To: MPA Students considering enrolling in PA 8990 (Capstone Project) for Spring 2022
From: Dr. Carol Ebdon
Subject: Spring Capstone Course Proposals – Due December 10

Date: October 7, 2021

I will be facilitating the PA 8990 Capstone Project this coming spring semester. MPA students are required to submit a proposal for their project and obtain permission of the Capstone instructor prior to enrolling in this course. **Students who wish to enroll in PA 8990 for spring 2022 must e-mail a proposal to me at cebdon@unomaha.edu no later than December 10**.

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. It is possible that after several revisions, your proposal may not be accepted for the coming semester. A proposed project will be approved on substantive and methodological merits, as well as whether or not it can be reasonably completed in one semester.

The presumption is that you have already given your topic some thought and have done some preliminary research on existing literature. A proposal based entirely on conjecture, with little/no thought given to the existing research or methodology, will not fare well in the proposal review stage. I encourage you to contact me well before the proposal is due to discuss your idea. It might also be helpful for you to talk to another faculty member familiar with your area of interest.

Your proposal should be in a Word file, not exceeding 2 single-spaced pages (12 point font, with 1" margins). Use the following format:

- *Student Information*: Your name and current e-mail address;

- *Courses Completed*: Number and names of MPA courses you have completed, or that are in process. If you are a dual-degree student, also indicate how many MSW courses you have completed. **Students must have completed all of their core courses and be in the last 9 hours of their MPA program in order to be eligible to enroll in this 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 research question(s) are you seeking to address? Why is this an important topic? If you are proposing a quantitative analysis, include the appropriate dependent and independent variables, as well as important expected causal relationships;

- *Literature/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, including specific information addressing the following: What research design might be used? Do you expect to 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?

The syllabus for the spring 2022 Capstone course is also being sent with this memo, for your information. *Note that the due dates are tentative and subject to change due to COVID considerations.* Three mandatory meetings will take place during the spring 2022 session. We will have an **orientation meeting on Monday evening, January 24th**. You will also each meet one-on-one with me midway through the semester (the week of February 28tht). Finally, **all students are required to participate in the project presentations on May 5th**. All of these meetings will likely be conducted via Zoom.

To see more background information, please visit the School of Public Administration web page for Current MPA Students (http://www.mpa.unomaha.edu/). Click on "MPA Curriculum," then click on "Capstone Project." Included on this page are examples of previous capstone project papers.