# **Department Faculty Meeting**

**February 9, 2021**

**Noon – 1:20 Remote:** [**https://washington.zoom.us/j/99037144551**](https://www.google.com/url?q=https://washington.zoom.us/j/99037144551&sa=D&source=calendar&ust=1603497297856000&usg=AOvVaw1Fi3oedf5svb3cL65Cytyp)

# Agenda items

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| --- | --- | --- |
| 12:00-12:02 | Welcome & Check in | Campbell |
| 12:02-12:07 | Social Justice Social Hour | Quinn-Smith |
| 12:07-12:10 | Approve **1/26/21** meeting minutes  | Campbell |
| 12:10-1:00 | MUP capstone conversation | Curriculum Committee |
| 1:00-1:20 | Announcements & updates | Campbell et al |

**Present**: Sofia Dermisi, Tyler Quinn Smith, Rachel Berney Dan Abramson, Jan Whittington, Megan Herzog, David Blum, Diana Seimbor, Branden Born, Keith Harris, Alex King, Himanshu Grover, Bob Freitag

**Late arrival** Mark Purcell, Marina Alberti, Qing Shen, Marty Curry, Christine Bae

**Absent** Manish Chalana, Bob Mugerauer

**Jan 26 Meeting minutes approval:**

Moved& seconded

8 yes

0 no

0 abstain

**Tyler Quinn EDI Committee**

Social justice social hours

These are mall group discussions bi weekly that stemmed from the UDP EDI week

We are discussing different articles focusing on EDI and looking at them through the UDP common book( How to Be an Antiracist) lens

We are looking to see more faculty members in attendance and yes you are welcome!!

Moving forward we will look to not conflict with classes

**Curriculum Committee Recommendations for changes**

There are some issues with the current thesis/professional projects.

We would like to look at alternative solutions to the current requirements

We want to get to the point to be able to vote on a proposal

Curriculum Committee 2021

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGES TO MUP CAPSTONE

EXPERIENCE

Request to Faculty

Please review this document and make note of your concerns/issues or any other comments you may have.

We also strongly request that please think of possible solutions or specific edits that will enable us to

address the issues / concerns identified by you.

We will update the document based on the comments/suggestions received and share the updated version for the second round of faculty review.

Background

Based on the curriculum committee discussions in the previous academic year and subsequent faculty

discussions during faculty meetings, this proposal summarizes the present state of discussions. We have framed this as a formal note that may be shared as is or with modifications with all our MUP students.

The goal of this solicitation of faculty comments is to develop consensus on what we as faculty feel is a

good, rigorous, and competitive capstone experience for our graduate students in the MUP program.

This draft proposal responds to the following concerns raised earlier in our faculty meetings:

1. High advising load for faculty which affects faculty research and student deliverables.

Proposed changes will: help reduce the overall faculty load, resulting in much more balanced

advising load. A possible expansion of Capstone options for students may further reduce faculty load.

2. Confusion between professional projects and thesis.

Proposed changes will: communicate detailed requirements and expectations to students to promote

realistic expectations.

3. Quality and timely completion of student capstone work.

Proposed changes will: Streamline process to help students better plan and complete their research

activities.

4. Maintain the quality of our capstone experience and continue to be competitive with other similar

planning programs.

Proposed changes will: Provide a variety of capstone options that will enhance the reputation of our

program.

5. Concern that professional members of professional project committees might not be available and/or

remain committed.

Follow-up proposed actions to address this concern:

1) Create (we have this resource) a pool of dedicated professionals to draw from.

2) Create a professional project committee member memo that details roles and responsibilities that can be signed to indicate agreement to abide by the responsibilities.

MUP CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE

THESIS AND PROFESSIONAL PROJECT

The Capstone

Professional projects and thesis are the primary options for MUP students to complete their studies.

Collectively, they are known as a “capstone project.” We expect both to follow a similar basic format and represent a scholarly effort of high quality. A professional project emphasizes preparation of the student for professional practice, whereas a thesis is an academic-focused research project with broader applicability.

It is expected that the written deliverable of both options will be similar with:

● Clear statement of the problem or issue to be addressed.

● A review of the existing literature

● Collection of data or implementation of project activities

● Analysis of results

● Discussions and Conclusion.

The differences lie in the scope and the focus:

• A professional project answers a question of practical importance such as developing a design or a

plan or evaluating a policy intervention within a particular agency or practice setting.

• A Master’s thesis is expected to build upon existing research for incremental knowledge generation

in the field of the research discipline and is applicable beyond a single setting.

Types of Capstone Projects

1. Individual Project (currently available)

2. Group Project: 2-3 students will work cooperatively (currently available)

3. Studio Project: A project led by faculty members (1 or more) as a studio project for a professional

Client

Student Guidance

Should I do a Thesis or a Professional Project

Some factors to consider in making your decision include your plans after graduation. Students who are

considering the transition into a job after the MUP degree (which is a terminal professional degree)

would likely benefit by undertaking a professional project addressing a specific professional challenge

or issue. It will provide you with an experience geared toward solving problems of practical importance

to the field. In a professional project, the client generally drives the research design and process.

Students who are considering a doctoral program or working in the research field would benefit from

undertaking a thesis. If you have ever thought about a potential future degree or research career, the

thesis option would give you a better understanding of the complete research process. In a thesis, the

student generally drives the research design and process.

If you are unsure about which option to select, schedule a meeting to discuss with your faculty advisor.





Comments & Questions:

The final presentation of capstone/thesis/professional project will correspond with the end of year PC event. We are continually trying to elevate this event so that students have an opportunity to present to members in the planning community

Question about the number of faculty on the thesis committee?? Current thesis committee guidelines are NOT changing. One faculty member would be chair and one faculty member would be committee member

The Prof Project would change in that a professional member can be one of two members required on the committee. There would need to be clear expectations given to the professional …and typically the professional who is overseeing the project would be on the committee

There may be issues of quality control if one of the committee members is a professional …

The faculty who is a chair should ultimately have oversite

Can we create a vetted list? How do we “rate” who is adequate?

How do we modify the workload with the increase of students??

Our job is to protect the quality of the work of our students

The chair of the committee decides whether or not the additional committee members are adequate…

We do not have enough faculty resource in dealing with demand with the increase in enrollment

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1qN5BdLT7rOJD6U902omIKTOiAe6iBuxDivEKLi_HnzI/edit#gid=1831975785>

Can we learn from schools that have been utilizing group projects as capstones for many years…*Follow up from Himanshu that they have done the research last year and that other programs have been successful in this model*

For the MIPM program, each student has to find at least 1 advisor ( faculty)

For the MIPM capstone they provide two courses which provides support, advice and help

Is there ever a thesis that has been done by 2 students? YES

Can we discuss the studio idea??

Dan currently has 5 MUP thesis students who are also taking the BE studio and they are basing their topics based on the studio. He’ll keep us posted how this turns out

For Dan…why not have these be professional project?

One difference is that the current group project has used 2 maybe 3 students max..

In the proposed studio model…more students

In this proposed model will all students then have their studio product be equal to their capstone? Prof project?

We would want to write a syllabus that would have set outcomes of the end product.

We frequently have documents at the end of studio…

In a studio setting…it’s difficult to know who contributed to the project.

Is there some way to design the studio so there is more clarity who is contributing?

Yes there are ways to track individual contributions…students do go on to complete their individual work.

In the proposed model it would be part of a larger whole and the product would cover more than one quarter..

We need to look at the number of faculty we have versus the number of students and we need to respond to this.

What kind of vetting are we doing of MUP students that they have the ability to produce a thesis as an individual?

Can we create a collective thesis support?? Faculty can share the mentoring??

What about keeping the thesis for those who want to do one and getting rid of all other requirements with regard to capstone. Exit exams for the rest?

What if we created a co-teaching arrangement for the research design course in fall of their second year?

The biggest opportunity we have would be to have more faculty be involved in the fall?

We need to make a decision and it’s only going to get worse unless we move forward with making a change

The way professional projects currently happen is that they can come from PC members or ones that are currently bubbling up and they reach out to a studio or a faculty member.

There are systems currently in place …we want to do more in our proposal to show how existing and proposed changes for the professional project and capstone line up.

Next steps: The curriculum committee will meet next week to discuss faculty comments, how concerns can be addressed and ultimately how we can move forward with a vote.