I have read your revised assessment procedures for the Ph.D. in Urban Studies and Public Affairs and I think you have developed a very good plan. The rubrics look good. I encourage you to begin collecting data in January and review findings at the end of Spring 2005.

Two suggestions:

- Do you have any targets for how many students should attain proficiency on the newly designed rubrics. For example, do you expect that 60%, 80% 100% etc should be scored satisfactory or higher on the writing skills? It would be helpful if in the plan (and 2005 report) you either state the targets, or state that you want at least one semester’s data before setting targets.

- Your assessment for communication is now focused on the latter part of the program (prospectus and defense). Have you considered assessing communication skills earlier in the program? It would enable you to (a) be able to state change over time – i.e., a value added model, or (b) provide specialized instruction or remediation for those students who need it. You could just propose something as simple as using the scoring rubrics for class presentations early in the program.

Minor point:

- I assume that technics = techniques (several times on Page 1).
6 December 2004

To: Rosemary Sutton, Office of Assessment
From: Helen Liggett, Interim Head PhD in Urban Studies and Public Affairs
CC: Bill Bowen, Head PhD Program; Dennis Keating, Associate Dean; Mike Wells, Assessment Officer; Kriste Vedegys-Duhigg, Graduate Program Coordinator
Subject: Assessment Procedures for the PhD in Urban Studies and Public Affairs

Assessment materials for the PhD program in Urban Studies and Public Affairs are attached. These were developed during fall of 2004. Faculty met early in the term to review the comments made by last year’s reviewers and approved an overall approach to assessment. I attended a program heads meeting shortly thereafter where Dean Tumeo, Professor Sutton and the heads of the other doctoral programs at CSU discussed assessment in general and also the particulars of how they approached the project. Material from that meeting included an overview of all PhD programs’ goals and (later) examples of learning techniques developed by the engineering department. My colleagues heading other programs in the Urban College also shared with me examples they had from other departments and were very generous in discussing their work thus far.

I would like to thank all these people for making it possible to then think about assessment in terms of what the PhD in the Urban College aspires to be.

Drafts of goals, assessment techniques and scoring rubrics were presented at the next PhD faculty meeting. Discussion emphasized the necessity of capturing the interdisciplinary nature of our program. All faculty members concurred in adding a communication goal. In retrospect it seemed like an oversight that we hadn’t included it the first year. Various faculty members offered changes. We discussed these and then the faculty voted as a whole to adopt the goals and assessment techniques listed in the first attachment. We focused on the
comprehensives, prospectus defense, dissertation and dissertation defense as key elements of the program and discussed the various items in the scoring rubrics for each. I later met with faculty members who had suggested amendments to the scoring rubrics to insure the final documents met with their approval. The faculty attending the meeting also approved these. Scoring rubrics are presented as the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th attachments.

Research and findings, have not been reviewed by the faculty. Nor have any actions been taken to date. This is because we are awaiting approval of the attached documents. Nevertheless, we did discuss a timetable for implementation. Pending approval, research would begin in January 2005. By the end of term we will have gathered findings. These could be reviewed at a faculty meeting the very end of spring term or the very beginning of next term. Then we can determine what actions need to be taken and report to the assessment office. Waiting until the beginning of Fall 2005 will mean there will be more data to review, so this was preferred. We also discussed mechanisms for implementation that would begin as soon as we receive approval to begin.
Assessment of Student Learning – PhD in Urban Studies and Public Affairs

Part I Goals

1. Knowledge of the Field
   Students will develop fundamental knowledge and critical perspectives pertaining to urban studies and public affairs. Students will develop advanced level of expertise within the area of their chosen specialization.

2. Research
   Students will develop the ability to initiate, plan, and execute original research and/or theoretical inquiry in their area of specialization.

3. Communication
   Students will acquire the skills to communicate at a professional level within the areas of scholarship and professional practice of their area of expertise.

Part II Assessment Technics

1. Knowledge
   Comprehensive examination (with scoring rubric)
   Evaluation of dissertation (with scoring rubric)

2. Research
   Dissertation prospectus (with scoring rubric)
   Evaluation of dissertation (with scoring rubric)

3. Communication
   Evaluation of prospectus presentation (with scoring rubric)
   Evaluation of dissertation defense (with scoring rubric)
Comprehensive Examinations

Assessment of Student Academic Achievement Objectives

Each reader of the comprehensives should complete evaluation.

Criteria for Evaluation (Objectives)

1. A depth of knowledge of principles of field of study at a level that exceeds that expected at the undergraduate and master's level
   a) Exemplary
      Student shows excellent understanding of foundational conceptualizations
   b) Satisfactory
      Student is conversant with fundamental conceptualizations
   c) Unsatisfactory
      There is a weak grasp of fundamentals

2. A breadth of knowledge of central issues and related debates
   a) Exemplary
      Student displays well developed analytic sense of relational and contextual issues
   b) Satisfactory
      Student has adequate knowledge of related subjects
   c) Unsatisfactory
      Relational and contextual knowledge is weak

3. The ability to independently articulate the significance and limitations of the relevant literature
   a) Exemplary
      Student has the ability to frame the literature and develop an insightful analysis of it
b) Satisfactory
   Student can competently accept or reject an argument

c) Unsatisfactory
   Student show limited facility organizing the relevant material

4. Writing skills that approach a professional level

a) Exemplary
   Words are chosen appropriately, sentences are well crafted, and
   the logic of the argument is clearly presented

b) Satisfactory
   Writing is grammatically correct. Syntax is adequate Logic of
   argument is clear most of the time

c) Unsatisfactory
   Point of argument is difficult to grasp in parts and there are a
   number of errors of grammar and syntax

5. Oral presentation skills that approach a professional level (for
   specialization where there is an oral component to comprehensive
   examinations)

a) Exemplary
   Student has clear well organized presentation, that covers the
   question and may even exceed it

b) Satisfactory
   Student can answer question but sometimes presents
   incomplete argument

c) Unsatisfactory
   Student jumps from topic to topic and/or does not address the
   question

Questions #1,2,3 are Criteria for Evaluation (Objectives) for Goal 1 = Knowledge

Questions # 4, 5 are Criteria for Evaluation (Objectives) for Goal 3 = Communication
Prospectus and Prospectus Defense

Assessment of Student Academic Achievement Objectives

Each member of the committee should complete evaluation after prospectus defense.

Criteria for Evaluation (Objectives)

1. The ability to formulate original research or to conduct theoretical inquiry
   a) Exemplary
      Proposal is an innovative idea from the student that constitutes an original contribution
   b) Satisfactory
      Proposal addresses a relevant issue
   c) Unsatisfactory
      Proposal lacks disciplinary relevance and/or repeats familiar ground

2. The proposed research is of adequate scope and depth to advance the field
   a) Exemplary
      The research or question posed in the proposal is highly relevant and/or will investigate areas heretofore under explored
   b) Satisfactory
      The research will address a central area and will add to knowledge in that area
   c) Unsatisfactory
      Research will only touch the surface of the chosen problem

3. The ability to plan a logical and coherent project
   a) Exemplary
The prospectus shows a clear and logical progression from problem, to research, to analysis

b) Satisfactory
The prospectus lays out a plan but there is some uncertainty about the use of data or areas of thought to be investigated

c) Unsatisfactory
The prospectus doesn’t do an adequate job of linking the research design to the expected analysis

4. The ability to design a meaningful research project

a) Exemplary
Research approach and method elegantly address the question being investigated

b) Satisfactory
Research will address the problem as posed

c) Unsatisfactory
It is not clear how the research approach and data are relevant

5. The ability to make a fluid and clear presentation of the proposed research or inquiry

a) Exemplary
All facets of the presentation (written, oral, and any visual aids) have an analytic component that contributes to the argument

b) Satisfactory
The various facets of the presentation are related to the project

c) Unsatisfactory
The presentation is disjointed and/or contains analytic gaps

6. The ability to design a realistic project within existing research constraints

a) Exemplary
The prospectus is realistic in terms of time, availability of data and scope, and other related matters

b) Satisfactory
   The prospectus will need some refinement in terms of practical constraints on the proposed work

c) Unsatisfactory
   The project is disconnected from the contingencies of scholarly work.

7. The ability to enter into and benefit from dialogue on the research

   a) Exemplary
      Student can respond in meaningful and thoughtful ways to questions and comments about the project

   b) Satisfactory
      Student can converse about project but may miss some of the implications of questions and comments

   c) Unsatisfactory
      Student has rigid or preprogrammed or somewhat incoherent responses to questions and comments.

*Question # 2 is Criteria for Evaluation (Objective) for Goal # 1 = Knowledge*

*Questions # 1, 3, 4, 6, are Criteria for Evaluation (Objectives) for Goal #2 = Research*

*Questions # 5, 7 are Criteria for Evaluation (Objectives) for Goal #3 = Communication*
Dissertation

Assessment of Student Academic Achievement Objectives

Each member of the committee should complete evaluation after dissertation defense

Criteria for Evaluation (Objectives)

1) Depth of Knowledge of field of study
   a) Exemplary
      Student displays excellent command of principles directly related to project
   b) Satisfactory
      Student shows good understanding of fundamentals directly related to project
   c) There is weak understanding of fundamental principles directly related to project

2) Breadth of Knowledge
   a) Exemplary
      Student shows excellent grasp of contextual and relevant related subjects
   b) Satisfactory
      Knowledge of related subjects is adequate
   c) Unsatisfactory
      Knowledge of related subjects is weak

3) The ability to independently read and understand the significance and limitations of the relevant literature
   a) Exemplary
      Student demonstrates highly developed critical sense pertaining to all work related to project
b) Satisfactory
Student shows the ability to make important analytical distinctions and understands how project fits into the literature

c) Unsatisfactory
Student is unfamiliar with some of the literature and student's ability to take a critical perspective is limited

4) Impact on the advancement of the field of specialization

a) Exemplary
The work makes a notable contribution to the field

b) Satisfactory
The work has some importance to others in the field

c) Unsatisfactory
The work is forgettable

5) The ability to execute a logical and coherent project

a) Exemplary
The project is elegantly designed and implemented

b) Satisfactory
The student did competent work in designing and implementing a project

c) Unsatisfactory
The design and execution of the project are poor

6) The ability to design research or organize a critical inquiry

a) Exemplary
Completed research or inquiry probes the problem deeply and is reflective about the strengths and weaknesses of the approach used

b) Satisfactory
Completed dissertation answers the basic questions of the problem

c) Unsatisfactory
   Work only touches the surface of the problem

7) Quality of the writing

   a) Exemplary
      Words are well chosen, sentences are well crafted, and the logic of the argument is clearly presented

   b) Satisfactory
      Writing is grammatically correct. Syntax is adequate. Logic of the argument is apparent

   c) Unsatisfactory
      Point of the argument is difficult to grasp and there are a number of errors of grammar and syntax

8) Organization of the Presentation

   a) Exemplary
      Presentation is clear, logical and organized. Listener can follow logic of argument. Pacing is correct for clear understanding

   b) Satisfactory
      Listener can follow and understand important points in the presentation

   c) Unsatisfactory
      Talk is poorly organized. Speaker jumps around from topic to topic and/or rambles

9) Components of the presentation

   a) Exemplary
      All facets of the presentation (written, oral and visual) are well integrated and enhance the analytic component of the presentation
b) Satisfactory
The various component of the presentation are related to the project

c) Unsatisfactory
The various media are disjointed or used for their own sake.

10) The ability to answer questions about and enter into dialogue on the research.

a) Exemplary
Questions are answered directly and clearly, student engages in insightful reflection on the issues raised.

b) Satisfactory
Student can answer questions, but may miss some of the implications of questions and comments.

c) Unsatisfactory
Student has difficulty understanding questions and/or has preprogrammed or somewhat incoherent responses to questions and comments.

Questions 1, 2, 3, 4 are Criteria for Evaluation (Objectives) for Goal #1 = Knowledge

Questions 5, 6 are Criteria for Evaluation (Objectives) for Goal #2 = Research

Questions 7, 8, 9, 10 are Criteria for Evaluation (Objectives) for Goal #3 = Communication