VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM

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MPA PROGRAM

Overview

One of the major purposes of a professional portfolio is to showcase in a single document the skills, competencies, and knowledge an individual has developed over time. A portfolio should be all-encompassing, reflecting professional work experience, military ugtxkeg."cpf "cp{"xqnwpvggt"gzrgtkgpeg"crrtqrtkcvg"vq"qpgøu"ectggt"hkgnf0"Kp"cffkvkqp."cm" tgngxcpv"cecfgokе"y qtm"qh"qpgøu"o clqt"ctgcu"qh"eqwtug"y qtm"cpf "kpvgtpuj kr "gzrgtkgpeg" should be included.

Developing a portfolio provides each student an opportunity to take stock of his or her professional development, assess his or her professional standing, and plan for future career growth and development. The presentation of the completed portfolio also allows faculty to observe the professional growth and development each student has derived from the MPA program. Portfolios are also excellent tools for prospective employers to assess the professional experience and capabilities of MPA graduates. The best portfolios are those that reflect the highlights of gcej "uvwf gpvøu professional and academic experiences, thus the work must reflect the highest professional and academic standards.

Because developing a portfolio is a difficult and time consuming task, students are strongly encouraged to begin developing a portfolio upon entrance to the MPA program (PADM 7300). By beginning early, students expand their opportunities to reflect on their professional development. As decisions are made about the appropriate artifacts to include, students become more aware of areas in which they need personal development and gain a broader understanding of academic and professional expectations. In addition, the building of a portfolio provides a challenging opportunity to students to organize and create a document that reflects their skills, abilities, and accomplishments, while adhering to a stringent portfolio framework.

The following guidelines are provided by the Valdosta State University, College of Arts and Sciences Department of Political Science for students enrolled in the Master of Public Administration (MPA) Program. The portfolio is a requirement and is normally completed during the final semester of coursework as part of PADM 7900.

Portfolio Requirements

Each Portfolio Must Contain the Following Sections and Materials:

    Title Page

    Table of Contents

    Introduction

    Professional Goals Statement

    Current Resume

    Captioned Artifacts

    Summary Statement

These sections must be comprised of two types of materials: *Productions*, which are documents prepared specifically for the portfolio; and *Artifacts*, documents produced f wtkpi "pqto cn'eqwtugy qtm"kp"vj g"eqwtug"qh"qpgøu"lqd."qt"y j kng"gpi ci gf "kp"tgngxcpv" volunteer work. For example, productions may include c"uwf gpvøu"r tqhguukqpcn'i qcnu" statement and professional summary, while an artifact is a term paper from a class, a o cpwcn'r tgr ctgf "hqt"qpgøu"y qtm rceg."qt"c"xqnwpvggt"y ctf "tgeeived from a non-profit agency.

The artifacts shall be clearly captioned and should be selected to reflect a cross-section of both professional and academic experience. For pre-service students who may have few or no professional products or artifacts, extra effort should be made to relate educational or volunteer artifacts to professional career goals.

Title Page

    The Title page must kpenwf g"vj e"uwf gpvøu'pco g."vj e"encuu"kp"y j kej "vj e"r qtvhqnkq"y cu" presented, the name of the professor, and the date of submission.

Table of Contents

    The table of contents follows the title page.

Introduction

    The introduction should provide a brief description of the portfolio, including the organizational scheme, as well as a brief statement about the uwf gpvøu'decision process for inclusion of materials. The introduction is essentially an executive summary of the document. The introduction should address the following:

- The time span covered in the portfolio;
- The fact that the portfolio reviews professional, volunteer, and academic experiences;

- A description of the balance among professional, volunteer, and academic contents;
- C"fguetkrvkqp"qh"vj g"cwvj qtøs current career status;
- C"dtkgh"fguetkrvkqp"qh"vj g"cwvj qtøs"r tqhguukqpclectggt"i qcnu="cpf
- Other information that introduced the document to potential readers.

Professional Goals Statement

The professional goals statement is a narrative of 300-500 words that specifies the uwf gpvøu"uj qtv'vgto "cpf "nqpi "vgto "i qcnu"kp"j ku"qt"j gt"hkgnf "qh"uwf {0"Vj g"uvcvgo gpv" may include the following:

- C"dtkgh"ce

- C"dtkgh"ug"qgp

- The job (name/address) or professional experience during which the product originated;
- The course (name/number) in which the artifact was created or to which course(s) the professional experience artifact relates;
- Approximate date when the product originated; and
- A rationale statement that briefly describes (in a paragraph or two) the artifact, elaborates on demonstrated competencies, states why it is included, reflects on what was learned from the experience represented by this artifact, and whether it was developed individually or as a member of a team.

Note: Ecr vkqpkpi "ecp"dg"f klhhewn/cu'uwf gpw'j cxg"rqpi "dggp'vcwi j "pqv'vq"õvqqv'j gkt"qy p"j qtpuö" qt "vq"õuj qy "qlhhö"Vj g"r qtvhqnkq.'j qy gxgt. "lu"cp"qr portunity for you to frankly state your strengths and to share your demonstrated successes. Keep in mind, however, the limitations of the artifacts and cite only those competencies that the artifacts clearly document.

Example Caption: A student is using a budget analysis from class as an artifact. The paper received a grade of A, with glowing comments from the professor. The caption might note that the artifact demonstrates:

- Ability to understand and analyze a budget;
- Ability to analyze quantitative data;
- Capacity to conduct interviews (you interviewed the budget director and mayor);
- Knowledge of the literature on budgeting (you cited 15 sources);
- Capacity to bring information from numerous sources to bear on a particular subject (as evidenced by your discussion of H.R. impacts of budget cuts);
- Excellence in written communication (the paper was flawlessly written);
- Skill at presenting data graphically (as evidenced by the nine figures in the paper);
- Proficiency in oral communication (as evidenced by the professor giving your oral presentation 98 out of 100).

Summary Statement

Provide a summary statement of no more than one page that ties the portfolio together. The summary should indicate why the collection of artifacts provides a good representative overview of current, professional development.

Portfolio Review and Presentation

A student completing the portfolio as part of the requirements for PADM 7900 must submit the portfolio to the course instructor no later than the

submission deadline stated in the syllabus. The portfolio must be user-friendly. Access to the contents should be simple and straightforward The final document must be in PDF format and flow in sequence. The portfolio must be presented to the instructor in the MPA program in a timely and professional manner, must include all required materials, and must be prepared and presented according to the written guidelines in the Professional Portfolio Guidelines. Any student who submits a portfolio deemed unsatisfactory by the instructor will have one opportunity to resubmit the portfolio. Portfolios will become the property of the MPA Program and will not be returned. Therefore, each student should make a personal copy of the portfolio for his/her records.

Once a student submits his/her portfolio to the instructor for review, the instructor will evaluate the portfolio according to the Portfolio Review Checklist included in this document. *This checklist is for instructor use only* but should serve as a guide for students as they prepare their portfolios. In order to merit a passing grade, the portfolio must meet or exceed minimum standards in **each** of the required areas (Table of Contents, Introduction, Professional Goals Statement, Current Resume, Captioned Artifacts, and Summary Statement) in the judgment of the supervising faculty member.

Portfolio Tips

- Start work on your portfolio early! Past portfolio developers note that the effort has taken them much more time than they initially expected.

- Make your portfolio a unique document that represents you as well as your skills, knowledge, and experience. The portfolio checklist includes some general characteristics of good portfolios that may help you to plan and evaluate your own document.

- Seek feedback from colleagues, peers, loved ones, and faculty before you complete the final draft of the portfolio. Have folks you trust and respect review your document, and ask for honest feedback.

- Once you think you have completed your portfolio, give it a rest before coming back to it after some time away. Then ask yourself: Does this document look as good as I first thought? Does it need further work? Does this reflect my best work?

- Ask yourself: Am I proud of this portfolio? This is the best predictor of a first-rate effort. This is not a matter of false pride or bravado, but rather your own personal assessment of the job you have done. Internal satisfaction and a sense of pride will result when the portfolio reflects ΰj g'uwf gpvΰu'xgt{ 'best work.

- An author should employ the technology and level of that technology with which she/he is comfortable. Portfolios must be presented as PDF files. Authors are advised NOT to employ unnecessarily complicated templates, backgrounds, or fancy bells and whistles. These only serve to distract from the real intent of the portfolio, which is intended to showcase the cwжj qtΰu'cej kgxgo gpvΰ0No personal pictures are allowed! If one wants to demonstrate his/her prowess with a program, there are opportunities to demonstrate expertise within the context of an artifact.

- Ask yourself: Is your portfolio organization meaningful, original, and constructed to facilitate review by faculty or potential employers? Is your documentation complete and consistent throughout the portfolio?

- Look at your artifacts, captions, and the rationale you have developed, and review them to make sure they fully reflect your professional development.

- Carefully proofread all components of the portfolio that accompany the artifacts. It is strongly recommended that you have someone provide editor's proofing of grammar, spelling, mechanics, and overall clarity of writing.

- Adherence to the guidelines and the ability to follow directions is expected of each public administration professional and MPA graduate.

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR PORTFOLIO!