

**DATE:** May 15, 2020

**SUBJECT:** New Academic Program  
University of Memphis  
Urban Affairs, PhD  
(CIP 45.1201 – Urban Studies/Affairs)

**ACTION RECOMMENDED:** Approval

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**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

The University of Memphis proposes an Urban Affairs PhD program that is designed to provide higher-level training for researchers, scholars, and professionals who seek to better understand urban systems and address urban challenges. The proposed PhD in Urban Affairs will be an interdisciplinary degree advancing theoretical understanding of urban affairs and public policy through inquiry-driven examination of urban issues and challenges. The proposed academic program was developed by an interdisciplinary team representing the four departments of the University of Memphis School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy (SUAPP) (City and Regional Planning, Social Work, Public and Nonprofit Administration, and Criminology and Criminal Justice) and three social science departments (Political Science, Anthropology, and Sociology) in the College of Arts and Sciences.

University of Memphis provided an update regarding the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on the proposed Urban Affairs, PhD program (Appendix A). The pandemic has drastically impacted the fiscal health of local communities, magnified existing socioeconomic disparities, and heightened the need for innovative social welfare policies and programs. The primary goal of the PhD in Urban Affairs program will be to provide an advanced research base for professionals and academics dedicated to building capacity in urban communities especially in light of COVID-19. The program will provide graduates with the knowledge and ability to advance understanding of urban systems, the capacity to demonstrate applied public policy problem-solving based on research and data, and the skills to engage with community constituents as partners in those enterprises.

**INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNING BOARD APPROVAL**

The proposed Urban Affairs PhD program was approved by the University of Memphis Board of Trustees on March 7, 2018.

**PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

August 2021

## **RELEVANCE TO INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STRATEGIC PLAN**

The University of Memphis is committed to its mission of an urban-serving university that closely collaborates with its community partners. The proposed Urban Affairs PhD program will support the University of Memphis strategic priorities of “investing in people, creating interdisciplinary initiatives, building productive partnerships, developing new resources, enhancing image and reputation and community connectedness.” The primary goal of the proposed program is provide an advanced research base for professionals and academics dedicated to building capacity in urban communities.

The proposed program aligns with the 2015-25 Master Plan for Tennessee Postsecondary Education and will fill the current void in Urban Affairs in the State of Tennessee by offering an advanced degree in this field. The proposed PhD in Urban Affairs will increase research capacity within the state by training researchers within social science professions and by supporting partnerships between the University, government and community organizations.

## **CURRICULUM**

The proposed Urban Affairs PhD program requires the completion of 48 credit hours for students entering with a master’s degree. Those entering without a master’s degree will be required to earn a master’s degree in one of the host disciplines such as Political Science, Anthropology, and Sociology on the way to earning the doctoral program. The coursework for the proposed doctoral program is designed to introduce students to interdisciplinary perspectives, provide theoretical grounding in the scholarship of engagement, offer training in how to conduct community-engaged research, and establish partnerships between PhD students and community partners. The proposed program will provide doctoral students with access to formal and informal professional development training through a variety of extracurricular opportunities. One example of these opportunities includes a local practitioner discussion series. These discussion series will allow doctoral students to see how local practitioners share their work, discuss programs and interventions and express research needs.

## **PROGRAM PRODUCTIVITY**

Enrollment projections for the program were determined based on research on comparable programs and a needs assessment survey. The proposed Urban Affairs PhD program projects an initial enrollment of 10 students with steady increases to 32 students by the seventh year. Annually, five full-time students will be supported by graduate assistantships.

It is anticipated that students who start the program full-time may need 3-5 years to complete the doctoral program.

	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>
<b>Enrollment</b>	10	18	21	27	29	32	32
<b>Graduates</b>	--		1	3	3	6	6

## **PROGRAM DUPLICATION**

The proposed PhD degree in Urban Affairs will be the first such program in the State of Tennessee. This unique doctoral program is interdisciplinary (rather than focused on a single discipline like public administration or urban planning) with a program outcome of preparing researchers to address urban or metropolitan issues.

## **EXTERNAL JUDGEMENT**

An external review of the proposed program was conducted during an institutional site visit on December 4-5, 2019. Dr. Edward Goetz, Professor and Director of Center for Urban and Regional Affairs at the University of Minnesota and Dr. Connie Ozawa, Professor of Urban Studies and Planning at Portland State University served as the external reviewers. The site visit included meetings with campus administrators, faculty, prospective students and community partners.

Dr. Goetz and Dr. Ozawa made a joint recommendation for the approval of the program and stated "SUAPP [School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy] has created a culture among its master's program students of dedication to community-driven and information-based policy making. The interdisciplinary nature of the curriculum is right on target for relieving urban problems, and the faculty at SUAPP and its three partner departments are well-positioned with their established reputation in the community and their records of scholarship."

## **STUDENT DEMAND**

The School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy conducted an online survey to determine student interest for an Urban Affairs PhD program. The survey was administered to practitioners in local government, nonprofit community development, philanthropy and recent graduates of social science disciplines. A strong interest was displayed with 88 percent of the respondents indicating an Urban Affairs PhD program would enhance the program offerings at the University of Memphis. Among those respondents, 57 percent indicated an interest in applying to the doctoral program. Respondents also provided feedback on course offerings, delivery format and options to pay for the program.

## **OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRAM GRADUATES**

Due to the flexibility and interdisciplinary focus of the proposed Urban Affairs PhD program, graduates will have multiple career paths to choose from. Some graduates may choose to pursue traditional academic career paths whereas some may choose to become practitioners or policy analysts in public service fields. Graduates seeking employment in academia will be trained to teach in a variety of disciplines as determined by the focus of their elective courses. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates that during 2016-26, the number of jobs for faculty teaching in the social sciences will increase by 12 percent.

For Urban Affairs PhD graduates seeking jobs in the public service arena, the 2016 Nonprofit Employment Trends Survey indicated that 51 percent of non-profit agencies reported increasing their staff size by 44 percent. Additionally, the 2018 survey conducted

by the Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management, found that 57 percent of the nonprofit executives plan to retire in the next 10 years.

The need for the proposed Urban Affairs PhD program is corroborated by letters of support from nonprofit and philanthropic leaders and local government officials. Letters of support from nonprofit agencies were received from Assisi Foundation of Memphis, Inc., Community Foundation of Greater Memphis, Hyde Family Foundations, Momentum Nonprofit Partners, Urban Child Institute, and United Way of the Mid-South. Additionally, the City of Memphis (Mayor's Office and Division of Housing and Community Development) and Memphis and Shelby County – Division of Planning and Development offered their support for the proposed Urban Affairs PhD program.

### **INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY TO DELIVER THE PROGRAM**

The proposed Urban Affairs PhD program will have a significant impact on the overall capacity at the University of Memphis by enhancing its capability in sponsored research, graduate education, and community engagement. The proposed program will be housed in the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy (SUAPP) with partnership from three departments in the College of Arts and Sciences. Collectively, these academic units offer seven master's programs and one doctoral program. The proposed Urban Affairs PhD program will rely heavily on existing courses from these academic units with the need to only develop four new courses. One of the strengths of this collaboration is the community engagement with various local foundations and non-profit partners.

Appendix A outlines the 8-year financial projections for the Urban Affairs PhD program that includes projections for the 2020-21 planning year. The planning year will allow the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy to hire the program director by January 2021. Initially, graduate assistantships will be supported by University funding with external research funds provided by SUAPP beginning in year three.

### **ASSESSMENT AND POST-APPROVAL MONITORING**

An annual performance review of the proposed program will be conducted for the first seven years following program approval. The review will be based on benchmarks established in the approved proposal. At the end of this period, the campus, institutional governing board, and Commission staff will perform a summative evaluation. The benchmarks include, but are not limited to, enrollment and graduation, program cost, progress toward accreditation, and other metrics set by the institution and Commission staff. If benchmarks are not met during the monitoring period, the Commission may recommend that the institutional governing board terminate the program. If additional time is needed and requested by the institutional governing board, the Commission may choose to extend the monitoring period.



**Tennessee Higher Education Commission**  
**Coronavirus Impact on New Academic Programs**  
**April 15, 2020**

*In light of the current Coronavirus pandemic, THEC is requesting additional information for new academic programs that are slated for the May 15, 2020 Commission meeting agenda. Please submit your response to the questions listed below by April 24, 2020. Any changes to expenditures and/or revenues will require a revised THEC Financial Projections Form.*

**Institution:** University of Memphis

**Academic Program, Degree Designation:** Urban Affairs PhD

**Proposed Implementation Date:** August 2021

### Questions: Coronavirus Impact on New Academic Programs

#### Overall Program Need

▪ **Is this academic program as relevant as before the pandemic?**

The challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic have increased the relevance of and need for this program. The PhD in Urban Affairs is a public-facing academic program, designed to enhance urban problem-solving through interdisciplinary, collaborative engaged scholarship. The pandemic has drastically impacted the fiscal health of local communities, magnified existing socioeconomic disparities, and heightened the need for innovative social welfare policies and programs.

As the Federal government tries to decentralize the response to the pandemic, much of the work of managing the aftermath will fall on local governments and nonprofit partners. The program will provide graduates with the knowledge and ability to advance understanding of urban systems, the capacity to demonstrate applied public policy problem-solving based on research and data, and the skills to engage with community constituents as partners in those enterprises. The combination of training in theory development and application will prepare graduates for careers in public, nonprofit, private, and educational sector positions as advanced policy analysts, researchers, administrators, and academics.

The Memphis community faces challenges of persistent poverty, inequity, and barriers to inclusive prosperity. These challenges strain local public services and create a need for a large, sophisticated network of community development and social service providers. Memphis does not currently have the capacity to meet this demand. Local public, nonprofit, and philanthropic organizations recognize a need for practitioners with advanced skills in research, analytics, and policy/program evaluation to more effectively address the vast community challenges facing the Memphis region. As evidenced in the letters of support included in Appendix C, local nonprofit and philanthropic leaders see the proposed PhD in Urban Affairs as an important tool in providing the increased local capacity.

▪ **Does this remain the most needed utilization of institutional resources in light of the pandemic?**

The program curriculum relies largely on existing courses and faculty and does not require significant utilization of institutional resources. The program remains important to the University's mission as an urban-serving university that closely collaborates with its community on issues of social service delivery and economic and community development.

## **Implementation Date, Admissions, and Enrollment**

### **Any projected change in the proposed implementation date for the program?**

- There are no changes to the proposed implementation date.

### **Will there be any adjustments needed in admission standards?**

- There are no adjustments needed in admissions standards.

### **Have enrollment projections shifted for the proposed program? If so, please provide an updated enrollment and graduation table and include an updated financial projections form.**

- The program is scheduled to launch in the fall semester of 2021, with the 2020-21 academic year serving as a planning year. Given this time buffer and the existing pent up demand among potential students, we don't expect a negative impact on enrollment.

## **Program Delivery**

### **What is the current delivery mode of the proposed academic program?**

- The current delivery method is hybrid, with the 4 core courses being offered as traditional in-person classes. Some courses that meet the "advanced methods" and "focus area" requirements are offered online.

### **Are there plans to change the delivery mode for this program in light of the pandemic?**

- The PhD committee will monitor university decisions and requirements regarding online instruction, as well as student interest, and adjust course delivery modes in accordance.

### **What percentage of the curriculum is devoted to online delivery?**

- The curriculum is flexible and will differ for each student; therefore, is not possible to determine what percentage of the curriculum will be delivered online. Students will choose from a wide range courses to meet the "advanced methods" (6 hours) and "focus area" (18 hours) requirements. Some of these courses are offered online.

## **Staffing and Placements**

### **What faculty and staff searches are planned prior to implementing the proposed program?**

- We plan to hire a PhD Program Director to start in January 2021 during the planning year prior to program launch.

### **Are any faculty and staff searches currently being advertised? If so, what is the anticipated hire date for these positions? Any challenges in hiring for these positions?**

- No

### **If applicable, are there any special considerations that will need to be made for student placements in clinical and/or internship settings?**

- NA

## **Accreditation**

### **Are there any accreditation considerations in light of the pandemic for the proposed program?**

- There is no accrediting body for Urban Affairs programs. The program will follow the periodic peer evaluation of PhD programs recommended by the UofM Graduate School.

## **Fiscal**

### **If applicable, are there any renovation and/or equipment purchases that have been affected by the pandemic?**

- NA

### **How equipped is the proposed program to endure any significant institutional budget cuts?**

- The program curriculum relies largely on existing courses and faculty and does not require a large budget allocation.

**Appendix B**  
**THEC Financial Projections**  
**University of Memphis**  
**Urban Affairs PhD**

	Planning	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
<b>I. Expenditures</b>								
<b>A. One-time Expenditures</b>								
New/Renovated Space								
Equipment								
Library								
Consultants								
Travel								
Other								
<b>Sub-Total One-time</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>B. Recurring Expenditures</b>								
<b>Personnel</b>								
<b>Administration</b>								
Salary	\$ 40,000	\$ 80,000	\$ 81,600	\$ 83,232	\$ 84,897	\$ 86,595	\$ 88,326	\$ 90,093
Benefits (37.10%)	14,840	29,680	30,274	30,879	31,497	32,127	32,769	33,425
<b>Sub-Total Administration</b>	\$ 54,840	\$ 109,680	\$ 111,874	\$ 114,111	\$ 116,394	\$ 118,722	\$ 121,095	\$ 123,518
<b>Faculty</b>								
Salary								
Benefits								
<b>Sub-Total Faculty</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Support Staff</b>								
Salary								
Benefits (37.1%)								
<b>Sub-Total Support Staff</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
<b>Graduate Assistants</b>		5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Salary	\$ 54,000	\$ 54,000	\$ 54,000	\$ 54,000	\$ 54,000	\$ 54,000	\$ 54,000	\$ 54,000
Benefits	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tuition and Fees* (See Below	53,490	54,560	55,651	56,764	57,899	59,057	60,238	
<b>Sub-Total Graduate Assistant</b>	\$ 107,490	\$ 108,560	\$ 109,651	\$ 110,764	\$ 111,899	\$ 113,057	\$ 114,238	
<b>Operating</b>								
Travel	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,000
Printing	5,000	5,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Equipment	3,000	3,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Other	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
<b>Sub-Total Operating</b>	\$ 7,000	\$ 11,000	\$ 7,000	\$ 7,000	\$ 7,000	\$ 7,000	\$ 7,000	\$ 7,000
<b>Total Recurring</b>	\$ 61,840	\$ 228,170	\$ 227,433	\$ 230,762	\$ 234,157	\$ 237,620	\$ 241,153	\$ 244,756
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES (A + B)</b>	\$ 61,840	\$ 228,170	\$ 227,433	\$ 230,762	\$ 234,157	\$ 237,620	\$ 241,153	\$ 244,756

\*If tuition and fees for Graduate Assistants are included, please provide the following information.

Base Tuition and Fees Rate	\$ 10,698	\$ 10,912	\$ 11,130	\$ 11,353	\$ 11,580	\$ 11,811	\$ 12,048
Number of Graduate Assistants	5	5	5	5	5	5	5

	Planning Year	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7
<b>II. Revenue</b>								
<b>Tuition and Fees<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>0</b>	<b>81,820</b>	<b>150,222</b>	<b>167,771</b>	<b>216,818</b>	<b>227,973</b>	<b>263,526</b>	<b>263,130</b>
Institutional	61,840	146,350	77,211	(47,009)	(92,661)	(100,353)	(132,373)	(128,374)
Federal Grants <sup>3</sup>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Private Grants or Gifts <sup>4</sup>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other <sup>5</sup>	-	-	110,000	110,000	110,000	110,000	110,000	110,000
<b>BALANCED BUDGET LINE</b>	<b>\$ 61,840</b>	<b>\$ 228,170</b>	<b>\$ 227,433</b>	<b>\$ 230,762</b>	<b>\$ 234,157</b>	<b>\$ 237,620</b>	<b>\$ 241,153</b>	<b>\$ 244,756</b>

**Notes:**

**(1) In what year is tuition and fee revenue expected to be generated and explain any differential fees. Tuition and fees include maintenance fees, out-of-state tuition, and any applicable earmarked fees for the program.**

The program will begin collecting tuition revenue in the first year. It will generate surplus in year 3.

The slight decline in projected tuition between year 6 and 7 reflects a difference in the projected mix of full-time, part-time, and dissertation-phase students in those two years.

The planning year includes partial salary for the program director, who we expect to hire in January 2021.

**(2) Please identify the source(s) of the institutional reallocations, and grant matching requirements if applicable.**

Expenses in the first 2 years will be covered with lapse salary funds within the college.

**(3) Please provide the source(s) of the Federal Grant including the granting department and CFDA (Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance) number.**

NA

**(4) Please provide the name of the organization(s) or individual(s) providing grant(s) or gift(s).**

NA

**(5) Please provide information regarding other sources of the funding.**

We anticipate that the program leadership will develop grants and contracts with local/regional agencies to provide program evaluation and other services that will generate at least enough revenue to cover graduate assistantship costs by year 3.