

# Report of the Committee on the One Year Mid-Career Program

## Executive Summary

### I. The Task of the Committee

The task of the Committee on the Kennedy School's One-Year Mid-Career Program was to consider what changes in the curriculum and requirements of that program could strengthen that program's contribution to the Kennedy School's overall goal of achieving excellence in government.

We did not feel obligated to recommend changes. After all, the school's mid-career MPA program is its oldest and longest running program. Its graduates are among the schools most distinguished alumni. It has made enormous progress over the last generation in terms of recruiting future leaders from governments around the world, and in terms of curriculum innovation at the Kennedy School. It was quite plausible to us, then, that this program did not need fixing - particularly at a time when the school faced many other important tasks.

Still, to the extent that we saw clear opportunities to enhance the overall quality of the program with little cost or risk, or to the extent that we could identify important principles that could guide the future development of the program, we were duty bound to point these out to the faculty. That is what we have tried to do.

As a general orientation, we noted the distinctive academic challenge of designing a first rate one year, mid-career program. On the one hand, the program brought the school into contact with a group of students who were experienced, mature, and committed to government. In terms of professional impact, then, the program had the strengths of the school's executive programs.

On the other hand, the program included an extremely heterogeneous student body, lasted only nine months, and often included important transitions for the students. These features of the program challenged the faculty to devise an educational program that simultaneously met rigorous academic standards, respected the students' competence to determine their own needs, and accommodated the diversity of the students' interests.

### II. Findings of the Committee

The principal findings of the Committee are these:

First, we are satisfied that the one year mid-career MPA program contributes to the overall mission of producing excellence in government. It is an outstanding program of which the Kennedy School can be proud. No other program in the school allows us such sustained contact with experienced and accomplished public sector officials from around the world. No other program has such a distinguished group of alumni. No other program has accommodated the degree of curriculum innovation that has occurred in the mid-career MPA program. If the program did not already exist, we would recommend creating such a program.

Second, we believe that the administrative staff of the program deserves very high marks for maintaining the quality of the program in a period of rapid expansion. The quality and diversity of the students have both increased along with the scale. This feat has been accomplished over the last decade in the teeth of an overall weakening of the society's commitment to the public sector.

Third, we judge that the next increments of the school's efforts to develop the one year mid-career program should concentrate on improving the quality of the program - not because we think the quality is now too low, but instead because we think there are academic opportunities to be exploited. In the past, the school has worked to increase the size of the program while holding quality fixed. In the light of President Bok's Report and our own deliberations, we think the time has come to shift the emphasis and increase quality while holding class size constant.

Fourth, we do see some clear opportunities to enhance the quality of the program. Those that we see, however, consist of a series of incremental steps which work simultaneously on stiffening the intellectual challenge of the program, retaining its flexibility, and upgrading student recruitment. There is no quick fix to be legislated by the faculty. Instead, there are "agreements in principle" that the faculty should reach to guide the development of the program.

Fifth, we specifically reject the idea that the one year mid-career program could be improved merely by the imposition of new course requirements. We do not think it is possible to improve the quality of the graduates of this program simply by mandating any particular course, or any particular set of courses. The background skills of the students are too varied, their aspirations too diverse, and our ability to determine what is valuable and then to deliver it too weak to justify mandated courses. Moreover, we found it difficult to describe the process by which stiffer course requirements would translate into higher educational attainments for this student body. We feared

that rigid course requirements would drive out of the program precisely those students who were now making the best use of it.

Sixth, we think that the efforts to stiffen the intellectual challenge and add value to the capabilities of the students upon graduation should be based on a process of "individualized contracting" between the student, and the school. Instead of mandating courses, we should design and implement a process that leads students to diagnose their own strengths and weaknesses in the light of an overall philosophy of excellence in government and their own professional aspirations, and then to plan and carry out with the aid of a faculty advisor an educational program that can shore up their weaknesses, and enhance their strengths.

### III. Recommendations

The Committee makes seven specific recommendations. None of the recommendations involve immediate changes in academic requirements. Hence, no formal faculty vote is needed.

Instead, the recommendations come in the form of principles that should guide the future development of the program. A faculty vote supporting the principles would morally bind the faculty and administration to developing the program along the lines indicated, or giving reasons why those directions had ceased being the proper ones. The specific recommended principles are these:

First, the faculty and administration of the school should make a concerted, five year effort to increase the overall quality of the students enrolled in the one year mid-career program. The program must find and recruit those who have real capacities for leadership in the public sector - particularly in the nation's state and local governments. This effort should include:

- 1) The continued expansion of the specialized fellowship programs for students from foreign countries that have done so much to bring high quality students to the MPA programs.
- 2) A more sustained and comprehensive effort to develop on-going relations with federal agencies like those we have with the Department of State.
- 3) A more aggressive effort to reach those approaching leadership positions in the major units of state and local government in the United States.

4) A concerted fund raising/development effort to develop fellowships supporting mid-career MPA students at the Kennedy School

Second, the faculty and administration of the school should commit themselves to developing the summer program into an integral part of the one year mid-career program. The program should be used to help all students make the transition from professional life to academic life, and to begin the process of contracting for specific educational objectives while at the Kennedy School. This effort should include the following:

- 1) The up-grading of those elements of the summer program that involve students diagnosing their own strengths and weaknesses, and setting their educational objectives;
- 2) The up-grading of those elements of the summer program that expose students to the concepts that are central to the KSG curriculum, and to the courses and teachers that are central to the MPA program; and
- 3) The creation of activities in the summer program that will open the students to learning from the school and from one another - including the creation of on-going study groups that could carry on throughout the academic year.

Although we do not recommend making the summer program required now, we urge that serious consideration be given to that possibility as the focus of the program shifts from what it has been in the past - namely, easing cultural transitions, and providing remedial training in specific technical subjects - to what it will be in the future - namely, preparing students to make the maximum use of their nine months at the Kennedy School for their own professional development. To insure that this commitment is not forgotten, we recommend that the faculty require that a report be prepared each year for the next five years about the continuing development of the summer program.

Third, we recommend that the advising system for the one year mid-career students be viewed as the primary mechanism through which an individualized, intellectual challenge is created. We see the advising system, joined with the summer program, as the place where the students contract with the school to achieve specific educational objectives. It follows, then, that the advising process must be made more significant for students and faculty alike. Specific steps to insure this result include the following:

curriculum. We therefore recommend that the school-wide Curriculum Committee continue to have the responsibility for developing the categories to be used in defining the curriculum, and organizing discussions about them. This should also help to give some coherence to the school's conception of "excellence in government", and to facilitate the advising process.

Fifth, we recommend that the faculty authorize the MPA Program Committee to further explore and experiment with requiring a written paper from the mid-career MPA students as a necessary requirement for the degree. The reason for moving in this direction is to give students the educational experience of doing some research in policy and management. The aim would be to allow them to see and know the difference between a sustained or a casual argument.

The reason for not establishing this requirement now is that it is not clear the recommendation can be effectively implemented at a reasonable cost. The best way to manage this requirement would be to allow the students to use any particular course they took as the vehicle for writing the paper. They would simply announce in advance that their paper in the course would be submitted to meet the writing requirement, and would therefore go through a slightly different review process - including a reading by the student's advisor. Although this approach held promise, we could not be sure it would work, and therefore do not now recommend this as an academic requirement.

Sixth, to improve the quality of teaching, we recommend that the school's Faculty Advisory Council on Appointments give greater weight to teaching performance and curriculum development efforts in the faculty appointment and promotion processes. Teaching is now included in the formal criteria for appointment, but it is not reliably measured. Nor is there much recognition of curriculum development activities.

Seventh, to insure that our courses include valuable perspectives from other countries, we recommend that the program undertake a sustained research effort focusing on comparative public policies, and comparative government. That would make the Kennedy School a less parochial place, and insure a more attractive welcome to our talented foreign students.

Report of the  
One Year Mid-Career MPA Program Subcommittee

I. The Assignment

The task of the Sub-Committee on the One Year Mid-Career MPA Program was to review the curriculum of that program in light of the school's commitment to producing excellence in government. Of particular concern was the question of whether the combination of very flexible requirements and a short time in residence were consistent with the school's ambitions to set high standards for the practice of government.

Although our attention was focused primarily on the curriculum, we acknowledged that decisions about the curriculum depended crucially on our expectations about the characteristics of the entering students, and their future careers. In considering the curriculum, then, we faced the choice of either assuming that the student body and its capabilities would remain largely as they now exist, or, of considering alternative futures in which the students would be different. We understood that it was risky to design a curriculum for a student body that was not now being recruited, but we thought that our obligation to the school's overall mission of producing excellence in government required us to think broadly about the positioning of this program in the public sector labor market. Consequently, we took seriously the questions of whom we were trying to train through the one year, mid-career program, and for what purposes, as well as the question of what sorts of courses, requirements and other administrative arrangements would constitute an appropriate curriculum.

The purpose of this report is to give the Curriculum Review Co-ordinating Committee and the broader Kennedy School Community the benefit of our deliberations and judgments about how the Mid-Career MPA Program, particularly its curriculum, student body, and administrative arrangements might be changed to enhance the program's contribution to the School's goal of achieving excellence in government.

II. What's the Problem?

As a point of departure, we sought an accurate picture of the problem to which our review was to be the solution. We subscribed strongly to the principle that if the program weren't broken, there was an obligation not to

fix it. Yet, there were many who thought the program had problems that needed attention. They just differed on what the problems were.

#### The Faculty View

From the vantage point of the Kennedy School faculty, the problem was seen largely as "looseness" (therefore the lack of both accountability and rigor) in the program's standards and curriculum. Different anomalies in the organization of the program attracted different degrees and attention from the faculty.

Some noted the odd disjunction between the organizing principles of the Public Policy Program which operated through required courses heavily emphasizing analytic techniques, and those of the Mid-Career Program which operated through only the most general requirements and tended to be used by the students less for training in analytic methods than for training in management or substantive areas. Others, including some students, were concerned about the disparity between the standards of the Kennedy School's one year mid-career MPA program and the national standards for MPA's which typically required two years of course work as well as training in public finance and budgeting.

Most disturbing of all, however, was a general sense that the current mid-career MPA program did not have enough intellectual challenge in it to help its students reach the goal of excellence in government. There was a worry that both faculty and students could collude to give students a Harvard Masters Degree with relatively little work. If that perception were accurate, there would be a problem indeed.

#### The Student and Alumni View

From the alumni and student perspective, the problem seemed slightly different. They tended to view the flexibility of the program (which the faculty viewed as laxness bordering on license) as one of the most important advantages. They thought this not only because it allowed them to tailor their programs to their individual needs, but also because it showed respect for their maturity and previous experience. They worried that the flexibility of the program undermined the development of a coherent notion of what it meant to be an outstanding public official, made it harder for the school to establish its degree in the market place, and was occasionally vulnerable to exploitation by students motivated by the goal of certification rather than learning. But, for the most part, they thought the advantages of flexibility outweighed the disadvantages. Some reported that they would not have come to the Kennedy School but for the flexibility of the programs.

Their criticisms of the program focused more intensively on the quality of the teaching and curriculum that they received. They thought that the teaching in the program was not consistently good enough, although they had had some outstanding professors. They thought that the analytic courses were not well enough motivated. They could not see the point of learning much of this material. They thought that the management courses were focused too much on big ideas and relied too heavily on cases, and that they were interested in more skill-oriented courses and in learning more of the management literature. They thought the solution was to invest more heavily in the quality of the teaching and the curriculum in the program, as well as to design some activities that built a sense of commitment to the public service along with a sense of class and professional identity.

#### The Market/Impact View

The most important perspective from which to view the performance of the mid-career MPA program was also the most difficult one from which to gather information; namely the market's view of the quality of the product. This is the most important since it is the only perspective from which one can accurately gauge the contribution of this program to the school's goal of producing excellence in government. Without that market test (qualified by judgments about the quality of the work that our graduates do as well as by measures of personal success and achievement), we are left only with guesses about what would be valuable to teach our students; or, even worse, only with the view that we should teach them what is academically respectable and convenient for the faculty. It is the hardest perspective to develop because one must monitor people and events far from our organizational boundaries. This is expensive and time-consuming. Nonetheless, based on the fragmentary information we have about the entering profiles and subsequent careers of the mid-career MPA students, we can draw the following tentative conclusions.

First, the mid-career MPA students seem to do well in public sector labor markets. Most advance in their careers following their training here. About half earn more than \$50,000 per year. Most seem to take on additional responsibilities for leadership. The only fly in this ointment is that the flow of graduates out from the public sector to the private sector is not only larger than the flow from the private sector to the public, but also large in proportional terms (17% of our alumni have moved in this direction after graduation). This is obviously a problem for a school committed to excellence in government; perhaps less so to a school committed to excellence in governance, for it may be that many of the private sector jobs held by our



students will increase the quality of private sector contributions to public purposes.

Second, both in its "factor" markets and in its "product" markets, the school's mid-career MPA program is oddly situated. Probably its strongest position in "factor markets" is based on a growing set of international fellowship programs that bring to the Kennedy School outstanding officials from foreign countries - both developed and developing. The oldest and largest of these programs is, of course, the Mason Program. That program is now being challenged in terms of scale and significance by a collection of programs that bring Germans, Japanese, Spaniards, Egyptians, and Israelis to the school. These programs are strong in terms of the school's overall goals because the quality of the students is high, because their importance to their countries is significant, and because their commitment to the public sector is generally quite firm. The combination means that their impact is high.

A second pillar of strength in the mid-career MPA program is the existence of some fairly firm, long term relationships with a few federal agencies that send high quality people to the Kennedy School. These agencies include defense, state, agriculture, and others - the more traditional federal agencies. Notably lacking are students from HUD, HHS, DOE, EPA, and Justice - all areas in which the school has notable substantive competence, and established research centers.

The more uncertain foundation of the mid-career program lies in the large number of students recruited from state and local government and the non-profit sector. In terms of quality, this element of the program has some of the best and some of the worst mid-career students. Particularly worrisome is the fact that this program seems to draw heavily on a narrow region - predominantly Massachusetts. It does not now seem to be reaching effectively across the country for students who are leading public sector organizations. Nor does it seem to be penetrating the upper reaches of governments in major cities. This contrasts with the recruiting patterns of our executive programs and suggests an opportunity for more effective targeted recruiting relying on networks of alumni from all the Kennedy School programs, but particularly the executive programs.

Our performance in "product markets" reflects our performance in "factor markets". We place students very successfully in the foreign governments and selected federal agencies who have sponsored students. We have done very well in placing students in Massachusetts. We have not done as well in high level positions in federal agencies who do not have a tradition of sending students to us, nor in State and

Local governments around the country. Again, there seems to be an opportunity to use the Research Centers the Executive Programs to expand and increase the quality of the school's placements for its mid-career students.

#### Conclusions: What Needs Fixing

The Sub-Committee's conclusion is that there is room for improvement in the quality of the school's mid-career MPA program. We also believe that the program is worth fixing. Indeed, in our judgment, if the program did not now exist, we would have to invent it. Like the school's Executive Programs, the Mid-Career Program makes a substantial contribution to the school's goal of pursuing excellence in government because it brings professionals to the school whose commitment to the public sector is reasonably sure, and whose competence and achievement are reasonably high. Unlike the executive programs, however, the Mid-Career Program lasts long enough to allow for substantial reflection and the broadening of one's perspective, and the detailed learning of many new ideas, facts, methods, and skills. Consequently, on professional impact grounds alone we believe that the Mid-Career Program should be maintained as an important teaching program of the school.

We also concluded that we would like to maintain the breadth of the program in terms of the kinds of students recruited. The diverse national origins of the school's student body is a strength, but also an unmet challenge to devise a curriculum and administrative arrangements that meet their needs. We also like the variety of functions represented in the class from those interested in government administration to electoral politics and journalism. That breadth, too, creates a challenge to the school to develop an appropriate curriculum and a coherent point of view. And we like the heterogeneity of the substantive interests of the class. That is what distinguishes the Kennedy School from other more specialized schools such as those focused on international relations, social work, or criminal justice. It is also what forces us to keep thinking about what are the most general concepts and methods that are valuable to those operating in the public sector.

The fact that this makes us different from most schools of public administration who recruit and train a narrower slice of those involved in governing in a democracy creates a small embarrassment since it means that our degree program is, perforce, less narrowly focused on those functions especially associated with public administration such as public finance, budgeting, personnel management, management information systems, and organizational design. But there is enough room in national MPA standards to allow us to meet these standards without having to narrow our

focus in terms of who is attracted to the school, and what they are taught. Or, if the embarrassment proves too great, and the concerns about truth in advertising become too sharp, we might consider an alternative degree such as a Masters in Public Affairs to accommodate those who are interested in politics as well as administration, and substantive fields as well as managerial functions.

We also concluded that the program should have a more sustained intellectual challenge incorporated within it. This may be associated with distributional requirements that force students to play to weakness rather than build on strength. Or, it might be associated with a specific intellectual task such as a writing project. Or, it might be associated with higher quality teaching and greater investments in curriculum that will continually challenge and motivate the students in the program. For our self-respect and that of our students we must be sure that there is a strong intellectual challenge associated with the program. In our view, the best approach is individualized contracting.

We concluded that we should make a sustained effort to upgrade the recruitment and placement of mid-career students particularly in those federal agencies in which the school's research centers had developed substantive competence, and at high levels of the major state and local governments throughout the country. We should set as an objective a more substantial presence, perhaps even the creation of fellowships from local foundations, in 5-10 governments in which the Kennedy School had an undeveloped alumni network.

We also concluded that the time had long since passed for us to pay serious attention to the research and curriculum development challenges associated with teaching a multinational student audience. We think it is urgent that the school begin a major research program in comparative institutional analysis and public policy to underwrite the development of a curriculum that can serve an increasingly multinational student body.

Finally, we concluded that, in general, the school needed to make much larger investments in the quality of the teaching and the curriculum offered in the mid-career MPA program. We noted that the courses in this program had typically been constructed from curriculum development efforts conducted elsewhere to meet different needs; e.g. from adaptations of the graduate courses of academic disciplines, from adjustments of the core courses in the public policy program, and from extensions of subjects taught in the school's executive programs. While there had been a few innovations that seemed particularly well suited to the mid-career program (e.g. the leadership course),

these had happened more as accidents and improvisations than as the result of a school wide commitment to make investments in courses suited to the mid-career program.

### III. The Solution: Back to Basics.

With this as our assessment of the problems and the general areas in which improvements had to be made, we set about designing a concrete version of the MPA program that was consistent with our views of how this program could make the maximum contribution to the school's commitment to excellence in government. In our discussions, we came to see the importance of the fact that we were designing a One Year Mid-Career Program. Those words defined important constraints and opportunities for the program.

The fact that it was a one year mid career MPA program in a world in which most MPA degree programs demanded two years of course work seemed to imply that we were treating the students' prior experience as an important qualification for the degree. That was the only responsible way to interpret the significance of this program design. If that were true, however, that put a great deal of pressure on the school to assess the quality of the experience that gave the students access to this special degree program, and also to use that experience as the basis for planning the educational challenges that would justify the awarding of an MPA degree after only a year of course work.

That meant, in turn, that the admissions to the program had to set high standards for qualifying experience (both its nature, and the applicants' performance). It also meant that the students and the faculty had to look over that experience to identify the areas of strength and weakness when compared to the school's conception of what sorts of competences, knowledge and skills were required of MPA students who embodied the school's ambitions to produce excellence in government. And it meant that the school would have to have a wide curriculum including many different courses taught at many different depths to accommodate the diverse demands (unless it turned out that many practicing public officials happened to have the same deficiencies - for example in policy analysis, or program evaluation, or political management and strategy.) That all followed from the fact that we seemed to be giving a year's worth of academic credit for the experience of the students.

The idea that the program was a mid-career program also suggested that the program was designed for people who were making transitions. This fact, too, had some advantages and disadvantages. On one hand, the fact that people were making transitions in functions, in substantive areas, perhaps across sectors, meant that they were open to

reflection and learning. On the other hand, it could also mean that they were full of anxiety and self-absorbed and that they had unreasonable expectations of what the Kennedy School would be able to do for them in economic, professional, and personal terms. In any case, our task seemed to be to facilitate transitions that would advance the cause of excellence in government such as broadened capabilities across substantive and functional lines, or deepened knowledge, or increased skills. One transition that we were not interested in facilitating, however, was the transition from the public to the private sector.

The key educational tasks that preserved our accountability for granting a Masters Degree from Harvard, and achieved our purposes of pursuing excellence in government through a one year MPA degree thus seemed to be the following;

- 1) Getting people who were not accustomed to being students in an academic environment ready to challenge themselves intellectually while at the Kennedy School.

- 2) Challenging them to develop those competencies that the school believed were associated with the goal of excellence in government

- 3) Emphasizing variety and range in intellectual capabilities, therefore the need to play to weaknesses rather than demonstrated strengths;

- 4) Achieving intellectual distinction through sophisticated integration and applications of methods in professional enterprises rather than through advancing to higher levels in any given academic discipline.

In short, our educational task was to produce first rate, intellectually curious and capable professionals rather than pre-doctoral students in the social sciences.

#### IV. Specific Implications for Curriculum

These principles suggested five large changes in the the current organization and operation of the Mid-Career Program and the broader environment of the school.

- 1) The Establishment of an Intensive, Summer Program to Prepare Mid-Career Students to take Maximum Advantage of the KSG Curriculum

The three basic challenges in designing the Mid-Career Program are: 1) to find a way to build on the students experience; 2) to accommodate the inevitable and desirable diversity in backgrounds and futures; and 3) to

help the students manage the transition from professional to student so that they can make the maximum use of the school. In our discussions we developed the idea that we should design a summer program specially for these purposes. Specifically, the aims and activities of the program should consist of three key elements: 1) learning to learn; 2) diagnosing one's own strengths and weaknesses; and 3) experimenting with, and preparing for, the KSG curriculum - both subjects and pedagogic style.

The end product of the summer program would be an individualized learning plan that became the contract between the KSG and the student. It, rather than a required curriculum, would be the principal mechanism for setting and enforcing standards. One way to think of this proposal is that it is an elaboration of the functions now performed through the advising system and shopping week. Another way to think of it is a more sharply and individually focused summer program.

2) The creation of distributional requirements designed to embody the school's commitment to creating decathlon people capable of integrating across diverse functions, to present a coherent idea of the school's view of excellence in government, and to encourage investment in the curriculum.

Our Sub-Committee had lengthy discussions about whether it was valuable or essential to establish course requirements for the Mid-Career students, and if so, what form they should take. We noted several strong arguments for establishing tighter requirements. First, requirements seemed consistent with the objective of raising intellectual standards across the program. Second, requirements could signal what the school thought was important for students to achieve, and thereby add coherence and meaning to the educational enterprise. Third, requirements might stimulate increased investment in teaching and curriculum. In these respects, it seemed that tighter requirements would deal with some major problems in the programs.

On the other hand, we noticed that the creation of rigid requirements created some problems as well. The requirements might make it difficult to take advantage of the heterogeneity of previous experience and current ambitions reflected in any mid-career program class. The mechanism by which requirements actually produced higher quality performance from the students also seemed a little obscure. If there were quality improvements to be gotten, it seemed that the better place to start was in improved recruitment and selection, followed by well-designed individual challenges, rather than blanket demands that fell arbitrarily on a class of mature professionals. Moreover, we were skeptical that requiring courses would cause them to

improve in quality; the effect could easily go the other way. On close examination, then, the issue of requirements seemed less clear than it did at the start.

The Sub-Committee decided that the best way to increase the level of challenge in the program was through improved recruiting and selection (see above), individually tailored curriculum plans produced in the summer program (see above), and through the requirement for a written project (see below). While it would be convenient for the faculty to seek higher intellectual achievements through mandated courses, it was not really clear that that would really produce the desired results.

The Sub-Committee also decided, however, that the school should define some distributional requirements that the students should fulfill. We were persuaded that a set of requirements would help the school to express a coherent philosophy of public service that could be used as a template against which students could measure their own strengths and weaknesses. We also hoped that the requirements, if properly defined, would focus the faculty's attention on courses and curriculum that needed to be developed.

We discussed several forms that the requirements could take. One idea was that the requirements should come in the form of specific courses that everyone had to take (such as micro-economic theory or organizational leadership). A second idea was that we should define three to five areas in which students had to demonstrate proficiency, but allow several different courses to satisfy the requirement. A third idea was that we should require students to achieve a high level of mastery of at least one narrow field, and at the same time achieve a minimum competence in several others. A fourth idea was that everyone should be required to take one course specially designed to communicate a coherent philosophy of the responsibilities, functions, and skills required of those who work in the public sector in different kinds of positions (e.g. policy analysts, managers, scientists, political executives, and so on).

Our conclusions were: 1) that requirements should be distributional emphasizing breadth over narrow specialization; 2) that "preferred courses" should be designed within each mandated area; and 3) that other courses could also satisfy the distributional requirement.

The conclusion about distributional requirements emphasizing breadth was consistent with our view that what was needed in the government, and what was consistent with the Kennedy School's current capabilities, were generalists who were capable of integrating a variety of different

functions and specialized capabilities in addressing important public problems. It was also consistent with our desire to encourage students to play to their weaknesses. And it was consistent with the aim of improving courses by simultaneously giving a certain amount of prominence to a small number of courses, and at the same time insuring that they would not be insulated from competition and market tests by giving them an exclusive franchise.

We were not opposed to the idea of a mandated formal course that presented a coherent philosophy of government. Indeed, we rather liked the idea of a "pro-seminar" in which the students confronted normative issues about their roles and responsibilities. We were inclined, however, to try to produce the important sociological benefits of such an effort through informal processes built around the continuation of the groups formed in the summer program rather than through a specific course.

The Sub-Committee then faced the question of how the distributional requirements were to be described. We knew that there should be no less than three, and no more than five. Table 1 presents some different ways of describing the distributional requirements - some based on disciplinary ideas, some based on the school's familiar distinctions of analytics, management, and substantive courses, and some based on conceptual schemes now used in the school's executive programs. In the end, the Sub-Committee decided that we should use the following scheme:

Predicting the Outcomes of Public Policies

Estimating the Value of Public Policies

Political Management, Communication and Leadership

Building Efficient, Flexible, and Accountable Organizations

To our minds, this scheme had the virtue of describing functions and tasks that our graduates would have to perform. It also contained some important challenges to the school to develop additional curriculum materials in key areas.



Table 1

Alternative Descriptions of  
Distributional Requirements

- Alternative 1: 1) Economic Analysis  
2) Political and Institutional Analysis  
3) Management
- Alternative 2: 1) Quantitative Policy Analysis  
2) Quantitative Approaches to Management  
3) General Management and Leadership  
4) Ethics and Political Theory
- Alternative 3: 1) Analysis  
2) Management  
3) "Pro-Seminar" on Professional Responsibilities [Required Course]  
4) Substantive Specialization
- Alternative 4: 1) Assessing Public Value: Quantitative Analysis and Theories of Justice  
2) Political Management and Organizational Strategy and Leadership  
3) Managing Organizational Production and Development  
4) "Pro-Seminar" or Professional Responsibilities

3) The creation of a requirement for a writing project that could embody and become the vehicle for realizing the schools desire to have students reach a certain height of intellectual achievement as well as breadth.

We also decided that the ambitions that we held for the students to achieve intellectual mastery and distinction might be satisfied more properly by challenging them to use the base of knowledge they created in the courses to see problems more broadly and accurately than they could before coming to the school, rather than achieving mastery of a narrow set of technical skills. In this sense, we thought their problem was to achieve height and vision rather than depth and technique. The depth and technique courses mandated by the distributional requirements built the basis of the vantage point from which the problems could be viewed.

The creation of a writing requirement would also give the mid-career students a real role to play in research

seminars. That, in turn, would strengthen substantive research courses, and perhaps even doctoral research seminars, as school offerings rather than adjuncts to the Public Policy Program.

4) Efforts to invest in the quality of teaching and curriculum with central reviews of the curriculum, and significant status awarded to faculty members on the basis of their curriculum contributions as well as more traditional academic research achievements.

The Sub-Committee also came to the conclusion that a great deal could and must be done to strengthen the quality of the teaching and the curriculum throughout the program. The process of selecting material from academic disciplines, adapting them for use in courses for practicing professionals, creating new methods and ideas to help the students deal with problems about which the academic disciplines are now silent, and knowing enough about what is being done in other courses at the school requires a great deal of effort from the faculty. That effort is not effectively recognized in the system that currently accounts for faculty workload, nor is it adequately recognized in promotion decisions. As a result, it is not done well.

There is also an interesting problem of how best to organize the faculty to do this curriculum development work. In the past, to the extent that the school had a theory of leadership and innovation in curriculum, it seemed to expect that to come from the Chairmen of the teaching programs. That has worked reasonably well for the public policy program, less well for the MPA program where the necessity for leadership was less well established by tradition. The innovation that occurred in the MPA program came from a few strong teachers willing to do the work of developing curriculum, and from experiments in the school's Executive Programs.

The Sub-Committee discussed the question of how best to organize the faculty for curriculum development. We remain uncertain about this issue, but our instinct is that it would be desirable to manage curriculum innovation at the course level, as long as the courses included several sections, therefore enough faculty members to create a critical mass of teachers and learners within the faculty itself. We recommend that the school form teaching and curriculum groups around the major courses that are taught in multiple sections in the school, and that these groups be supplied with resources to achieve curriculum development goals.

5) A major research investment to be made in comparative studies to underwrite curriculum development efforts to help us be responsive to many of our strongest mid-career students.

Finally, it seemed clear to the Sub-Committee that the school had to acknowledge the fact that one third of the students, including many of the best, were now coming from countries other than the United States. We felt strongly that the school had to do more to internationalize its curriculum. The best way to do that would be to dramatically increase the school's research activities in comparative public policies and comparative governmental institutions. Indeed, this is necessary for the school to achieve many purposes other than having a first rate curriculum for its mid-career students, but that objective alone is worth doubling or tripling the school's current efforts in this domain. At the moment, we are a relatively parochial faculty offering a curriculum dominated by U.S. policy issues and concerns, in a school that has a heavy concentration of talented international students, in a world where many of the most urgent public problems are being faced by foreign - particularly developing - countries. Five years from now, that should be much less true.