

## New Academic Program: Executive Master of Public Policy

### BACKGROUND

#### **Program Proposed Start Date**

Fall 2019

#### **Program Description**

Executive Master of Public Policy Public Policy (EMPP). The full program proposal is available at: <https://secure.oregonstate.edu/ap/cps/proposals/view/103021>

Public policy is the study of how collective decisions about public resources are made and implemented. The discipline of public policy is closely connected to the practice of policy, and the proposed program is designed for students to interact with policy makers, helping them understand the political, economic, and social constraints policy makers faced. Students will also gain an understanding of performance assessment in policy implementation; policy evaluation; and conflicts in values that animate policy debates. The EMPP will train students in research, analytical, and management skills that are transferable across sectors and issues. The EMPP is designed for mid-career professionals in the public or nonprofit sectors who are interested in advancing in their positions or who are looking to transition from the private sector to a career in public service. The EMPP is based on the current online Master of Public Policy program (MPP), with slight revisions that address the professional status of potential students, including the requirement of a capstone project rather than an internship.

The current residential and Ecampus MPP program consists of 62 credits and coursework designed for students who have little experience in the policy sector (including practicum and internship options). The proposed EMPP will have similar core coursework requirements, mission, learning outcomes, and multiple possible concentrations, but is designed for experienced practitioners as a 45-credit program.

#### **Program Context**

The School of Public Policy (SPP) currently offers the MPP (Ecampus and resident) and the PhD in Public Policy. The EMPP draws on the richness of those programs, faculty, and classes to create an exciting and interdisciplinary executive graduate program. The EMPP will be offered primarily online with students having access to Corvallis-based courses as well. The proposed program draws on the strengths of faculty across OSU who bring state-of-the-art thinking about public policy training and practice. The EMPP emphasizes substantive interdisciplinary knowledge about important policy issues, analytic skills, and policy practice. Students will have the opportunity to pursue their individual interests and passion in specialization areas, each of which is supported by a wealth of experience and expertise both in the SPP and across OSU.

#### **Program Purpose/Relationship to University Mission and Strategic Plan**

OSU is home to world-class scientists working on many issues critical to 21st century citizens. New forms of governance and problem solving are being tested and studied at OSU to address these issues. As populations continue to become more connected and interdependent, these issues promise to affect us more broadly, more quickly, and with more impact than ever before. As a Carnegie Community Engagement Certified university, OSU and SPP have

demonstrated a strong commitment to community engagement. As the land, sea, space, and sun grant university for the state, OSU has the responsibility to serve "...the people of Oregon, the nation and the world through education, research, and service" (OSU Strategic Plan). Through its strategic plan and vision statements, OSU has set transparent goals for raising standards for learning, research, and outreach. The proposed EMPP program is designed to address all those goals through its recruitment of public working professionals to participate in a rigorous program that addresses the practical and emerging concerns of both Oregonians and citizens around the world. The EMPP program will provide graduate training for place-bound and employed policy professionals in the public and private sectors. In addition, the EMPP program will serve publics outside the University community with the research and advisory capabilities that are afforded by our faculty and students as they gain experience and skills.

An ever-increasing number of citizens are employed by state and local government agencies and nonprofit organizations. However, as government budgets are tightened and funding is withdrawn from a growing number of programs and benefits, both public and elected officials appear to be losing confidence in the ability of government to act effectively to solve social problems. Indeed, many citizens have grown to view government itself as one of the biggest problems. In light of these and other challenges, the proposed EMPP program at OSU will develop the abilities of present and future policy analysts and leaders in Oregon, the region, and the world to meet the mounting challenges of governance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The EMPP program is designed to promote professionalism, innovation, global awareness, and a commitment to public service for current and future government and nonprofit employees.

The EMPP Program is designed to enhance OSU's strategic goals in its signature areas: advancing the science of sustainable earth ecosystems, improving human health and wellness, and promoting economic growth and social progress. The EMPP program will also enhance the ability of policy practitioners to operate and adapt to a new environment of tightened budgets, do more with less, allocate resources to meet the demands of citizens and elected officials, and work in an environment of increased public scrutiny and skepticism. Students who complete the program will bring a strong understanding of policy theory, methods, and practice to their professional lives that will extend the capacity of the state, region, country, and world to apply scientific results to emerging 21<sup>st</sup> century issues.

### **Need for the Program**

During Winter 2015-16, the Public Policy Graduate Program at OSU conducted a regional needs assessment of governments, nonprofits, and policy advocacy organizations throughout Oregon and northern California to assess the potential support and demand for a distance EMPP. Cover letters, questionnaires, a program example, estimated tuition and fees, and graduate program newsletter were sent to 1,502 organizations. Instructions for an online option to answer the survey were also included in the cover letter. A total of 394 questionnaires were returned with the results posted below (26.2% response rate).

The majority of respondents demonstrated some interest in supporting and sponsoring employees to participate in an EMPP program. Over 56 percent of respondents preferred a 100 percent online option for degree delivery, followed by 39.6 percent preferring a hybrid delivery system. Rural policy was the most popular concentration for surveyed organizations, followed by social and environmental policy concentrations. When asked how likely their organization would be to hire someone with EMPP skills in the next three to five years, 18.8 percent responded "likely," and 37.3% said "very likely." Currently there are six students in the online MPP program that are eligible for the EMPP and transfer into the program, if approved.

Previously, a similar approach was used to gauge potential enrollments for the MPP and the PhD in Public Policy. Organizational survey results were found to be a conservative estimator of potential interest in each program. Therefore, upon reviewing the results for the EMPP organizational survey, it was decided to offer the MPP through Ecampus while the EMPP Category I proposal made its way through the approval process. The Ecampus version of the MPP was implemented in Winter Quarter 2018 and will have 24 students enrolled as of Fall 2019. Four of these students are qualified for the EMPP (i.e., adequate years of professional experience) and have indicated interest in transferring to the EMPP program if and when it is implemented. SPP is projecting 7 new EMPP students during the first year of operation, which by all indications is likely to be surpassed based on the current number of online MPP enrollments, as well as inquiries to Ecampus about the online MPP program (#159 inquiries in 2017-18 and #164 in 2018-19).

**Table 1. Organizational Survey Results: Demand and Modality**

<i>If OSU decides to offer an EMPP in the future, which of the following best describes the likelihood of your organization's support of employee participation?</i>	
<b>7.9%</b>	Highly likely to support and sponsor employees.
<b>26.4%</b>	Highly likely to support but not sponsor employees.
<b>41.6%</b>	Somewhat likely to support and sponsor employees.
<b>19.8%</b>	Somewhat likely to support but not sponsor employees.
<b>19.8%</b>	Highly unlikely to support and sponsor employees.
<i>Which type of course delivery method would be most attractive to employees in your organization?</i>	
<b>56.3%</b>	100 percent online.
<b>39.6%</b>	Hybrid program, with at least 50 percent of the program offered online, and the rest occurring over intensive week-long sessions offered during the summer on campus.
<b>4.1%</b>	All intensive week-long courses offered during the summer on campus plus night courses.

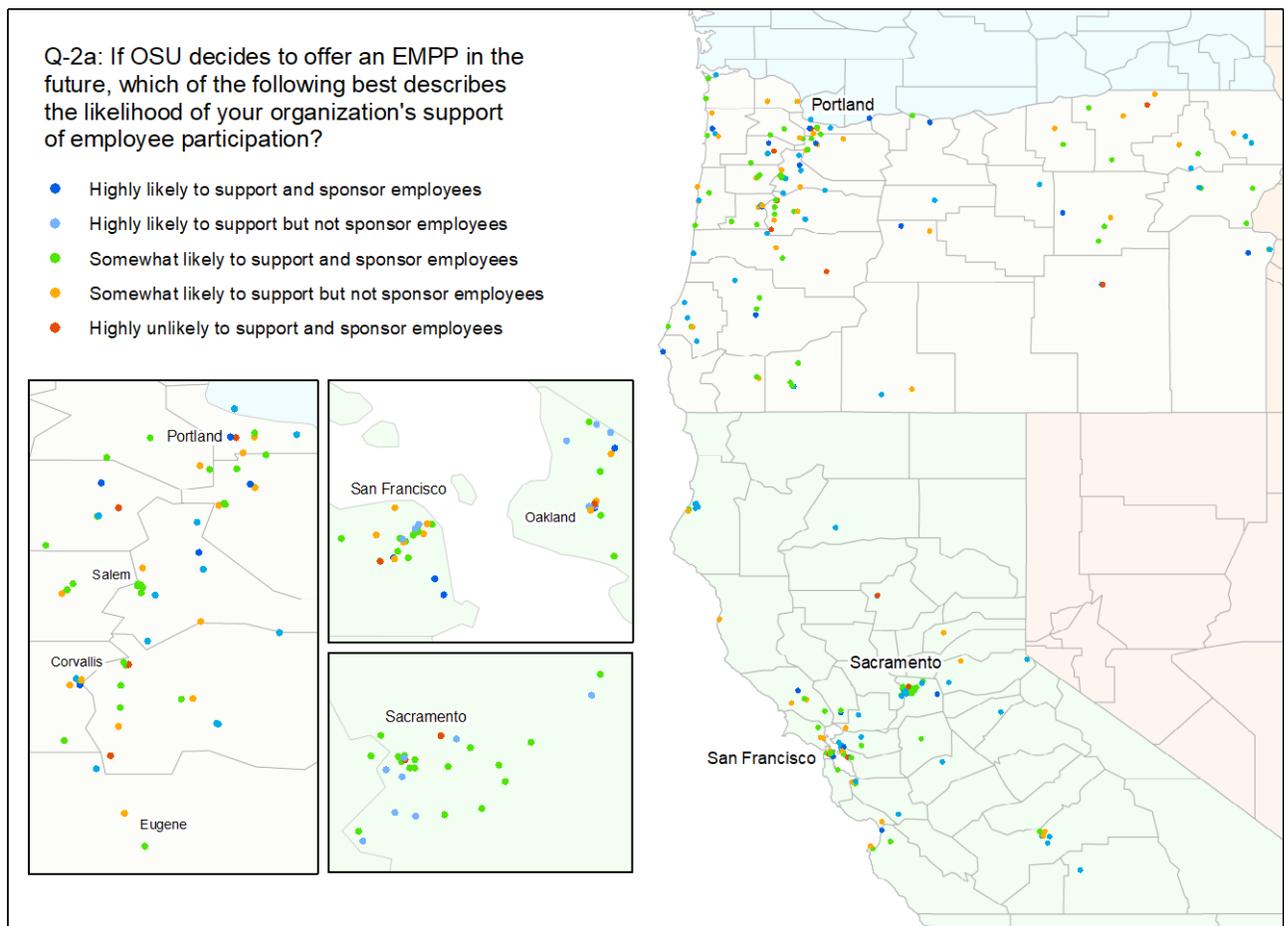
**Table 2. Organizational Survey Results: Preferred Policy Concentrations**

<i>What major area(s) of concentration would be most beneficial for your organization? (please circle all that apply or leave blank if not relevant)</i>	
<b>29.4%</b>	Energy Policy
<b>45.2%</b>	Environmental Policy
<b>19.3%</b>	Marine Policy
<b>63.5%</b>	Rural Policy
<b>52.5%</b>	Social Policy

**Table 3. Organizational Survey Results: Likely to Hire EMPP**

<i>How likely is your organization to hire someone with the skills of an EMPP the next 3-5 years?</i>	
<b>12.4%</b>	Unlikely
<b>25.6%</b>	Somewhat likely
<b>18.8%</b>	Likely
<b>37.3%</b>	Very likely
<b>5.8%</b>	Not sure

**Figure 1. Organizational Survey Results: Spatial Distribution of Organizational Commitment to Support Employees**



While there are MPP programs at both OSU and Portland State University, this is the first Executive-style MPP program to be developed and implemented in the state, and one of only a couple such programs nationally. It is also the only program nationally with a rural policy concentration. The proposed EMPP at OSU is designed to leverage and build on the strengths of the existing program and faculty at OSU, with the flexibility for students to access online graduate certification programs. The expertise in these concentrations and certifications is unmatched at other Oregon institutions and will serve as the basis of concentration areas in the SPP. The EMPP would also complement and support existing online graduate certificate

programs at OSU including: Forests and Climate Change; Data Analytics; Public Health; Sustainable Natural Resources; Urban Forestry; and Water Conflict Management.

**Program Financials**

The EMPP is designed to leverage existing faculty strengths and classes already offered through SPP graduate programs. Currently, the SPP is funded through a combination of OSU support and revenue generation by SPP instructors teaching Ecampus, summer session, and INTO OSU classes. Additional costs for the EMPP will include: (1) a small and ongoing summer stipend (\$5,000+ OPE) for an Assistant Program Director, which will be funded out of SPP’s general and earned funds and (2) an annual supplies and services budget for program operating costs and marketing funded out of earned revenue from the program. Ecampus will be responsible for the EMPP webpage and additional marketing efforts, in addition to “refreshing” existing Ecampus courses when needed. SPP also has access to several existing conference rooms with advanced communication equipment for distance advising and committee meetings.

**Table 4. Proposed Budget.**

	Academic Year 2019	Academic Year 2020	Academic Year 2021	Academic Year 2022
<b>Personnel</b>				
Assistant Program Coordinator Stipend	\$5,000	\$5,150	\$5,305	\$5,464
OPE	\$2,100	\$2,205	\$2,315	\$2,431
<b>Personnel Subtotal</b>	<b>\$7,100</b>	<b>\$7,355</b>	<b>\$7,620</b>	<b>\$7,895</b>
<b>Other Resources</b>				
Supplies and Services	\$1,500	\$1,530	\$1,561	\$1,592
<b>Other Resources Subtotal</b>	<b>\$1,500</b>	<b>\$1,530</b>	<b>\$1,561</b>	<b>\$1,592</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$8,600</b>	<b>\$8,885</b>	<b>\$9,180</b>	<b>\$9,486</b>

**RECOMMENDATION**

All appropriate university committees and the OSU Faculty Senate have positively reviewed the proposed program. The Provost recommends that the Academic Strategies Committee approve the establishment of the Executive Master of Public Policy effective Fall 2019, pending the support of the Statewide Provosts Council and the approval of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission.