



Available online at www.sciencedirect.com

ScienceDirect

Policy and Society xxx (2016) xxx–xxx

policy
and
society

www.elsevier.com/locate/polsoc

Schools of public policy and executive education: An opportunity missed?

Ken Rasmussen^{a,*}, Derrick Callan^a, Mikhail Pryadilnikov^b

^a *Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, University of Regina, Regina, Saskatchewan S4V0S3, Canada*

^b *Professor, Master of Global Public Policy Program and leading research fellow at the School of Public Policy, Russian Academy of the National Economy and Public Administration*

Abstract

Executive education programs at schools of public policy are currently under examined in the literature. More than their strictly academic counterparts, executive education programs must be immediately relevant to the needs of practitioners and should be grounded in evidence of what works to improve public management. This article draws attention to the uneven global development of executive education, with American schools leading the way by a significant margin. Among schools who do engage in this activity there is an emerging orthodoxy based on the dominance of an “action learning” framework, a curriculum focused on leadership and management skills, and a faculty supplemented by practitioners with experience in public policy development and service delivery. Executive education has the potential to bridge the gap between theory and practice by bringing the research and expertise of public policy schools to a much broader community.

© 2016 Published by Elsevier Ltd on behalf of Policy and Society Associates (APSS).

Keywords : Public policy; Public administration; Public policy teaching; Research in public administration; Educational standards; Russia

1. Introduction

With the growth in the number of schools of public management and public policy¹ worldwide in the past 20 years, it might be expected that we would see an equal growth in the number of executive education programs established by these schools aimed at working public service professionals. The reason for such an expectation is that most, if not all, of these programs have been created with the specific objective of training students for professional public service careers as well as to penetrate the world of practice through engagement with governments, agencies, and public servants. As such, executive education programs are a good place to explore the status of public management as an epistemic community. Does the presence of executive education programs in schools of public policy help create a community of professionals, based on shared and broadly accepted concepts of how to effectively lead and manage

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: ken.rasmussen@uregina.ca (K. Rasmussen), Callan2d@uregina.ca (D. Callan).

¹ For the purposes of this article the term public policy school will cover all schools offering programs whose primary goal is training graduate students for public service careers, and which are eligible for membership in a national body that offers program accreditation, such as NASPAA and CAPP. These schools offer a variety of graduate degree programs, but we will refer to them collectively as MPP/MPA degrees.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.polsoc.2016.12.002>

1449-4035/© 2016 Published by Elsevier Ltd on behalf of Policy and Society Associates (APSS).

Please cite this article in press as: K. Rasmussen, et al., Schools of public policy and executive education: An opportunity missed?, Policy and Society (2017), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.polsoc.2016.12.002>

public sector organizations? Is executive education an indicator of the state of development of a public management epistemic community? Is executive education found in all schools of public policy or is it unevenly distributional globally?

An epistemic community is defined by its common characteristics including shared sets of causal and principled beliefs, a consensual knowledge base, and a common policy enterprise (Adler & Haas, 1992). Furthermore, an epistemic community may consist of professionals from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds, who have a shared set of normative and principled beliefs, which provide a value-based rationale for the social action of community members (Haas, 1992). This is of course an ideal type definition that is not always achieved in practice, even among traditional professions. When we examine public management as a profession it becomes clear that it has no academic gatekeeper, as is the case with law and medicine. Therefore, its status as an epistemic community appears much more elusive. The borders of an epistemic community are somewhat blurry and contested by both practitioners and academics. Even well-established epistemic communities never have completely stable or precise boundaries between the epistemic and other realms. As one recent study noted, “the boundaries of epistemic communities are crossed, open to debate and dynamic” (Meyer & Molyneux-Hodgson, 2010). It is the progress toward such a community and not the destination itself that is the subject for examination in this article.

We explore the development of a public management epistemic community by assessing the extent to which the world of academic “public management” influences the world of practice. The article examines the way in which schools of public policy organize their executive education activities, how much this activity has grown, how much convergence there is among schools of public policy that offer executive education, how coordinated executive education is among schools themselves, and what is the relative status of the executive education programming offered by schools of public policy compared to their other programs. It examines the extent to which there is movement toward a common conceptual space in the realm of executive education for public managers centered in schools of public policy and how seriously public policy schools are pursuing executive education. Finally, the article suggests that executive education provides one way to develop a public management epistemic community that is itself increasingly anchored in national and international accreditation associations.

2. Methodology and background

The article uses two main methods of research to present its evidence about the current positioning of executive education in schools of public policy in North America, Europe, and Asia. First, it analyses and reviews the literature on public management and higher education to explore the history and development of executive education in public policy schools. This provides the context for the study and the proposition that executive education in schools of public policy reflect what public managers need immediately in contrast to what these same schools offer in their full-time programs aimed at those with little or no experience in government. Second, evidence from a wide range of academic literature, website, media, and school brochures is used to describe the position of and approach to executive education in a variety of programs from around the world. Global rankings are used to select the universities that house these programs and this is supplemented by reputational surveys and accreditation status (where these exist) to further refine the list of programs selected for analysis.

3. Schools of public policy: gatekeepers of the profession?

The construction of a public management epistemic community is confronted by the fact that there is no single gatekeeper such as a Law Society that guards access to the profession as there is in law, medicine, engineering, and a long list of other professions. In this, public policy schools are confronted with a challenge similar to business schools. But business schools have been much more willing to develop common standards and nomenclature in their programs and have been much more effective in the diffusion of a “universal” model of business education. Business schools dominate management development activities, including those aimed at public sector clients, and their regular full-time academic programs are among the most sought after undergraduate and graduate degrees globally. Indeed, business schools have collaborated in developing something of a mass production model, which gives its fullest expression in the global prominence of the MBA degree as a highly regarded “license” to practice management (Antunes & Thomas, 2008).

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7492452>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7492452>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)