

Date: February 5, 2021

Memorandum to: Provost Sally Kornbluth
Thomas Ferraro, Chair, APC

From: Paula D. McClain, Co-Chair, Master's Advisory Council
Brad Fox, Co-Chair, Master's Advisory Council

Reference: MA in Bioethics and Science Policy External Degree Review

On January 28, 2021, the Master's Advisory Council discussed the proposed Executive Masters in National Security Policy (E-MNSP). This degree has been reviewed and approved by the Sanford School of Public Policy Faculty and supported by Dean Judith Kelley. (Note: The faculty approval occurred after the proposal was submitted and the results were 42 in favor, 2 against, and 2 abstained.)

Overall, we were impressed with the new degree proposal. It builds on the strengths of the Sanford School of Public Policy, addresses a critical area of need, and is delivered in way that provides both personal engagement and digital flexibility. In the comments below, we will outline our questions and concerns. Where appropriate, we will make recommendations which we think will strengthen the proposal and the degree.

Market and Recruiting

The target market for this degree is mid-career professions, working in areas related to National Security. Applicants for this program should have at least ten years working experience in the military, civil servants, contractors and consultants. (Note: The proposal said 7+ years in some places and 10+ years in others.) The proposal noted that there are hundreds of thousands of individuals in each of these categories. It is important to note that from a market perspective, the number of potential applicants to this master's degree will be a small fraction of the stated population. Not all of these individuals will have the appropriate education, years of service, or field of work to be qualified to apply. The MAC felt that the proposal did not clearly define the background of student the program desires. Several MAC members noted the struggles they faced when launching their program when there was not clarity on the required student background. **Recommendation: Better define the requirements for admission, including: years of service; the type of work that qualifies as work in the field; prior degree requirements; prior coursework requirements; etc.**

The effort and support for the marketing effort is a little confusing. The marketing effort mentioned in person recruiting and a digital campaign (google) to identify candidates and then personal engagement once a candidates has expressed an interest. In addition to this approach,

Sanford's historical not-for-credit programming for 250-350 military and civilian professionals means that it has some existing networks and contacts that may be used to build awareness of the program. These seem like good approaches. The aspects that are confusing are the monetary and personnel resources. The program allocated \$10K toward marketing on (p. 31) and the budget on p. 138 has \$15K. Both of these amounts seem to be low when trying to build awareness for a new program. From a personnel perspective, on p. 40 of the proposal, it mentioned a dedicated marketing specialist (p. 40) would support the program, however, this resource was not included in the budget on p. 138. It is important to have a robust marketing effort for the program to be successful. **Recommendation: Better define the monetary and personnel resources needed to market this program to prospective applicants so that it will be able to achieve its enrollment goals.**

Finances

The budget on p. 138 provides a good overview of the expected expenditures beginning with the first year of classes. It is unclear if the expenditures associated with this startup of this program are accounted for in the budget on p. 138. It seems like there should be a year 0 which would be the year after the program is approved, but before the students start in year 1. Expected expenses in year 0 would include

- Marketing for the first cohort of students (print materials, digital advertising, travel for in person recruiting events, dedicated marketing specialist...)
- Online course development cost (faculty time, instructional designers, recording, editing ...)
- Professor of the Practice (will likely need to be hired before Year 1 so that course content can be developed)
- Faculty Director (needs to be hiring POP, Adjuncts, Program Assistant, engaging with prospective students...)
- Dir. of digital Learning (support digital course development)
- Level 8 Program assistant (support program operations)

With the Year 0 costs, the program can better calculate net benefit to the school and the time to break even. **Recommendation: Revise the budget to consider Year 0 costs.**

The proposed tuition for the program was \$40,000. The degree is priced \$10,000 below the tuition of its cheapest competitor. Sanford's own Master of Public Policy (MPP) is \$48,307 annually. It is unclear why an executive program somewhat related to the MPP degree is priced less per year than the MPP. It seems like this degree can compete on the distinctiveness of the curriculum and should not focus on price as a differentiator. **Recommendation: Consider increasing tuition to be within the range of tuitions charged by competing programs, including its own Master of Public Policy.**

Resources – Faculty

The new program has 9 defined classes and 1 elective. The plan is for a new Professor of the Practice to teach 4 classes per year. Three of the classes will be in E-MNSP and one will be for

other Sanford programs. Two classes will be taught by tenure/tenure track faculty within Sanford and 4 classes will be taught by adjuncts. Additionally, faculty will be compensated for advising students. With the new POP teaching one class in the residential Sanford programs, existing Sanford faculty will only be asked to teach 1 net class in this program. Overall, this does not seem to be a significant strain on the Sanford faculty. There was some discussion of having 1 faculty teach 3 of the core classes. To have 3/10 classes taught by the same person seems to limit the exposure of students in this program to different perspectives. **Recommendation: Make additional course teaching trades with Sanford's residential programs so that the E-MNSP POP teaches 1-2 classes in the E-MNSP.**

The description of the Professional Practice in National Security class says that each student will work with faculty or preceptors from their job and find and solve a problem at the workplace. "This will be the culminative experience of blending the curriculum, led by the individual student working singularly with a faculty member and preceptors from their job, to advance a goal or solve a problem at their work location incorporating lessons learned from all or most classes in the program. "This seems like a substantial amount of effort for a single faculty to coordinate 20-25 individual research projects. **Recommendation: Assess if a single instructor can teach the Professional Practice in National Security class with 20-25 students or are additional faculty needed to mentor these projects.**

Resources – Staff

The budget includes time for a Director of Digital Learning (0.3). Most digital classes require significant support from an instructional designer to adapt to the digital platform. It is not clear if there is enough time allocated for this work. **Recommendation: Assess if there are sufficient resources in place to support the development of 9 digital classes in 1 year.**

For executive program, community building is critical. The on campus immersive experiences are a great opportunity to build this community. The section of "Graduate Student Clubs and C-Curricular Events (p.25-26) seemed focused on activities tailored to residential students. It seems like a concerted effort is needed to develop community during the on-campus immersive experiences. **Recommendation: Develop community building programming during the immersive experiences.**

University Collaboration

The program requires the student to take an elective from the broader university. From an academic perspective, it does seem valuable to provide students with a multi-disciplinary exposure. The logistics and viability of this approach are unclear. Most online programs across Duke are not open for enrollment to students from other programs. Practically, it seems like a list of possible options should be identified and a MOU put in place with those other programs to allow the students to enroll. **Recommendation: A list of pre-approved electives should be defined and a MOU established with each of the schools offering the electives.**

The program makes some assumptions regarding university services that need to be clarified. On p. 34, it states that E-MNSP staff will connect students to the Student Health Center and Duke CAPS as needed. These services are typically enabled when students pay the student health fee. Many working professionals are not in the area and already have health insurance and do not want to pay the Student Health Fee. If the E-MNSP students do not pay the Student Health Fee then Student Health Center and Duke CAPS will not be available to them.

Summary

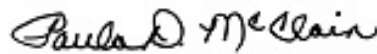
The MAC feels the Executive Masters in National Security Policy is a promising new degree for Duke University to offer. It seems to fill an unmet need for working professionals in the area of national policy. The MAC identified a couple of questions and concerns above and tried to provide recommendations and suggestions to address these questions and concerns.

Please let us know if you have any questions regarding the MAC's assessment of the proposed Executive Masters in National Security Policy degree.

Sincerely,



Bradley A. Fox
Co-Chair of the MAC



Paula D. McClain
Co-Chair of the MAC

cc: Mark Hart, Director of Digital Learning, Sanford School of Public Policy
Judith Kelley, Dean, Sanford School of Public Policy
Jennifer Frances, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs