



# Master of Public Administration

*Passion. Skill. Leadership.*

The School of Public Affairs and Civic Engagement

## Prospective Student Information Session Applicants for Spring 2026 Admission

*“The MPA program taught me how government works, how resources flow from all levels of government — federal, state to local. The program is second to none in preparing you for a life in government.”*

Shamann Walton

SF District 10 Supervisor

SF State Master of Public Administration 2010

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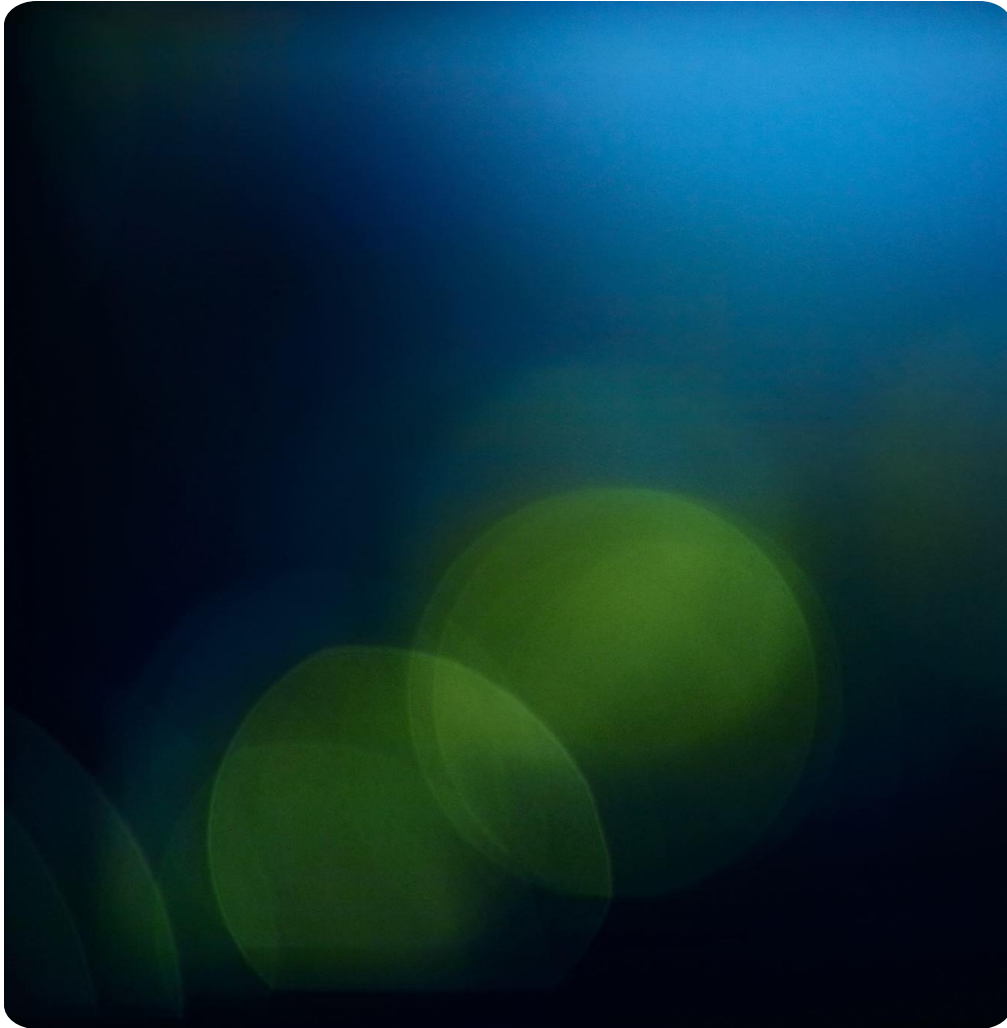
# Session Overview

- Public Administration Careers
- Why SF State's MPA?
- Overview of the SF State MPA Program
- Admissions Process
- Q & A

Concerned about our democracy?  
Develop the skills and knowledge you need to be most  
effective in your role in the public or nonprofit sector.

**Earn Your MPA (Master of Public Administration) Degree!**

# MPA is THE professional degree for those seeking a career in public service and nonprofit management



Includes public policy, city management, nonprofit administration, and general public management in environment, criminal justice, health, & gerontology

Skills and techniques to develop and execute policies, projects, and programs that resolve important problems within organization & society

Social justice, equity, and sustainability values



# Our Mission

The mission of the SF State MPA Program is to **enhance individual and organizational capacity** to serve the public and nonprofit sectors through **engaged and innovative teaching, research and service.**

- ✓ We teach effective public administration by **enriching students with knowledge and skills** to inspire innovation and motivate continuous improvement.
- ✓ As faculty and students, we work to **provide applied research and service** to the community.
- ✓ We **instill an appreciation for public service values** such as: accountability, civic engagement, diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice, and sustainability.

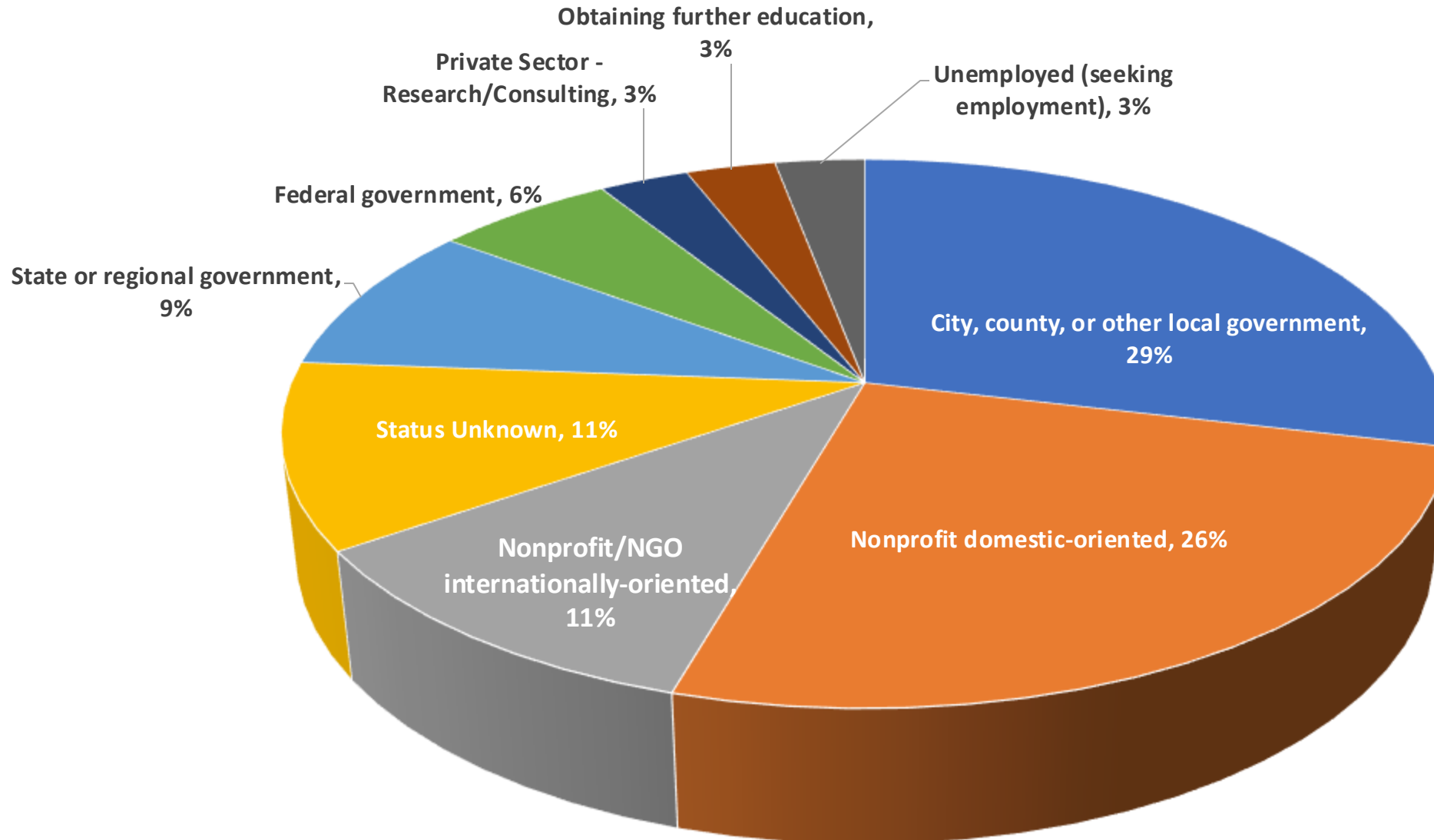


Change the  
world for the  
better!

Top 10 things to  
do with your  
MPA degree

1. Teach and mentor: in colleges, public service corps, and other educational settings
2. Develop and manage programs, projects, people, and budgets within government, nonprofit, or even business organizations
3. Become a city manager, a chief diversity officer, a sustainability officer, and other new, critical leadership posts
4. Direct or launch your own policy advocacy or nonprofit organization (promoting, for example, environment, urban housing, or immigration services. Become a contractor for government services.)
5. Launch your independent consulting career or join a management consulting outfit (for example, become a data analyst, a program evaluator, an organization development facilitator, a strategic planning specialist, or a DEI consultant)
6. Run for office at the state and local government levels (for example, state assembly, city and county councils, or commissions)
7. Run for special district offices (for example, school boards, parks, and utility districts)
8. Volunteer or get appointed to oversight bodies, advisory commissions, and civic relations boards in government and nonprofit sectors
9. Become an incubator: develop and promote initiatives that break barriers and harness untapped energies and resources in problem solving
10. Get a Ph.D. and also do any of the above

# Employment of MPA Graduates



**MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION  
2022-2023 GRADUATES**



# Employers Know What They Are Getting with SF State MPA Alumni

- Strong analytical skills – research, evaluation, policy analysis, finance
- Managerial skills
- Writing & presentation skills
- ‘Soft’ skills – teamwork, communication, leadership

Common starting jobs for graduates include policy analysts, program managers, grant writers, researchers, and budget analysts. As their experience grows, many graduates rise to upper-level positions in government, nonprofit, and even business organizations (Source: [NASPAA](#))



# Important Program Outcomes

- High retention rates: Typically, more than 80% of students enrolling in our MPA Program complete their degree in 4 years or less!
- Average number of semesters students needed to complete the degree is just 6
- 31% of students graduating in 2022-2023 got a NEW JOB DURING their MPA program
- 50% of students who graduated in 2022-2023 received a PROMOTION during their degree program.





# Why SF State's MPA Program?

## Quality, Value, & Impact



Nationally accredited  
program, nationally  
respected

High quality faculty members  
– active researchers, high  
levels of community  
engagement



Innovative, Flexible, High-Quality Curriculum



Competitive Admissions

Our student body is  
outstanding and diverse  
From wide variety of  
backgrounds and interests  
Help to further enhance the  
classroom experience



The best deal around in terms of costs and  
return on your investment

# Program Overview



Mid-size program

Small class sizes

No bottlenecks; median time to degree is now 6 semesters



Full-time faculty of 4 – full focus on public administration

Each has academic preparation & practitioner experience

Opportunities for faculty-student collaborations



Flexible course formats



Nationally accredited by NASPAA (Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, & Administration)



Low tuition cost, best value for your investment

# Diverse & Inclusive

Highly diverse student  
body: 70% from  
under-represented  
groups

Our students represent  
a wide variety of  
backgrounds,  
experiences, and fields

Highly diverse full-time  
faculty

- 100% female
- 80% from under-represented groups



THE SCHOOL of  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS &  
CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

*Passion. Skill. Leadership.*

## Core PA Faculty

- **Dr. Maria Ernita Joaquin**  
Organization and Public Management
- **Dr. Jennifer Shea**  
Nonprofit Administration, Public Policy (Director, School of PACE)
- **Dr. Genie Stowers**  
Urban Administration, Information Technology
- **Dr. Janey Wang**  
Public Finance, Research Methods

## Affiliated Faculty & Staff

- **Dr. Kathy Naff**  
Human Resources Management
- **Dr. Ayse Pamuk**  
Housing Policy
- **Dr. Carol Silverman**  
Research Methods, Program Evaluation
- **Kevin Hickey, MNA**  
Nonprofits, Public Policy & Society
- **Regina Neu, MsED**  
Nonprofit Management
- **Dr. Raquel Pinderhughes**  
Environmental Justice, Sustainability
- **Demetrios Bosniadis**  
Staff: Academic Office Coordinator

...and several other adjunct faculty

# High Impact Connections with Alumni in Nonprofit and Government Organizations

Courses frequently feature alumni panels speaking about current events and relevant career opportunities. Alumni panelists in recent introductory courses:

- **Anissa B.-Villarreal, MPA 2015**  
Assistant Agency Director, Government & Community Relations  
Alameda County Social Services Agency
- **Brian Wiedenmeier, MPA 2014**  
Executive Director, Friends of the Urban Forest
- **Camarin Sanford, MPA 2020**  
Senior Mental Health Project Manager, UC Berkeley
- **Doris Padilla Barone, MPA 2011**  
Director of Disaster Services, San Francisco Human Services Agency
- **Ellie Tumbuan, MPA 2014**  
Co-Owner and Managing Partner, The Justice Collaborative
- **Irving Torres, MPA 2020**  
Director of Community Engagement, All Home
- **Najeeb Kamil, MPA 2015**  
Senior Departmental Administrative Analyst, County of Santa Cruz Health Services Agency



## Testimonials from our Graduates

*The MPA Program has offered me a wide range of tools that I have been able to apply in my professional life. I gained research skills in several of the courses that gave me hands on experience with interviewing, survey development and research analysis. I learned planning methods that I was able to use in a major work project that involved collaboration among several partners.*

**Stacy Kono, Director of Programs and Innovation  
Rockwood Leadership Institute  
SF State MPA Graduate 2017**



# Convenient Classroom Locations

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## Located in the Heart of SF

- Opportunities for applied projects, service learning, and community-engaged research with public and nonprofit agencies

## Convenient

- Scheduled tailored for working adults – nights, weekends, late afternoons, hybrids
- In-person classes held at SF State's Downtown Campus through spring 2026 (main campus effective summer 2026)
- Remote synchronous and asynchronous class options



# Flexible Schedule & Alternative Class Formats

- Traditional (fully in-person or synchronous remote) - **Rare**
  - Evenings/Afternoons: Meet synchronously once per week
  - Saturdays – 3-unit classes meet for 6-7 full-day sessions
- Hybrid
  - Combines in person and online (synchronous or asynchronous) meetings
- Online (asynchronous or bichronous)
  - No in-person meetings; only online





# *Potential* Location & Modality Changes *Pending*, Fall 2026

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- **Location**
  - 160 Spear Street through spring 2026
  - Starting summer 2026, SF State's Main Campus, 1600 Holloway Ave.
- **Modality (Approval Pending)**
  - Currently seeking Distance Education Authorization (DEA) – if approved, will allow a greater percentage of curriculum to be delivered in online, bichronous, and hybrid/mixed modality formats

# A Highly Affordable Degree

- 69% of SF State MPA students graduating in 2022-2023 reported taking on **NO student debt**
- 6% took on **\$5,000 or less** of student debt

Estimated Tuition and Fees to Degree 2025 – 2026				
University	Part Time	Full Time	Accredited	
CSU-East Bay	n/a	\$19,214	No	
San Jose State	\$21,236	\$20,926	Yes	
Notre Dame de Namur	\$22,248	\$22,248	No	
<b>San Francisco State</b>	<b>\$29,512</b>	<b>\$29,009</b>	<b>Yes</b>	
Golden Gate	\$29,430	\$29,430	No	
Mills College at Northeastern University (MPA)	\$42,240	\$42,240	Yes	
University of San Francisco	\$64,410	\$64,410	Yes	
UC Berkeley (Master of Public Affairs)	n/a	\$68,882	No	
Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey	\$87,276	\$49,870	No	
University of Redlands/Presidio Center for Sustainable Solutions- MBA/MPA dual degree	\$104,390	\$104,390	No	
Sonoma State (currently not accepting applications)	n/a	n/a	No	



# How We Prepare Our Graduates

A rigorous  
curriculum

Internships

Applied field  
study credits

Practical &  
Research  
projects

Connections with  
alumni working  
in the field

2-year Willie  
Brown  
Fellowship

# A rigorous curriculum

Cross-program focus on writing, critical thinking, oral presentation skills & developing teamwork abilities

Balance between theory and practice

Applied research & service-learning opportunities

# The MPA Curriculum (39-42 units)

## Core (4 courses, 12 units; letter grade only):

- 700: Foundations of Government & Management
- 705: Design & Consumption of Research
- 706: Applied Data Analysis
- 715: Policy Process & Civic Engagement

## Management perspectives (select 4 of 6 courses, 12 units; letter grade only):

- 720: Organizational Design & Change Management
- 722: Performance Management & Planning
- 724: Economic Perspectives
- 725: Managing Human Capital
- 727: Program Design & Service Delivery
- 730: Resource Management and Allocation

**\*Have to earn B- or higher in each course and maintain a GPA of 3.0 overall\***

## Electives (12 units)


- Select a designed elective emphasis (optional)
- Select electives with advisor's approval
  - Grade or CR/NC option

## Public service internship (0-3 units)

- 803: Internship, 3 units
- Or apply for waiver with significant public service experience.
  - Grade or CR/NC option

## Culminating experience (select 1 of 2 options, 3 units):

- 890: Capstone
  - Must be taken for a grade
- 898: Thesis

A close-up photograph of a person's hands gently cradling a small, colorful globe of the Earth. The globe is positioned in the center-left of the frame, showing the Arctic region with Greenland, Canada, and parts of the United States and Europe. The hands are light-skinned and the background is a soft, out-of-focus brown. The right side of the image is covered by a semi-transparent white overlay containing text.

# Choose your elective emphasis (12 units)

- Nonprofit Administration
- Public Management
- Public Policy
- Urban Administration
- Self-Designed Emphasis

# Other Ways to Fulfill Elective Requirements

Earn a [Graduate Certificate](#). A few of the many possibilities include:

- Ethnic Studies
- Ethical Artificial Intelligence
- Sustainable Business

➤ *Seek approval from an MPA faculty advisor before enrolling*

Enroll in **the MPA – Concentration in Aging in Society\*** (proposal under review; anticipated to be approved for fall 2026).

4 courses on aging:

1. GRN 705, Aging in a Multi-Dimensional Context
2. GRN 715, Aging and Social Policy Analysis
3. GRN 725, Aging and Diversity
4. GRN 735, Ethical and Legal Issues in Aging and Social Services

**\*Note:** Enrollment in the proposed concentration in aging in society program is contingent on final program authorization from the CSU Chancellor's Office.



# Practical Projects

Projects in many courses are action- and service-oriented.

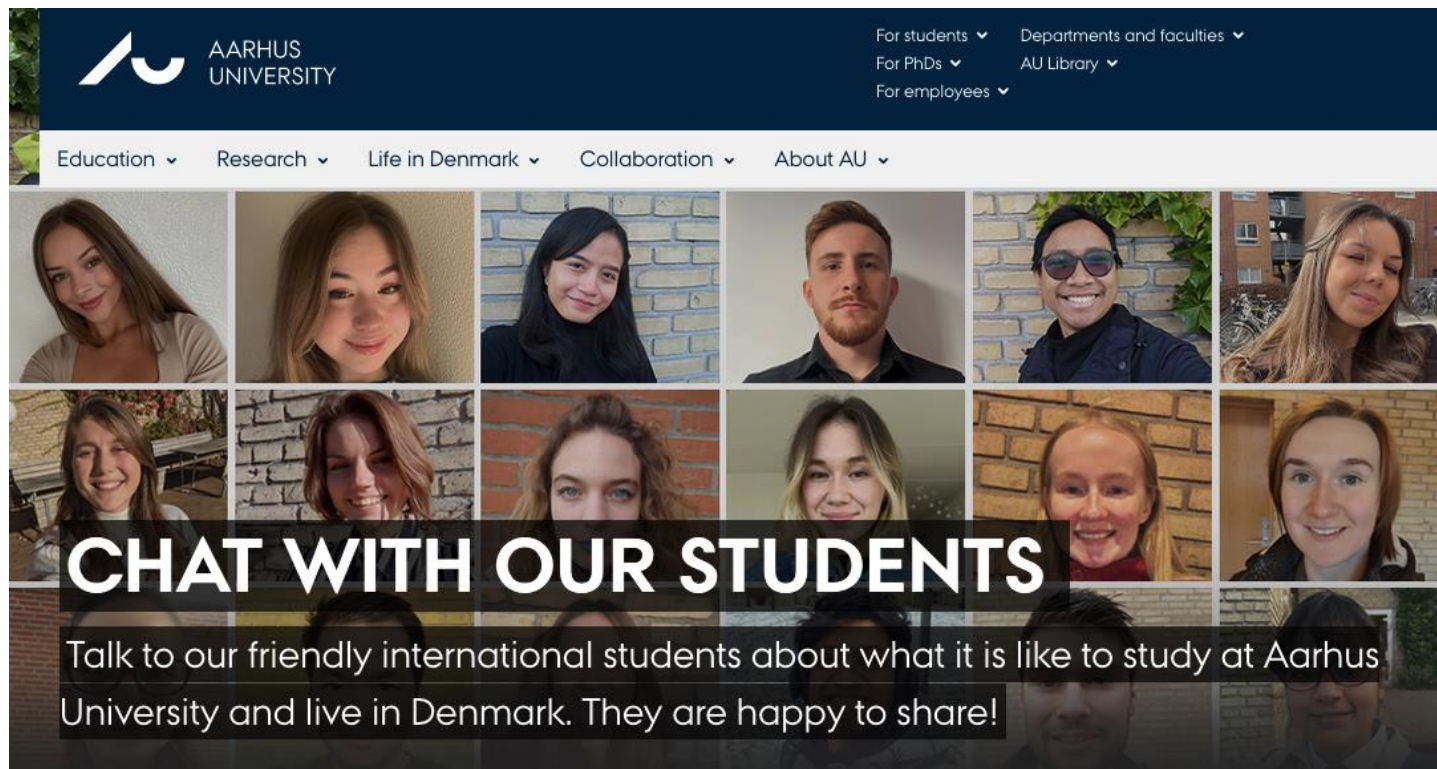
For example, in PA 727, students interviewed public managers (government and nonprofit) about COVID-era adaptations in their service delivery. Here is a father-daughter duo: MPA student Madeleine Martin interviews San Marcos County Public Works Director, Mr. Buck Martin

Interview with Buck Martin: Director of Parks and Recreation San Marcos  
Madeleine Martin - Thursday, October 28, 2021, 4:31 PM



Interview with Buck Martin: Director of Parks and Recreation San Marcos  
Madeleine Martin - Thursday, October 28, 2021, 4:31 PM





# International Connections

- Summer abroad in Denmark (University of Aarhus)
- Fall study abroad in Thailand (National Institute of Development Administration)
- Academic Year study abroad in Japan (Meiji University)
- Faculty with international connections and interests

[Learn more about SF State's study abroad programs for MPA students](#)

# Scholarships & Fellowships Just for MPA Students

- **2-year Willie Brown Fellowship for MPA Students**
  - \$11,000 per year for 2 years plus \$3,000 in professional development funds yr. 2
  - Enroll in at least 6 units per semester for 2 calendar years (January – December)
  - Participate in 1-year public sector internship and other professional development activities
  - Open only to SF State MPA students in good standing with 18 or fewer units completed by December of academic year
  - Applications open Aug. 25 & close in Nov. 2025
  - For more information, including information session dates, [visit our website](#)
- **Learn more about this and [scholarships offered at SF State](#).**



# Admission Process: Deadlines, Process, Requirements

- Transcripts
- CV
- Recommendation Letters
- Personal Statement/ Essay



# Application Deadlines, Process, & Requirements

Apply online through CSU [Cal State Apply](#):

- For Fall admission, the review begins March 1<sup>st</sup>; Applications close May 1<sup>st</sup>
- For Spring admission, the review begins October 1<sup>st</sup>; Applications close November 1<sup>st</sup>

Application requires unofficial transcripts, an updated CV, two recommendation letters, and a personal statement

**Submit unofficial transcripts from all the universities you have attended**

- No less than 3.0 GPA in last 60 units required – may not be waived
- No GRE required or pre-requisite coursework



## CAL STATE **APPLY**

*Interested in the proposed MPA, Concentration in Aging in Society?* Indicate your interest in Cal State Apply by checking the box that asks. We will follow up once the concentration is fully approved.



# Submit a personal statement, 3-4 pages in a coherent essay



Life/work experiences that have led you to an interest in public service (public or nonprofit), especially if related to civic engagement and/or DEIB in any way



Career goals and professional interests or aspirations, including what informs them. Include any specific policy areas, subfields of PA, civic engagement and/or DEIB initiatives



How the MPA degree will be helpful and consistent with your career goals and aspirations



Describe why this is the right time in your career to come into a MPA program and seek the degree



Describe why the SF State MPA degree program is a good fit for you and your career / professional goals, especially how they align with the public service values SF State's MPA Program elevates

## Taken together, documents should paint a coherent picture

- Personal statement, references, transcripts, and resume should tell a coherent story
- Obstacles are okay, but explain them and resolution
- Demonstrate that applicant knows what the MPA degree is and will be satisfied with what it delivers
- Demonstrate applicant's potential to
  - Add diversity to the program (interesting background or experience)
  - Make a contribution to the public/nonprofit sector
  - Succeed in the program



# How to Learn More as Prospective Students

Visit the MPA Program website: <http://pace.sfsu.edu/mpa>

Connect with us on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/1346917/>

Look for panels and other events open to prospective students: <https://pace.sfsu.edu/news-events>

- Observe a class
- Attend guest speaker presentations in classes
- Participate in career development workshops
- Be put in contact with alumni and current students

*For more information about opportunities listed above, contact [pace@sfsu.edu](mailto:pace@sfsu.edu)*

Take advantage of application advising and support from the Graduate Division:

- <https://grad.sfsu.edu/content/apply>
- <https://grad.sfsu.edu/content/advising>
- <https://grad.sfsu.edu/content/advising-faqs>

# Questions & Answers

We hope you will consider applying! We look forward to reviewing your application.

