



Doctoral Education at the Biden School of Public Policy and Administration: 1961-2021

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Doctoral education at the Biden School of Public Policy and Administration evolved from a growing recognition in the second half of the 20th century of the need for research and analysis to inform public policies and practices.¹ The initial demand was for university scholarship to address the increasingly complex social and policy challenges emerging in cities and metropolitan regions. The challenges of poverty, urban decay, environmental degradation, and racial and ethnic discrimination did not fit neatly in disciplinary bundles and could not be adequately addressed through the lens of a single area of knowledge. In addition, these challenges could only be addressed if interdisciplinary knowledge was translated into policies and programs that might be adopted by communities. A new generation of scholars was needed, one that was truly interdisciplinary in knowledge and orientation, and capable of conducting research and scholarship on complex societal issues in order to identify new possibilities for policy and action.

The original doctoral program in the Biden School was created in 1972 to address this societal need. It focused on the emerging fields of urban affairs and public policy. Over the next half-century that doctoral program expanded its substantive focus to address the full scope of public policy and administration, and the design of the program changed many times. Additional doctoral programs also were established to address critical societal challenges in energy and environmental policy (1997), disaster science and management (2010), engineering and public policy (2019), and education and social policy (2021). Through all these changes, the original core identity of doctoral education in the Biden School was retained: educating a new generation of interdisciplinary scholars capable of identifying creative solutions to critical societal challenges and prepared to translate those solutions into policies and programs for communities at all scales, local to global.

THE EMERGING SOCIAL SCIENCES

The emergence of interdisciplinary, policy-oriented doctoral education at the University of Delaware and elsewhere in the 1970s was a product of the changing landscape of scholarship in the social sciences in the decades immediately following World War II. During that period the traditional social sciences—

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political science, sociology, economics—became embroiled in controversies about whether and how social inquiry should be more scientific and more empirical. The dialogues in each discipline focused on issues concerning appropriate epistemology, theory, modeling, and empiricism. While some scholars in all of these disciplines carried out research and analysis on emerging social and economic challenges, including the challenges facing urban America, many more focused on the internal challenges related to the construction of their disciplines. Prodigious scholarly debates about the directions of these disciplines arose shortly after the war and continued through subsequent decades. Some of the nation's leading social science scholars engaged in an academic battle that often entangled not only university departments but the national and international academic and professional communities. Each discipline had a set of active and highly visible protagonists who had large numbers of disciplinary disciples: in sociology, Talcott Parsons and C. Wright Mills; in political science, David Easton and Sheldon Wolin, in economics, Milton Friedman and G.L.S. Shackle. Quite apart from the merits of any of the positions, the dialogues themselves were inward-looking and focused more on the content of the disciplines than on the development and use of knowledge to address contemporary issues. Indeed, by the 1960s and 1970s, the leading journals in each discipline were largely barren of any consideration of substantive societal challenges or research-based policy proposals to address them.

Looking back, Irving Louis Horowitz (2006) points out that the dialogues of the traditional social sciences became increasingly preoccupied with building each separate discipline, with scholars becoming increasingly specialized, and the value of scholarship measured by its contributions to that discipline. The result was an increasing fragmentation among and within the major social sciences disciplines, and increasing isolation of the scholarship undertaken in those disciplines from the substantive emerging challenges in society. It was this, Horowitz proposed, that set the stage for the emergence of new, interdisciplinary fields of social science: urban affairs, policy studies, environmental studies, criminology, and communications. Two of these, urban affairs and policy studies (defined later as public policy or policy analysis) were to become core areas of the Biden School along with the field of public administration, which in the decades after World War II became a domain of interdisciplinary scholarship and practice quite separate from political science.

The need for these fields was proclaimed by diverse scholars in the decades after World War II, just as the public purpose of higher education was expanding. In 1951, Daniel Lerner and Harold Lasswell, both of whom had recognized the value of social science research to various aspects of the war effort, framed the concept of the "policy sciences" and called for the social sciences to engage in interdisciplinary approaches to address critical national policy challenges. The policy sciences, they argued, would fulfill the intelligence needs of our times and provide the knowledge required to improve the practice of democracy (Lerner and Lasswell, 1951). Public policy analysis as an interdisciplinary and applied field of study was created in the first three decades after the war.

In that same period, universities were called upon by both public and private institutions to play a more active role in addressing the emerging problems of America, including the growing challenges in cities. Many older cities were experiencing an unprecedented outmigration of population and economic enterprise to new and growing American suburbs that were themselves the product of public policies. Most dramatically, the Interstate Highway System Act of 1956 authorized the construction of 41,000 miles of federally-funded highways that drove population, businesses, and employment out of American cities. Cities had increased concentrations of poverty, a loss of economic investment and jobs, and diminished resources to tackle their challenges. All of this was taking place at the peak of the civil rights movement and later during the domestic strife attendant to the war in Vietnam. The U.S. War on Poverty driven by Lyndon Johnson's Great Society initiative reaffirmed the urgency of meeting domestic challenges, most of which were concentrated in America's cities. Yet, the incentive for the University of Delaware and other universities to take on an expanded responsibility for addressing these urban challenges did not initially come from government policies.

THE DIVISION OF URBAN AFFAIRS

The Biden School evolved from the Division of Urban Affairs, established in 1961 with funding from the Ford Foundation to address the challenges facing urban America, specifically those in the city of Wilmington and the surrounding region. The forces that gave rise to university-based urban affairs

programs in general and the UD program specifically are complex and, in comparison with the creation of traditional disciplinary programs, unusual. Most of the pressure for urban affairs programs came from outside the academic community rather than from the efforts of scholars working on urban issues. Urban affairs programs arose as an important university response to the practical social, political, and economic challenges facing American cities in the decades after World War II. The social origins of urban affairs have given the field and its programs a distinctive identity and a mandate to apply the knowledge and expertise from universities to address the challenges of urban America.

Systematic study of urban phenomena has been a part of many established academic disciplines for decades. Until the emergence of urban affairs programs, however, no discipline had organized its inquiry or mode of applying knowledge in ways that made it the logical vehicle for university responses to the emerging urban crises of the 1960s. The emergence of urban affairs programs as a set of self-contained programs was a direct response to external demand. Universities were called upon by governments, private institutions, and community organizations to play a more active role in their communities, to mobilize their resources to help alleviate the poverty, racism, institutional disorder, and environmental blight that threatened the nation's cities and menaced its residents.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the federal government invested massive amounts of funds for "solution-oriented" training, research and services, and for advice on the setting up, operation, and evaluation of a vast number of federally-spawned urban projects that were part of the "War on Poverty" and the "Great Society" proposals of the Johnson administration. Some government leaders believed that a national commitment on the scale of the "cold war" defense mobilization or the space program was required to address the problems of cities. It was thought that the technologies and management skills used in the defense and space programs could and should be transferred to metropolitan regions to help in the wars on poverty and physical and environmental decay. Universities, particularly those with interdisciplinary urban programs, were often regarded as ready-assembled Cape Canaveral's capable of channeling new technologies to the cities through applied research and expert consultation with public officials and community members (Rich and Warren 1980).

These societal pressures also grew out of militant demands and popular support for greater social and economic equity. In the wake of urban riots in the late 1960s, colleges and universities—often pushed by their students and faculty -- were viewed as having a moral obligation to improve conditions for the poor and ethnic and racial minorities in the communities they served. In this environment, urban affairs emerged as a field with a set of distinctive academic and research priorities defined in part by a broader social and policy movement. At the same time, urban affairs also represented a challenge to many of the traditional forms of higher education: the hierarchical relationships among students, faculty, and administrators; traditional, disciplinary-bound curricula and course content; and the absence of strong university-community cooperation in the application of research to practical social problems.

Between 1959 and 1974, the Ford Foundation distributed \$36 million in start-up grants that challenged U.S. universities to establish new programs designed to address the problems of urban America. The grants required universities to reach beyond their campuses to engage and ameliorate the growing tensions in U.S. cities that resulted from poverty, racism, physical blight, and the outmigration of private investment, population, and employment (Rich and Warren 1980). The University of Delaware received a grant in 1961 to establish the Division of Urban Affairs, one of the first university centers in the U.S. to focus on the growing challenges of America's cities and metropolitan regions. The Ford Foundation guidelines required that the funds would support a new unit that was interdisciplinary in the composition of its staff and that the staff would be actively engaged in the communities that they served.

In some respects, the University of Delaware was an unusual choice for one of the first Ford Foundation grants. In 1961, the University was still a modest-sized institution, more akin to the scale of a large college than to the multiversity it would become over the next half-century. A regionally-focused institution, the undergraduate enrollment of 3,600 was made up largely of Delawareans. The University had few graduate programs and only 340 full-time graduate students. Most of the graduate students were enrolled in the sciences and engineering. It also had a small imprint in the social sciences, with most of the research conducted by individual scholars for publication in journals and books, and very limited experience in carrying out the restricted and targeted requirements of grants or contracts.

In other regards, the University of Delaware was a perfect choice for a new interdisciplinary program intended to bring expertise to bear on the challenges of America's urban communities. UD is a land-grant university, and the Ford grant was designed to bring programs to America's urban areas parallel to those land-grant programs that had served rural America for the past century. UD was in a formative period of developing new programs that would benefit from the infusion of resources to undertake a venture that cut across traditional academic units. In terms of geography, the University was centered along the rapidly sprawling eastern megalopolis—from Boston to Richmond. Further, the small City of Wilmington manifested all of the interconnected and growing challenges of urban America: poverty, racism, environmental blight, inefficient planning, and overburdened and under-professionalized government programs. These challenges affected services and the quality of life in Wilmington in areas as diverse as housing, education, transportation, and public safety.

From the outset, the Division of Urban Affairs was different by design. The small professional staff of the Division had diverse social science and planning backgrounds and were expected to work in teams to address the multifaceted problems of Delaware's communities, especially Wilmington. In a practical and quite intentional way, the Division represented a mid-20th century reinvention of the 19th-century land-grant concept but now focused on addressing the emerging demands of an increasingly urbanized society. Instead of agricultural extension agents, the Division hired urban agents. Instead of crop improvement, the Division focused on addressing community problems ranging from housing and child poverty to race relations and community organization. The creation of the Division in 1961, a century after the Morrill Act established land-grant universities, reflected a recognition that the United States had become a predominantly urban nation, and that the land-grant responsibility needed to be refocused to address the needs and challenges of America's cities and metropolitan regions. In many ways, the programs of the Division were designed (and redesigned and expanded) to address the still emerging needs of communities throughout Delaware, their governments, and their community institutions, particularly by providing improved data and analysis to support evidence-based decision-making.

The Division was situated in the structure of the University in a manner calculated to emphasize its role in activities external to the University. It reported to the UD vice president for university relations rather than the provost. In the early years, the interdisciplinary staff included political scientists, public administration specialists, economists, demographers, and sociologists. Some faculty held appointments in the disciplinary departments but the Division initially had no academic degree programs and no faculty of its own. The Division staff was intentionally more racially diverse than the University as a whole, and it included community development specialists and other practitioners and advocates who would not be found in academic departments. Notably, the initial senior staff had little background and experience in urban issues; most had focused on rural issues and now sought to translate their knowledge to an urban setting.

The Division of Urban Affairs faced major challenges in carrying out its mission of applying research-based knowledge of best practices to Wilmington and other communities across the state. Most serious was the lack of capacity on campus and around the state to generate the data and analysis needed to inform planning and decision-making. The University had no established social science or policy centers generating data and analysis that could be drawn upon by the Division and there was little experience or interest among the existing social science faculty in conducting applied research for the state and its communities. For the first decade and a half of its existence, the Division was building the capacity to carry out applied research and analysis while it was already engaged in completing studies for government and community institutions at all levels, often under contract. The units established in the 1960s and 1970s to create capacity for applied research and public service remain part of the Biden School in 2022. The Census and Data System, established in 1963 to provide demographic information, became the Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research. The Urban Agent Program, established in 1972, to support community development in the City of Wilmington, evolved to the Center for Community Research and Service. The Delaware Public Administration Institute, established in 1973 to assist local and state government, became the Institute for Public Administration

In the late 1960s, the staff of the Division of Urban Affairs began to work on the design for a Ph.D. program that would prepare a new generation of interdisciplinary scholars. Part of the rationale for the program came directly from the experience of the Division. The composition of the Division's staff had been intentionally drawn from different disciplines. That said, the assumptions about how to achieve an

interdisciplinary orientation were quite naïve. Communications problems among staff trained in specific disciplines limited collaborations that would generate integrated knowledge. The proposed new graduate program would prepare truly interdisciplinary scholars and change agents.

In 1970, the University approved the appointment of faculty with primary appointments in the Division, anticipating that there would be a change in the academic and organizational status of the unit once the proposed new graduate program was approved. In 1971, new faculty were hired with primary appointments in the Division and some senior staff were awarded faculty rank in the Division. The initial conception was for an M.A. and Ph.D. program in Urban Affairs and Public Policy that would enable students with a bachelor's degree to enter the master's program and then move on to earn a Ph.D.²

The model for the development of the Division as an academic unit was included in the 1971 report of the University of Delaware's Community Design Commission and included a detailed proposal for the new Ph.D. program. The model called for a graduate college of urban affairs that would make the activities of the Division more central to the University as a whole by providing a place where students and faculty could participate in the development of research, education, and service related to the contemporary issues of urban life. Social issues would be the source and target of these initiatives which would stress the interdependence between basic theory, systematic research, and the application of scientific knowledge to policy and practice.

The M.A. and Ph.D. programs were established (1972 and 1973) even before the Division was transformed to the Graduate College of Urban Affairs and Public Policy in 1976. When the Division of Urban Affairs became a college it was given a broader name that included public policy since it already had a broader mission than was the case with the original unit supported by the Ford Foundation. The new College had a mandate for addressing all areas of advanced public affairs education, research, and service. The M.A. in Urban Affairs and Public Policy, first awarded in 1973, and the Ph.D., first awarded in 1976, were matched by a Master of Public Administration degree approved in 1976 and first awarded in 1978. All three graduate programs stressed the interdependence between basic theory, systematic research, experiential learning, and the application of interdisciplinary knowledge to policy, planning, and management.

A NEW GENERATION OF URBAN AFFAIRS SCHOLARS

The development of the new urban affairs and public policy graduate program was based on a belief that understanding and addressing the emerging challenges faced by cities and other communities required new approaches to the generation and use of social knowledge. Because of this, the graduate program was defined less by a pre-defined set of topics, methods, and theories than by a commitment to creatively combine all of these elements from many sources in ways that would generate new knowledge to inform public choice, create new possibilities for social change, and enhance capacities to guide the future of communities. Viewed in retrospect, this search for useable knowledge was both idealistic and naive. The former because it held the possibility of creating and using ideas, research, and analysis to promote what is of common value for the improvement of communities. The latter because it was not clear how to create such knowledge, by whom it would be used, or even how to determine what was of common value to a community. Even so, the new graduate program, and others like it across the nation, projected basic confidence about the power of ideas to guide social action and social change. That outlook attracted a diverse array of faculty and students.

The curriculum of the graduate program drew primarily from political science, sociology, and economics and included some facets of urban planning, demography, anthropology, law, and at times, areas of environmental science and engineering. As the graduate program was being designed, it became clear that the urban affairs focus needed to be matched with a focus on public policy, and students needed to be provided with the tools of policy analysis. Accordingly, public policy was added to the name of the program at the outset. The third ingredient for the graduate program was a less well-defined but still

² The viability of the M.A. as a free-standing professionally-oriented program developed later, in the 1980s and 1990s, when the program began to attract applicants who wanted a research-oriented professional certification for practice rather than an opportunity to move on for a doctoral degree.

important consideration of the scholarly dialogue on implementation, understood variously as public administration by those with a government orientation and as theories and strategies of social and community change by those more focused on community-based action. The program connected and reconnected the three dialogues of urban affairs, public policy, and public administration, and faculty and students located themselves in various positions among the dialogues according to their theoretical orientation or, more often, what seemed valuable to their substantive focus on housing, poverty, neighborhoods, service delivery, community, and economic development, or improvements in government programs, policies, and services.

The curriculum of the urban affairs and public policy graduate program was designed to be interdisciplinary, applied, and problem-oriented. Social issues, it was proposed, would be the source and target of the program, which would stress the interdependence between basic theory, systematic research, and the application of scientific knowledge to policy and practice. The program was interdisciplinary because the challenges facing urban America and the wider world did not come neatly bundled in disciplinary packages. The program was applied because the dichotomies often posed between academics and practitioners, between the community of ideas and the community of experience, were viewed as false and unproductive. Instead, the program was oriented towards helping students understand how they could use the knowledge they acquired and created to address the challenges facing communities. This was an idea of translational research before that concept gained prominence nearly a half-century later. The program was problem-oriented, such that the issues facing urban America would be examined as they emerged as problems within communities, and, especially as they were understood by those who experienced those problems. In some respects, this problem orientation was a forerunner of what later would be recognized as the process of problem-based learning, for which the University of Delaware gained global recognition.

The expectation was that the graduates from the program would be capable of bridging between the world of ideas and the world of action, between the role of researcher and the role of policy advocate and change agent. While some would pursue careers in academe, literally creating the field of urban affairs and contributing to the development of the field of public policy, others would apply their knowledge and research skills to leadership and decision-making positions in the wider community. Many would do some of both. It was expected that the scholarly work of the graduates would be informed by direct experience with the communities and challenges they examined.

The early years of the graduate program were marked by a great deal of faculty debate and experimentation with how the objectives of interdisciplinary, applied, and problem-oriented knowledge were to be met. There were no established graduate programs with these characteristics to serve as models; most established urban-oriented programs were in urban planning or city management and were preparing students for professional careers rather than for research and analysis. The faculty recruited to lead the program had all been trained in specific disciplines, mostly in sociology, political science, and economics. While they sought to create a truly interdisciplinary program, they each spoke a different disciplinary language and used concepts and methods familiar to their own discipline. There was a continual problem of slipping back into disciplinary approaches rather than connecting those approaches in new and intellectually productive ways. One way this challenge was addressed, was to rely on team-teaching of the core seminars, particularly the doctoral seminars. Even so, it soon became apparent that putting an economist, sociologist, and political science together in the same classroom did not necessarily produce interdisciplinary discourse. The substantive urban focus also was not well-defined or agreed upon. To a significant extent, urban meant whatever an individual faculty member defined it to mean.

In effect, the faculty were asking the students to do something that the faculty themselves were largely unable to do. In some cases, the frustrations with trying to generate truly interdisciplinary knowledge led some faculty and students to retreat into focus on methods, expecting that if we provided students with rigorous methodological capacities, they would make their own choices of the theories and substantive knowledge to apply to highly complicated social problems.

After the first years, the program did take on its own scholarly identity. In the early years, the participation of doctoral students in the process of experimentation with new concepts and frameworks for teaching and research may well have been the most rewarding part of their doctoral education. One result was a very high level of engagement of the faculty and doctoral students working together to shape new

understandings of challenging subjects and also working together on research and sponsored projects. Over time, the faculty developed more confidence in the core structure of the program which, as is true for doctoral programs in all fields, took real shape around the areas of research being undertaken by the faculty, often in collaboration with the doctoral students. The UD program helped define the intellectual center of gravity for the field of urban affairs, working with colleagues through the national Urban Affairs Association. The early doctoral graduates often were hired by other universities to develop programs modeled after the UD program.³

One of the challenges that faced the graduate program from its inception and remained a challenge throughout the program's development, was determining the appropriate background and qualifications of the students admitted to the program. By definition, students admitted to the program would have an academic background in one of the disciplines and rarely had much prior training in other disciplines. Since the faculty wanted students who would become a new generation of scholars, they did not limit those admitted to particular substantive fields or insist that there was initial alignment between the student's interests and the existing research programs of faculty. They did not seek to reproduce themselves. The resulting problem, however, was that students were interested in a very wide range of scholarly areas that often extended beyond the substantive expertise of the faculty. One way this was addressed was to limit entry to the Ph.D. to those who first earned the M.A. in Urban Affairs and Public Policy, or who had a master's degree in a related social science field. The doctoral students entering the Ph.D. program as graduates from the M.A. were typically best prepared for the demands at the doctoral level. The M.A. in Urban Affairs and Public Policy had been designed initially as a point of entry leading to the Ph.D. program. By the 1980s, however, the M.A. began to attract more professionally-oriented students who wanted a terminal graduate degree that prepared them for practice in planning, community development, nonprofit leadership, historic preservation. During that same period, more doctoral students entered that program with master's degrees from other institutions and from diverse disciplines. The acceptable range of master's experience became a continuing and contentious faculty issue for decades. On the one hand, the program wanted to attract students from diverse intellectual and experiential backgrounds. On the other hand, students needed a strong foundation in the social and policy sciences to be successful in the Ph.D. program.

Another continuing challenge was that many of the faculty were engaged in applied, short-term, and externally-funded research projects that were not always part of a longer-term program of scholarship. Doctoral students worked with faculty on these applied projects and gained valuable experience, but the projects rarely offered opportunities for students to develop dissertations or gain experience in the production of published scholarly research. Student dissertation topics reflected their diversity of interests, backgrounds, and objectives. The broad scope and range of dissertations and their varying scholarly content and quality remained a challenge for decades.

Despite these challenges, enrollments grew throughout the 1980s with graduate student funding provided primarily through grants and contracts from faculty and professional staff, most often working through the College's centers. By the end of the 1980s, the Ph.D. program was the largest in the social sciences at UD. Because the doctoral program was among the first of its kind in the nation, it became a model for similar programs across the nation. Indeed, despite the program's internal challenges, it developed a high recognition in the field of urban affairs that grew steadily as its Ph.D. graduates moved into faculty positions at other institutions. These alumni continued to connect with the University of Delaware as active members of the national Urban Affairs Association, the secretariat for which remained at the College.

By the late 1980s, most of the doctoral students and dissertations were supervised by a handful of the College's faculty, with most of the remaining faculty focusing their contributions at the master's level. In

³ Given that the Ph.D. was one of the nation's leading programs in a new field, the College hired some of its own Ph.D. graduates, a practice typically discouraged in the academy. The College also hired master's and doctoral graduates to research and public service professional staff positions in the centers. Some of the senior professional staff also held faculty rank.

part, this was a self-selected division of labor that became more firmly established with the growth of the MPA program.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

At the University of Delaware, there were strong connections with the field of public administration but no established academic or research program until 1976. The approval of the program was significant for the University which at the time had few professionally-oriented graduate programs. The Delaware MPA program was developed at the same time as the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) was advocating new national quality standards for MPA programs. In 1982, NASPAA formally reviewed the MPA and certified it as meeting the highest standards for such graduate programs. Delaware's program was one the first to be so designated.

From the outset, the new MPA program offered full-time students a unique opportunity to work alongside the faculty and professional staff of the college on applied public administration projects throughout the state. The Institute for Public Administration provided ongoing leadership and support for the program and its students. A parallel role was played by what later became the Center for Community Research and Service with most of those students being in the M.A. in Urban Affairs and Public Policy. This model of combining rigorous academic work with hands-on professional experience in carrying out research and applied projects continued to expand and evolve through the 1980s and 1990s, with a formal infrastructure developed to support it. By the 1990s, this approach became nationally recognized as *The Delaware Mode*. In line with *The Delaware Model*, the MPA was designed primarily as a full-time degree program, although it did admit part-time students and subsequently developed a mid-career option.

NEW DIRECTIONS OF ENGAGED SCHOLARSHIP

The scope and impact of the College's applied research and public service programs often overshadowed its scholarly contributions, leading to a false identity among many at the UD that was in contrast to its national recognition as a locus for engaged or translational scholarship. The scholarly research productivity of the faculty increased consistently over the 1980s. The College was advancing not only the fields of urban affairs and public policy, and later public administration, but emerging fields of energy and environmental policy and historic preservation. . The growth of work in the latter two areas led to the creation of two new centers in 1984: The Center for Energy and Urban Policy Research (renamed the Center for Energy and Environmental Policy in 1993) and the Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering (renamed the Center for Historic Architecture and Design in 1996).

By the mid-1980s, the earlier focus on urban affairs had dissipated and now had priority for only a subset of the College's faculty and professionals. Many faculty and staff focused their work in public policy and public administration, or more specialized areas such as energy and environmental policy and historic preservation. Within the graduate programs, the scholarly focus also was becoming broader and more diffuse, covering diverse substantive areas of public policy and administration including health policy, education policy, energy policy, public finance, nonprofit administration, community development and planning, and intergovernmental service delivery.

In 1987, the University Faculty Senate appointed an external review team to evaluate the graduate program in urban affairs and public policy.⁴ The review team affirmed the Delaware program as among the best known in the nation but criticized the Ph.D. program for being too open-ended in its research identify and for accommodating students with too wide a range of backgrounds and scholarly interests. It recommended that the doctoral program needed a better-defined focus around a few established areas of faculty scholarship. Subsequently, the doctoral program was redesigned around areas of specialization that reflected the primary scholarly areas of the faculty. Ironically, this served to fragment the program across the areas (and various subfields as defined as appropriate by the faculty), rather than either reunify it around scholarship in the core field of urban affairs or affirm it as a degree in public policy and policy analysis. The challenge was that the research and scholarship of the faculty was cutting across

⁴ The review was part of the ongoing academic program review process that evaluated all programs over a ten-year cycle.

diverse fields of inquiry that were only loosely connected by an interdisciplinary, policy-oriented, and applied orientation. At the same time, the program often filled gaps in the limited range of other doctoral options across the University available to social and policy-oriented students. It served part-time as well as full-time students and students looking for a professional doctoral program as well as those who sought a research degree to prepare them for faculty positions. The result was that the program was subject to increasingly different expectations and aspirations and diverse demands on the types of students in the program (both backgrounds and aspirations), the proper curriculum, and the way that program resources were aligned. In effect, the urban affairs and public policy graduate program became a bundle of programs wrapped up in the same package.

A REFOCUSED VISION

By 1990, the College of Urban Affairs and Public Policy was well-established at the University and nationally recognized for its distinctive programs in urban affairs and in applied research and public service. In 1992, a national ranking of U.S. graduate urban programs ranked UD's College of Urban Affairs and Public Policy 4th in the nation (behind MIT, Carnegie-Mellon, Syracuse)⁵ The MPA program received a six-year reaccreditation from the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA).

As a result of a University review of the College in 1991, a strategic plan was developed and approved by the faculty that aligned the path of development with priorities of a new university administration and with the broader scope of its programs and responsibilities. The Strategic Plan charted a course for a new and more focused stage of the College's development. The College needed a stronger scholarly and intellectual center of gravity that would underpin its graduate programs, research, and public service, and that would connect its programs and centers. This translated into concentrating the graduate programs around emerging areas of strength and comparative advantage, and the supporting programs of research that enhanced the areas of graduate concentration. It also meant sharpening the focus of public service programs and strengthening the integration of public service with research and instruction. *The Delaware Model* of public affairs education was designed around this integration. Finally, the strategic plan called for the generation of additional resources from external sources to supplement university support, particularly additional resources to support the growth of the graduate programs.

The Strategic Plan also pointed to strengthening the academic programs by concentrating graduate work in areas of specialization that rest upon active research and public service achievements. The M.A. was modified to create a terminal professional degree track. New concentrations were approved for the M.A. program that focused on areas supported by active research and community service programs in the centers: community analysis and development (Center for Community Development now Center for Community Research and Service); energy and environmental policy (Center for Energy and Environmental Policy); and historic preservation and planning (Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering). The concentration in historic preservation and planning was partly a compromise solution to external pressure to prepare American Planning Association certified planners for local government. The College did not have the faculty capacity to support a new planning degree program and the concentration would produce graduates with sufficient planning expertise to be employed by local governments for entry-level positions and with the added advantage of having knowledge of historic preservation planning, a specialty that most local governments did not have the resources to support as a separate position.

Similarly, the doctoral program concentrated in areas of research specialization and began to focus admission on students planning to conduct research in those areas, a significant departure from the past. The key areas were urban governance and planning, technology and society including energy and

⁵ The ranking was carried out by James G. Strathman from Portland State University and was published in the *Journal of Urban Affairs* in 1992. In addition to ranking 4th overall, Delaware was ranked #1 by peer institution leaders.

environmental policy, and social policy including education and health policy and community development.

Between 1991 and 1995, graduate enrollment increased from 137 to 185 with a doubling of the number of women and minority students as well as an increase in international students. Graduate student financial support more than tripled between 1991 and 1995, reaching \$1.6 million and the number of funded students increased from 42 to 92. Virtually all of the increased funding came from college-generated sources including an increase in externally sponsored research and public service from \$1.5 million in 1991 to \$3.5 million in 1995 (Rich, 1995:6). Part of this came from an increase in the number of faculty and also an increase in faculty participation in sponsored research encouraged by extended contracts that included appointments in the centers intended to provide support for the development of proposals for external contracts and grants.⁶ In addition, the public service programs supported by most of the centers also increased, partly as a result of increased demand from state and local governments and agencies and also through growing national and international sponsored research, most of which was carried out by the Center for Energy and Environmental Policy. At the same time, faculty and staff publication increased as did participation in national and international professional meetings, encouraged by increased travel support generated from the overhead return from sponsored programs.

Overall, the college became more self-reliant, especially regarding its finances. One result of this was the creation of a reserve account for graduate student funding that served as an insurance policy and enabled admissions committees to make funding commitments to new students early and before some external grants and contracts were finalized. The risk was low since external funding had been increasing.

THE DELAWARE MODEL

By the mid-1990s, the College was gaining recognition for *The Delaware Model* of public affairs education. It was and is a unique model grounded in the integration of graduate education, policy research, and public service. It was a model developed through two decades of efforts and it drove the growth of the College's graduate programs in scale, quality, and impact, and in ways that took maximum advantage of the growing capacities of the research and public service centers and their growing engagement with constituencies at the local, state, national and global levels. The number of constituencies served doubled from 150 in 1990 to 300 by 1995. While the majority of those served were still local and state organizations and agencies, the College also carried out projects with 16 foreign and international agencies, 12 federal government agencies, and 7 national nonprofit organizations.

For all of these projects, graduate students worked alongside faculty and professional staff and applied what they learned in their classrooms to address actual problems of policy, planning, management, community development, and civic engagement. The graduate students were funded through this work and the standard of quality expected for their contributions was to match those of professionals with whom they worked, and for the most part that is what happened. The graduate students completed their academic programs with a level of experience and understanding about social and policy research and analysis and about the delivery of programs and services that simply could not have been obtained from a traditional academic program or even from an academic program embellished with occasional opportunities for internships or summer project work. At the same time, the graduate students greatly enhanced the capacity of the centers and institutes, and also greatly enhanced the capacity of the faculty to carry out scholarly research in collaboration with doctoral students.

The Delaware Model was greatly assisted by the State of Delaware General Assembly which, starting in 1985, provided funding for Public Service Assistantships (PSA). The funding was a direct line item to the College and provided funds to provide assistantships for graduate students to work with faculty and professionals on public service and applied research projects of vital interest to Delaware's communities and agencies. Many of the projects assisted local governments and community organizations as well as state agencies. PSA funding often was used as match support for small grants from public agencies and

⁶ The university-reported sponsored research and public service per FTE faculty increased to over \$300,000 in 1995, among the highest level of any academic unit at the university, including the sciences and engineering departments.

community organizations, enabling partnerships in applied research and public service that otherwise would not have been possible or would have been at a greatly reduced scale of contribution. PSA funding also provided start-up support for new areas of policy research and service, including initial research and analysis on homelessness, energy efficiency, and water conservation. PSA funding grew in the mid-1990s enabling more students to work on more projects and providing a growing foundation of support for increased enrollments, particularly in MPA and M.A. programs. By that time, work conducted with PSA support was impacting virtually all areas of public policy and government operations in the state.

The Delaware Model was most clearly explained in a jointly authored article in the *Journal of Public Administration Education* in 1997.⁷ Recognizing that the dichotomy between theory and practice has “haunted the field of public administration,” including public administration education, the authors proposed that a new educational approach was needed that engaged students in the integration of theory and practice as a fundamental part of their learning experience. Enabling that approach, required more than simply a redesign of the curriculum.

The Delaware Model, they pointed out, was the result of a series of conscious philosophical decisions, as well as some actions fueled by necessity. From the outset, the Division of Urban Affairs connected the University with many of the communities it served. As the School developed, the commitment to bridging the University and the community remained at the center of the School’s development. Beyond this, it was a practical necessity to keep the academic programs and the centers connected in mutually beneficial ways. The product was and remains a distinctive model of public affairs education that by the mid-1990s had achieved a significant integration of theory and practice in its educational programs based on a similar integration in the College’s structure and organization.

CHEP TRANSITION

In 1996, a proposal had been made by the University administration to reorganize five of the UD’s ten colleges. Included in the recommended reorganization was the merger of the College of Urban Affairs and Public Policy with the College of Human Resources and the College of Education. A group of five deans recommending the reorganization to the provost proposed that the units were linked by the common mission of being interdisciplinary pre-professional and professional programs with a policy and service orientation directed to central societal issues and challenges. The programs were complementary and connected by a historic association with the University’s responsibilities as a state-assisted, land grant institution. They also shared a commitment to academic and professional values that emphasize interdisciplinary research and instruction in the service of meeting important societal needs. The newly consolidated college, they argued, would represent a stronger balance and integration of graduate and undergraduate programs, sponsored and unsponsored research, and community and public service. It would be more responsive to the needs of the state and its communities, broadening the scope of programs that directly affect the quality of life in Delaware and far beyond.

On July 1, 1997, the proposed merger was implemented and the College of Human Resources, Education and Public Policy was launched; so was the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy which included all of the academic programs of the former College of Urban Affairs and Public Policy. Two years later, the college name was changed to College of Human Services, Education and Public Policy, but on campus and in the community the college became known by its acronym, CHEP.

⁷ Robert Denhardt, Jerome R. Lewis, Jeffrey A Raffel, and Daniel Rich (1997). Integrating Theory and Practice in MPA Education: The Delaware Model. *Journal of Public Administration Education*, vol. 3, no. 2: 153-62 and reprinted in the 1997 Education Supplement, PA Times, October 1997, 5-7.

CHEP was not only a priority for university investment; it also became a priority for increased direct investment from the State of Delaware. Those investments fueled the rapid growth of the new college. By 2000, CHEP was the second-largest UD college.

THE ENEP PROGRAM

Concurrent with the creation of CHEP, faculty affiliated with the Center for Energy and Environmental Policy (CEEP) proposed a new interdisciplinary master's and doctoral degree program. The program's name, which was originally environmental and energy policy, was subsequently switched to energy and environmental policy, parallel to the name of the Center. It was known by its acronym, ENEP.

The ENEP program grew from the work of faculty and students affiliated with CEEP. The Center was one of the earliest academic research and teaching centers in the nation to focus on the interrelated areas of energy and environmental policy, and to do so with an interdisciplinary and policy-oriented research lens. The work of the Center focused on the global political economy of energy and how it could be changed. Over time it developed ongoing research on issues of climate change and sustainable development. Much of the work was pathbreaking. Starting in 1997, CEEP was an official observer organization to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, which enabled the submission of briefing papers that became part of the official record; eventually, CEEP submitted 10 briefing papers. CEEP also hosted an Energy and Environmental Policy Book Series, which focused on critical issues in the political economy of environmental and energy policy. This work involved faculty from several disciplines and attracted graduate students who wanted to work on the issues of climate change, energy transformation, renewable and nonrenewable energy options, environmental justice, and later smart cities and sustainable development.

Initially, graduate students working in CEEP and focusing their studies on energy and environmental policy were enrolled in the master's and doctoral programs in Urban Affairs and Public Policy. By the mid-1990s, it was clear that there was interdisciplinary faculty capacity and student demand to support a program focused on these areas. It also was clear that CEEP was generating the external funding needed to support the program's graduate students and enable them to work with faculty on CEEP projects. Since many of the projects were international, the Center attracted prospective international students as well as those being recruited from the U.S.

The ENEP program was approved in 1997 with the first official enrollments in 1998. The first graduates of the Master of Energy and Environmental Policy (MEEP) program were in 1999 and the first Ph.D. in ENEP was in 2001. The program was reviewed for permanent status in 2002, which included an assessment based on an external review committee. The review committee was strongly supportive of granting permanent status for the program but also pointed to some of the challenges faced in the administration of the program, specifically with the reporting line for the program director and the need to clarify the relationship of the ENEP program to CEEP. While the program would not have existed without CEEP, for both substantive and resource reasons, the initial administrative locus for the ENEP program was in the School and not in CEEP. Under UD policy at the time, centers did not administer degree programs, and until the creation of the Graduate College in 2019, the University did not have organizational arrangements that supported interdisciplinary programs that transcended boundaries of college.

THE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION

In the early 2000s, the local impact of the School was increasingly matched by greater national recognition, but of a kind somewhat different from what has been the case earlier. The School still had national recognition and ranking in the field of urban affairs. What was new was the School's growing recognition in public administration, and some other fields of public policy, specifically energy and environmental policy. The School was becoming a comprehensive school of public affairs and it was increasingly recognized as such by its peers. Perhaps the most notable outcome from the first decade of

the 21st century, was that the School completed a reorientation of its aspirations that increasingly focused on becoming one of the nation's premier schools of public affairs.

Senior School faculty became more engaged with the major national public administration associations, the American Society for Public Administration, and especially NASPAA, then named the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration.⁸ Since the 1970s, the Division of Urban Affairs and the College of Urban Affairs and Public Policy had been central to the national network of urban affairs programs. In the late 1990s and especially in the 2000s, the School developed a parallel centrality in public administration and public affairs programs more generally. By 2002, the School was ranked in the top 50 among schools of public affairs by *U.S. News & World Report*, based largely on a reputation survey. The School retained its high ranking in urban policy and city government as 7th in the nation and was 26th in public administration. The School also was gaining recognition in the field of nonprofit management, which would lead to a national ranking in that specialization in subsequent years. By 2006, the School's recognition as a nationally ranked, comprehensive school of public affairs was indisputable.

In January 2010, as a result of another reorganization, the School entered the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). It also took on a new name. The change in the name of the School from Urban Affairs and Public Policy to Public Policy and Administration was a confirmation of the substantive shift in faculty orientation. Even so, the name of the Ph.D. in Urban Affairs and Public Policy was not changed at this time, largely because of a few senior faculty with major roles in the program who had great recognition in the field of urban affairs. While the names of the M.A. and Ph.D. programs were not changed, both were redesigned, partly as a result of the loss of faculty who had earlier been major contributors to those programs.

Two new graduate programs were added just as the School was making the transition to CAS. The M.A. in Historic Preservation initiated in 2010 grew out of an area of specialization in M.A. in Urban Affairs and Public Policy. The Disaster Science and Management M.S. and Ph.D. were initiated in the same year and were administratively located in the School in 2011.

The M.A. in Historic Preservation (MAHP) was established to take advantage of the faculty's strong national reputation in historic preservation planning and practice. Specifically, the program's strengths were the documentation and analysis of historic resources, scholarship in vernacular architecture, use of computer applications in preservation documentation, and use of material culture research and scholarship to provide a context for interpretation of historic properties. The institutional backbone of the MAHP program was the Center for Historic Architecture and Design (CHAD), renamed from the Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering (CHAE) in 1997. MAHP students gained knowledge and employable skills through experience working with CHAD. In addition, the program encouraged students to specialize in an area of particular interest drawing on related programs in CAS in the departments of History, Art History, Geography, English, and Museum Studies, as well as the Winterthur Program in American Material Culture. In an important sense, the MAHP was greatly advantaged by the School's move to CAS since it fit well with the overall mix of interdisciplinary programs and faculty in the college.

After its probationary five-year start-up period, assessments of the quality of the MAHP program were uniformly positive. The challenge, however, was that there were less than a handful of School faculty actively teaching, advising, and supporting students in the program. Given the declining number of School faculty since 2009 and the need to give priority in faculty hiring to other areas and programs with greater student demand, the School faculty voted in October 2016 not to support permanent status for the MAHP. Instead, historic preservation returned to an area of specialization in the M.A. in Urban Affairs and Public Policy, continued to be supported by CHAD, and later became an option for a graduate certificate.

The development of the graduate program in Disaster Science and Management (DISA) was quite different. The Disaster Research Center (DRC) had been established in 1963 and was the first in the world devoted to the social scientific study of disasters. Historically, DRC had conducted field interviews

⁸ NASPAA later kept the acronym but changed its name to the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs and Administration, intended to denote a larger global scope.

and extended research projects on the group, organizational, and community preparation for, response to, and recovery from natural and technological disasters. All DRC research was intended to yield both basic scientific knowledge and information that could be used to develop more effective plans and policies to reduce the impacts of future disasters. DRC activities have been supported by diverse sources, including the National Science Foundation, the Department of Homeland Security, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Other sources of funding include the NOAA Sea Grant Program, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Multidisciplinary Center for Earthquake Engineering Research, Public Entity Risk Institute, and the U.S. Geological Survey.

While not a formal part of the School, the Disaster Research Center (DRC) many core faculty in DRC held appointments in the School. DRC also was physically located adjacent to the School. The DISA graduate program was developed to take advantage of the DRC's strengths and recognition, and when it was developed, it was natural that School would be the administrative home for the interdisciplinary program.

The Disaster Science and Management (DISA) program was developed by an interdisciplinary, university-wide faculty committee established by the provost in the summer of 2006. It was designed to complement existing graduate programs in such fields as sociology, urban affairs and public policy, energy and environmental policy, and civil and environmental engineering. The committee's proposal for a new interdisciplinary graduate program in Disaster Science and Management was approved by the Faculty Senate in April 2009 and obtained seed funding from a \$400,000 grant from the Unidel Foundation. The first students entered the program in Fall 2010. The development of the DISA program took advantage of the university-wide interdisciplinary faculty capacity in different dimensions of disaster science and management.

REVISION AND REORIENTATION

As of 2012, the School of Public Policy and Administration was the largest social science graduate unit in the College of Arts and Sciences, and among the largest graduate programs at the University. In that year, the School was ranked 12th in City Management and Urban Policy by U.S. News and World Report. Between 2009 and 2013, the Ph.D. in UAPP enrollment was relatively stable, averaging about 45.

A significant revision of the Ph.D. in Urban Affairs and Public Policy was submitted and approved in 2013. The key motivation for the revision was that some of the faculty who had been central to the program for two decades had retired. The faculty who left included some of the School's most productive and prominent scholars; they accounted for supervision of 75% or more of the dissertations during the early 2000s. The curriculum revision reflected an adjustment to the new scholarly configuration of the remaining faculty. One key change was to include a proseminar in leadership and public administration, which was a growing area of faculty strength. The proseminars in social policy and technology and society were eliminated as requirements since the School had lost key faculty in those fields. It is notable that before the 2013 program revisions, public administration was not a visible area of the Ph.D. in UAPP and most public administration faculty in the School had only a tangential connection with the program. Because of the 2013 revisions, that situation changed.

As part of the 2013 revision, the qualifying exams were also redesigned to focus more extensively on the integration and use of the knowledge acquired. The redesign was also intended to improve support of student progress at each stage in the program by providing clear milestones at each stage. It was also decided to limit admissions to the Ph.D. program to 4-6 full-time students each year and to admit only those students whose research interests aligned with the emerging expertise of the faculty. This meant that the program would focus somewhat less on traditional areas in the field of urban affairs and more on areas of public administration and policy analysis, which would better align with current faculty scholarship and plans for new faculty recruitment. The new program was designed to be completed in four years of full-time study.

In 2018, the Ph.D. in UAPP curriculum underwent another major revision. Some changes were designed to align the UAPP doctoral program with parallel changes in DISA and ENEP doctoral programs, and other changes reflected the emerging composition of the School's faculty. For example, the proseminars in social policy and technology and society were reintroduced since the School once again had faculty expertise in those areas. Additional required preparation was expected for entering students and

methods requirements were strengthened. The 2018 redesign also accommodated the changing aspirations and expectations of doctoral education once the School was named the Joseph R. Biden, Jr. School of Public Policy and Administration in December 2018. That naming confirmed a path of development for the School and its graduate programs, especially its doctoral programs, that was included in the White Paper recommending the naming of the School. That White Paper highlighted the importance of doctoral education to the future of the Biden School.

In line with the newly affirmed priority of the Biden School, three new graduate programs were added between 2017 and 2018: a Master of Public Health (MPH) jointly offered with the College of Health Sciences, a Ph.D. in Engineering and Public Policy offered with the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, and a Master of Public Policy, one of the essential degrees for a comprehensive school of public affairs. The MPA degree also developed an online as well as an on-campus option. The online MPA program would address the needs of part-time students recruited nationally through a partnership with Wiley, one of the nation's leading online services platforms.

After a period of contraction between 2009 and 2014, the Biden School faculty also was on a growth trajectory. The number of faculty increased from 24 in 2014 to 35 in 2019, with an additional 8 positions committed to complete the approved hiring plan. As anticipated, the number of joint-appointment faculty also increased as the Biden School expanded its joint programs with other academic units. At the same time, the number of research and public service professionals increased from 23 in 2009 to 48 in 2019, consistent with the growth in external funding for research and public service.⁹

By 2019, the Biden School already was the largest social science unit at UD and, by any reasonable measure, was a fully comprehensive school of public affairs, on a par in size with many of its aspirational peers. It was already operating with a partnership model, developing joint programs with academic units in different colleges. In keeping with its newly affirmed priority and increasing scale, effective July 1, 2020, the Joseph R. Biden, Jr. School of Public Policy and Administration became the first free-standing professional school at the University.

PH.D. IN PUBLIC POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION

The naming of the School and its transition to free-standing status was accompanied by many other changes including an affirmation of the broader mission of doctoral education. The transition to this change started much earlier. Most significantly, it was reflected in the change in the name of the School to Public Policy and Administration in 2010. A decade later, as the School was making the transition to a free-standing professional school, the Ph.D. in Urban Affairs and Public Policy committee recommended that the name of the degree be changed to Ph.D. in Public Policy and Administration, affirming the substantive broadening of the scholarship of the faculty and doctoral students and aligning the name of the program with the name of the School.

The name change was accompanied by other program changes that better aligned the design of the program with the orientation of the expanded faculty. This was essential since the key to the program's future success, as is true of all doctoral programs, was the commitment of research-active faculty scholars to engage, support, and collaborate with advanced students. Over the previous 10 years many of the faculty who had earlier been most engaged with the doctoral program retired. Now the program needed to be re-energized around the contributions of a new configuration of faculty, with a broader public affairs identity better reflected by a Ph.D. in Public Policy and Administration. The program changes included added requirements in methods and research design, improved support for doctoral student services, and new budgeting practices to provide coordinated funding for doctoral students in all of the School's programs.

LOOKING AHEAD

⁹ "The Biden School's Transition to a Free-Standing Professional School: A Report to the University Faculty Senate," February 10, 2020, 4. Courtesy of the Dean's Office, Biden School of Public Policy and Administration.

Going forward, the School's development will likely include additional specialized doctoral programs delivered in collaboration with other UD units and designed to utilize the Ph.D. in Public Policy and Administration as the base on which to build. The proposed "hub and spokes" model of development takes advantage of the Biden School's interdisciplinary orientation and is consistent with the design of the ENEP and DISA programs, both of which engaged faculty from many academic units. The development of the MPH in collaboration with the College of Health Sciences, and the Ph.D. in Engineering and Public Policy in collaboration with the College of Engineering also exemplify this approach. Soon after the changes were approved to the Ph.D. in Public Policy and Administration, the School in collaboration with the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice and the College of Education and Human Development established a new Ph.D. in Education and Social Policy.

The first doctoral program in what is now the Biden School was launched at a time when the University had a modest profile as a research and graduate institution. In many regards, the development of doctoral education in the Biden School tracked with and contributed to the University's emergence as a major research university. The Biden School's doctoral programs also were agents of change for the University as well as the larger society. The initial program was designed to be different. A half-century later, all of the School's doctoral programs reflect key characteristics associated with that initial program; all are interdisciplinary, translational, and community-engaged. In recent decades these characteristics have become more highly valued within the overall priorities of research universities, including the University of Delaware. In the future, the doctoral programs of the Biden School will almost surely play a greater role in support of the University's identity as a research university, and also carry on its legacy of creative scholarship to address society's emerging challenges.

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