

Going Up the Career Ladder Via the UPCPA: A Profile of Graduates of our Academic Program

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Since the establishment of the College of Public Administration at the University of the Philippines, there have been significant revisions in its curricula and courses. From a handful of students in 1952, the number of enrollees have continually increased. At the time of entry, majority of the graduate students were holding positions in the civil service and the academe, within and outside Metro Manila. The rest were full-time students. Available data show a general trend towards an improved career for UPCPA graduates. This may lead to some sense of false complacency on the part of the UPCPA but the ratio of entrants to graduates must also be examined. There must be more systematic methods/preparations so the College would produce more successful graduates.

Introduction

This paper looks at the products of public administration (PA) education in the College of Public Administration, University of the Philippines (UPCPA) and through them, see what PA education has achieved during the past 35 years.

Its purpose is to answer the question: Where have all the graduates gone? In this paper, we give the answer: gone up the career ladder, everyone!

Background

The Institute of Public Administration was established in 1952 amidst the reconstructed ruins of Rizal Hall in Padre Faura. Significantly, one perceived answer to the problems facing economic recovery in the post-war years was training in public administration.

The "initial graduate program was formulated on the basis of a 30-unit requirement for a master's degree, without foreign language or thesis requirement."¹ This pioneering program has undergone several revisions. As early as six months after its inception, minor changes were made in the course requirements. In 1956, the master's thesis became a requirement, as well as internship for those who had no administrative experience. Revision in courses were made periodically between 1957 to 1962 to make the courses relevant to the times.

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In 1964, the Master of Public Administration (MPA) program underwent a major revision. The program was divided into two, the MPA Plan A, designed for teachers and researchers, which required a thesis, and the MPA Plan B geared towards practitioners offering specialization in four fields - organization and management, public personnel administration, public fiscal administration, and local government administration. Another major addition was made in 1968 with the establishment of the Doctor of Public Administration program. The Institute of Public Administration became the College of Public Administration (CPA) in 1966.

The CPA also offered a certificate program beginning 1957, which was phased out in 1983. The Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration (BAPA) program was abolished in 1968.

The 1968 curricular revisions remained unchanged until 1983 when the CPA opened up a new field of specialization for the non-thesis program, Public Policy and Program Administration. The local government field was expanded to include regional government, and the two closely-related fields of Organization and Management and Public Personnel Administration were merged and renamed Organization Studies. In 1986, the Mid-Career or Plan C program was introduced and the BAPA was reinstated.

At present, the College is undergoing a major geographic change. After almost 30 years of trying, the CPA is finally moving to the Diliman campus of the University in Quezon City from Padre Faura in Manila.

Comings and Goings

From a handful of students in 1952, the CPA's roster of enrollees have gone up to a total of 3,970 in 1987. Of these, 3,011 were enrolled, at one time or another in the MPA program, 286 for the Certificate in Government Management (CGM), 468 for the DPA, and 265 for the BAPA. Among those enrolled, the College has graduated 1,053 MPAs, 281 CGMs, 25 DPAs, and 262 BAPAs. This means that, percentage-wise, we graduated nearly all BAPAs, 98.25% of the CGM enrollees, 34.97% of the MPAs, and a measly 5.34% of the DPAs. Needless to say, our batting average for the doctoral program is very low, and the MPA average is not all that spectacular. (See Table 1)

Of the enrolled MPA students, as many as 64.36% became inactive, and .66% were disqualified. For the CGM, nobody became inactive, while 1.75% were disqualified. Among the doctoral students, only 2.56% were disqualified, but a staggering 92.09% have remained inactive. A report of students of Dr. Bautista in PA 299.2 used 1981 entrants to the MPA program as sample,

and revealed that of the 71 who enrolled that year, only 11 have gotten their degrees. Most of them just dropped out. Why do they drop-out? We may have to conduct a larger study of reasons in dropping slips which often show pressure of work as basis, but those who finished some semesters, interviews have to be conducted. Why do doctoral students become inactive? One major conjecture is pressure of work. Since many of our students are working full-time in government agencies, they do not have the time to pursue full-time research.

Table 1
UPCPA Graduates, by Program

<i>MPA Students</i>		
MPA Graduates	1,053	34.97%
MPA Inactive	1,938	64.36%
MPA Disqualified	20	0.66%
TOTAL MPA STUDENTS	3,011	100%
<i>DPA Students</i>		
DPA Graduates	25	5.34%
DPA Inactive	431	92.09%
DPA Disqualified	12	2.56%
TOTAL DPA STUDENTS	468	100%
<i>CGM Students</i>		
CGM Graduates	281	98.25%
CGM Inactive	0	0%
CGM Disqualified	5	1.75%
TOTAL CGM STUDENTS	286	100%

Our graduates have fluctuated in number through the years. The largest harvest of MPAs was registered in academic year 1978-79 with 103, followed by 1977-78 with 88, and 1979-80 with 83. The decade ending that period also yielded a large crop of graduates, since we assisted the regional units of the University in developing their faculty. The decade from the mid-60s also showed a big number of graduates, going up as high as 71 in 1968-69. That was the period when the Civil Service Commission set up the requirement of

at least 12 units of public administration as prerequisite for promotion to higher level positions. We may also note that the number of graduates which swelled in the late 70s kept to mid-levels until the early 80s, because of faculty enrichment programs of member schools of the Association of Schools of Public Administration in the Philippines (ASPAP). There were two years wherein we did not have a single graduate - 1957-58 and 1961-62. Between those years, we registered the lowest number of graduates. That period correlates with the imposition of the thesis program.

For the DPA, the biggest number of five graduates was registered in 1982-83, followed by 1984-85 and 1985-86 with four each. CGM graduates were most numerous in 1976-77 (90) and in 1977-78 (85).

Profile of Graduates

Sex. Of the 265 students who enrolled in the BAPA program, 123 were male (46.42%) and 142 were female (53.58%). For all graduate degree programs, the male-female ratio is reversed, with 590 males (53.2%) and 519 females (46.8%) or a total of 1,109. (See Table 2)

Table 2
CGM, MPA, DPA Graduates, by Sex

<i>Sex</i>	<i>No. of Graduates</i>	<i>%</i>
Male	590	53.2%
Female	519	46.8%
TOTAL =	1,109	100%

Age. By age, BAPA graduates clustered around the 20-22 years age bracket. The graduate students are young, with the highest percentage found in the 25 and below age bracket (270 or 24.35%), decreasing as the age categories become higher - 14.61% in the 26-30 age group; 11.99% in the 31-35 bracket, and 11.90% in the 36-40 group. Only .9% fall under the 50 and above category. These do not include, alas, those who never indicated their ages, which by the way, is a full 324 or 29.22%

Highest degree achieved. Of the 1,109 who received degrees (excluding BAPA), majority received the MPA (797 or 71.87%). Many CGM graduates proceeded to the MPA program (22.27%), while only .45% of BAPA graduates went on to finish the MPA.

By position. Three types of students enter the College. Majority of the entrants to MPA and CGM programs were holding positions in the civil service at the time of entry (667 or 61.2%), while 94 (9%) were hailed from the academe. As many as 323 (29.8%) were full-time students. Of those holding positions in government, 78.86% (526) held second level (technical and professional) positions, while 13.49% held first level positions. However, as many as 51 (7.65%) were already in third level positions when they entered. A full 40.43% of those entering from the academe were faculty members from non-UP schools (39 of 94). The biggest percentage of academicians enrolling in the graduate programs belonged to the academic non-teaching group in UP (48 or 51.06%). (See Table 3)

Table 3
UPCPA Graduates, by Position at Time of Entry

<i>A) Civil Service Position</i>		
	<i>No. of Graduates</i>	<i>%</i>
1st level	90	13.49%
2nd level	526	78.86%
3rd level	51	7.65%
	667	100%
<i>B) Academic Position</i>		
	<i>No. of Graduates</i>	<i>%</i>
Faculty - UP	3	3.19%
Research - UP	48	51.06%
Faculty - Non - UP	38	40.43%
Research - Non - UP	5	5.31%
	94	100%

It seems that the UP diploma is considered important by those in technical positions in government for promotion to higher level positions, as per the Civil Service Commission's requirement. Within the UP, the academic non-teaching staff see the graduate degree as a means to enter the faculty. For non-UP faculty, a similar aim of promotion, as well as academic enrichment is a motivation.

Among the DPA graduates, a similar trend is seen for those in civil service positions. However, among the academicians, majority of the graduates, at the time of entry, were UP faculty members (66%) followed by non-faculty (33%). Thus, the doctoral program is really considered very important in faculty promotion and enrichment, as it has been designed to be.

By office. The graduates represented different institutions. The largest proportion came from staff offices of the government (214 or 19.74%). UP Diliman and Manila accounted for the next highest (130 or 12%). What should not be ignored is the fact that 29.8% of the graduates were full-time students upon entry to the graduate programs. The smallest proportion (1.01%) was accounted for by those who came from UP regional units, most likely faculty members from those units pursuing higher degrees. Among the government agencies, all types of agencies were well represented. Small but significant proportions were exhibited by the hospitals, the military, and private agencies. Twenty-nine foreign students comprised 2.68% of the graduates. The UPCPA has indeed reached out to different types of occupations, as well as in different positions.

Where Have All the Graduates Gone?

We have taught over 3,000 students and graduated over 1,000 of these. Where did they go after they received their degrees?

Since it was impossible to track down the graduates because no updated directory exists, we tried to use different methods. First is the University of the Philippines Human Resources Development Office (HRDO) which keeps a list of graduates of the UPCPA who are employed in the University, in fact the HRDO Director and three of his staff members are CPA alumni. Another means used is looking through the list of Career Executive Service Officers (CESOs)² as late as before February 1986. The third method used was going to Personnel Offices randomly selected to see how many of their personnel were UPCPA graduates.

In the UP system, 87 CPA alumni are employed in various offices. Of these, 30 have remained in the UPCPA. By level of position, 56 are faculty members in member colleges of the UP Management Education Council (64.37%). Ten (11.49%) are in staff positions like in the offices of Human Resources Development Office, Budget, and Vice-President for Planning and Finance. The rest (24.14%) are scattered in various positions and offices. (See Table 4a)

As many as 30 (34.5%) were members of the academic non-teaching staff when they enrolled in the CPA and have now become members of the faculty. Academic non-teaching staff going up the same ladder comprise 21.8% (19), while non-academic personnel who have gone up the non-academic ladder account for 17.2% (15) of the graduates. A very impressive 10.3% (9) rose from non-academic ranks to become faculty members or lecturers.

Table 4
UPCPA Graduates Who Work with the
University of the Philippines

4.a.

<i>UP Personnel who Finished at CPA</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
Teaching in MEC Units	56	64.37%
HRD and Budget Office	10	11.49%
Others	21	24.14%
TOTAL =	87	100%

4.b.

<i>Total No. of students.</i>		<i>%</i>
Who rose from REPS to faculty	30	34.5%
Who went up in Non-Academic ladder	15	17.24%
Who rose up the REPS ladder	19	21.82%
Faculty who got promoted in rank	4	100%
TOTAL =	87	100%

Of the 431 CESOs listed by the Career Executive Service Board in 1986, as many as 51 (11.83%) graduated from the UPCPA. Complete data from the CPA files match only 39 of them, that is, as far as lists of positions upon entry and upon each promotion is concerned. From available data, it was found that 76.92% were promoted upon graduation, while others were promoted while enrolled or a year or so after graduation. By steps, majority rose within the second level rank while enrolled and subsequently rose to the higher rank thereafter. A few rose immediately to the third level, even while enrolled.

In the random sampling of government personnel officers, data was available for 60 UPCPA graduates. More than half of the graduates (53.33% or 32) rose from second to third level positions after completion of their graduate programs, and 23.33% (14) rose within the steps in second level positions. Even those in third level ranks were promoted in step or transferred to other offices of similar rank (8.33%). (Table 5)

Table 5
Sample of UPCPA Graduates in CES Positions
and their Rate of Promotion after Graduation.

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Immediate Promotion	30	76.92
No immediate Promotion	5	12.82
Inc. data	4	10.26
TOTAL	39	100%

There is, thus, a general trend towards promotion for UPCPA graduates upon graduation. While some do not get their promotions immediately, some get it even while still enrolled in the program.

Where Do We Go From Here?

These data, albeit still incomplete in the sense that they should be substantiated by a real survey, can lead us to complacency. Like proud mothers and fathers, we at UPCPA can say, we educated them, and they rose from the ranks so fast many of them have even outpaced us, in pay at least. But the successes of our graduates should be looked at side by side with our figures on the ratio of entrants to graduates. Why have we graduated only 25 DPAs and only 34% of the MPA enrollees? Where lies the fault - in our admission requirements, in our comprehensive exams, in our techniques of motivation?

If we look again at the figures on inactive and disqualified, we will see that very few have been dropped out. If we look at our disqualified list closely, we will see that we have been doing our best to weed out the unfit. For our doctoral program, we raised the weighted average for exemption from the qualifying exam to 1.25, a really tough requirement. If we analyze our comprehensive exam mortality, we will see that there is often very little correlation between weighted average in the courses and average grades in the comprehensive exams.

What can we infer from these? There must be more systematic preparation or review methods provided to comprehensive exams takers. I have started meeting the examiners since the last semester, but I cannot yet establish a trend from the one where I noticed that less students flunked the exams. For the doctoral qualifying exam, I would like to think that we have succeeded in weeding out non-qualified students before allowing them to

proceed farther to take the much dreaded comprehensives. For those who have become inactive, we must know the reasons. Here is where further research is needed. Most likely, it is pressure of work in the office. But there can be a myriad other reasons. As a response to the possibility that we may not have been selective enough in our admission requirements, we have changed the application forms to look more into motivation and career plans.

All these policy changes are designed to get the best students who can hurdle the work until they graduate. On the curriculum side, our periodic changes have made our curricula responsive and relevant to the times. We have sat down again and again and have reviewed our admissions policies and curricula. We must sit down now to see how to keep our students until they graduate, because we have seen that we have succeeded, at least, in harnessing their talents, such that they can enrich their offices by their training and experience. We must add to the pool of talents we have enhanced.

Endnotes

¹Caridad S. Alfonso, "The Graduate Program in Public Administration in the University of the Philippines," *Philippine Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. XVI, No. 3 (July 1972), pp. 273-278.

²CESO was created during the Marcos regime to systematize the appointment of government officials for the different government agencies and departments. This was an offshoot of the British Civil Service System. After the February Revolution, it consequently collapsed.