

**REVIEW OF THE M.S., IN COLLEGE STUDENT PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION**

Classification of Instruction Programs (CIP) Code: 13.1102  
 College Student Counseling and Personnel Services

**OVERVIEW**

The **M.S., in College Student Personnel Administration** program at Illinois State University is housed in the Department of Educational Administration and Foundations within the College of Education. The Department houses three degree programs and three graduate certificate programs: M.S. in College Student Personnel Administration; M.S., and M.S.Ed. in Educational Administration, Ed.D., and Ph.D. in Educational Administration, Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Leader Certificate, Post-Master’s Graduate Certificate for Superintendent Endorsement in Educational Administration, Post-Master’s Graduate Certificate for Chief School Business Official.

**Enrollment and Degrees Conferred by Plan of Study, Fall Census Day, 2014-2021**

**M.S., in College Student Personnel Administration, Illinois State University**

First Majors Only

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Enrollments	50	41	42	49	43	36	40	29
Degrees	24	26	20	15	21	21	17	19

Table notes:

Graduating Fiscal Year consists of summer, fall, and spring terms, in that order. For example, Graduating Fiscal Year 2019 consists of the following terms: summer 2017, fall 2017, and spring 2018.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
 PROGRAM REVIEW SELF-STUDY REPORT**

**Self-study process**

The self-study process began with the faculty coordinator, assistant coordinator, a doctoral graduate assistant and the Gamsky Fellow reviewing the materials provided by the Provost’s office. We met regularly as a committee to collect and review data and engage stakeholders during the 2022-2023 academic year. Data collected for review during this time included the data dashboard, exit interviews of graduates, and an alumni survey.

**Program Curriculum**

Our curriculum has remained relatively unchanged in its requirements since our last self-study with the exception of the replacement of one course. With this change, the program has also been able to offer the opportunity for students to simultaneously complete the program and a graduate certificate in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS). All CSPA courses are offered at the 400 level. There are three pathways for students to complete the program based on their interests with part-time students most often taking the comprehensive exam option and full-time students taking the capstone course option. No students have selected the thesis option during the timeframe of this self-study.

CSPA Program Curriculum			
Thesis Option	Comprehensive Exam Option	Capstone Course Option	Courses
Hours Required			Year 1
3	3	3	428.01 Foundations of Student Affairs Work
3	3	3	461 Student Development in Higher Education

3	3	3	462 Organization & Administration of Student Affairs Functions in Higher Education
3	3	3	463 College Students and Their Cultures
			Year 1 or 2
3	3	3	410 Research Methods/Statistics
3	3	3	466 College Students and the Law
3	3	3	473 Organization and Administration of Community Colleges
3	3	6	464 Practicum in College Student Personnel Administration
6	6	6	Electives
			Year 2
3	3	3	413 Social Justice & Social Theory
3	3	3	467 Issues & Skills for Counseling College Students
0	0	3	482.01 Capstone Seminar in CSPA
3-6	0	0	499 Thesis Hours
39-42	36	42	Total Hours Required

### Program or academic unit faculty

Since 2018, the core faculty of the CSPA program have been Dr. Phyllis McClusky-Titus (retired in 2022) and Dr. S. Gavin Weiser. Courses not taught by these two have largely been taught by non-tenure-track faculty who are hired due to their demonstrated excellence as student affairs practitioners. Over the time period of this review, four additional departmental faculty and five NTTs (including the Assistant Coordinator) have taught required coursework.

### Program goals and quality indices

The CSPA program provides graduates with the knowledge and skills necessary to:

- be conversant in the historical, philosophical, organizational, and student developmental issues in higher education and student services;
- be committed to the continual education, growth, and understanding of college students;
- facilitate the success of college students and staff through effective management of personnel, resources, and facilities;
- work successfully in student service settings at 2- and 4-year colleges and universities;
- fulfill the obligation to educate him/herself in order to become a more informed consumer of research in student affairs and higher education;
- assess, evaluate, and improve student services in colleges and universities.

Our vision of student success within the CSPA program is for students to graduate in a timely manner and leave the program with gainful employment within the field of their choosing. To measure our ultimate vision, we track student and alumni employment, professional association involvement, and degrees pursued after program completion.

### Student learning outcomes assessment plan and process

The assessment plan indicates that CSPA faculty has mapped the nine program goals to courses and assignments within the curriculum. The assessment process that includes annual student exit interviews, curriculum mapping of national competencies with course outcomes and assignments, regular program review using national norms and competencies, assessment of student learning through a survey developed by students and faculty, and discussions with program advisory board members and other professionals in the field. Some changes from this plan have occurred due to departmental turnover and this specific document not being given to new program leadership prior to this self-study cycle.

### **Specialized accreditation**

Student affairs graduate programs have no professional licensure or accreditation process. There is a voluntary process to assess compliance with “best practices” from the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS), a consortium of professional associations. In addition to meeting these standards, program coursework incorporates an established common set of professional competency areas for student affairs educators designed by ACPA and NASPA, the two primary professional associations of our profession.

### **Responses to recommendations resulting from the previous program review**

Our response to the five recommendations from the previous review can be summarized as follows:

- Our ability to respond has been limited by a lack of faculty capacity and the changing landscape of higher education post-pandemic.
- We are working to enhance support specific to the increased number of part-time students enrolled in the program.
- There is a need to clarify the unique purpose of the capstone experience that differs from other graduate programs. In this program, the capstone experience is not a project, but a course that synthesizes the learning that has occurred over the past two years, as well as anything that is occurring within the field. Hence, no changes were made.
- We are working to incorporate more opportunities for our students to become engaged with research with efforts to do so disrupted by the pandemic.

### **Changes in the academic discipline, field, societal need, and program demand**

The field of student affairs and higher education has experienced significant change over this review period. NASPA’s 2023 survey of graduate preparation programs identifies trends observed in our program, including increased diversity among students and more students interested in attending part-time while working full-time. Programs reported considering changes associated with reducing time to degree completion, incorporating more critical perspectives, offering micro-credentials, and hiring new faculty to replace retirees. Challenges reported include low enrollment, budget stress, low wages for graduate assistants with decreased offerings, and lack of support for recruitment and marketing.

### **Major findings of this program review self-study**

Through the process of engaging in this self-study, it is evident that our program graduates have a deep passion and love for their experience at ISU within the CSPA program. One thing that has shifted since the last review is the number of graduates who have taken their degrees, knowledges, and experiences outside of higher education. In addition, there are increased numbers of working professionals enrolling as part-time students. Moving forward, we have learned that we need to be more intentional with recruitment and increase tenure-line faculty.

### **Initiatives and plans for the next program review cycle**

Given the historical strength of the CSPA program, the overwhelming passion graduates have for this program, as well as what we have learned from this self-study, we propose six initiatives and plans for the next review cycle:

- Investment in recruitment and marketing
- Supporting part-time students
- Continued opportunities for graduate assistantships within and beyond Illinois State University
- Support for at least one additional TT faculty line
- Increase faculty-supervised individual and small group research projects for students
- Ongoing minor course revisions

## PROGRAM REVIEW OUTCOME AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ACADEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Department of Educational Administration and Foundations houses three degree programs and three graduate certificate programs: M.S. in College Student Personnel Administration; M.S., and M.S.Ed. in Educational Administration, Ed.D., and Ph.D. in Educational Administration, Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Leader Certificate, Post-Master's Graduate Certificate for Superintendent Endorsement in Educational Administration, Post-Master's Graduate Certificate for Chief School Business Official. The committee thanks program faculty for their critical reflections about the current state of their program.

The self-study reports that enrollment for the M.S. in College Student Personnel Administration program has seen a steady decline over the period of review (52 students in 2014 to 40 in 2021), which is consistent with similar programs within the state and nation. The committee commends the program faculty for their actions that have resulted in increased diversity within the program students; students from underrepresented groups increased (from 32 percent in 2016 to 45 percent in 2022). We note that the program has maintained high retention rates (typically above 90 percent) throughout the period of review and has excellent placement rates of their graduates. The self-study indicates that the program regularly engages with their advisory board.

While recognizing the M.S. in College Student Personnel Administration program has many strengths, the committee is concerned about many aspects regarding the current state of the program and several of these issues that were highlighted in the self-study. The self-study report is candid in its recognition of the need to further evaluate the program in light of these challenges as well as changes in national and disciplinary trends. Therefore, the Academic Planning Committee flags the M.S. in College Student Personnel Administration program for further review. The committee requests that the Department of Educational Administration and Foundations take the following actions and submit the following reports based on those actions.

### **Report: Due September 1, 2026**

Submit to the Academic Planning Committee via the Office of the Provost

**Develop a plan for recruitment and enrollment growth.** The committee supports faculty efforts to explore further expansion of program enrollment during the next program review cycle. The committee notes that the program has begun to develop and implement a plan for student recruitment. The committee recommends that the program work with University Marketing and Communications to pursue additional methods of recruiting.

**Assessment Plan.** The self-study report outlines some of the elements of an assessment plan of student learning outcomes (e.g., student, graduate, alumni, and employer surveys); however, the committee asks that the program faculty work with University Assessment Services to formalize a more complete and finalized plan that not only aligns with the standards of the relevant external bodies (e.g., ISBE, ACPA, NASPA), but also provides meaningful information for faculty to use for program improvement. When the faculty compiles this plan, the committee suggests that faculty consider how the standards of external bodies are addressed and aligned with the program courses and how student performance on various direct measures from those courses can be used to examine student learning in relation to those standards. Perceptions gathered from various stakeholders have provided valuable inputs for program planning, and additional indirect assessment strategies to consider may include systematic documentation of feedback already being gathered by faculty through informal contacts with students and alumni.

**Develop a plan for curricular review and revisions.** The committee encourages faculty to complete a comprehensive review of coursework in the program to ensure that it is aligned with the changes in the discipline mentioned in the self-study. As part of this review, the committee asks that the program faculty include insights from their examination of the curricula of comparator and aspirational programs. We also recommend that the program develop processes that will allow improved tracking of student scholarship and civic and community engagement activities.

**Develop a recruitment and retention plan for faculty.** The committee recognizes the decrease in tenure track faculty and relatively high ratio of non-tenure track to tenure track faculty during the period under review. The committee recommends the development of a formal plan for faculty recruitment and retention.

**Comparator and aspirational program analyses.** The self-study report provides a brief quantitative analysis of comparator institutions, however, no conclusions or actions are made regarding these comparisons. The committee has included analyses of comparator and aspirational programs in the self-study report guidelines to provide faculty with opportunities to consider the niche their program has among its peers and to gather information for program planning. The committee asks the program to revisit these sections of the self-study and address this section through expanded analyses of comparator and aspirational programs, including aspirational programs nationwide, that could help to develop strategies for addressing priority initiatives for the programs.

**Revise the initiatives and plans for the next program review cycle section.** The committee asks that the program faculty expand the discussion of each of the initiatives listed in this section of the self-study report. We ask the program faculty to describe plans to implement these initiatives. We strongly recommend that these plans are aligned with the department's strategic plan and suggest that the program consider developing an aligned strategic plan to ground the need for more resources by clearly outlining how the program fits into the overall unit.