

# Agile Government: The Role of Public Affairs Education



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**Important note:**

For purposes of this report on agile government, the term “schools of public affairs” refers generally to schools of public administration, public management, public policy, and public service.





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## Foreword

The National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) established the [Agile Government Center](#) (AGC) in November 2019. The Center serves as the hub of a network that brings together governments, nonprofits, foundations, academic institutions, and private sector partners to develop and disseminate agile government principles. The network also aims to develop and support strategies to provide public goods and services that fully meet customer needs and build public trust. The IBM Center for The Business of Government (the IBM Center) is a partner of NAPA's Agile Government Center.

The AGC and its community of interested leaders, the Agile Government Network (action network), are building upon the Academy's initial efforts as presented in two reports: *Building an Agile Federal Government: A Call to Action* and the *Road to Agile Government*. The network is committed to advancing the value and practice of agility in public governance through research, global engagement, and academic program content.

Schools of public affairs have an important role in public management, creating education and training programming aimed directly at ensuring the public sector has a rich and well-prepared pool of talent who can tackle lingering and emerging issues. This report discusses the need for a new vision among schools of public affairs to ensure their relevancy in growing a successful public management sector, drawing content from the tenets of agile government.

The curriculum and pedagogy of schools of public affairs are central in this quest. This report is intended to initiate a dialog on how to integrate agile governance principles into curricula—with the hope that collaboration among entities devoted to the discipline of public management and schools of public affairs will result in the presence, availability and steady flow of public servants who embrace the principles of agile government, and who also demonstrate the associated skills and capacities to act on these principles in their day-to-day work.

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## Agile Government Education: An Introduction

Intentional, sustained exchanges of expertise and ideas among public administrators, policy making communities, and academia have few channels that bring research and formal educational programming to practice on a consistent and enduring basis. At best, this absence of regular exchange leads to serendipitous contributions to those working on policy, with the aim of developing and sustaining reasoned approaches to policy problems. For those in public administration, the lack of long-term relationships with academia erodes the ability to create effective and agile public governance. Too often this leads to an impoverished policy dialog, a moribund administrative environment, and diminished reliability and quality of public services.

The most significant challenges facing public administration today include the isolation of public servants, the rigidity of the administrative and regulatory systems in which they operate, and the lack of opportunity to develop relevant and emerging competencies. The persistence of these challenges has resulted in public management failures of enormous consequence (such as unchecked pollution, and a crumbling infrastructure). These failures have cost lives and livelihoods, and further eroded the public's trust in government. Despite such recurring shortfalls, the public administration field continues to struggle to correct them.

Restoring belief that public service is critical to the preservation and endurance of democracy requires breaks from the operational status quo and adoption of bold and risky strategies. Professional training that develops new expertise, showcases relevant knowledge resources, and builds networks of skilled, agile leaders, can seed agility and foster resiliency in public administration.

Currently, ten working principles form the basis for promoting agile governance. These include establishing clarity of mission and expediency in achieving it, using metrics to demonstrate success, being persistent in the face of failure, forming collaborations of highly skilled cross-functional teams, and perhaps most important of all, championing innovation. While these principles do not convey new concepts, taken together they outline an actionable framework for achieving agile governance.



## Ten Principles of an Agile Government<sup>1</sup>

- **Mission:** Mission is extremely clear, widely accepted, and the organization is laser focused on achieving it.
- **Metrics for Success:** Metrics are widely agreed upon, outcome-focused, evidence-based, and easily tracked.
- **Customer-Driven Behavior:** Customers are part of the teams that design and implement agile programs. There is continuous iteration and improvement based on customer feedback.
- **External Networks:** Networks are an important part of leveraging customers and the public.
- **Speed:** Appropriate speed is essential to produce quality outcomes, regulatory consistency, and a clear focus on managing risks.
- **Cross Functional Teams:** Empowered, highly skilled, diverse cross-functional teams and networks lead to improved results.
- **Innovation:** Innovation is rewarded, and rules and regulations that hinder problem solving are examined and changed as necessary.
- **Persistence:** Persistence requires continuous experimentation, evaluation, and improvement in order to learn from both success and failure.
- **Evidence Informed Solutions:** Solid evidence forms the foundation for designing and implementing policy and program options.
- **Organizational Leaders:** Leaders eliminate roadblocks, aggregate and assume risks, empower teams to make decisions and hold them accountable, and reward good outcomes.

These principles provide a starting point for how best to achieve agile governance. Over time, their adoption and integration into core management systems will establish their bona fides.

The next sections of this report pose new and emerging competencies required for agile public governance, and offer approaches through which schools of public affairs can adopt curricular and pedagogical innovations to develop these competencies. The report also suggests ways to use capacities and expertise of agents outside of academia in educational programming and training.

The ideas presented in this report first appeared in a series of [blogs](#) posted by the *IBM Center for Business of Government*. They have been modified for this report and are intended to start robust conversations, encourage open debates, and realize rich exchanges among those who see value in agile government principles and promise in their adoption and implementation. This report, and the larger set of activities pursued by the Agile Government Center are part of a set of activities generated by the National Academy of Public Administration Grand Challenges agenda.

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1. DeSeve, G. Edward. "The Road to Agile Government, Driving Change to Achieve Success." The IBM Center for the Business of Government. page 6.



## Setting the Stage for Reimagining Public Affairs Education around Agile Government

*By its very nature, agility builds upon mastery of special skills, command of existing knowledge and theory, the drive for new knowledge, and the value of practical experience grounded in real situations.*

### Foundational Skills

Achieving educational outcomes that support the agile government principles<sup>2</sup> and building agility requires that program pedagogies rely heavily on case studies, engagement in real time/real life public problem dilemmas, cross-disciplinary team collaborations, and exposure to practitioners who are successful because of their agility in managing and leading public services.

While working within academia to transform educational programming can be constrained by administrative protocols, faculty governance and resources, its fundamental purpose and historical role in society make higher education a reasonable choice to lead change.

Dr. Ernest Boyer's work has relevance here.<sup>3</sup> Among many writings, his 1991 seminal report entitled, "Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities for the Professoriate"<sup>4</sup> is perhaps

2. <https://www.businessofgovernment.org/blog/agile-government-foundational-skills#ftn2>

3. Dr. Boyer served as Chancellor of the State University of New York, United States Commissioner of Education, and President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

4. Boyer, Ernest L. *Scholarship Reconsidered, Priorities of the Professoriate*. New York. Carnegie Foundation. 1990. 160 p.



the most prescient about transforming public affairs educational programming. He challenged then-current views of the role of academia in society by using scholarship—the essence of the academic sector. Boyer classified four kinds of scholarship: discovery, integration, application, and teaching. Five years later he added the scholarship of engagement, which he defined as connecting the rich resources of the university to the most pressing social, civic and ethical problems, to our children, to our schools, to our teachers, and to our cities. Specifically:

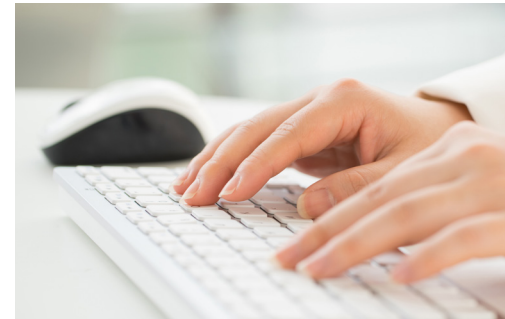
- The **scholarship of discovery** refers to the pursuit of inquiry and investigation in search of new knowledge.
- The **scholarship of integration** consists of making connections across disciplines and advancing knowledge through synthesis.
- The **scholarship of application** asks how knowledge can be applied to the social issues of the times in a dynamic process that generates and tests new theory and knowledge.
- The **scholarship of teaching** includes not only transmitting knowledge, but also transforming and extending it.
- The **scholarship of engagement** connects any of the above dimensions of scholarship to the understanding and solving of pressing social, civic, and ethical problems.

Dr. Boyer saw dangers when the academy disengages from society. He found research projects and partnerships with industry and government, but also found that generally universities had ceased being leaders in social change, or in exercising the levels of service they once provided. At the same time, social, economic and environmental challenges requiring innovative thinking were real and growing and had become truly global.

The academy needed an internal imperative to re-engage with society. “There is”, Boyer stated, “a deepening conviction that the role of higher education, as well as the priorities of the professoriate, must be redefined to reflect new realities.”<sup>5</sup> His writings, nearly 35 years old, continue to ring true today.

To build on Dr. Boyer’s framework as it pertains to public affairs education today, considering an additional and new kind of scholarship may be useful: the scholarship of participation. This scholarship requires the engagement of those in non-academic communities —civil society, nonprofits, and businesses—in enabling the strategic direction of educational programs within the university. These contributors ground the university in relevant work.

The implications of Dr. Boyer’s work and the scholarship of participation for reimagining schools of public affairs are threefold. First, schools train individuals who enter public service to seek knowledge and information from those outside their immediate environments/spheres of influence—welcoming those in other career paths to offer different expertise and viewpoints. Second, this scholarship ensures that schools focus on relevant issues—those that matter to the public and contribute to the betterment of society. And finally, this approach requires schools to direct the expertise resident in academia to those with public responsibilities.



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5. Boyer, *Scholarship Reconsidered*. P.6

Presented in the frame of scholarship, these elements impact a university climate supportive of the transformation of public affairs education. How one operationalizes these elements and measures their mastery are key. The following discussion defines high-level skills that reflect these elements.

Significant work has been done to define skills and competencies required in the public sector. Each is important and addresses a specific audience. As examples, see the skills set forth in the Executive Core Competencies for the Senior Executive Service,<sup>6</sup> or in private sector recommendations to frame categories of skills within different federal executive agencies. This section offers a full integrated portfolio of applied skills that brings agile practices to public management across levels of governments and agencies.

## Foundational Skills for Agility in Public Service

### Force-multipliers—skills across all dimensions

- **Influencing without authority.** This is one of the most powerful and valuable skills a public leader can have, requiring one to identify, seek, secure, and maintain resources to successfully undertake work. Often this requires developing high-performance teams made up of individuals from multi-disciplines, for whom one does not have direct administrative control.
- **Possessing an appreciation for action and a sense of timing and perseverance.** It is important to know when the status quo presents an obstacle to solving a problem, and how to mitigate limitations presented by policies and procedures to affect the necessary actions needed to address a problem or to exploit an opportunity.
- **Being curious.** Curiosity nurtures the impulse to ask questions, seek new information, and test new ideas. Curiosity can mitigate the effects of confirmation biases and stereotyping people and ideas, and lead to new insights and alternative ways of approaching problems.
- **Possessing adaptive capacity.** Responding effectively to changes in technique, work platforms, perspective, and innovations creates flexibility and encourages innovation. For example, medical schools teach students the latest techniques, but their training pivots on the acquisition of knowledge that will enable them to adjust to whatever changes occur in medical technology, discoveries, and practice.
- **Knowing how and when to use the levers that affect policymakers' receptivity to analysis.** Understanding the perspectives and contexts of those who could benefit is critical to the relevance of work for policy. Being informed about the motivations, challenges, and timing that drive policymakers' actions provides the context in which this work will be assessed and valued.
- **Taking risk.** This involves knowing when to take action; understanding when the expertise, experiences, information, and data available are limited or nonexistent; being comfortable with the unknown and with unclear consequences; understanding how to construct action to allow for the identification and correction of potential problems; and developing ways to initiate the collection of missing or limited data and information for future considerations.

Additional foundational skill dimensions can be found in Box A.

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6. [Executive Core Competencies](https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/public-sector/building) as published by the Office of Personnel Management. <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/public-sector/building>.



## BOX A—Skills For Agility In Public Service

### Rapid Iteration

- Designing a series of steps/procedures to adjust options or approaches that reflect the learning that occurs as work is conducted/projects undertaken
- Ability to shift quickly to new procedures/methods that mitigate problems/shortcomings identified in ongoing work

### Building Coalitions

- Identifying cross-sector and diversified stakeholders in setting goals, defining roles, identifying benchmarks, and facilitating deliberations
- Learning how to make it easy for others to help
- Understanding target audiences and the differences among them, including the challenges they face, how they seek and use analysis and data, etc.
- Creating and sustaining a clear purpose that unifies coalition members who do not agree, like, or respect each other
- Securing multisector partners by understanding how to bridge systems and solve issues across sectors
- Learning how to find and recruit allies, idea people, special assistants, opinion makers, key media contacts, people with a large following, and leaders. Effective allies need to be doers who do what they say they are going to do

### Solving Policy Issues/Problems

- Using facilitation, convening, building space for dialogue, design thinking, building a meaningful agenda, and mastering the pitch
- Learning how to develop an agenda rather than reacting to someone else's agenda
- Determining what one is trying to do, how one goes about doing it, and how one knows when they're successful

### Making Decisions with No or Incomplete Data

- Learning when and how to make decisions when reliable data is not available
- Mastering how to track these decisions to correct course
- Using gaps in data to advance collection of relevant data for future decision-making

### Mastering the Regulatory Environment

- Knowing regulations, what they are, how they are proposed, implemented, and changed
- Determining how to allow agility in interpreting regulations while protecting the intent of the law
- Understanding how to use regulatory rule-making to support agility

### Engaging the Community

- Engaging in authentic “listening,” creating a space for community to inform practice and policy
- Defining community broadly, to include all those with a stake in the problem and policy
- Knowing how to manage community expectations

### Measuring Impact

- Establishing and collecting relevant data and information
- Adopting rigorous computational analysis, dashboards, road maps, and project plans to evaluate success and identify shortfalls
- Knowing how to interpret data and identify its shortcomings

## BOX A—Skills For Agility In Public Service (cont.)

### Managing Projects and People

- Procuring sufficient resources
- Implementing strategies and facilitating groups
- Removing barriers that exist between generations within a workforce, and creating workplace environments that are welcoming, challenging, and engaging to newly minted talent

### Communicating Effectively

- Leading deliberations among those holding diverse viewpoints
- Separating truth from opinion by critically evaluating various sources of news and information
- Convincing others of the value of your work by communicating the essence of your idea

### Knowing Oneself

- Understanding the importance of self-reflection and knowing one's motivations; identifying your strengths and weaknesses and how those affect others
- Constructing pathways for learning outside of formal academic settings that will offer a broader education
- Building a relevant and constantly growing set of leadership and management skills, and mastering the craft of using policy tools—how they work, when, and at what cost
- Identifying one's own biases and privileges

### Championing Equity

- Learning the historical context of discrimination
- Recognizing structural and social determinants of policy and their structures within public management
- Applying an equity lens in all skills

“ Adopting competencies that advance the practice of agile governance will require a full review and potential remake not only of the courses taught, but how they are taught, and by whom. ”

Identifying the skills and expertise needed to advance agile governance values and principles is critical to successfully embedding agile practices in public service, but is merely the first step. How these skills are taught, by whom, and where, are all essential considerations for the adoption and practice of agile governance.

Curriculum and matriculation patterns will vary by public affairs program and by student. Adopting competencies that advance the practice of agile governance will require a full review and potential remake not only of the courses taught, but how they are taught, and by whom. Since course content is primarily developed by faculty within public affairs programs, it will be necessary for faculty to accept the competencies as foundational.

This may be a challenge for some programs, especially those in which faculty who make up the governing body of the program: (1) have little to no practical experience in public policymaking and management; (2) do not regularly seek input from faculty colleagues outside of the program; and/or (3) have little to no regular relationships with the members of public affairs communities writ large.



## Assessment of Readiness to Deliver for Today's Public Administration Needs

***The world is changing, and many policy problems need longer term and more innovative solutions. What major forces in developing and sustaining a highly skilled public workforce can integrate agile government values and skills in their work?***

Addressing certain governance challenges calls for bold steps that leap over current approaches and create entirely new systems. This approach has grown more critical in a world that seems to reinvent itself every day. Schools of public affairs need to lead efforts to ensure that public service is a strong, well-respected practice, and that public servants lead effectively in a dynamic and uncertain environment.

Ensuring that students master competencies needed to successfully overcome public policy challenges, and exploit policy opportunities presented by today's socioeconomic and political environments, are key to success. Schools of public affairs should serve as the axis around which learning and action thrive, and should aspire to be the learning choice for those seeking to participate in public and civic innovations. To earn and retain this position, schools will have to undergo significant change. The prior section of this report identified competencies needed to achieve agility in public practice. The next sections discuss how these competencies can be adopted and integrated into education programming.

Any major change to public affairs education should be based upon a critical assessment of its relevance to, and engagement in, current public conditions. If the role of public affairs education is to infuse the civic sector with a sustained presence, and



provide a steady flow of expertise that enhances government-driven innovation, then an assessment based upon the following questions may reveal how well public affairs programs are performing this role.

- How do public affairs programs measure success? What concrete data points do programs use to assess the success? How are failures identified? How are they corrected?
- If the biggest challenge of the future is its uncertainty, how are public affairs programs preparing students for this? What courses, programs, learning experiences are offered that are directly designed to tap into the dimensions of the uncertain? How are these courses designed and by whom?
- How do public affairs schools identify public policy problems? How do schools of public affairs design educational programming to mitigate/address those problems? Do the programs have an overall strategy for this type of policy-driven engagement?
- Who is ultimately responsible for developing learning objectives and designing curriculum? How do programs regularly assess curriculum? What processes are used to adjust course content and pedagogy to reflect current policy challenges and the associated research? What relative weight does the program give to ethics, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal skills compared to microeconomics and quantitative skills?
- If one agrees that current socio-economic and political issues are global in character—addressing US interests while accounting for global influences—then are traditional, separable concentrations in domestic and international issues the most appropriate to prepare students to address these problems? How do public affairs programs define global? How have they modified their programs to present an integrated global and domestic foundation in public affairs?
- How do public affairs programs advance research that can identify critical competencies and teaching protocols to inform public affairs practice and skills?
- How do schools engage students to attack mega-challenges like: consequences of climate change; implications of technology disruption; repercussions of human migration and displacement; global economies and prevention of pandemics?
- How do public affairs programs prepare students to facilitate the engagement of the general public in developing options for attacking problems or tackling challenges?
- Are public affairs faculty undertaking research that is relevant and immediately useful to public leaders? How does the program assess this relevance?
- Do public affairs programs employ practitioners? How are they chosen and who determines what they teach? How are they involved in the governance of the school?
- How do schools ensure that their faculty are representative of multiple disciplines? What is the dominant discipline in the program?
- Apart from the traditional capstone programs and one-off, faculty-led external collaborations, how do programs provide students with the benefits of practical experience?



- Do public affairs programs extend educational programming to potential learners outside of traditional Master's and PhD students? Who are these learners? How is the planning for these programs integrated with the overall educational strategy for the program?
- What is the value added of offering PhD programs? What role does the PhD program play in enhancing the Master's program? Is offering PhD degree necessary to maintain the quality of the Master's program, if so, why?

Answers to these questions will help clarify the current state of public affairs education (the “as-is”) and reveal potential areas in which new direction is needed (“what could-be”).

To formulate a bold, new vision for public affairs education that embraces the need for agility and matches the current needs of public service and policy, the academic community must break loose from barriers, traditions, and normative habits that have limited innovation in curriculum and in training protocols. Schools need to step into new environments and embrace new possibilities quickly—and with agility—to ensure that they create the supply of expertise public governance requires.

To achieve this departure from the “as is” to “what could be,” a successful reimagining of public affairs education can entail a wide range of actions, including those listed below:

- Open program development to new partners, including public, nonprofit and business sectors.
- Open curriculum construction to new partners, including faculty from other disciplines and expert practitioners from public, nonprofit and business sectors, especially in the development of the experiential learning aspect of the curriculum.
- Open programs to new participants, nontraditional students, lifelong learners, etc.
- Open programs to new ways of instilling experiential learning like apprenticeships, formal breaks in study, and intermittent internships.
- Base learning on solving policy dilemmas rather than solely on conveying theory—reorganize programs to address problems rather and use disciplinary research to enhance the learning.
- Instill co-equal status of the craft of public affairs and its scientific underpinnings. Reject the notion that one enjoys a higher status than the other. Public affairs schools can ease tensions that now exist between these two elements of educational programming and demonstrate the power of integrating discovery into practice.
- Develop integrated, multi-disciplinary approaches to public affairs education, in lieu of discrete concentrations. For example, blend domestic with global, development with environment, and housing with transportation policy. Public affairs rarely operates within defined, discrete boundaries. Almost nothing of policy relevance adheres to neat delineation.

- Reexamine the consequences of exploring policy problems in a linear fashion, starting with defining the problem and then moving sequentially through developing alternatives, framing choices, performing analysis, recommending solutions, implementing programs, and evaluating them. While these steps are useful for developing logical sequences for analysis, policies are developed under the conditions of uncertainty, disagreement, multiple constraints, and incomplete data. Thus, actual exploration and deliberation of policy are rarely linear and often play out on multiple levels simultaneously.
- Determine how best to mitigate constraints ingrained in university environments that pose obstacles to transformative change. For example,
  - The primacy of faculty governance over curriculum can stymie any change, especially if and when tenured professors reject change.
  - University administrative processes often limit innovation, including those that constrain hiring, promotion, course scheduling, contact hours, experiential partners, cost recovery, and tuition, among others.
- Consider basing matriculation in public affairs schools on individualized educational plans building professional portfolios rather than meeting general degree requirements noted in transcripts.

In adjusting educational programming to accommodate agile government values and practices, schools of public affairs should also consider how they teach, where the educational experiences take place, and who teaches.

The scholarship and instruction that takes place in public affairs programs must serve the common good, align to today's most immediate, critical challenges, and transfer to a curriculum relevant to the skills required for public service. To achieve these objectives, while integrating agile governance values and protocols, requires concerted and sustained efforts by educators. Tackling how we teach, where we teach, and who teaches, offering pathways for sharing ideas, is discussed in the next section of this report.





## Key Educational Components

***Currently the targets for admissions to public affairs schools are those seeking a terminal master's degree (professional degree) that they complete in two to three years. To address agility and design curricula that addresses challenges of 21st century governance, additional options are needed across multiple dimensions.***

### Students

Some students enter programs with a clear direction of what they want to study and for what purposes, while others enter programs to develop general skill sets that can be applied across professional positions. Most students accept the required construct of programs that include core courses (such as public finance, policy development/analysis, microeconomics, quantitative/computational learning, research design, and a capstone experience), an internship, special one-off programs, and access to faculty.

Some programs recruit those in mid- to mid-high levels of responsibility within an organization who want to perfect skills or learn new ones. For example, they would like to enhance skills in leadership and systems thinking, budget formulation and execution, communication, human resource development, procurement, and data. The learning and training associated with these individuals usually appears as separate executive master's programs.

Other programs offer certificate, portfolio, or pop-up courses. These are usually delivered in some sort of cluster (two to four courses) around a narrower and focused theme, and often require limited time investment on the part of the student participant (a half day to several weeks). Other variations on these themes exist throughout the public-affairs school community.

No matter the reason for learning or the student demographic, the importance of instilling appropriate competencies is critical to student success and the long-term program health. Opportunities to learn the value and practice of agility should be available to the broad student audience: those in traditional academic graduate and undergraduate programs, those beginning their public service, those in mid-career, and those who have achieved top leadership positions. Those who simply wish to obtain basic understandings of and skills in public affairs, but will not enter public service careers, also can be served by public affairs programming.

Adapting the competencies necessary to achieve an agile public workforce, while expanding programs beyond traditional master's degrees, will depend squarely on who teaches the new competencies, how they are taught, and where they are taught.

The next sections offer preliminary and illustrative thoughts and suggestions on these factors.

## Who Teaches: Faculty

Essential to the successful development of students' understanding the practice of agile government is the direct and consistent participation of those who serve in the public sector. Practitioners have been involved in public affairs programs since the creation of these schools in the late 1960s. At that time, Ford Foundation funding supported the establishment of a new discipline of "public policy analysis" designed to bring together three disparate disciplines: political science, policy sciences, and public administration.

Between 1967 and 1971, nine programs emerged across the United States as the first schools of public policy. The advent of public policy as a discipline was not merely an academic innovation but rather the outgrowth of a changing political environment. The academic and practitioner communities were initially seated together at the policy table to share expertise and inform deliberations. Scholars had an appreciation for the political environment in which they worked, and policymakers and administrators welcomed the infusion of knowledge, research, and data into their work.

As new public policies appeared in the 1960s and 1970s, this active community of scholars, policymakers, and public administrators worked together to identify specific skills needed to support professional policy analysis. This union resulted in some noteworthy influences on the formulation of public administration as a discipline.

For instance, the development of POSDCORB (Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, Coordinating, Reporting, and Budgeting) became a guiding framework for shaping the practice of professional administration, as did the Department of Defense's (DOD) Policy Planning Budgeting System (PPBS). Most importantly, policy analysis emerged as formal discipline and a professional pathway for newly minted policy analysts.

Practitioners served as faculty members in several of the newly formed policy schools. Their "real world experiences" and tacit understandings of how organizations and policy-making actually worked were instrumental not only in sustaining the alignment between the curriculum and the knowledge and skills needed in policymaking settings, but also in complementing the research agendas of tenured/tenure-track faculty. This collaboration proved critical to the early success of the public affairs programs.



The involvement of practitioners in the development and adoption of agile governance competencies, and in the creation of appropriate curriculum and pedagogy used to instill these competencies, is more critical today than ever before. This brings professional life experiences to the classroom, exposing students to challenges now facing public policy and making their knowledge of policy fresh and relevant.

Practitioners also share the many networks outside of academia that can enrich students' academic experience by exposing students to players in policy in real time. Integrating practitioners into the life of the program also increases the programs capacity to offer accomplished mentors for students, enhance job counseling, and professional career advice—and, perhaps most importantly, ready-made connections to a wide variety of policy communities.

## How to Teach: Methods

Schools could consider various course formats that showcase agile principles and how they can be applied. The examples below would move away from typical course matriculation designed for and restricted by the required number of contact hours per week and semester.

### Design Thinking Lab

- Using the design thinking framework of ideation, a feasibility and implementation matrix, prototyping, scaling, etc., to solve a social issue. Students would have full 24/7 access to dedicated space in which they can meet and work through problems and invite guests to test their work.

### National Science Foundation—Corps/Business Model Canvas<sup>7</sup>

- The purpose of this model is to transform a specific innovation, from an academic idea into a feasible and implementable action with potential for widespread social impact.
- This approach starts with a value proposition and requires students to work through a systematic process to test that proposition within an ecosystem of key stakeholders, find key partners, identify key resources, develop cost structures, and define revenue streams.
- This approach instills in students an appreciation for the need to understand and identify the real policy problem, and to consider main elements that affect the success of any solution.

### Hybrid Service Learning / Project-Based Learning Model

- Merging elements of a service-learning course (exposure to actual experiences in society, organizations, etc.) with the components of project-based learning, to solve a real-world issue or challenge.
- Students begin their graduate school experience working alongside professionals in the field solving business issues via short-term projects that are selected to align to individual portfolios. These “companion” experiences present a steady-state for testing learning in real-life situations.

## Types of Learning Formats

- Webinars, in-person workshops and sessions.

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7. For more detailed information on the National Science Foundation's I-Corps model see: [https://www.nsf.gov/news/special\\_reports/i-corps/resources.jsp](https://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/i-corps/resources.jsp).



- Online learning spaces to create opportunities for learning by students and the larger community of leaders in the public affairs/administration field.
- Teach-Backs—dedicated alumni teach topics and mini courses.

## Where to Teach: Settings Where Learning Takes Place

Learning new competencies should not be bound by place. An important feature of seeking skill outcomes that demonstrate agility is that significant learning experiences should take place outside of the classroom, in places, organizations, and governments where the subject matter focuses on practical policy and administrative operations. For example, classes on public financial management can take place in city, county, or state finance offices.

While each public affairs program differs in approach, scope and capacity, exploring new ways of teaching in new venues should be deliberate and creative. Sharing experiences, failures, and successes among public affairs programs should take place, with collaborations encouraged.

## The Role of Research

Academia also plays a critical role in developing research that can offer new insight into the development of competencies that support agile governance. While research conducted in most disciplines has relevance in the development and implementation of policy, schools of public affairs are often the model for moving research into practice.

The IBM Center is a major contributor to advancing research undertaken to bridging the gap between academia and the practice of public management with the intention of moving discovery and knowledge into actionable approaches to public management. One of the eight research areas for which the IBM Center solicited research in 2021 is agile government: “Driving Agility: Enhancing Mission Support and Delivery.”

This research area focuses upon challenges to implementing agile strategies in government. These include: how agile practices align with traditional bureaucracy; how agile government requires new approaches to leadership; how new structures and approaches to work focus upon outcomes; how the presence and adoption of complex cultural and regulatory frameworks better ensure agile government successes; how agile principles can be used to improve policy development, regulation, and management by encouraging broader consultation, diversity of opinion, and responding to ideas from stakeholders; and how can the application of agile techniques improve trust in government by demonstrating increased effectiveness and responsiveness. The research solicitation also seeks the identification and development of examples and case studies of agile in action in the U.S. and around the world.

Public administration researchers have begun to engage with emerging agile practices in various ways, including through the development of theory on why agility increases the potential for effective results, the study of how incrementalism works in achieving results, and how agile links with top-down-driven strategic change. Agile offers new pathways for research, including hypothesis-driven modeling, agile policy implementation, collaborative regulatory development, and new management modes.

This early interest and momentum in research on agile governance can further inform decisions on what public affairs schools teach and how, who teaches, and where teaching takes place.



## Laying the Groundwork for New Structural Designs in Preparing Students for Agile Government

Some argue that the current norms of step-by-step, single institution innovations are successful, superior, and more palatable than advocating fundamental widespread structural change. While components of a new design can serve as separable, independent actions, this report advocates for an integrated framework that supports major program changes.

The previous sections of this report identified competencies reflective of agile governance and described the building blocks for reimagining public affairs education. The next several sections present actual program designs intended to prepare those moving into government (pre-career service) and for those currently serving in public service (in-service/professional development). The approach offers multiple pathways to ensure a steady stream of expertise across the public sectors and government functions.<sup>8</sup>

The new program design attempts to operationalize concepts presented in previous sections, and addresses three overarching challenges facing public affairs education.

8. These approaches also complement the work undertaken by schools of public affairs who have refreshed their curricula and pedagogies and the work undertaken by federal agencies, such as the U.S. Office Personnel Management and the U.S. Office of Management Budget, and the many associations and contractors who have developed training for public servants.



**1 First, caring about public administration and its success.** The nation continues to bear witness to multiple public sector failures. Many policy challenges go unaddressed, are recast as partisan, or presented as unsolvable—all as citizen faith in public systems and the people who run them continues to plummet. Much of the public believes that government just does not know how to solve problems for the common good, and continues to fumble or flounder. Even when government does succeed, its accomplishments are not recognized or are simply taken for granted.

For public administration to excel, two things matter: (1) the people who make up the public service, and (2) the environments in which those people work. Governments have to attract and retain a steady flow of experts whose intellect, grit, agility, and problem-solving skills can be applied directly and swiftly to addressing key challenges. Governments also have to ensure that work environments and cultures provide space and support to maximize success. Agencies cannot attract and recruit energetic, purpose-filled, smart, and hard-working individuals only to place them in organizational structures led by those who do not know how to manage talent, or who are themselves restricted by old protocols.

**2 Second, growing the right competencies.** Over the past several decades, researchers and management gurus have identified scores of skills and competencies deemed critical to management success. Many come with their own sophisticated schematics hoping to add to their bona fides—all seeking the “holy grail” of competencies. This longstanding quest covers a diverse set of views on an extensive range of skills.

As discussed in previous sections, several critical competencies are essential for agile governance. They do not comprise a tidy, complete checklist, where ticking all of the boxes leads to development of the perfect specimen of a public leader. Rather, when taken together these competencies present an integrated portrait of how individuals can succeed in the world of public service.

**3 Third, the settings in which learning takes place.** Government and training providers are currently bound by time and space limitations that define the educational experience by credit/contact hours, week-defined semesters, and seasonal breaks (summer, spring, and winter). The physical plant of the school/university serves as the primary platform upon which learning takes place. In many ways, instead of enhancing the educational experience, this standard disrupts the way students learn, teachers teach, and knowledge is transferred. Breaking away from these traditional learning protocols and settings is essential to the success of public affairs programs.<sup>9</sup>

The next sections of this report focus upon each of two traditional audiences essential for agile governance: pre-service (career master’s program) and in-service (educational programming for those already in-public service).

9. During a Business of Government Hour [podcast aired on the Federal News Network](#) and hosted by Michael Keegan, agile government principles and their implications for the education and training of public servants are explored. This podcast offers additional insights into the role of agile government in education programs and research.





## Pre-Service Education

***Achieving successful programming in graduate programs not only instills an understanding of agile governance, but also provides settings in which the practices of agile governance are essential to students preparing for careers in public service.***

The overall redesign of public affairs education presented in this section would have two basic phases: the Induction Phase and the Program Phase.

### Induction Phase

This phase is foundational to the success of adopting a new way to teach public affairs education. It would demonstrate to students the complexities of public administration and the tools available to work in public service. Perhaps most importantly, this phase would require that students actively engage in problem solving.

Before beginning course work designed for the new educational framework, all students would be required to attend and successfully complete a formal induction. The Induction Phase would immerse students in the world of public problem solving, while developing an appreciation for the complexities of the public service environments. The Induction Phase establishes student expectations, assesses their progress, and builds a foundation upon which subsequent learning builds. The goal of the Induction Phase is twofold: to ensure students understand basic policy tools and how they are used, and to assess the suitability of students to continue in the program.

The policy tools and the role they play in public management are described below.

- **Rules and Regulation.** *Examine the dynamic process of rulemaking, both within regulatory policy and in the larger set of relationships between government agencies.* Congress passes laws—and enhances the power of administrators by delegating the authority to act. Administrators in agencies often exercise their power by writing and enforcing regulations. This is an exceptionally powerful tool for how policy is interpreted and implemented.
- **Public Financing and Fiscal Planning.** *Learn how policy actors navigate the uncertainties of budget and appropriation policies, and how these processes affect the world of public administration.* Learning how to navigate through budgetary uncertainties is critical. Nothing works without having money to spend, and nothing is more disruptive than not knowing how much money is available to spend through a fiscal year. There is a very clear process by which agencies develop budgets, how legislatures assess them and appropriate money, and how agencies distribute funds obligated to them. The federal budget and appropriation process should be covered separately since understanding that process can assist in local and state fiscal planning.
- **People.** *Examine how to think carefully about how to prevent skills mismatch that may sabotage policy implementation.* An often-neglected part of policymaking is understanding how to align the right people, in the right places, with the right skills, at the right time. Too often, the skills do not match a job—or the job requires unavailable skills. Avoiding this mismatch and securing appropriate talent is key to successfully managing human resources.
- **Policy Analysis.** *Understand the value of non-partisan analysis as a source in considering policy options.* This type of analysis can provide keen insights that would otherwise not emerge in rough-and-tumble political battles. But policy analysts are often keenly disappointed when their analyses are not noticed or used. Understanding what makes policy analysis effective through effective communication strategies, precise timing, and targeted dissemination can significantly enhance the relevancy of analyses.
- **Storytelling.** *Explore the power of the narrative, and how to convey information and knowledge through stories.* Storytelling is an inescapable part of politics. Policy analysis may appear as the gold standard of policy work—only to frustrate analysts when policy decisionmakers use their favorite stories to support a policy position rather than a sound analytic argument. Learning how to use a story to support one’s analytic conclusions can be powerful.
- **Anticipating the Unknown.** *Develop skills that result in keen insights into unanticipated consequences of policy issues.* One of the most important, but most elusive, aspects of policymaking is to understand the unexpected, anticipate the surprise, and have ready adjustments to apply to the policy.
- **“Red Team” Analysis.** *Understand how to test the efficacy of policies or programs by assuming an adversarial posture that challenges assumptions, operations, and practices.* Red teaming forces a “big picture,” holistic review of an operation or policy from the perspective of an adversary. The purpose of conducting a “red team” analysis is to discover vulnerabilities, uncertainties, and weaknesses in policy and operations.
- **Integrating global and national public affairs.** *Expose tensions that exist when developing U.S. interest in global settings, essential for success.* This involves developing content for students using a blended set of methods, theories, and cases to achieve a basic understanding of the implications of global policy making for achieving domestic policy objectives.

During the Induction Phase, students also are immersed in real, ongoing public problems in order to maintain a practical point of reference for the learning that takes place in this Phase. Identifying these problems as an integrated part of the Induction Phase can be achieved in several ways, including securing government partners tackling current problems, supporting mentors who can supplement course content using their experience, and developing an inventory of public affairs cases that align with the learning objectives.

Enrolling in and successfully completing the Induction Phase would be required for students intending to enroll in the new program “portfolio” tracks<sup>10</sup> that award master’s-level credentials, and encouraged—but discretionary—for those in other non-degree portfolio tracks.

## The Program Phase

The following organizing principles of the new framework for public affairs education would form the bases for program curricula, pedagogy, matriculation and credentialling.

- **Integrating competencies** into all learning experiences. Each course will demonstrate how it develops the competencies and assesses student progress in mastering these skills.
- **Clustering educational content** into offerings that align with the student career goals/interests. Instead of the relative constricted matriculation<sup>11</sup> now present in master’s programs, students will select tracks of study at the beginning of their programs targeted directly at their career interests. The next section of the report describes this approach as “portfolio tracks” and presents how this could look and function.
- **Opening enrollment** to nontraditional master’s students: those already in professional careers who want to refresh or learn new skills, and those in other disciplines/career paths who simply may be exploring public affairs. Mixing heterogenous groups of students enriches the learning process.
- **Allowing students to enroll** in courses outside their portfolio track—facilitating movement among portfolios.
- **Designing courses** with the intention that they could serve across portfolios, e.g., developing a political communications course that could populate all portfolios.
- **Conducting courses off-site** in settings where learning occurs within the context of real work challenges (e.g., public finance classes can take place in city government offices).
- **Supporting full flexibility** in course duration, which varies from days to weeks to months. Time would match curriculum design and not be bound by the traditional academic calendar and contact hour requirement.
- **Using and awarding** a variety of credit hours, and allowing flexibility in the time taken to earn the credits, and the source of the credits.



The next section presents potential designs for new public affairs education programs.

10. The “portfolio” concept is discussed in detail in the next chapter.

11. In most 2-year master’s programs, after completing required core courses, students are left with little discretion in selecting courses that may be relevant to their career choices. This discretion is further limited by availability of faculty (who may have reduced teaching loads or who are teaching other courses) and the expertise resident in program faculty.



## New Design for Pre-Service Education

*Developing an actual model for pre-service education would help to visualize transformation objectives and associated actions.*

### The Portfolio Track Approach

Broadly speaking, five portfolio tracks would serve as the main set of offerings of new public affairs education. These tracks would share six attributes:

1. All course content will integrate the principles of agile governance and seek to develop the competencies aligned with agility.
2. Course content and experiential activities will be designed specifically for each portfolio.
3. Course content and matriculation requirements will be developed and designed by faculty who teach in the track, faculty from other departments who can offer advice, and successful practitioners who currently serve (or have successfully served) in the areas of focus of specific portfolio tracks.
4. Students will mainly study with those in their same portfolio.
5. Course credits, timing, and assessment will be established for each portfolio.
6. University administration will grant flexibility in the design and execution of courses and credit for faculty involvement.



Each student would follow an individualized educational plan depending on the portfolio track selected. This plan would be developed by a team of faculty, including a practitioner, in consultation with the student and reviewed regularly.

## Portfolio Track A: Generalist Range

*Designed to provide students the flexibility to explore various disciplines and functions without specializing in any particular course of study, similar to existing programs that offer a “generalist” approach to curricular development.* This track can align most directly and strongly with building agile governance competencies. Experiential learning settings in this track would include engagements with those undertaking public investigations, developing new government initiatives, conducting strategic planning operations, and forming intergovernmental coalitions.

## Portfolio Track B: Role-Based

*Designed for students who know the role or position they seek in public service after graduation.* Courses and experiences would focus on the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in operational positions in the public service arena, such as program management, public finance, risk management, cybersecurity, human resources, and program evaluation. Learning settings include governmental offices, public/private partnerships, public administrative offices, budget and finance offices, etc. where responsibilities for these functions reside.

## Portfolio Track C: Policy Area

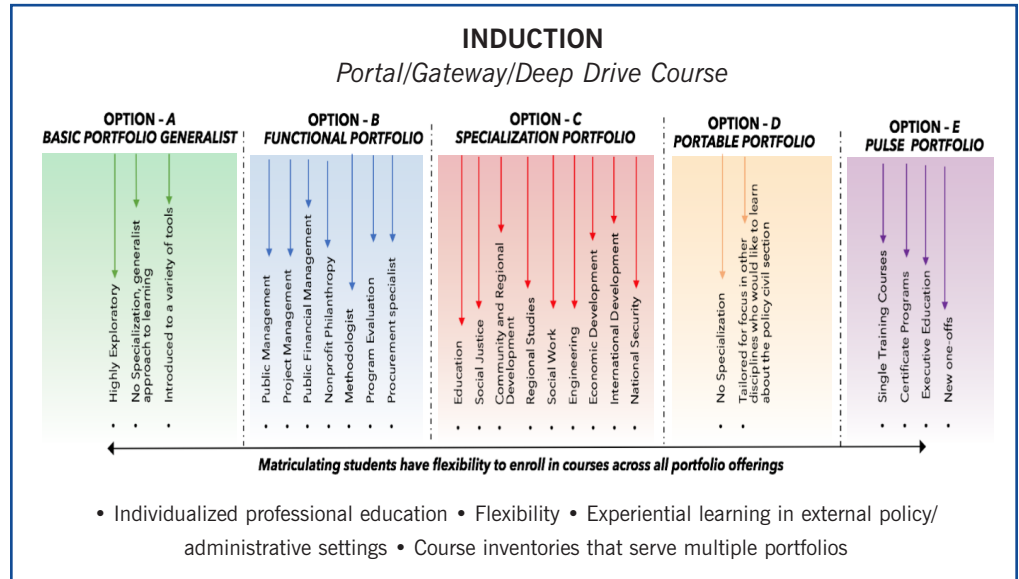
*Designed for students who want to work in a particular policy or issue area.* This portfolio exposes students to knowledge and tools used in specific policy issues and disciplines to conduct policy analysis, policy research, program evaluation, and microeconomic analysis. Settings involve experiential learning directly connected to the issue area, including university research centers, think tanks, governmental policy offices, foundations, and nonprofits.

## Portfolio Track D: Exploration

*Designed to be a “portable” portfolio that schools of public affairs can offer to graduate students seeking advance degrees in discipline-specific areas outside of public affairs.* This track helps students interested in understanding how policy works and the mechanisms and tools used to engage with the public affairs community. For example, this portfolio would include classes on policy development, political communication, or writing for impact, and could be tailored for various clusters of disciplines, such as physical sciences, natural sciences, medicine, fine arts, or architecture.

## Portfolio Track E: Pulse

*Designed to be a “pulse” portfolio that addresses students’ unique individual interests.* This portfolio awards formal recognition of program completion and can be used as credit toward enrolling in Portfolios A-C. This portfolio would include courses of study such as negotiation, data analytics, and organizational change. These programs can be designed as formal certificate programs with specified, required courses offered over a period of time (weekend, weeks or months); or simply as unique, one-off classes.



The graphic above presents the portfolio concept.

### Matriculation for Portfolios A, B, and C

After successful completion of the Induction Phase, students would choose a particular portfolio in which to enroll. Students would take required foundational courses that develop competencies and build learning experiences aligned with the emphasis of the particular portfolio.

### Portfolio Contents and Design

Each of the A, B, and C portfolio tracks would contain the following elements:

- **Menus/pathways** of curated courses designed specifically for that portfolio.
- **Experiential learning** requirements embedded in individual courses as well as separate, individual experiences. This learning takes place off-campus at sites relevant to the nature of the portfolio. For example, if a student chooses Portfolio B and the pathway is public management, then students would spend a significant amount of time in local, state, federal, nonprofit agencies—and be exposed to strategic planning and operations (e.g., systems, human resource, and economic development). Experiential requirements are embedded in each pathway, integrated into each course within the pathway, and offered as separate modules (e.g., intermittent internships or formal shadowing programs). The design for each of these portfolios requires formal collaborations with a variety of non-university entities (city, state, federal, nonprofit, business). This approach also would offer options for apprenticeships that can involve breaks in matriculation.
- **Course content would vary depending on learning objectives.** Content for each portfolio will be developed by school faculty in collaboration with expert practitioners in the public, nonprofit and business sectors, and designed to achieve an integrated program for learning.

- **Course formats would vary depending on their learning objective in the portfolio.** Examples of formats follow:
  - **Modules:** Courses composed of several discreet components that share a theme and can be taught by several professors. For example, a communications module can be composed of several parts covering different types of writings, social media, oral communications, and debate.
  - **Traditional courses:** Courses offered on regular weekly, semester-long courses.
  - **Pulse courses:** Discreet short courses offered as part of the portfolio's required learning. These can supplement other courses or introduce students to new concepts. For example, a course on the role of cybersecurity in data analytics.
  - **One-offs:** Courses designed to cover content that holds immediate interest but does not fit neatly into a portfolio; for example, a course on communication during a crisis. These also can include pilot courses testing new material, pedagogy, and professorial collaborations.
  - **Use of technologies:** Given the extraordinary shifts educational institutions made in response to COVID-19 restrictions, multiple-media platforms can be used to construct coursework, broaden access to learners outside of the institution, collaborate across geographical boundaries, develop new course assessments, and engage with practitioners tackling real, immediate public administrators and public policy challenges.

## Matriculation for Portfolios D and E

These portfolio tracks would be designed for those not ready to commit to full time professional graduate training in public affairs. Portfolio D focuses on teaching students pursuing other professions about the implications public affairs has for their work. Portfolio E is designed for those interested in graduate level public affairs education but not yet ready to commit full time to a graduate professional program; this portfolio would allow students to take courses and earn credits that can then be used in the future to enroll in a full-time program.

**Portfolio D.** This portfolio track would require the development of a basic course in public affairs offered to a wide range of audiences from students in other disciplines, community leaders, and members of the public. The course would include an understanding of public affairs settings, how policy is deliberated and administered, the data dimensions of policy, the role of intergovernmental governance, and the implications of citizen participation for policy development and implementation.

**Portfolio E.** This portfolio track can build upon extant programs that serve nontraditional master's students who do not commit to full-time study. Program offerings in this portfolio can integrate agile governance competencies by designing specific content for each of these programs, or can allow those in this portfolio to enroll in courses offered in portfolios A, B, and C.





## New Design for In-Service Education

*This section offers new approaches to integrating agile governance training to in-service, professional development programming.*

Previous sections of this report described educational programming offered at the graduate level through schools of public affairs (pre-service training). In addition, many existing professional development programs offered in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors aim to enhance the knowledge and skills of working professionals. Some programs draw upon expertise resident in public agencies, others apply models employed by business communities, and others have their roots in executive programs offered at universities.

These rich reserves of talent, knowledge and experience can assist in both the development of agile governance training programs and the assembly of cohorts for the training. Accomplished scholars and leaders in the public and private sectors have the capacity to innovate and deliver excellence in governance.

Activating these resources to build expertise in agile governance practices can draw on a number of strategies and approaches outlined below. Each of these strategies would:

- Require additional discussion and determinations regarding proof of concept, development of business and governance plans, and collaboration across sectors;
- Supplement pre-service programs;
- Be based on governance structure for that could in part rest with a major association or a newly established 501(c)(3) organization;



- Call for dedicated resources that could either be absorbed within existing operations or financed through grants or gifts; and
- Differ from extant programs so as not to compete with these programs.

## In-Service Training Components

- **Create a “Champion Class” subscription program:** This would operate similarly to existing and very successful “Master Class” programs. A streaming platform would allow any subscriber to watch or listen to the inventory of videos made by accomplished public servants, drawn from the federal, state or local levels. They could have served as elected officials, come from business communities with histories of working with the public, or be international public leaders. Videos would be available anytime and anywhere, accessed via a computer or smart phone through streaming channels. This new programming would exploit the knowledge and expertise of successful leaders to develop and lead online courses for public administrators, academia, and the general public. Financial support for these activities would come through a subscription fee structure, with revenues generated to invest in program enhancements.
- **Build SWAT teams:** This option creates teams of successful public leaders who could engage quickly to assist agencies experiencing immediate challenges or undertaking transformational changes. These teams would differ from traditional study groups or advisory councils, in that they would mobilize quickly and act as resources for those who need counsel and advice. This activity might best be managed by an existing organization with the capability to offer access for focus groups, timely and ongoing advice, or problem assessment.
- **Creating new media pathways:** This option presents a range of offerings, including:
  - Weekly Roundtables, on topics of immediate interest to public affairs stakeholders;
  - Interview Series, including one on one interviews with exemplar public administrators who offer their reflections on the challenges of leading government reforms (a variation on the “Champion Class” idea);
  - Study Hours, presenting segments on the findings of recent studies (which can include work by GAO, think tanks, government agencies, policy shops in private sector businesses, and other interested entities), and discussing the implications of such studies for those serving in public administrative roles; and
  - Weekly “Fireside Chats,” (podcasts) discussing challenging public leadership and administration issues
- **Create a Public Leadership Academy:** This would stand-up a formal educational entity that would serve as the premier national institution for the in-service study of public affairs. Prestigious fellowships would be awarded to highly qualified and accomplished public servants to study advanced techniques in administration, and to develop professionally through curated assignments to public administration agencies experiencing challenges. Graduates would earn a certificate recognized as the top credential in public service achievement. Graduates of the academy not only can assume leadership positions within public agencies, but also be a pool from which special expertise can be drawn to undertake government wide assignments.

For example, a graduate could serve as a “special forces expert” who could be deployed as a SWAT team member (see previous page).

- **Create competitive fellowships for in-service experience for graduate students:** This would build financial resources to support apprenticeships in public agencies. These apprenticeships would differ from internships in that the students would be placed in actual professional positions in agencies and serve in these positions for at least one year. Public leaders could serve as sponsors for apprenticeships. Funding for these fellowships could be sought from outside sources and sponsoring public agencies.
- **Work with schools of public affairs seeking transformational change:** This would explore partnerships with schools of public affairs to better integrate pre-service training with the needs of public agencies. The effort could result in better preparation of the public workforce and allow the development of more efficient, and targeted in-service training. A group of over 30 public affairs schools who have been developing ideas on this transformation would be a rich resource for additional consultation.<sup>12</sup>
- **Develop and Implement a Research Agenda:** This would advance studies and define topics for forward-looking research on how best to apply agile frameworks in the development and implementation of government policies, programs, and regulations by working with academic experts and partner organizations like NASPAA, APPAM, OECD, NAPA and ASPA.

## Next Steps

In creating these programs, special consideration should be given to advancing public affairs as a profession, and focusing on key policy challenges that public administrators will face. For example, cross-cutting topics could include leveraging AI across government, or administering programs that require highly sophisticated expertise residing outside of government.

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12. The Volcker Alliance is providing the administrative support for this group of deans and can provide information on the deans' initiatives. See: <https://www.volckeralliance.org/our-work/initiatives>.



## Concluding Note

This report seeks to revitalize schools of public affairs by initiating frank conversations about the condition of public affairs programs, especially as they exist in academia, and focusing on agility in government as a framing construct. Educational and training approaches used in the past are not in line with the skills needed today to tackle public leadership challenges. The report is intended to foster robust, honest discussions about the future of public affairs education.

Affecting changes discussed in this report will involve engaging the interest and resources of a variety of players, including schools of public affairs, universities, foundations, associations, government agencies, employers, and potential enrollees. Members of the public affairs field can enhance the value of the profession through examining and exploring possibilities to reimagine their craft.

## About the Author



Angela Evans

**Angela Evans** is a Visiting Fellow with the IBM Center for The Business of Government. Prior to this role, Dean Evans joined the faculty of the LBJ School in 2009 as a professor in the practice of public policy at the LBJ School of Public Affairs. In 2016, she assumed the position of Dean of the LBJ School and in 2021 was named Dean Emerita. She also facilitated the formation of a network of deans who collaborate on work directed at strengthening public affairs education.

While Dean, she strengthened the School's commitment to producing dynamic, actionable research to inform real world policymaking, to attracting and retaining the best talent to teach students and engage with the School's communities, and to providing diverse cohorts of talented students with the knowledge and skills needed to influence and lead in the civic sector. She accomplished this by refreshing the School's academic programming, expanding its intellectual leadership, modernizing and streamlining its systems and operations, and raising over \$57 million in research and development funding.

During her tenure as Dean, the LBJ School rose 6 spots in the US News and World Report Ranking from #14 to #8. Dean Evans also has earned numerous teaching awards, including the 2012 Texas Exes teaching award; the most valuable class (2010 and 2012) and the most helpful professor (every year between 2010-2015).

Prior to joining the LBJ School, Dean Evans worked for the U.S. Congress for nearly forty years, the last fifteen of which she served as the deputy director of the Congressional Research Service (CRS), a legislative branch agency that provides nonpartisan research and public policy analysis to Congress. In this capacity, she oversaw all facets of the research scholarship, development, and operations within the CRS.

While at CRS, she led the first agencywide reorganization in thirty years, developed the first agencywide interdisciplinary collaborative research framework, secured foundation support for several large research projects, and oversaw a \$110 million budget and 700 professional staff representing a broad range of disciplines, including those from law, the physical and social sciences, and medicine.

Dean Evans also is a fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration. She was elected the president of the Association of Schools of Public Policy and Administration and she served on the executive committee of National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Analysis



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