

**To:** MPA Students considering enrolling in PA 8990 (Capstone Project) for Spring 2024

**From:** Professor Craig S. Maher

**Subject:** Enrollment Procedures for Capstone Course

**Date:** October 18, 2023

I will be facilitating the PA 8990 Capstone Project this coming spring semester. MPA students are required to obtain permission of the Capstone instructor/School of Public Administration prior to enrolling in the Capstone Project course. To receive approval, students develop and submit the basic idea for their Capstone project before they are given permission to enroll in PA 8990.

As the instructor of record, I will review the proposed projects and give enrollment approval for those that meet course requirements. The review process may involve revisions of the proposal in keeping with the instructor's comments. It is possible that after several revisions your proposal may not be accepted for the coming semester. I will notify you of your approval by e-mail, with a copy to Dr. James Harrold. When you receive e-mail approval, you will need to contact Dr. Harrold at **[jharrold@unomaha.edu](mailto:jharrold@unomaha.edu)** to have him authorize your enrollment.

The syllabus for the spring 2024 Capstone course is also being sent with this note for your information. Please visit the School of Public Administration web page for Current MPA Students (<http://www.mpa.unomaha.edu/>). Click on "Capstone Project" to see more background information about this requirement. Included on this page is information to help you in thinking about your project.

Students must be in the last 9 hours of their MPA program in order to be eligible to take the course. In addition, you must have completed PA8120, Research Methods, to enroll.

**Students who wish to enroll in PA 8990 for spring 2024 must prepare a brief statement of their proposed project and e-mail it to [csmaher@unomaha.edu](mailto:csmaher@unomaha.edu) no later than December 4th.** I will provide feedback or suggest changes. If revisions are required, I will provide a deadline for the revised proposal. Proposed projects will be approved not only on substantive and methodological merits, but also on whether or not the proposed project can be reasonably completed by the end of the fall semester. *If you will be collecting primary data through surveys, interviews, focus groups, etc. and intend to try and publish the findings or if the project is directly related to your work where the results will be shared, you will need to go through the Institutional Review Board (IRB) process.* The

IRB process can be a bit time consuming, so if you think it may apply to your project let me know ASAP so I can help.

Your statement **MUST** follow the format provided below (address all information and items):

- Student Information: Your name and current e-mail address;
- Courses Completed: Number and names of MPA courses you have completed, including that you have completed the required research methods course;
- Project Title: Tentative title of your project;
- Problem Statement: Clear, concise statement of the issue, problem, and/or program to be examined, analyzed, and studied. What specific question are you seeking to address? If relevant to your research design, include the appropriate dependent and independent variables, as well as important expected causal relationships.
- Theoretical Framework: Discussion of the major area(s) of scholarly literature that you will review, and/or theoretical concepts that you might use as a basis for your project.
- Project Research Design: Discussion of the project's likely research design and feasibility within the time limits of the semester session, including specific information addressing the following: What research design might be used? Is it expected the project might use quantitative or qualitative methods? Will the proposed project require collection of new data, or will it use existing data? How many organizations and participants (units of analysis) will be involved? Do you or will you have access to the persons or organizations you want to analyze or study? What approaches might be used to analyze your data?

Submit the proposal as a Word file. The length must not exceed 2 single-spaced, typewritten pages (12 point Times New Roman font, with 1" maximum left, right, top, and bottom margins). You must use the section titles provided in the bullet points above for organizing your proposal. **Proposals not meeting these guidelines will be returned without being read.**

PA 8990 will meet three times during the spring 2024 session. **Attendance is mandatory (students in the online program will participate via conference call).** There will be an introductory session (**January 22nd**), a milestone meeting during the week of March 18 (**this will be 30-minute, one-one meetings with Dr. Maher**), and a final session for presentation of projects (**May 16th**). Make sure you note the dates and times on the syllabus accompanying this letter.

If you have any questions about PA 8990 or about the proposal review and enrollment process, please contact me via e-mail ([csmaher@unomaha.edu](mailto:csmaher@unomaha.edu)). I encourage you to contact me before the proposal is due to discuss your idea. It might also be helpful for you to talk to your advisor or another faculty member familiar with your area of interest.

Sincerely,

Dr. Craig S Maher