

Report of the Evans School Ten Year Review Committee

April 30, 2015

INTRODUCTION

Our committee charge from the University of Washington Graduate School was to review the Evans School of Public Affairs to assess the quality of the graduate programs and to provide the deans and the faculty with constructive recommendations to strengthen the programs as well as to provide the University with a clearer understanding of each program's quality, educational value, role within the University and community, role within the academic discipline, and resource requirements. Members of the review committee are Ellen Schall, Martin Cherkasky Professor of Health Policy and Management and former dean, Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, New York University, Angela Evans, Professor, Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs, University of Texas, Austin, and from the University of Washington Mark Ellis, Professor, Department of Geography and Director of the Center for Studies in Demography and Ecology, and serving as committee chair Robert Crutchfield, Professor, Department of Sociology.

In addition to the charge from The Graduate School, the Evans School asked that we consider five additional questions: 1) What impact does the Evans School have on public policy and management locally, regionally, nationally and globally? 2) How can the Evans School expand our engagement with the University, city, region, nation, and world? 3) What scale and scope are best suited to achieve the Evans School's mission? In the next ten years, how should we respond strategically to emerging changes in underserved markets, teaching technologies, and global competition in public affairs education? 4) The Evans School is a top ranked school of public affairs with a nationally prominent program and regional roots. How can we advance the reputation and quality of our programs regionally, nationally and globally? What resources would we need to do that? and 5) How can the Evans School ensure access to graduate public affairs education under the University of Washington's financial model? How can we attract top students given the levels of fellowship awards other programs are able to offer?

Our evaluation is based on the self-study that was prepared by the dean, faculty and staff of the Evans School, data provided from the Graduate and Professional Student Senate (GPSS), and interviews that took place during a site visit on April 2nd and 3rd. We were surprised and disappointed that the GPSS survey and focus group data, while administered in February and March, were transmitted to us weeks after our visit and far too late to be of use. We would strongly recommend that, in the future, these data be provided to committees prior to the site visit so that they might explore themes developed there in meetings and interviews. Also, the response rate of the survey results that we received was troublingly low. We would strongly encourage the GPSS to avail itself of some of the expertise that exists within the university to achieve a response rate that would inspire more confidence. The results of the survey- in addition to the low response rate- in some ways raise worrisome issues we are no longer in a position to explore, thus casting some doubt on our findings. Twenty-six percent, of the

admittedly small number of respondents, were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, for example with the quality of advising and 35% felt that some members of the faculty were not encouraging them to graduate. That is a puzzling finding that would have merited further inquiry. Finally, we would recommend that the GPSS develop a survey designed for masters programs and not use the same instrument that was developed for doctoral programs.

During the site visit the review committee had meetings with the Evans School leadership, program directors, faculty, graduate students (separate meetings with Ph.D., MPA, and Executive MPA students), key staff, members of the School's Alumni Council, and members of the Advisory Board.

In this report, as we did in the final meeting with the Dean and with representatives from the Graduate School, from the Provost's Office, and from The Graduate School Council, we have elected not to organize this document around the questions that were presented to us. Instead we will begin with the overall strengths of the School and then move to a set of observations that we consistently made during our interviews and readings. In organizing the report in this way, we will touch on the questions asked of us by both the University and the School

OVERALL STRENGTH OF SCHOOL AND PROGRAM

The Evans School's is fortunate to have excellent leadership. In the Dean, as well as in the Associate and Assistant Deans there is substantial ability, experience and commitment to the School, its programs and their students. This is a very stable leadership team, which has stood the school in good stead during very difficult financial times for the University of Washington. Although the State has substantially reduced funding to the University, the Dean of the Evans School and her team have not only maintained the quality of programs and research, but they have grown and, by all indications, improved their already high quality. The committee took note that during this difficult period, the size of the faculty has grown and they have also maintained a good record of placing their graduates and the pattern of these placements are on an upward trajectory, boding well for the future.

Since the Evans School's last ten year review, in 2006, they have made notable progress in a number of important areas. They have moved up in *US News & World Report's* rankings so that they are now consistently ranked among the top ten public policy graduate programs in the United States. The quantity and the quality, as indicated by the placement, of their research in highly-ranked publications, have grown, indicating an active and influential collective research portfolio for faculty and graduate students of the school. In part this has been achieved by a growth in the quality of the faculty at both the senior and junior levels. This statement is not intended to suggest that the Evans School's faculty of the past was not good, to the contrary they were. A good faculty is now a better faculty.

A notable achievement of the past ten years has been the launch of their Ph.D. program. That program is of modest size, but the students are good, are receiving excellent training and are

being well placed. The establishment of this program has not come at the expense of their other graduate programs; the quality of those programs has remained high. As mentioned above the placement of students in both their MPA and Ph.D. programs is quite good. The Executive MPA students are not mentioned here because by definition most of them come into the program already holding professional positions. Several EMPA students were in the group from the Alumni Council that this committee met with. They expressed considerable satisfaction with the training that they received in that program. These programs are of high quality because, in large measure, of the commitment of the Evans School faculty to teaching.

The Evans School enjoys a staff of both a size and quality that would be the envy of other UW units. This is a very good and committed staff. The committee met with twelve “Key Staff” members. It was obvious to us that they are outstanding. An additional strength is the collaboration between staff members and the faculty of the school. They are collectively to be commended for the enriching collaboration that appears to mark their work. The adoption of continuing process improvement (we were told this is an important "practice what you teach" way of managing) is at the heart of how the School works so well together and has been able to move forward in the last decade.

Finally, this committee would like to note the very strong commitment of both their Alumni Council and Advisory Board. These bodies are composed of people who care deeply about the Evans School and its students and are strong resources that have in the past, and stand ever ready to assist and support the School moving forward.

The Evans School has an excellent reputation, which leads to a positive narrative to and for the national community of public policy schools. Outside of the UW the Evans School is seen very positively with a respected faculty and high quality research portfolio. Their graduate programs and graduate students are well regarded. This committee believes that they need a new narrative to clarify their place and role within the UW. The Evans School, from the outside, appears to be rich in resources, with a growing faculty, and a robust staff capacity. Despite these resources the School portrays a bit of a "bunker mentality" in relation to the rest of the University. The current narrative is possibly a product of the University's recent fiscal crises, the change to the ABB budgeting system, and the threat of merging the School into other UW units several years ago. These competing narratives, the national one versus the local one, provide the backdrop for the following observations that have been made by this review committee. See below for discussion on developing a new narrative for the School and its role in the university.

COLLABORATIONS

The committee encountered persistent inconsistencies in perceptions among Evans School faculty and leadership and other sectors of the University community regarding the willingness of the Evans School to engage in collaborative endeavors across the University. The Evans School self-study reports numerous collaborative efforts occurring across campus, however,

there seems to be contrary perceptions that are based upon other experiences with the School. This disconnect needs to be addressed.

The committee could not definitively assess the root causes for these divergent perceptions. However, it appears that one of the obstacles that the Evans School leadership identified was the adoption by the University of the “activity based budgeting” (ABB) allocation model. According to discussions which took place over the two-day review, this model may have had the unintended consequence of creating financial disincentives for the Evans School to engage in joint faculty appointments, shared research endeavors, and joint course offerings. Here is a quote from the self-study that illustrates this concern:

For 20 years the Evans School has valued the opportunity for graduate students to benefit from the many strong programs across the University, however, the ABB formula has had notable financial implications.

It was not within the timeframe and charge of this committee to validate these perceptions. Given the potential obstacles that the use of the ABB may have for the Evans School, however, the committee recommends that the University work with the School to analyze the new financing system’s impact on the School.

While the University works with the Evans School on the effects of the ABB allocation, the committee recommends that the Evans School consider the following options, which are independent of the ABB, to further strengthen its role in, and contributions to, the broader university community. These efforts also may provide the Evans School with opportunities to convey its concerns to other units.

Exploit Its Strengths in Policy Analysis and Public Administration to Assist the University Community

As a top public policy and administration school, the Evans School has the resident expertise to assist researchers and administrators across the university to make their research more accessible and relevant to policymakers at the local, state, and national levels. The School is poised to offer courses, seminars, training, and mentoring to researchers in a wide range of disciplines who are interested in moving their research into applications that would inform policy deliberations across governments. The School could be an exemplar of how to move the knowledge and expertise resident in the University to affect social and economic conditions and address directly relevant policy challenges.

The Evans School can use the relationships it has developed with international public policy and public administration to continue to advance the global reach of the School as well as the University.

The School also could contribute to meeting some of the administrative challenges and opportunities facing the University. The Evans School faculty members are nationally respected for their scholarship in public administration. This scholarship could help bring innovative ideas to enhancing the operations of the university, including organizational and systems analysis, performance management, program evaluation, and human resource management.

Explore Formal and Informal Partnerships with Other University Departments

The committee encourages the Evans School leadership to reach out to other colleges and departments in the University to learn how they perceive the Evans School and to determine if there are untapped opportunities to build collaborations. This outreach may serve two fundamental purposes. The first is to demonstrate to other University units that the Evans School is proactive in seeking out partnerships. The second is to afford the Evans School the opportunity to better acquaint other units with the challenges it faces and for its members to know better the challenges of those units.

Develop a Narrative About the School

The Evans School has strong standing within the public policy and public administration communities. It is nationally recognized for its program quality and its research. The leadership of the Evans School has been active and recognized in major associations and its faculty has published in highly respected and ranked journals. The committee recommends that the Evans School convey the contributions it can make to the mission and enrichment of the University as a whole.

Identify and Build on the Evans School's Comparative Advantage

The Evans School should consider what it can do best, build on those strengths and seek partners who can complement those strengths. Policy schools tend to try to be everything to everyone. The Evans School should determine how best to identify and communicate its comparative advantage. This would also help the School identify internal (University) and external partners (state, local, national, international entities) who could serve as collaborators with the School. This narrative could be used to tell the Evans School story to a wide range of audiences.

GLOBAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Evans School self-study and the presentations in the site visit proclaim that the school's programs and research have regional, national and global reach and influence. We saw evidence of these connections but noted that many of the students with whom we met were from the region or stated intentions of staying within the region when they graduate.

We understand the reasons why they might want to do this. Seattle's labor market is strong and the region is a pleasant place to live. But for a program that has national and global ambitions

there is much potential for the Evans School to increase national and especially international recruitment and placement of students.

There are tensions between being a school with strong regional connections and influence and efforts aimed at enhancing global reputation and impact. There is value in thinking through how these regional, national and global ambitions intersect in the school's programs and whether tensions between them can be resolved without sacrificing the school's successful regional mission and influence.

A resolution of these issues requires clarification of what the Evans School means by global in its desire for growth in this arena. The current program incorporates the global in its current programs mostly by exposing students to the regional and national manifestations of global political, economic and environmental processes.

Other global strategies might involve training students in other national contexts (an Evans@country strategy) about the manifestations of the global in those institutional and economic contexts. The opportunities in Asia seem most promising to us. Or there could be enhancements of programs that speak to global processes and the global institutions that make and respond to them. These latter two global strategies for growth are less evident at Evans at present but both offer exciting possibilities for future expansion if the tensions we have identified above can be resolved.

The pursuit of global strategies beyond those evident in existing programs will require internationalization of the curriculum, and further internationalization of the faculty and student body.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The review committee commends the School and its leadership team for its acknowledgment, in the self- study and in our conversation, that they can and must do better in this arena. It must increase the number of people from under-represented groups on the faculty and in the student body. It must enhance the curriculum so it better prepares students both for nuanced and sophisticated conversations in the classroom and for effective policy and management careers in multicultural and complex environments. Seattle is a global city and this effort- to significantly improve the school's demographic profile and to lead in the way it teaches and prepares students- is important whether the student body is regional, national or global. UW leadership has emphatically stated that improved diversity is central for both the University's domestic and global missions. The Evans School can be a leader in this effort. It is important in this regard to utilize national and global benchmarks, not local or state ones. The 2009 plan is widely cited as an excellent blueprint. We strongly suggest it be updated, with clarity about phased-in implementation.

The review committee suggests an immediate focus on hiring faculty of color, which should then also help in recruiting and yielding students of color. We clarified that the percent of faculty of color (20%) listed in the self-study was not an accurate account of tenure and tenure-track faculty. The Evans School anticipates vacancies due to retirements as well as being able to secure additional lines. This presents a strategic opportunity for the Evans School. We discussed the value of several strategies, including the possibility of joint hires with other departments or schools, with particular attention to political science; “endowed professorships” as one way to attract faculty; and the wisdom of being open to “target of opportunity” hiring.

Student diversity is key to student learning and must be pursued. Financial aid is important here, of course, but so are programmatic offerings such as course content, mentoring and funded internships.

We applaud the faculty of the Evans School for its ongoing commitment to teaching and continuous curricular review and improvement. At the same time we heard clearly from students that too many members of the faculty are ineffective in allowing or guiding conversations about equity, diversity and inclusion in the classroom. Students need to develop a sophisticated and historical analysis of structural and systematic inequities nationally and globally in order to be effective in public service as well as increase their individual and collective cultural competency. We recommend close consideration of instituting some requirement, both for faculty and for students. Faculty can be asked how they plan to improve in this regard and given a menu of options. Students can be required to take a course or perhaps each student can be allowed to select from a menu of three or four courses.

Finally, the school is to be commended for appointing Joaquin Herranz as its Chief Diversity Officer, but the role of any such person needs to be clarified and then attention paid to whether that is best managed as a full-time job, presumably then held by a less senior person, or whether it is part of the role of a more senior person, as now.

We know well that attention to issues of diversity and inclusion requires a sustained commitment. We end this section as we began it- by appreciating the commitment to engage in this important work and by suggesting that the school has an opportunity to take a leadership position here in the field.

GRADUATE PROGRAMS

PHD PROGRAM

The PhD program was launched in 2006 as part of an effort to enhance the research orientation of the Evans School. The program is modest in size and attracts well-qualified applicants. About 10 students are admitted a year of which approximately half enroll. Those who don't enroll tend to go to other top policy schools, which speaks to the selective composition of the applicant pool.

The placement record is short given the duration of the program. Graduates work for a mixture of state governments, nonprofits, and universities (though we can't tell whether the latter are tenure-stream faculty positions). The mixture of placements is oriented more to the non-academic sector than is typical for social science PhDs but perhaps this is to be expected for a policy and management PhD.

There is interest in growing the PhD program but we suggest caution for three reasons. Our first concern is the demand for public policy and management PhDs given the tendency of schools like Evans to hire scholars from disciplinary departments. We are not sure there are sufficient academic positions to demand an expansion of the PhD. If placement of PhDs in non-academic jobs is a goal, then that needs to be clarified.

Our second concern relates to the first and is the current trend toward downsizing of other social science PhD programs at UW and elsewhere in reaction to the poor academic job market in these fields more generally. The paucity of academic jobs is also forcing some social science PhD programs to readjust their sole orientation to placement in academic positions and think about the placement of their PhD graduates in non-academic jobs. These are signs that the labor market for PhDs in social science is not robust. Perhaps this is not the case in policy and management but we are not so sure.

The third concern stems from discussions with PhD students. They clearly want a PhD in the policy and management field but are also aware that such a PhD does not have the strong disciplinary identification of mainstream social science disciplines. They expressed concern that these mainstream social science disciplines are still favored in policy school hiring, including at Evans. (see above). Perhaps some recent hiring or discussion at Evans has conveyed this impression to them. They may be unaware that 7 out of 28 tenured or tenure-stream faculty at Evans have a policy oriented PhD (information supplied after the site visit). If policy schools favor PhDs from traditional disciplines instead of PhDs from policy schools then an expansion of the PhD program will make academic placement of Evans PhDs a difficult proposition.

One alternative to expanding the in-house PhD program is to cultivate dual-degree programs with other units. There are program advantages for students and faculty with these programs. Students with these degrees might have an edge in the academic labor market by straddling a traditional academic unit and the Evans School. This might also aid in recruitment of the most qualified students through the combined attraction of different unit faculties.

Regardless of expansion there is a need to align expectation to reality in terms of time to degree. Students expect or hope to finish the degree in four years but many take longer. The average time listed in the self-study is over five but because the program is young this number might be biased downward. The PhD should be finished in four years, or under five years for most students. This might require some streamlining of the requirements and procedures in the program.

MASTER'S PROGRAMS

The review committee had an opportunity to meet with the program directors as well as students from the MPA program (including a part-time student) and students and recent alumni of the EMPA. Both groups reported high satisfaction.

The faculty director of the EMPA program described them as the “happiest” group at the school and that assessment was borne out by our conversations with the students. The EMPA cohort was particularly impressive in its professional diversity and the students found great value in that. They did express a desire to interact more with other groups on campus, both within the Evans School and with the wider university and the need to create institutionalized mechanisms for this. They pointed out a few gaps in the curriculum, including the need to include attention to big data and technology; cultural competency; and the legal context for decision-making. The most significant programmatic deficit was the need for faster turnaround for feedback. Some faculty, primarily those not from the Evans School, were slow in returning assignments and thin in offering feedback, which left the participants completing the next assignment without understanding where the performance gaps were from the previous assignment. The students also expressed a wish for additional mentoring, perhaps from local Evans alumni, and the benefit of faculty having on-line office hours in between class meetings.

The decision to create an additional EMPA offering for students from Asia seems well conceived and a smart strategic next step, well-aligned with the University’s priorities and the School’s global ambitions (see above). It will be important as the School renovates its classrooms to have video capability in one or two classrooms to accommodate this new market.

The MPA students with whom we met were apparently not a full representation of the student population, which was described to us as national and international. Almost all the MPA students we met were local and/or regional, although many reported applying to schools out of state. These students reported positively on the strong sense they had of being a cohort, which underlines the need for a strategy to create a welcoming and vibrant program for part-time students, not just allow them in, but create specific programming for them.

The MPA students had a clear sense of the need for improvement in several dimensions. They were especially focused on the need to address issues of diversity in all the multiple dimensions addressed in the diversity section above.

They mentioned the challenge of so many internships in the area being unfunded and the burden that puts on students who were already managing debt. We discussed with the Advisory Board the possibility of creating a campaign to raise funds that would, for example, offer on a competitive basis a summer stipend to allow 25 or 50 students to take the summer internship that would best support their career advancement.

The students were clear that while they liked the building, the space was no longer adequate and significant renovations were necessary.

Finally, in terms of curriculum, they pointed out the need to include attention to technology, politics (not just policy), and social enterprise and social entrepreneurship- which they say the business school covers well and they suggest Evans could find a way to partner with the business school in this area. The focus group report, which, again, we received after our visit and so couldn't pursue- mentions the need for a course in values and ethics and also a problem with electives being offered sporadically.

There was some discussion of the wish for each section of a core class to be more like the others, for there to be uniformity. But we think it may also be worth considering the alternative, especially as the school seeks to address the needs of increasingly disparate students. One financial management section, for example, could be focused on US-based public and nonprofit sector systems, while another could be more international. If the decision is made to keep the sections aligned, then the course material will have to be broadened.

While the students with whom we met identified gaps and needs, they were very identified with the School and appreciative of the faculty, staff and the leadership of the School. They were glad to be there.

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM

In reading the School's self-study, and in the committee's interviews, it was clear that the topic of establishing an undergraduate program is a central issue. What is unclear to this committee, and we believe that it is unclear to many in the Evans School, is the reason for establishing such a program. The faculty and leadership should continue conversations towards gaining clarity of purpose on this topic, and they should not move forward with any concrete steps towards establishing an undergraduate program until the purpose of creating one is very clear to everyone involved and there is widespread support for doing so among the faculty.

Should they elect to proceed, the strategy for doing so will depend on the basic purpose on which they settle. Among the strategic possibilities are creating a stand along program, building a collaborative program with other units such as Political Science, Economics or Sociology (perhaps like the informal collaborative program developed between Anthropology and the School of Public Health), developing an undergraduate minor rather than a major, or perhaps even developing a suit of courses that might be taken by students who are majoring in other social science departments or schools (e.g. The College of the Environment, Engineering, etc.).

Some suggested in conversations with us that creating an undergraduate program might be a means by which the School can increase the racial and ethnic diversity of their graduate programs, although if the undergraduate degree is seen as a pipeline then there needs to be overlap in coursework. An alternative might be to build collaborative relationships with units

that currently have relatively large populations of students from underrepresented groups. For example, many very good Native American undergraduates, when encouraged to go to graduate school, respond that they feel like it is time for them to return to their communities to help there. Perhaps the Evans School might reach out to the new leadership in American Indian Studies to explore how they might develop a mutually beneficial collaboration.

This committee has several major concerns about the current consideration of establishing an undergraduate program. First, they may be underestimating the attendant costs of developing a program. Doing so will require considerable space and the School already feels that their current space is inadequate for their programs. To establish an undergraduate program, considerable resources will have to be committed towards mentoring the new students. There will be administrative costs (e.g. advising, writing centers, course scheduling, etc.). Obviously the School already has costs in these areas. A new undergraduate program will demand more.

Second, the committee hopes the faculty will consider the impact on its resources and relationships. Regarding resources, there will be both the physical demands (space, technology, etc.), and HR demands that must be attended to if the program is to be adequate. Also, the faculty of the school should take seriously the effect of establishing a program on their relationships with other units on campus. They should consider how these other units will receive the news that they might want to begin enrolling undergraduates. These UW programs, which have related programs, will have opportunity to weigh in on any program the Evans School proposes. Other units may well resist the Evans Schools efforts to establish an undergraduate program if they are not included in conversations and their interests are not adequately protected. These units, by University policy, will have opportunities to comment on any proposed new program. The School should take care to nurture and not harm relationships with these programs.

Third, the Evans faculty should consider potential impacts of an undergraduate program on their core MPA program. It is very likely that it will be difficult to limit the size of a new undergraduate major in public policy. It is possible that maintaining an undergraduate program will siphon resources from their current programs. Therefore, the resource, space and staffing implications of creating an undergraduate program for current Evans School operations and program goals need to be considered carefully.

SPACE

As the self-study states, the Evans School resides in Parrington Hall, the second oldest building on the University of Washington campus. This finding was borne out throughout the numerous sessions, and by a variety of participants in the study. The Evans leadership, students, and advisory groups consistently expressed concern over space.

While the architecture and history of the building are noteworthy, the interior space is not

conducive to learning environments appropriate to support the School's current and evolving pedagogy. It also lacks the space needed to accommodate the growing number of graduate (both Masters and PhD-level) students and faculty. The faculty expressed concern as well with regard to the lack of collaborative workspaces in which they could invite colleagues from outside of the School to meet and work.

The self-study offers several scenarios to address the space needs ranging from the construction of a new facility to major renovations to the existing structure. The committee did not address the feasibility of the options presented in the self-study. Rather, the committee offered guidance on how the Evans School might best plan for any modifications or construction.

Overall Physical Flexibility of the Design

The committee encourages the Evans School to seek out designs that accommodate the ever-changing nature of technology and how students and faculty use that technology to enhance the instruction, research, and learning environments for faculty and students.

Space configurations should account for how the Evans School can support the research the faculty conducts with their University partners as well with state, local, and nonprofit collaborators. This could include: distance learning facilities, workshop areas, and the ability to secure large data sets.

The committee also discussed the importance of considering how the physical plant encourages the global reach of the Evans School. Determining the type of facility that will allow the School to support partnerships with colleagues in other countries is critical. Since the University in general, and the Evans School specifically, are seeking strong collaborations with Asia, the School can use this focus to determine what it would need in physical space and technology infrastructure to advance these partnerships.

Number and Size of Classrooms

The committee would encourage the Evans School to base its planning less on the number of students each classroom would hold and more on how the spaces could be adjusted to accommodate a range of students.

Furnishing Classrooms, Offices and Collaborative Spaces

Several of the committee members have had experience with the design of new spaces. Each shared the importance of furnishing any new or renovated facility with portable, movable, modular equipment, including "desks", worktables, technology pods, etc.

CONCLUSIONS

The members of this committee appreciate the opportunity to review the Evans School of Public Affairs. We especially appreciate the information provided to us by the leadership, faculty, staff, and interested others. Also, we would like to take this opportunity to thank Augustine McCaffery for her coordination and work to make this process work very smoothly.

The Evans School is strong. Its programs are of high quality, the faculty is productive, and the School is making important contributions to the University of Washington and nationally to the public policy and administration intellectual community. The next ten years are full of promise for the Evans school and this committee's consensus recommendation is that the graduate programs offered be continued.