



Dear Patty,

On behalf of the Schar School of Policy and Government at George Mason University, the Virginia Certified Public Manager (CPM) Program respectfully requests reaccreditation for the 2021 calendar year.

Founded as a branch of the University of Virginia in 1957, George Mason became an independent institution in 1972. As a young university, Mason has made impressive strides in size, stature, and influence in just a short time. Today, Mason is Virginia's largest public university, with ten schools and colleges devoted to a variety of areas of study. As Mason expanded beyond its Fairfax campus, it followed the revolutionary "distributed campus" model, today including additional Virginia campuses in Arlington and Prince William counties. Now, the student population represents more than 130 countries with over 34,000 students.

Mason grew rapidly to become a major player in higher education field in the region and nationally. The university's dynamic research culture and innovative academic programs prepare Mason's diverse student body for 21st century careers. Its commitment to teaching excellence and cutting-edge research enrich the academic experience. Located in the National Capital Region, students enjoy extensive cultural opportunities, experiences, and access to the most sought-after internships and employers in the country. The University has campuses throughout Northern Virginia (Fairfax, Arlington, Prince William, and Loudon Counties), as well as in Songdo, Korea, and cooperative relationships globally.

The Schar School has a history of conducting multi- and trans-disciplinary social and policy research and recognizes as part of its mission the importance of combining the expertise and capacities of multiple institutions, disciplines, and professions in addressing complex problems. Previous and ongoing activities have already developed a tremendous base of executive education, advanced training, and study abroad programs, with expertise in public administration, public policy, political science, economics, regional and comparative analysis, and urban planning, to name a few.

The Virginia CPM Program is designed to enhance the careers of those in public service management.

The curriculum is calibrated to provide management and leadership theory and practice to all candidates, strengthening the transformation by connecting learning to application. The curriculum, therefore, focuses critical-need topics, as:

- Governance: State, Local, Regional, and Non-Profit Levels,
- Budgeting and Financial Management,
- Project Management; and
- Information Technology Management.

Originally, course modules met in-person, twice per month to enable candidates to spend meaningful class time with a cohort of peers. All readings, assignments, and examinations were also individually based, left at the discretion of the respective course module instructors with prior approval from the Virginia CPM Program Director. This is so that a clear relationship exists between the assigned projects and expert-driven curricula. Altogether, the course modules for the two completed cohorts thus far represented approximately 300 hours – that is, 21 per each of the course modules and 48 hours for the capstone. Further, for each of the course modules, there were seven hours of preparation dedicated for reading and study with 14 hours of instructional time.

Prior to the pandemic - COVID19 - efforts were underway to make the Virginia CPM Program more accessible those outside of the Northern Virginia area. This meant that the program had to become primarily virtual so that candidates could access in a remote and online format. Since March, the new cohort operates in a complete virtual environment, which started in September 2020 with an intended completion date of December 2021.

With this new format, it is critical that candidates learn to increase their communication toward effectively coordinating so that they can meaningfully collaborate through the designated period - the 3C's model.

Thank you for the opportunity to share some of our progress as we continue to make improvements to the Virginia CPM Program as well as increase its accessibility throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

We look forward to working with you throughout the reaccreditation process.

Please let me know if you have any questions - I stand ready to provide additional information.

Thank you in advance.

Sincerely,

Tonya E. Thornton (formerly Tonya T. Neaves)

Director of the Virginia CPM Program

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