CSUSM Master of Public Administration (MPA) Feasibility Study

PSCI 301 Practice of Political Research
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Executive Summary

Introduction

Democracy in Action is a community engagement practice through which CSUSM faculty and students partner with a local city government to conduct research, gathering qualitative and quantitative data to benefit city projects that are backlogged or need additional attention. The MPA feasibility study project is designed to consider and develop a Master of Public Administration (MPA) program at CSUSM to meet the regional demand of the labor force in the public sector. This project was integrated into PSCI 301 Practice of Political Research and co-sponsored by CSUSM Extended Learning, Office of Civic Engagement, and Department of Political Science.

Research Design

We adopt a mixed-method approach to survey and interview various research populations regarding their interest in the MPA program, including municipalities, law enforcement, fire services from San Diego and Riverside County, and CSUSM students. First, we designed a service provider survey using Qualtrics to collect overall demand and interest in the potential program from community partners. Second, we conducted qualitative interviews with selected community partners from the following cities: Canyon Lake, Carlsbad, Escondido, Menifee, Murrieta, Oceanside, San Marcos, Temecula, and Vista. While most survey respondents were nonprofit organizations, the interviewees were from city governments, chambers of commerce, and other public service providers such as police and fire departments. Finally, we distributed a CSUSM student survey using Qualtrics among undergraduate students majoring in highly relevant programs such as political science, sociology, economics, social science, and American Indian Studies. We collected 40 responses for the provider survey, 109 responses for the student survey, and 14 qualitative interviews with community partners.

Data and Analysis

The provider survey received 40 responses from community partners. Thirty-six respondents identified their organizational type, with 23 non-profit organizations (63.89%), seven city government agencies (19.44%), two public service agencies (5.56%), two local chambers of commerce (5.56%), and two others (5.56%). Services provided to local communities include developmental services, park and recreation, public safety, human resources and risk management, city clerk and management, and water operations and maintenance. When asked about the most pressing issues faced by local communities, respondents identified environmental concerns (15%), job opportunities (14.17%), housing (14.17%), services for the homeless/unhoused (13.33%), food security (10%), healthcare (10%), mental health/addiction rehabilitation (9.17%), veteran assistance (6.67%), and others (7.50%).

When asked what the level of need for a potential MPA program at CSUSM is, 45.45% of respondents think the level of need for MPA is moderate, while 39.39% consider it as high. When asked if individuals within their organizations would be interested in an MPA program, 32.35% responded with a "yes," 52.94% with a "maybe," and 14.71% with a "no." Respondents also demonstrated a high level of interest in potential collaboration. Apart from one organization, all other respondents replied that they would be interested in some forms of collaboration, including internships (35.14%), program liaison (21.62%), prospective teaching or instruction (18.92%), as well as community board input (17.57%).

The community partners interviewed demonstrated consistent interest in a CSUSM MPA program, and many expressed their support for collaborating with it. The interviewees across the different groups said they found value in educated employees. Some said that an MPA can be a pipeline for city government jobs, and others think an MPA program at CSUSM can create more job opportunities connecting people to the community. Many respondents advocate for the MPA to be community-oriented and flexible when asked about curriculum design. Interviewees from South Riverside County also point out that there is "a lack of full-fledged 4-year public university presence" in their region and the potential benefits of a CSUSM MPA program to their employees and communities.

The student survey received 109 responses. The results show that although 53.54% of student respondents plan to get a job directly after graduation, 37.78% said they plan to go to graduate school. Among 104 respondents who answered the question about the highest degree they want to obtain, 41.35% said they want to obtain a master's degree, 15.38% chose a doctorate, and 3.85% chose the professional certificate/other category. When asked about their career goals, many respondents chose career paths that could be potentially relevant to the MPA program, which include business (23%), local government (15.02%), administration (14.08%), and social services (12.68%). When considering potential MPA programs, financial considerations and career prospects are the most important priorities for students. Finally, most of our student respondents plan to stay in Southern California within or adjacent to the CSUSM service region after graduation.

When students were asked if they would be interested in applying to a CSUSM MPA program, 42% of respondents answered yes, 38% answered maybe, and 20% answered no. This shows that among students who plan to obtain graduate degrees, the majority would either be interested or potentially interested in a CSUSM MPA program. When asked why they are interested, many respondents indicated that an MPA program would help with career advancements and benefit the general welfare of people in their communities and networks. Some said they would prefer to stay at CSUSM instead of moving to a different school for an MPA program.

Discussion & Conclusion

The survey and interview results generally indicate that most community partners, service providers, and CSUSM students have genuine interests and support for an MPA program at CSUSM. Over 80% of community partners consider the level of interest in a CSUSM MPA program to be high or moderate. Similarly, over 80% of the student respondents said they are or may be interested in applying for a CSUSM MPA program. Furthermore, community partners and service providers demonstrated a strong interest in collaborating with the potential program. They cited their interest in providing resources and inputs through internships, teaching or instruction, community board input, and liaison.

Community partners and student respondents also provided essential insights into the curriculum design of a potential MPA program at CSUSM. Of all the concentrations we listed, the most likely in high demand are nonprofit management, public/social policy analysis, local government, and public finance and budgeting. In addition, most respondents across the provider and student surveys prefer hybrid and in-person modalities, citing the benefits of flexible schedules and in-person communications.

Introduction

Democracy in Action Overview

Democracy in Action is a community engagement practice through which CSUSM faculty and students partner with a local city government to conduct research, gathering qualitative and quantitative data to benefit city projects that are backlogged or need additional attention. Many regional cities need more human resources to complete all the projects that must be addressed. The program is designed to help city governments address issues through student engagement and research work. Faculty and students work closely with city officials to hone their expertise on specific scopes of work, and the students provide a polished, final report to the city.

Course Description

PSCI301 Practice of Political Research is designed to introduce students to the skills for interpreting, conducting, presenting, and analyzing political science research. Over the course of the term, students learn how to think like social scientists while developing various skills required by the discipline, such as how to choose which method to employ, how to undertake original research (complete with data collection and analysis), and how to present your findings to colleagues. At the end of this class, the goal is to help students understand and conduct political research that will be useful in both academic and professional settings.

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Describe and assess the logic of political science research
- Comprehend the basic concepts, steps, and design involved in the systematic research process.
- Achieve an intuitive understanding of using statistical software for data analysis.
- Design and communicate research and be an intelligent consumer of research.

MPA Feasibility Study Project Overview

The project is designed to consider and develop a Master of Public Administration (MPA) program to meet the regional demand of the labor force in the public sector. The MPA program under consideration is intended for individuals interested in managing municipal functions, managing nonprofit organizations, planning for the future, and guiding political leaders into good decision-making. To achieve this goal, we designed a mixed-method approach to survey and interview various populations, including municipalities, law enforcement, fire services from San Diego and Riverside County, and CSUSM students, regarding their interest in the MPA program. This feasibility study project was integrated into PSCI 301 Practice of Political Research and co-sponsored by CSUSM Extended Learning, the Office of Civic Engagement, and the Department of Political Science. The research process is led by Dr. Xiaoye She, Assistant Professor of Political Science, with the participation of political science students taking PSCI301 Practice of Political Research in Fall 2023. Daisy Sandoval was the research assistant who helped coordinate research conducted by student teams and contributed to the final report.

Research Design

Research Population and Sampling Frame

The feasibility study adopts a mixed-method design to collect both quantitative survey and qualitative interview data from research participants. The research population includes both community stakeholders and CSUSM students.

For community stakeholders, we adopted a purposive sample that includes respondents from city governments and agencies, water districts, police and fire departments, chambers of commerce, and non-profit organizations in CSUSM service regions of North San Diego & Riverside Counties. To fully capture the program demand and level of interest, we first designed a Qualtrics service provider survey to collect general information from community partners. We then complement the quantitative survey data with qualitative interviews with selected community partners. The Qualtrics provider survey questionnaire and interview protocol are included in Appendixes I and III.

We developed a list of potential interview and survey respondents among community partners based on suggestions from CSUSM Extended Learning. We also relied on the CSUSM SD4 service learning/internship database to identify additional community partners, mainly non-profit organizations in our service region. Extended Learning helped distribute the provider survey to community partners, and we received 40 responses. The student teams conducted 14 in-depth interviews, in-person or via Zoom. While most survey respondents are non-profit organizations in the region, the interviews are primarily undertaken with city governments and agencies, water districts, political and fire departments, and chambers of commerce.

To survey potential student demand and interest, we designed a Qualtrics student survey distributed among undergraduate students majoring in highly relevant programs such as political science, sociology, economics, social science, and American Indian Studies. Due to time and logistic constraints, the student survey could only be distributed to some undergraduate students at CSUSM. Nonetheless, the purposive approach allows us to survey the students most likely interested in the potential MPA program and collect their input on curriculum design. With the help of the Office of Civic Engagement and the department chairs of these programs, we distributed the student survey through Qualtrics and received 109 responses. The Qualtrics student survey questionnaire is included in Appendix II.

Service Provider Survey Design

We developed the service provider survey through Qualtrics and collected community partner input on the following areas:

- Services provided by the organization to local communities and issue priorities
- General assessment of regional demand for an MPA program
- Organizational interest in and potential collaboration with the MPA program
- Suggestions for curriculum design for the MPA program

Building on previous surveys for newly developed programs at Extended Learning, the student teams helped design the survey questions to be distributed among community partners who provide direct services to local communities in the CSUSM service region. The sampling frame included city

governments and agencies, police and fire departments, chambers of commerce, and non-profit organizations. We received 40 responses from community partners invited to participate in the survey.

Student teams that contributed to the design and analysis of the Service Provider Survey are:

- Team One: Marissa Gonzalez, Olivia Ohm, Anelly Brown, and Akram Salaymeh
- Team Two: Maya Sepulveda, Nic Regal, Vincent Santiago, Taylor Bolanos, and Katie Gordon
- Team Three: Ana Jaimes, Hayden Rivera, and Juliette Corona
- Team Four: Maribel Hernandez, Diego Ruiz, and Luis Mendoza

Each team contributed to the design and analysis of two survey questions. The complete Qualtrics questionnaire for the service provider survey is included in Appendix I.

CSUSM Student Survey Design

We designed and distributed the CSUSM student survey through Qualtrics. The survey contains questions in the following areas:

- Student's academic and career goals
- Student's graduate program interest
- Student's CSUSM MPA program interest
- Student's preferences on program and curriculum design

Building on previous surveys for newly developed programs at Extended Learning, the student teams helped design the survey questions to be distributed among CSUSM students who could be interested in applying for an MPA program on campus. The sampling frame included students majoring in related disciplines such as political science, sociology, economics, and other social sciences and interdisciplinary majors. Dr. Elizabeth Matthews from the Office of Civic Engagement helped coordinate the survey distribution with the department chairs and program coordinators of Political Science, Sociology, Economics, Social Science, and American Indian Studies. Across the five departments and programs we received 109 responses from CSUSM students across the five departments invited to participate in the survey.

Student teams that contributed to the design and analysis of the CSUSM Student Survey are:

- Team Five: Camren Pierce, Ava Harlan, Rafael Alvarez
- Team Six: William Connor, Connor Liske, Will Prouty, and Natalie Paulson
- Team Seven: James Carmody, Dominique Contreras, Kaley Goins, and Anastacia Phillips
- Team Eight: Wyatt Steele, Grace Manuel, Jacob Shafer, and Rob Weiler

Each team contributed to the design and analysis of two survey questions. The complete Qualtrics questionnaire for the CSUSM Student Survey is included in Appendix II.

Community Partner Interview Design

Along with the provider and student surveys, we designed the community partner interviews to collect more in-depth knowledge from selective community partners across cities in North San Diego & Riverside Counties. The general interview questions resemble the service provider survey. However, the student teams were instructed to tailor and follow up on selective questions to gain in-depth knowledge of the specific cities. Based on the list provided by CSUSM Extended Learning, students reached out to the community partners in the following cities: Canyon Lake, Carlsbad, Escondido, Menifee, Murrieta, Oceanside, San Marcos, Temecula, and Vista. We invited participants who are primarily city governments, chambers of commerce, and other public service providers such as police and fire departments.

Student teams used a recruitment script to email the community partners and set up Zoom, in-person, or phone interviews with the community contacts through email exchanges or phone calls. Each student team then adapted the interview protocol template provided by the instructor while tailoring some interview questions to each city. Student teams were introduced to interview research ethics in class and acquired oral consent from participants before video or audio recording the interviews. The recruitment script and interview protocol templates are included in Appendix II.

All eight student teams contributed to the interview research, and each student team was able to secure and conduct at least 1-2 interviews with community partners. We were able to conduct a total of 14 interviews before early December. Following the interviews, the student teams transcribed the interviews into written transcripts and coded the interview data using the interview memo template provided by the instructor. The interview findings and the provider and student survey results were presented to campus and community partners during the final project presentation at Extended Learning.

Data and Analysis

Community Partner Survey Results

The community partner survey contains ten questions. We received 40 responses from community partners who were invited to participate. The results are presented below.

Question One: Which of the following entities best describes your organization?
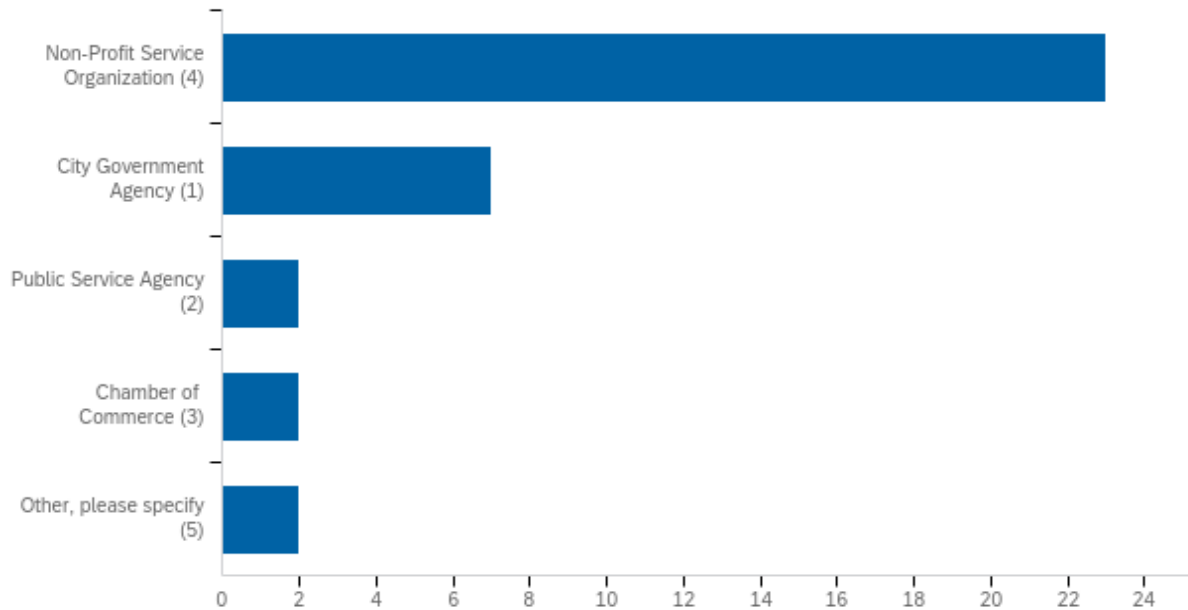
Question one asks participating organizations to identify their organization type. The following options were provided: non-profit service organization, city government agency, public service agency, chambers of commerce, and others. The purpose is to categorize the participants' organizations and determine how their organizational type may influence their responses. Of the 36 respondents to this question, 23 are non-profit organizations (63.89%), 7 are city government agencies (19.44%), 2 are public service agencies (5.56%), and 2 are local chambers of commerce (5.56%). Two additional respondents mentioned they are local non-biased news outlets and palliative care education institutions. All respondents provided their contact information, allowing us to follow up with further questions as needed.

The results show that most participating community partners or service providers participated in the survey are non-profit organizations in the region, with only a few city governments and specific public service agencies. The survey results complement the qualitative interviews, primarily focusing on city governments and public service agencies.

Question Two: What service(s) does your organization provide to local communities? Please select all that apply.
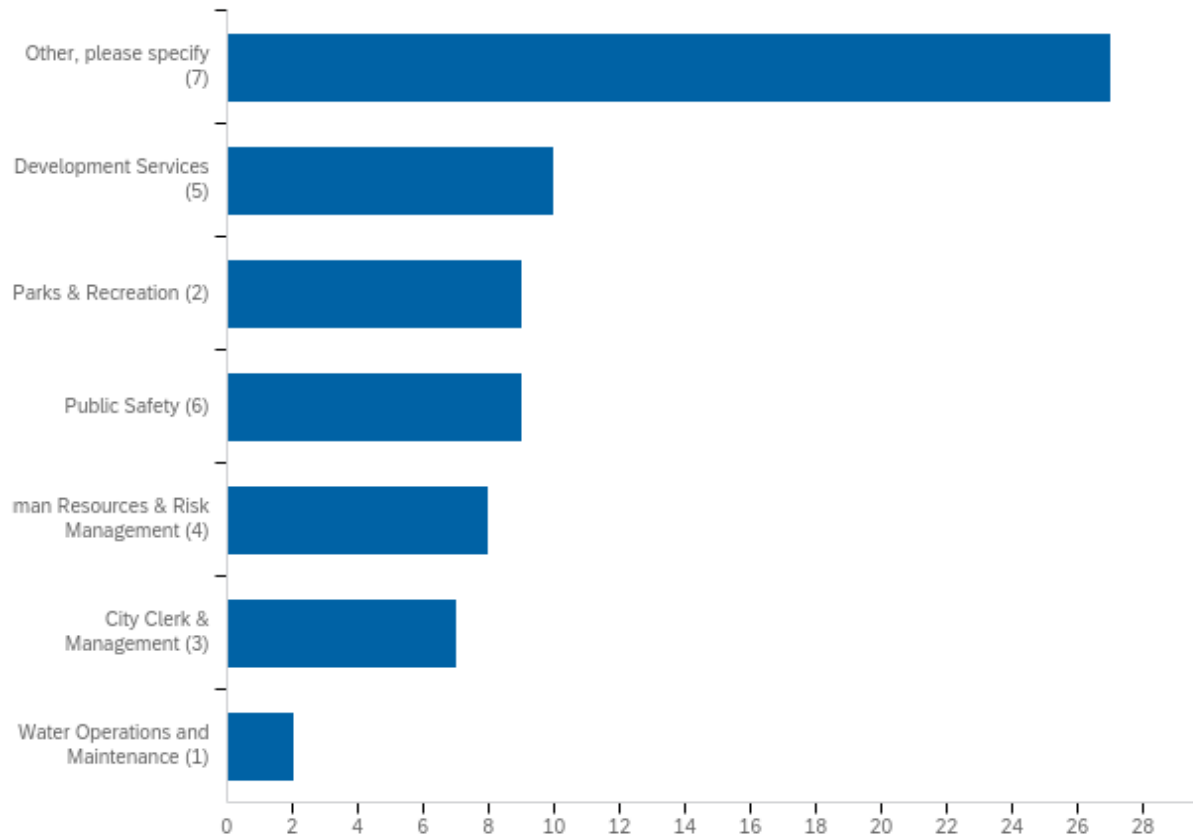

Question 2 asks each organization to identify their organizations' services to local communities. This question is designed to understand what a participating organization is responsible for and what purposes it serves for its communities. Survey respondents were also allowed to choose multiple responses to this question. The results show that ten organizations provide developmental services (13.89%), 9 provide park & recreation services (12.50%), 9 provide public safety services (12.50%), 8 provide human resources and risk management (11.11%), 7 provide city clerk and management (9.72%), and 2 provide water operations and maintenance (2.78%). In addition, a few organizations outline their functions as multimedia/television/film production, shelter to unhoused families, volunteers to other nonprofits and public agencies, finance/treasury, and environmental and energy research and advocacy.

Question Three: Which of these are priority issue areas in your city or service region?
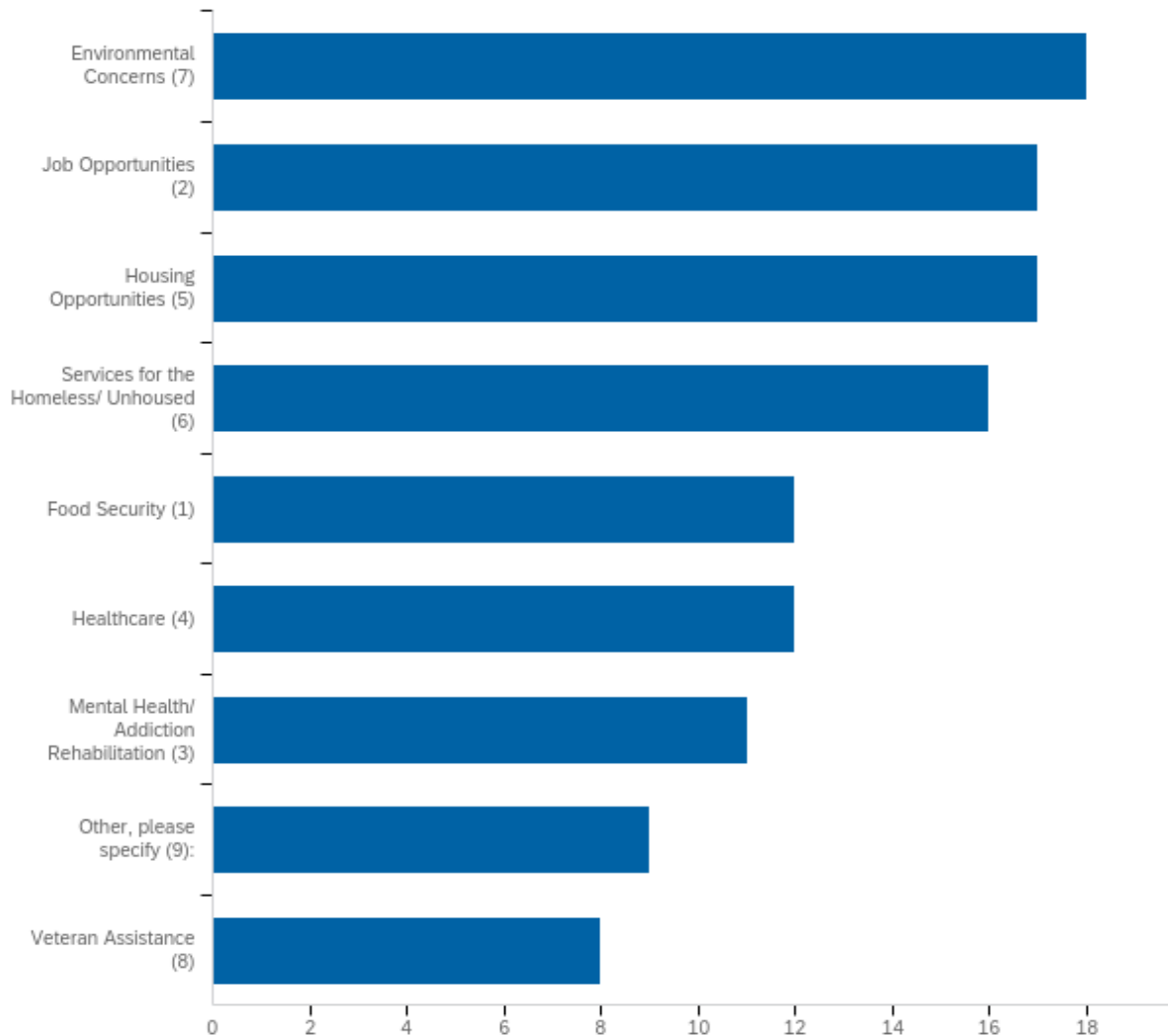

Question 3 asks participants to identify priority issue areas in the city or service region related to or in addition to their provided services. Identifying such issue priorities can help inform the development of the MPA curriculum and specific concentration and certificate programs. Of all the choices provided, environmental concerns (15.00%), job opportunities (14.17%), housing opportunities (14.17), and services for homeless/unhoused (13.33%) were among the top priorities of local communities, according to survey respondents. Other priorities include food security (10%), healthcare (10%), mental health/addiction rehabilitation (9.17%), and veteran assistance (6.67%). Many of these priorities were also echoed in interviews with local public officials. When choosing "Other, please specify," some survey respondents cited energy generation/distribution, inclusiveness in the workforce, serious illness, mental health unrelated to addiction, and media production.

Question Four: Which of the following issues are the most pressing? Please rank each issue on a scale of 1-3.
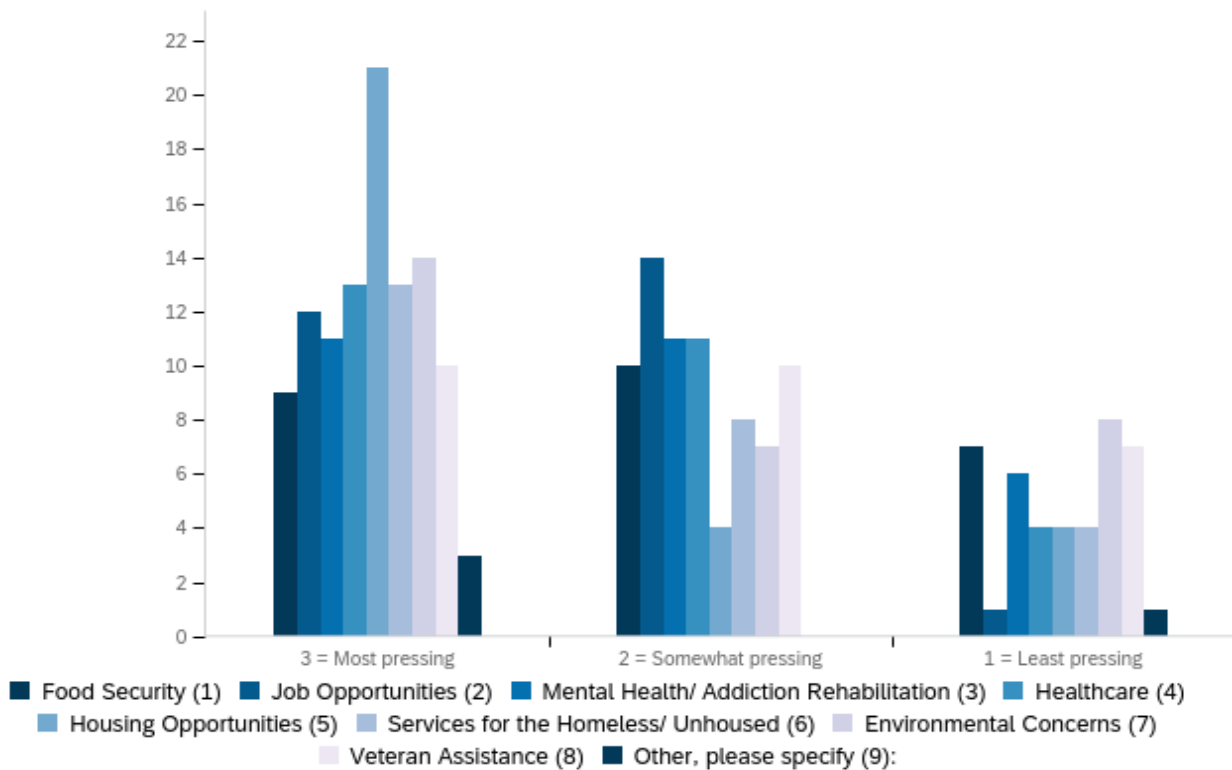

For Question 4, providers were asked to rank the issues they identified on a 3-point scale of most, somewhat, or least pressing. We ask participating organizations to rank these issues based on their perception using their knowledge as community partners and service providers. Of the choices provided, housing opportunities received the most votes for "most pressing," with a total of 5 votes. In the "somewhat pressing" category, job opportunities and veterans' assistance tied for first, with five votes each. There were far fewer votes in the "least pressing" category, but food security, mental health and addiction rehabilitation, housing opportunities, and environmental concerns were among the top choices. Going by a mean scale of all votes, food security was considered most pressing with a mean of 2.33, mental health and addiction rehabilitation was second with a mean of 2.14, and environmental concerns & veterans' assistance tied for third with a mean of 2.00.

Question Five: What is the level of need for a Master of Public Administration (MPA) program in the North San Diego or Riverside County region?
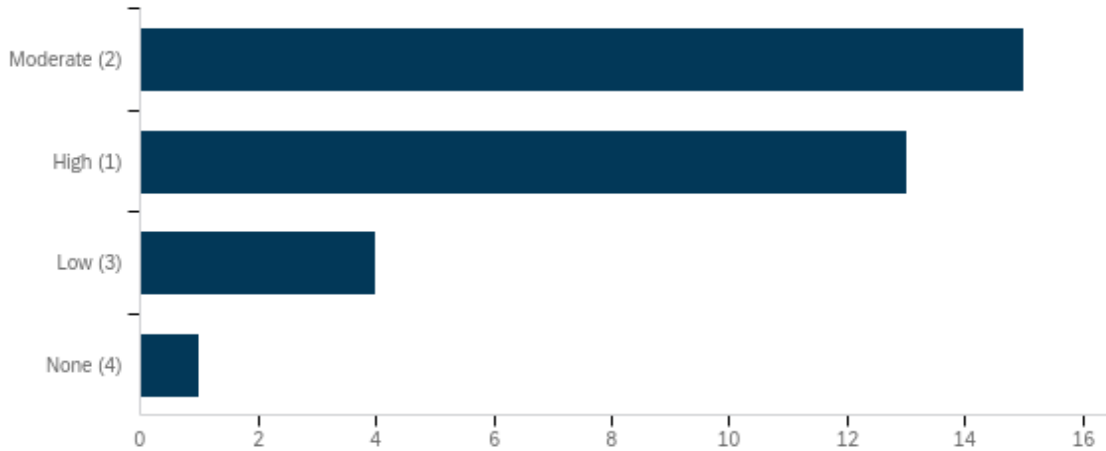

Question 5 assesses the level of need for an MPA program in the region. Out of all the responses received, thirty-three individuals participated in the survey. Fifteen respondents think the level of need for MPA is moderate (45.45%), while 13 consider it as high (39.39%). Only four respondents believe the need is low (12.12%), and one respondent chose "none" (3.03%). Our survey results indicate that the need for a Master of Public Administration (MPA) program in the North San Diego or Riverside County region is potentially in high demand, with over 80% of the respondents feeling the need is high or moderate.

Question Six: Do you anticipate there are individuals in your organization who would be interested in an MPA program?
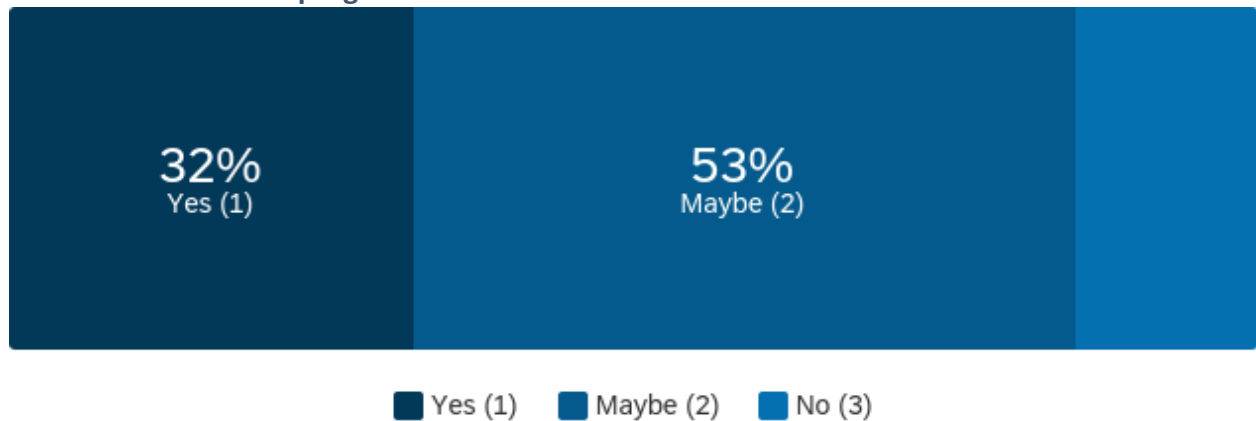

Question 6 assesses the level of interest in the MPA program within their specific organizations. There were three possible answers: yes, no, and maybe. With a total of thirty-four responses, eighteen said maybe, eleven said yes, and five responded with no. When asked if individuals within their organizations would be interested in an MPA program, 11 or 32.35% responded with a "yes," 18 or 52.94% with a "maybe," and 3 or 14.71% with a "no." While not entirely sure, these responses indicate that most respondents believe there would be interest in such a program, even among those already working in municipal positions in different cities.

Question Seven: How would your organization be interested in engaging or collaborating with CSUSM's MPA program? Please select all that apply.
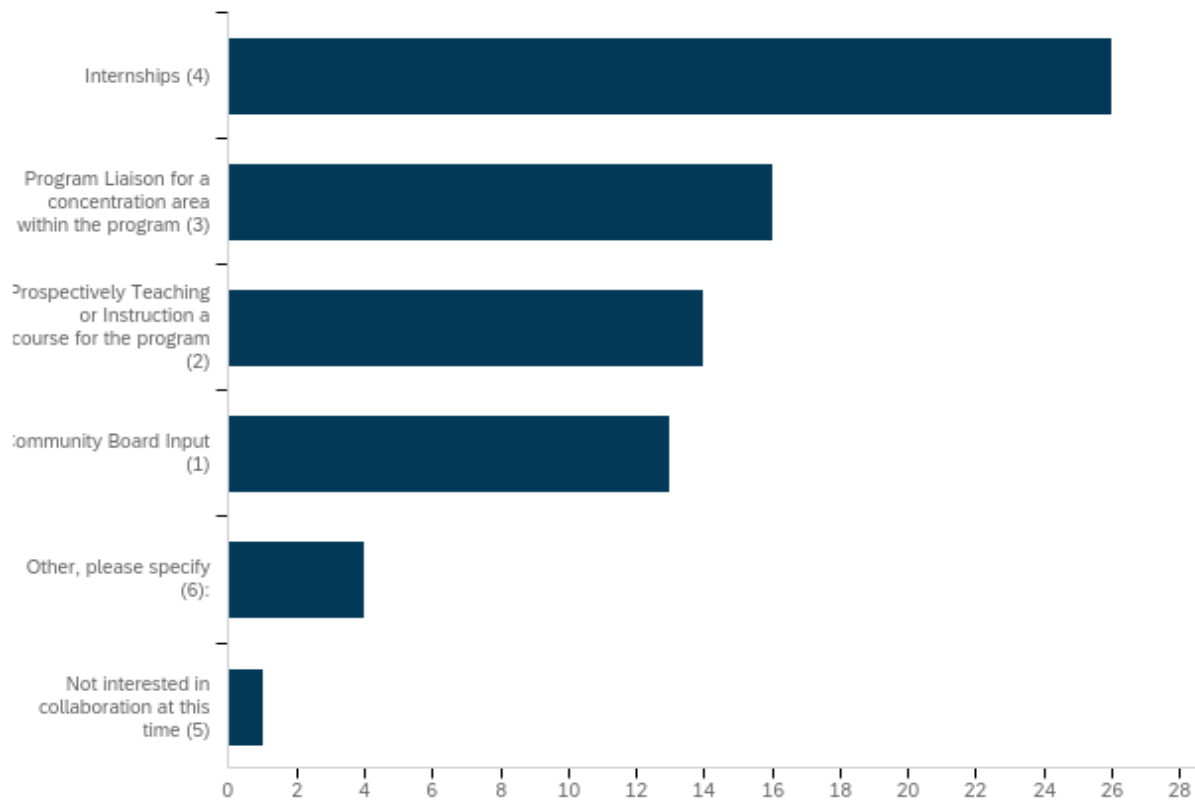

Question 7 asks about potential interests in engagement or collaboration with a potential CSUSM MPA program. Respondents can choose multiple options for this question. The results demonstrate a high level of interest in possible collaboration. Apart from one organization, all other respondents replied that they would be interested in some form of collaboration. Such opportunities include internships (26 respondents or 35.14%), program liaison (16 respondents or 21.62%), prospective teaching or instruction (14 respondents or 18.92%), as well as community board input (13 respondents or 17.57%). For respondents who chose the other category, they also mentioned the CSUSM Sponsored Career Ready Storytelling College program, employee enrollment in the CSUSM MPA program, assisting in promoting the program in their community, and helping check employee interest in teaching on their own time.

Question Eight: Which of these concentrations within a CSUSM MPA program would you be interested in?
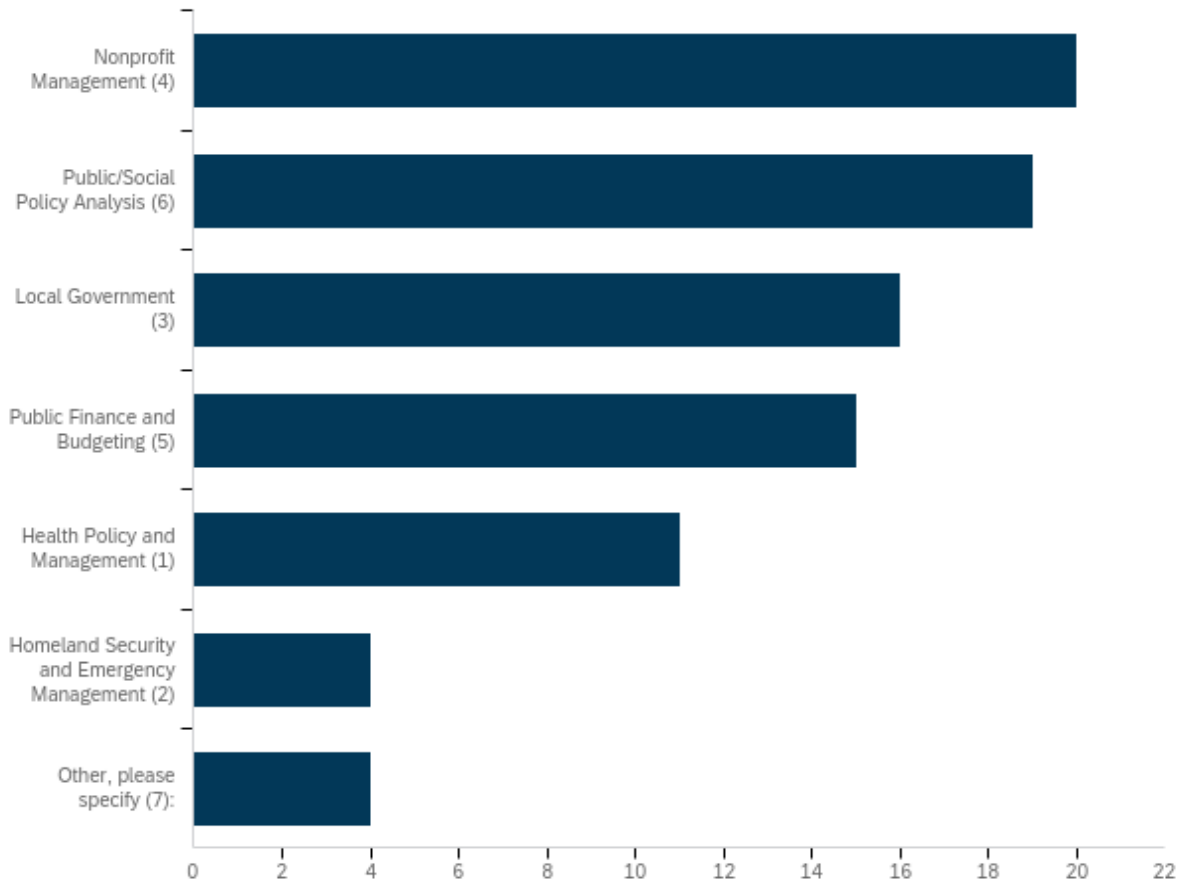
Question 8 asks respondents to choose a concentration they may be interested in in the prospective CSUSM MPA program. This question helps us assess the potential interest in various concentrations of the MPA program and informs our decision to develop such concentrations. We listed the most common MPA concentrations based on U.S. News rankings of MPA programs and added a few that could interest our local community partners and students. Because most respondents were non-profit organizations, it was unsurprising that 22.47% of our respondents selected nonprofit management. This is followed by public/ social policy analysis at 21.35%, local government at 17.98%, public finance and budgeting at 16.85%, health policy and management at 12.36%, and homeland security and emergency management at 4.49%. Other concentrations suggested by respondents include intergovernmental Relations, human resources and union negotiations, city/urban planning, development Services, organizational Leadership, and mental wellness.

Question Nine: Which of the following modalities would you prefer for a CSUSM MPA program? Please select all that apply.
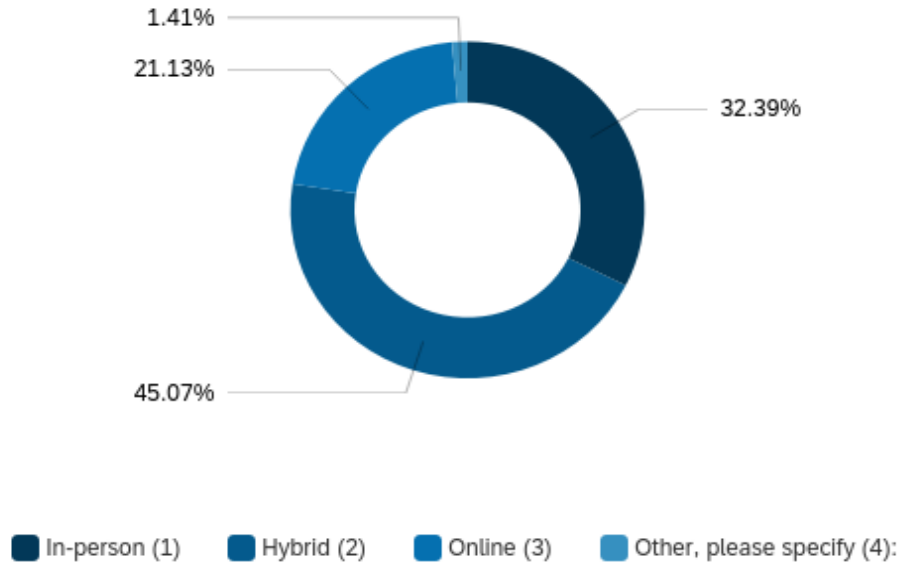
Question 9 asks respondents to identify their preferred modalities for the CSUSM MPA program. Given the demonstrated level of demand and interest from survey respondents, the question is designed to inform curriculum design for the potential CSUSM MPA program. Of the three choices, 32.39% of respondents preferred in-person instruction, 45.07% preferred hybrid instruction, and 21.13% chose online instruction. One respondent also suggested the Temecula campus as a potential location if only in-person instruction is offered and that an online option should be available for master's programs since their employees may have to work full time.

Hybrid had 32.39% choice, in-person with 32.39%, and online with 21.13%.

Question Ten: Additional Comments
Community partners and service providers who participated in the survey also highlighted some additional themes in their comments, such as interest in certificate programs, potential forms of collaborations, curriculum suggestions, and modality preferences. Below are specific comments provided by the survey respondents:

- "I would also love to see certificate programs for key service areas for those who may not be able to commit to a graduate degree or may not even have a bachelor's degree. Ideas include building officials, code enforcement, government basics, financial budgeting, human resources, conflict resolution, etc."
- "CSUSM has been instrumental in the growth & success of our nonprofit. Because of the involvement of so many departments, hundreds of student interns, and service-learning students, our program is going nationwide, impacting hundreds of thousands of students. We are more than happy to offer it to you at no cost. We are certain it could help your program.

Leadership skills are critical for all programs and fields of study. We wish you the best in your future projects!"

- "Be responsive to community needs and priorities."
- "Look forward to the development."
- "As a nonprofit leader, I'm not certain how an MPA would assist someone in nonprofit management. These would appear to be very different areas of study and focus. However, I hope my responses are worthwhile contributions to the success of your program."
- "Please keep us posted!"
- "It's a great idea to have an MPA program. If it's a hybrid, suggest in-person classes at night in Temecula. Virtual is great, too, for working executives. Thank you."
- "Thank you for the opportunity to participate. I have also met with Anelly and Olivia for the in-person interview."

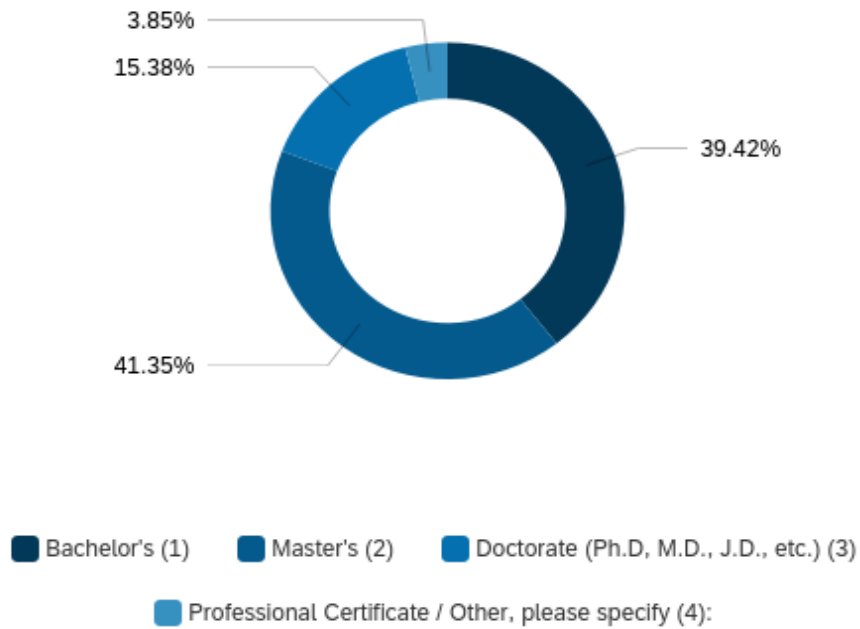## Student Survey Results

The student survey contains ten questions. We received 109 responses from CSUSM students across the five departments and programs invited to participate in the survey. The results are presented below.

Question One: What is your immediate goal after graduating from college?
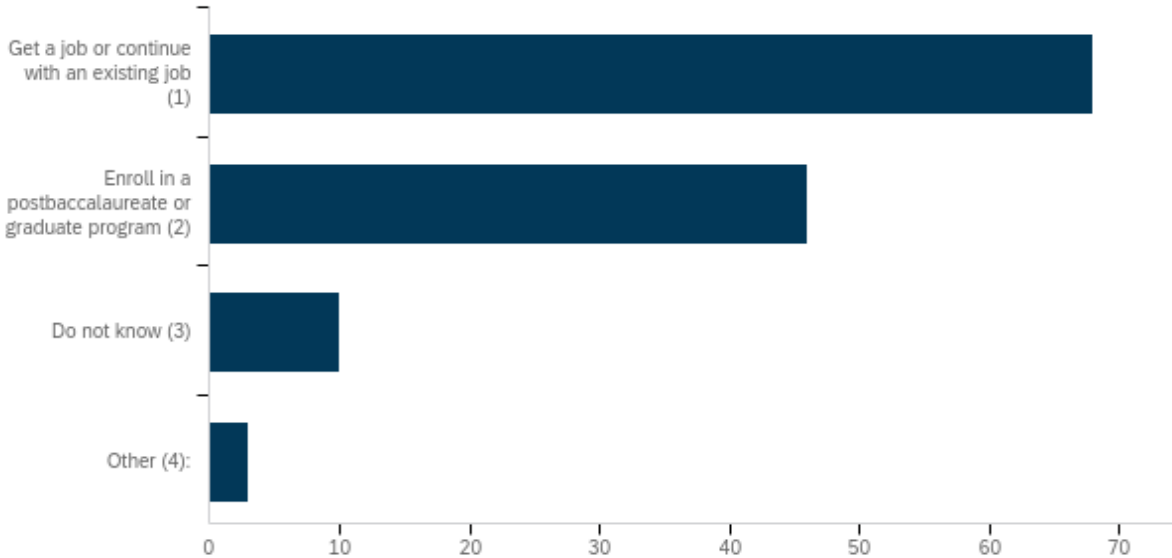
Question 1 asks students to identify their immediate goal after graduation. The four answer options we provided were getting a job or continuing with an existing job, enrolling in a post-baccalaureate or graduate program, do not know, and others. The initial results show that 53% of student respondents plan to get a job or continue the one they already have, 36% plan on enrolling in a postbaccalaureate or graduate program, and 7.87% still need to decide. In addition, approximately 2.36% of students answered "others," although two mentioned they plan to attend law school. Since law school is also a graduate program, we adjusted the number of students interested in graduate programs to 48 or 37.78% of all respondents. This shows that although over half of the students plan to get a job directly after graduation, a significant portion still plan to go to graduate school.

Question Two: What is the highest academic degree that you intend to obtain?

Question 2 asks students to identify the highest academic degree they intend to obtain. The four answer choices they could choose from were bachelor's, master's, doctorate, and others. One hundred four survey respondents answered this question. As illustrated in the pie chart, students who intend to obtain a master's or bachelor's as their highest degree of education are almost identical, with a master's having 43 responses (41.35%) and a bachelor's having 41 (39.42%). The two other possible responses are significantly less common, with a doctorate having 16 (15.38%) and a professional certificate/other having only 4 (3.85%). The other refers to certificate programs and law degrees. By gauging these responses, we can infer that around half of the respondents are interested in or intend to take some form of a master's program, which could include a Master of Public Administration.

Question Three: What is your intended career goal(s)? Please select all that apply.
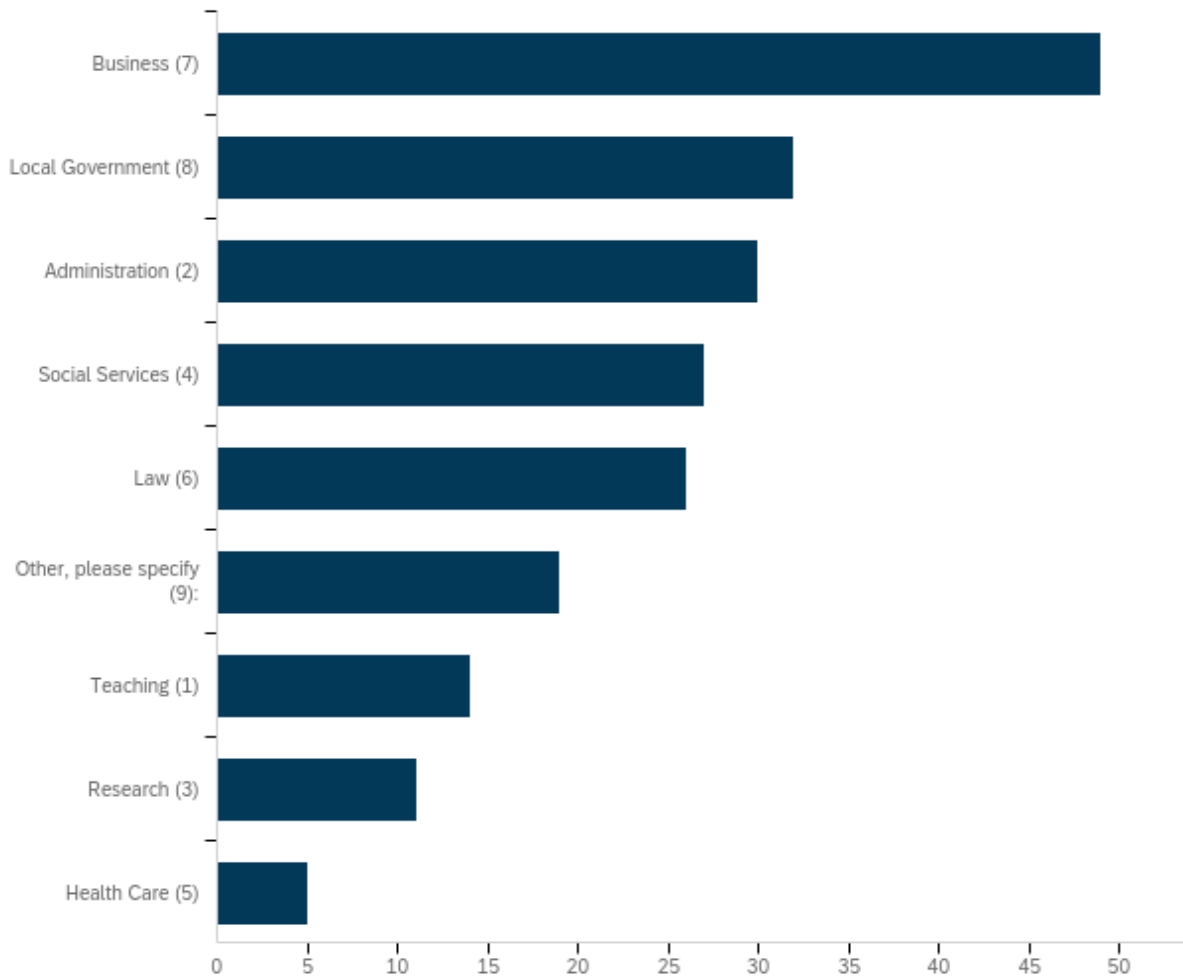
Question 3 asks student participants about their intended career goals. Since students were allowed to choose multiple options for this question, we received 213 response counts. The bar chart shows that the most prevalent answer was business, encompassing 49 responses or 23% out of 213 responses. The following three categories are potentially relevant to our MPA program, which includes local government (32 responses or 15.02%), administration (30 responses or 14.08%), and social services (27 responses or 12.68%). The three responses chosen the least in this survey were teaching (14 responses or 6.57%), research (11 or 5.16%), and healthcare (5 responses or 2.35%). In addition, 19 respondents selected "Other, please specify" and mentioned that they are interested in jobs in or related to technology, finance, and federal government/agencies.

Question Four: Where do you plan to live after graduation? Please select all that apply.
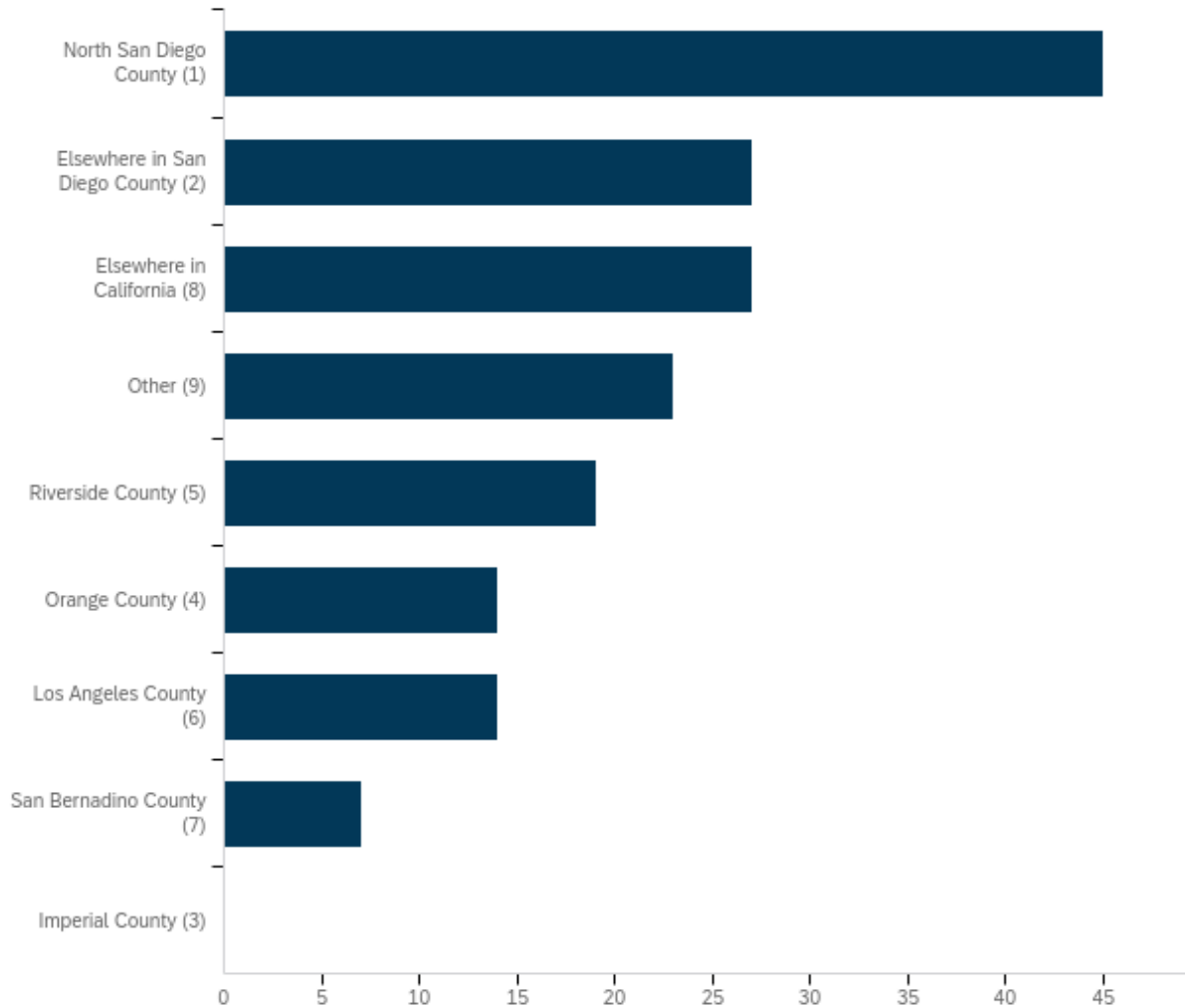
Question 4 asks student participants where they plan to live after graduation. Among the 176 responses we received, 45 students plan to stay in North San Diego County (25.57%), 27 students plan to stay somewhere else in San Diego County (27 or 15.34%), and 19 students plan to stay in Riverside County (10.80%). In addition, 14 students said they would remain in Los Angeles County (7.95%), and seven said they would stay in San Bernadino County (3.98%). Another 27 respondents chose elsewhere in California, and 23 chose another (13.07%). The result shows that most of our student respondents plan to stay in Southern California, within or adjacent to the CSUSM service region.

Question Five: What is important to you when choosing a graduate program? Please select all that apply.
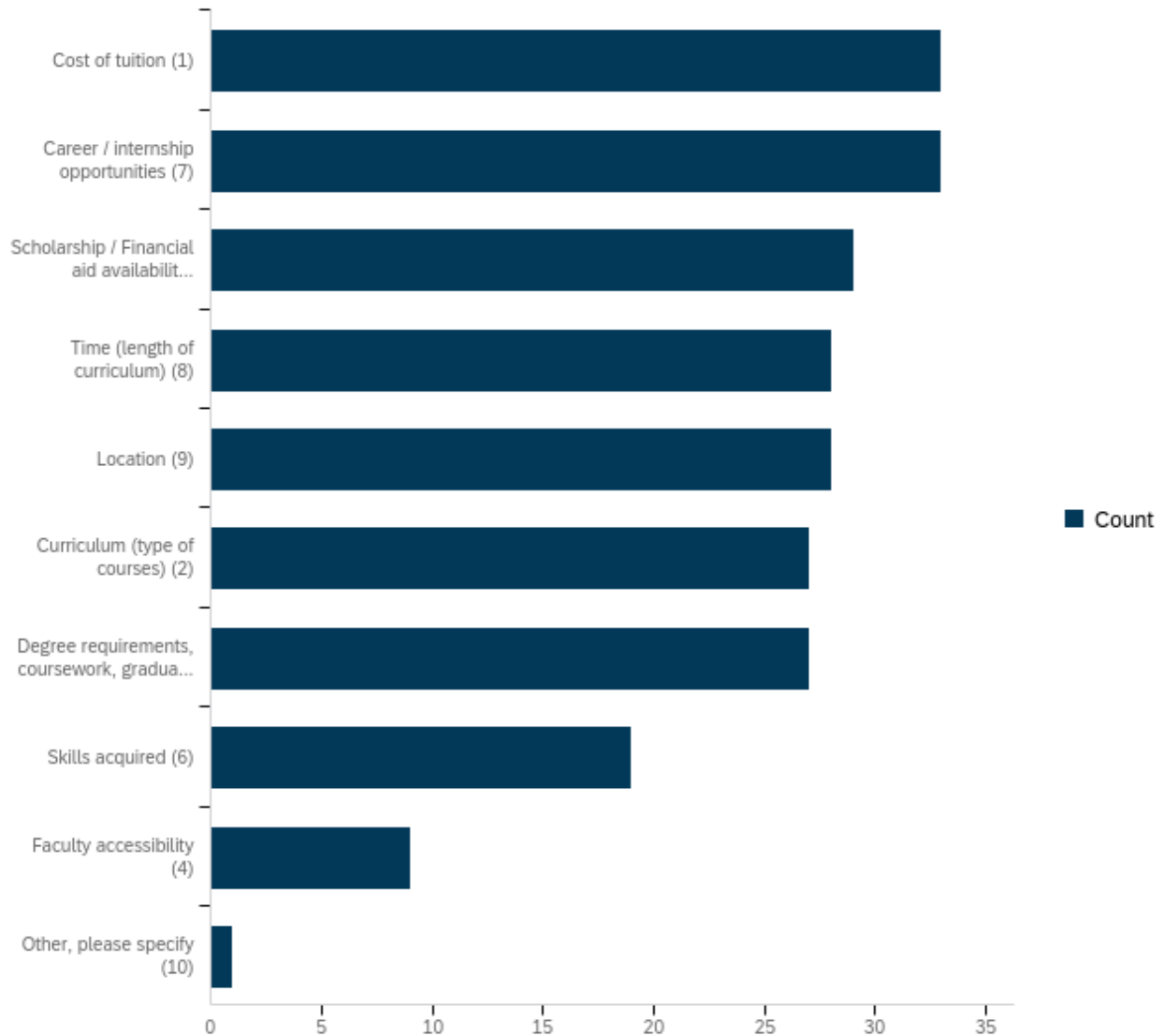
Question 5 asks how students would choose a graduate program. The answers were not mutually exclusive and can help us identify prospective applicants' priorities in seeking a suitable MPA program. The top response was "Cost of Tuition," with 25 responses, followed by the two responses of "Scholarship / Financial Aid Availability" and "Career / Internship Opportunities," tied with 24 votes and showing a focus on financial cost and opportunities afforded post-college. Next, with 23 votes, is "Curriculum (type of courses)," "Location" with 22, and "Time (Length of Curriculum)" with 21 votes, all focused on the structure of the prospective program. Trailing these responses were "Degree Requirements" with 20 votes and "Faculty Access" with eight votes. Finally, only one person who selected the fill-in-the-blank "Other, please specify" with a one-word answer: "Online." The results show that financial considerations and career prospects are the most important priorities when students consider potential graduate programs.

Question Six: Would you be interested in applying to a CSUSM Master of Public Administration (MPA) program? This program is intended for individuals interested in managing municipal functions, planning for the future, and guiding political leaders to good decision-making.
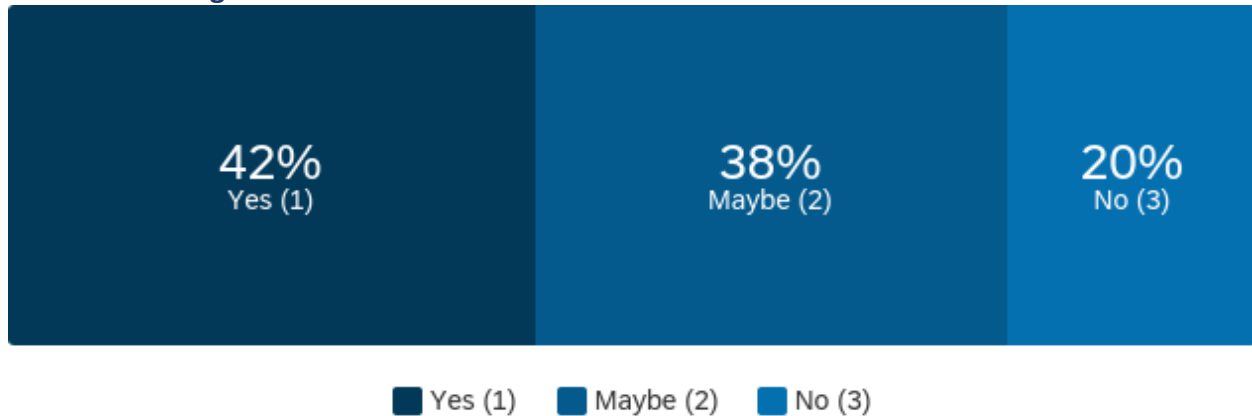
Question 6 asked if survey respondents were interested in applying to a CSUSM Master of Public Administration (MPA) program. Nineteen people, or 42% of respondents, answered yes, 17 people, or 38%, answered maybe, and nine people, or 20% of respondents, answered no. This shows that most survey respondents are interested or may be interested in a CSUSM MPA program being offered.

Question Seven: You indicated that you would be interested in a CSUSM MPA program. Please use the space below to share why you would be interested in this program:
For students who indicated they were interested in the CSUSM MPA program, question 7 asks them to explain their interests further. Students provided the following comments:

- "I'm interested in a CSUSM MPA program because of the location, as it is in my area, and the cost of attending and household situation would be ideal as I would be saving a ton of money."
- "I have expressed interest in getting a position in the water management field before, and having a degree in Public Administration is beneficial in trying to get this position."
- "I think I would be interested as it can similarly align with public policy, as it is something I have been interested in for a while."
- "I feel like this course would help a lot of students gain a better understanding of how specific and important parts of our government and society work."
- "I believe I would do well in the public sector due to my sociological and criminal justice background."
- "I'd just like to know anything new that CSUSM can offer while I'm not sure about whether or not to get a master's degree, I'd at least like the opportunity to take a look at some resources about it."
- "The ability to see problems in my everyday life and be able to influence the people that can make change happen allows me to help my community."
- "I'd be interested in learning to guide future political leaders into doing what's right for the people and not their personal interest."
- "I like to help people with decision-making, so I think I would need more information on a degree as well."

- "I would be interested because I like to help people get a general idea of their rights and how they function in the census here in the United States."
- "I would be interested in an MBA because I believe it would be very beneficial for my career. It would provide a lot more job opportunities for myself in the future."
- "Having an MPA would help advance my career."
- "I would like to continue my education with CSUSM."
- "I currently work for the State of California in Sacramento. My goal is to help build real, long-lasting communities. So, depending upon the goals of the degree, it might be something I would consider."
- "I would be more interested in an MPP program, but I could be interested in this program depending on how things go after graduation."
- "I want to contribute to improving communities that need equal access to resources and their overall quality of life. I haven't found a major that aligns precisely with my goals, but an MPA sounds like it might be a good fit!"
- "I feel like it would add a lot to my career!"
- "I would be interested because I am looking at a public policy Master's program at UCI. A similar program here would make me consider altering those plans to stay more local."
- "An MPA program could be extremely beneficial to students looking to earn a degree in leadership roles, which can transfer into government, law, and business environments. In my case, I think an MPA and a JD would look very attractive."
- "I am a GI Bill student whose benefits must be used continuously and in person, so an MPA program here at CSUSM would be ideal to avoid transferring to another university and having to relocate."
- "I am interested in working in government or nonprofit programs. I have good leadership skills as well as passion and knowledge of politics."
- "If this program were 100% online, I would be interested in applying. Due to my residency location, I am unable to attend face-to-face. However, I do like the CSUSM faculty and the program I am currently attending, and I would apply for the graduate program if it were online."
- "I would be interested in the program for increased career opportunities and to be able to hopefully make serious changes in our political landscape."
- "I want to go into running and managing a nonprofit. So, I want to be in a lead role and work with people. I also think working in a political sector is interesting to me."
- "I would be interested because, through research in the field that is of particular interest to me, I would have the ability to change public policy that is detrimental to steps of change for marginalized communities. CSUSM has been a great experience, so I would be interested and consider an MPA program."
- "I plan to get an MPA online through another school. If CSUSM had a comparable program, I may stay here."
- "The closest program is in Riverside, and there are limited options. I like CSUSM and want to stay with this university."

Many indicated that an MPA program would help with career advancements (ten answers) and benefit the general welfare of people in their communities and network (seven answers). It was also shown that people would prefer to stay within CSUSM instead of moving to a different school for an MPA program (seven answers). There were also four answers with more general statements involving being interested in an MPA Program. One interesting point of note regarding the 28 answers to Q7 is that some are interested in an MPA program due to their loyalty to CSUSM and their plan to stay in the region after

graduation. Thus, a program may be especially beneficial for students who want to continue their education at CSUSM or stay local after graduation.

Question Eight: Which of these concentrations within a CSUSM MPA program would you be interested in?
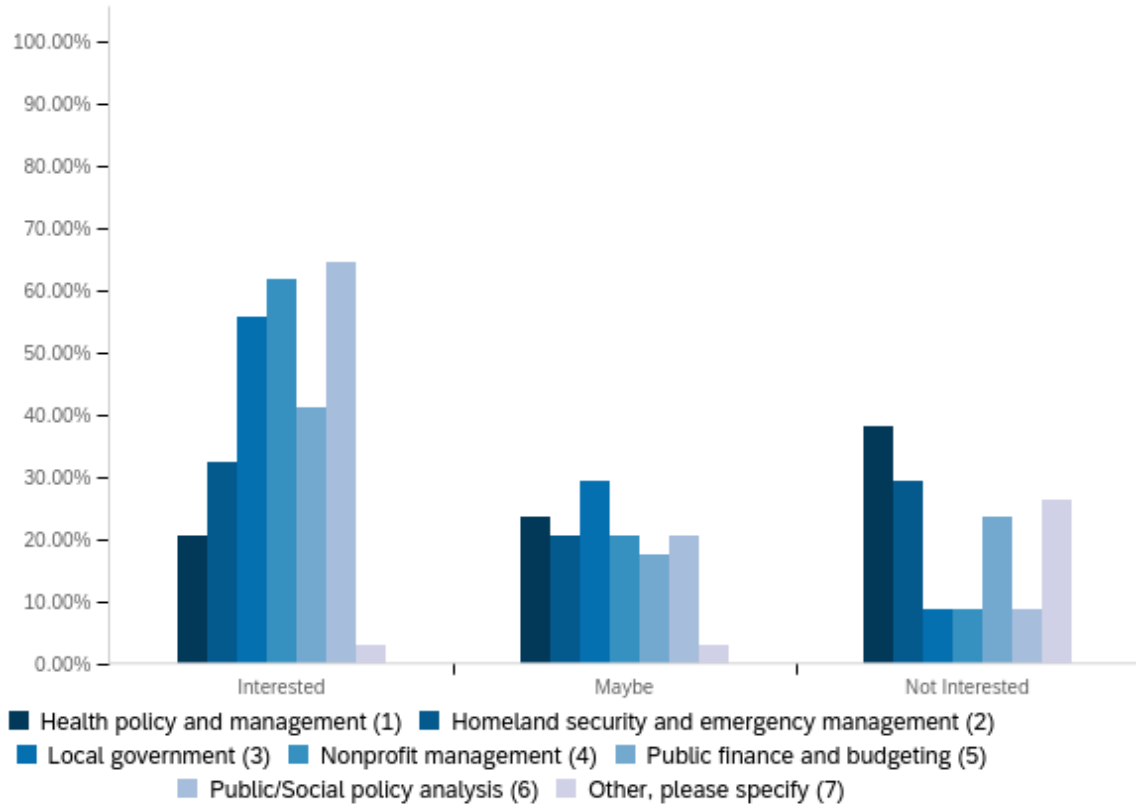
Question 8 asks students to identify potential concentrations they would be interested in for the CSUSM MPA program. To ensure consistency of results, the choices are identical to the concentration question in the provider survey. We receive a total of 109 responses to this question. The graph results showcase more decisive interests in non-profit management, public/social policy analysis, local government, and public finance and budgeting concentrations, with mixed results in health policy and management, homeland security, and emergency management. Interestingly, these results are very similar to the provider survey, showing that service providers and students have similar interests in concentrations most relevant to our service region. Overall, this question helped showcase which concentrations within the proposed MPA program are most popular with the student body of CSUSM.

Question Nine: Which of the following modalities would you prefer for a CSUSM MPA program? Please select all that apply.
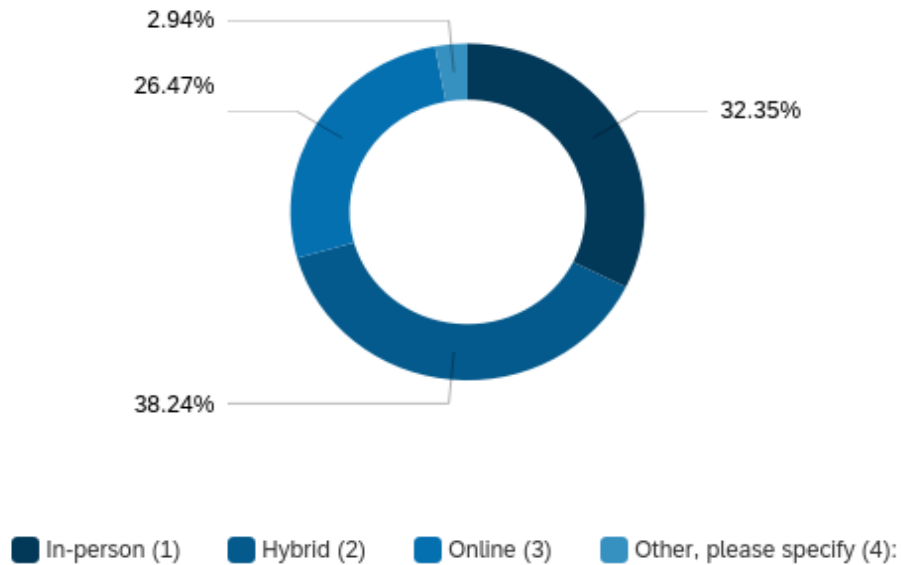
Question 9 asks students to identify their preferred modality for the CSUSM MPA program. This question is also identical to the modality question in the provider survey. The results show that the majority (38.24%) of respondents supported a hybrid learning system, with sole support for in-person and online modalities at 32.35% and 26.47%, respectively. With the majority voting for hybrid learning, this learning method can benefit those in the program more. A split learning system allows students to come into the classroom and work alongside peers and instructors, as well as being able to work from home. Hybrid learning helps with both hands-on learning and accommodations for busy work schedules. The result is also consistent with findings in the provider survey, where community partners preferred hybrid and in-person options compared to a completely online program. This question helped us understand which learning method a successful MPA program can use to appeal to its students.

Question Ten: Additional Comments

Question 10 provides space for students to enter additional comments. Student respondents who provided comments are generally very enthusiastic about a possible MPA program at CSUSM. They indicate they would like to learn more about the program and believe this program will be helpful for their future career. Some respondents also highlighted how having this program can help the campus grow and positively change the community. Several respondents also highlighted practical considerations such as financial aid availability, affordability, and cost efficiency. Below are comments provided by the respondents:

- "Does financial aid or any cal vet cover a MPA program?"
- "I'm interested."

- "I think an online program or hybrid would be great, especially as many individuals would be balancing 1 to 2 jobs. Additionally, the cost of tuition would be something I would like to know more about and about potential financial aid."
- "My potential interest in the Masters in Public Administration program relates to my desire to know more about the field to help plan my future."
- "This program may be of value to those who want to help create policies that will bring positive change in our society, so I am all for this program."
- "I am interested."
- "I'm a business major, and this program will help me develop my ideas and thoughts about business and development. I would be happy to learn more about it, so that's why I'm interested in this program."
- "I believe that achieving an MBA is something that should be greatly encouraged:"
- "I would love to know more about the curriculum and what careers I might be well-equipped to pursue with this degree."
- "The MPA program sounds great for students and the community,
- I feel like we should promote this program more and be more hands-on with it. More meetings or Zoom calls!"
- "I would like this to be a more government-oriented program that caters mainly to Political Science majors while also offering some opportunities for those with similar majors like Global Studies and Business Administration. There could be a pathway system that allows for specializations after taking a certain number of basic classes. Also, A good idea would be to have a rotating roster of instructors, speakers, and professors. This would allow students to learn about public administration from a variety of sources and keep them up to date as the field shifts."
- "Thank you for administering this survey."
- "I am hoping to further my education after I obtain my bachelor's degree. I believe CSUSM would be the perfect school to do this. I hope you find me as a potential candidate."
- "I am not sure where to go from after my bachelor's, but I would love to come back and do my master's, hopefully sometime soon."
- "If is hybrid maybe I can consider."
- "Any additional degree that choose to obtain has to be affordable, obtainable within a short period of time, and highly employable."
- "I think it would be a great way to expand CSUSM. I feel like this school is constantly growing and I know I have enjoyed my time here."

Community Partner Interview Results

To complement the provider survey results, which focused on nonprofit organizations, Student teams also conducted qualitative interviews with city governments and public service agencies across eight cities in North San Diego and Riverside County: Canyon Lake, Carlsbad, Escondido, Menifee, Murrieta, Oceanside, San Marcos, Temecula, and Vista. The results are presented below.

Canyon Lake

Team 8: Wyatt Steele, Grace Manuel, Jacob Shafer, and Rob Weiler

Interview Respondents: Nicole Dailey (City Manager)
Our team interviewed Nicole Dailey, the city manager of Canyon Lake. During the interview, Mrs. Dailey highlighted the need for qualified workers for city governments. She said: "Here in Canyon Lake, we have several employees with no degree at all, which is surprising to me. Many have little to no prior city experience. We do have some with a bachelor's degree, And I think I may be the only one with a master's degree." Accordingly, Mrs. Dailey noted that at the entry level, there is a high demand for higher education and real-life experience in whatever job is being applied for.

We found that Mrs. Dailey and her organization were interested in a potential CSUSM MPA program. She cited her smaller city's lack of resources and skilled employees. She stated she was the only person in her organization with a master's degree. Mrs. Dailey states, "There is a demand for an MPA Program that can be used for cities like Canyon Lake, which take in very few skilled workers."

As there are few options for an MPA degree, she noted that having a certification program and employees with real-life city experience would be immensely beneficial as most of the staff at City Lake does not obtain a master's degree or even a bachelor's degree. Dailey expressed her interest in collaborating with CSUSM's potential program and assisting in any possible business plans or internship programs. When asked about a potential institutional collaboration, Dailey said, "One thing our city can do and would love to do is bring efforts to the Temecula region involving fellowship, internship, or internship opportunities, and maybe even development."

Our interview with Mrs. Dailey gave us insight into how a small city like Canyon Lake runs on a day-to-day process and what type of candidates they are looking to hire. Mrs. Dailey spoke about how significant a degree or certificate can be. Still, Mrs. Dailey believes personal experience is the most important, especially in smaller cities with significantly smaller staffing. Hands-on experience is crucial to work in city management, and an MPA would be excellent for giving real-life opportunities.

Carlsbad

Team 7: James Carmody, Dominique Contreras, Kaley Goins, and Anastacia Phillips

Interview Respondents: Mickey Williams (Police Chief); Emily Bruce, Matt Sanford, and Judy Von Kalinowski (Economic Development Team)
We interviewed Mickey Williams and the Carlsbad Economic Development Team, including Emily Bruce, Matt Sanford, and Judy Von Kalinowski. They provided insights into the educational preferences and

workforce needs within Carlsbad's law enforcement and economic development sectors. As Carlsbad's Chief of Police, Mickey Williams talked about his organization and role. "The Carlsbad Police Department is a municipal police department, covering 39 square miles of about 115,000 residents. We provide all state law enforcement services to the city. My role is that I am responsible for all police services and administration". He emphasizes the importance of having trained and educated individuals in law enforcement services for the city's 115,000 residents. Most of his employees possess college experiences, reflecting a commitment to a well-educated workforce. Williams emphasizes connecting with the community and making informed decisions through a solid understanding of government basics and public administration.

Carlsbad's Economic Development Team aims to serve the community through public safety, public utility, and other core services. Similar to the police department, most employees possess degrees or educational backgrounds, with job-specific skill sets also being valued. The demand for labor force within this team varies based on the evolving needs of the community, "One perspective to keep in mind is a lot of this is driven by policy and budgetary conditions, so for example, our city council is wrestling with a projected long term systemic deficit which is projected to hit us in the next four to five years. In response, they are looking at how we trim in certain areas; do we reduce headcount in certain areas? We might say we could benefit from having staff here, but ultimately, if the policy decision is that we have to go the other direction, then we have to."

When talking about certificate programs and their preference regarding the MPA program, Williams expressed low interest in a certificate program, citing uncertainties, "Not that important to implement. If someone says they have a degree from a four-year accredited university, I know what that means. If someone walks in and says they have a certificate, that could mean many things, and I don't know for what." The mention of online modality as a means to expand access to education aligns with the contemporary trend of virtual learning. However, there's a desire for more information and collaboration. This cautiousness might be attributed to law enforcement's unique and sensitive nature, where practical skills and real-world experience are paramount.

The Economic Development Team highlights the importance of a broad degree in public administration, given the diverse skills and backgrounds required for many positions, " A number of our employees do look for opportunities do look for opportunities for furthering their educations and advancement in their careers and the MPA program path does tend the one that appeals to many because it can be quite broad and can provide education experiences that can apply to many areas that can apply to many different areas of local government and other agencies." The success of their Master of Public Administration (MPA) program indicates a recognition of the value of advanced education in their workforce. The expressed interest in partnering with educational institutions like CSUSM for online modalities and potential cohort classes demonstrates a forward-looking approach to education and professional development. Emily Bruce's statement emphasizes that employees seek opportunities for further education and career advancement, with the MPA program being particularly attractive due to its broad applicability across various areas of local government and other agencies. This aligns with the idea that a comprehensive education in public administration can equip individuals with versatile skills relevant to different sectors.

The data and quotes suggest a shared emphasis on education and a preference for broad, comprehensive programs within Carlsbad's law enforcement and economic development sectors. The expressed interest in online education and collaboration with educational institutions indicates a willingness to adapt to evolving educational modalities to meet the dynamic needs of the workforce and the community.

Escondido

Team Four: Maribel Hernandez, Diego Ruiz, and Luis Mendoza

Interview Respondents: John Tanger (Fire Chief)
We interviewed John Tanger, the fire chief for the city of Escondido. According to Mr. Tanger, the main goal of the fire department is to respond to fire emergencies and educate the community on fire hazard safety. During the interview, Mr. Tanger stated, "We are a full-service department...we handle everything that happens out in the field Fire EMS Hazmat...That's our responsibility as public servants to make sure we're taking care of the community. That could be from education to responding to a 911 call". According to Mr. Tanger, the fire department's primary challenge is the community outreach program. However, this is primarily attributed to a lack of proper bandwidth and not a lack of personnel.

When discussing the topic of firefighters and the MPA program, Mr. Tanger believes that becoming a firefighter and obtaining a graduate-level degree are two different things. He thinks that a firefighter does not necessarily need an MPA to be proficient at saving lives. "So, when you come up the ranks for the firefighter, there's a lot of schooling that happens before you actually get hired." However, he suggests that the MPA program will indirectly benefit the fire department by providing support through other departments. As Mr. Tanger stated, "I would say in general, not just my department but all departments, I think there's going to be folks that if it's local." He also highlights the need and demand for certified programs such as those offered by the California Firefighter Joint Apprenticeship Committee to help youths get involved in different services such as police or fire. Such programs help youth get out and involved with the community, especially at younger ages.

Menifee

Team Three: Ana Jaimes, Hayden Rivera, and Juliette Corona

Interview Respondents: Rebekah Kramer (City Manager)
We had the privilege of conversing with two influential individuals in the City of Menifee. The first individual we spoke with was Rebekah Kramer, the acting City Manager. Her duties involve overseeing all staff, implementing policies designated by the Council, and managing the city's financial budget, revenue streams, and expenses. Our second conversation was with Gina Gonzales, the Economic Development Director. Her responsibilities include expanding, attracting, and retaining businesses and partnering with local schools to establish pathways and pipelines focused on workforce development.

Through the interviews, we discovered that the city of Menifee has five primary areas of focus where they intend to allocate their resources. These areas include having a unique identity, encouraging community engagement and social infrastructure, fostering a thriving economy, creating a safe and

vibrant community, and promoting connectivity and mobility. Mrs. Kramer states, "We must have a thriving economy to support city services. We can't provide those without revenue to fulfill those obligations." However, the city's significant obstacle is obtaining the necessary resources to achieve these objectives. One of the examples Mrs. Kramer brought up was the Holland Road Overpass Project. "You can't decide you're going to build a road expansion or bridge and have it be done in a year… Our Holland Road overpass took ten years from the time the council decided that they wanted to move forward with that project and the time that we had the money in place to do it. It takes a lot of time and effort and planning."

In our conversation with Mrs. Gonzales, she highlighted the demand for a labor force for city governments. "So if you're looking for a sector to invest in, communities are widely available up and down California compared to other states. Umm or yes, people are growing in California, and they need the public sector workforce to provide those services because there's no way, just like Menifee, where we're actively pursuing building our own City Hall…"

We also discussed the necessity of an MPA program to meet the labor force's demand. Both Mrs. Kramer and Mrs. Gonzales expressed that the city of Menifee would like to collaborate with CSUSM, as they believe such programs can be highly advantageous. Mrs. Kramer said, "Our very first time of having 11 interns, we ended up hiring five, and that's a huge sign of, you know, sometimes you find some really start talent in the interns…And it's programs like this that really bring those stars to us."

Similarly, Gina mentioned, "I think we already partner pretty much with Cal State San Marcos on multiple things, and also with the master's programs, we do a lot of studies with them already currently too. And then so we have had agreements in the past too where they offered incentives and discounts to our employees like a lot of the educational, I would say facilities or organizations that are out there." They also highlighted that public administration is about a "bigger breadth of the curriculum" compared to a business with a "larger territory of areas to fall back on than just business administration. The city of Menifee is "looking for people with that skill set, knowledge, and understanding" and "having a workforce that comes with that training and background."

Murrieta

Team Five: Camren Pierce, Ava Harlan, Rafael Alvarez

Interview Respondents: Kristen Crane (Assistant City Manager)
Our group interviewed Kristen Crane, the Assistant City Manager of Murrieta. Mrs. Crane also has an MPA herself. As the assistant city manager, she is responsible for "overseeing several different departments and assisting the city manager with various special projects and managing some of the staff in the city manager's office that have different program areas they're responsible for." She also identifies several priority areas for the city, including public safety, quality of life, and expansion of local businesses. When asked about the current need for an incoming workforce for local government, she said, "Cities are here to stay; I think it's the level of government that is most effective."

Mrs. Krane also looked into what her own MPA experience was like, as real-life professionals taught it, which she finds vital to the program. When asked about demand and interest in a potential MPA

program at CSUSM, Mrs. Krane said: "I think it's honestly something that's not being discussed. You may know from talking to Godfrey that there's kind of a lack of full-fledged 4-year public university presence in the Southwestern Riverside County anyway. We're trying to promote better modes of transportation for students to get these degrees, as people are not entertaining the ideas locally." These findings were very intriguing as they gave us an idea of what might make this program successful. She mentioned that a hybrid modality might be more favorable for her employees as it would allow students to get real-life experience while completing the program.

Oceanside

Team Two: Maya Sepulveda, Nic Regal, Vincent Santiago, Taylor Bolanos, and Katie Gordon

Interview Respondents: Michelle Geller (Economic Development Director) and Jonathan Borrego (City Manager)
We interviewed two respondents from the City of Oceanside: Michelle Geller, the Economic Development Director, and Jonathan Borrego, the city manager. The City of Oceanside is a full-service city with a population of 180,000 and 6,000 brick-and-mortar businesses. As the city manager, Michelle describes her role as "the liaison to the businesses and between the businesses and the city." She is part of the Economic Development Commission and has worked with the city since 2019. Jonathan Borrego was appointed city manager in 2022 and oversees policy execution & operations of roughly ten different departments in the City of Oceanside. Notably, both respondents acquired their MPA/MBA from CSU Long Beach before entering their current roles.

Michelle emphasized her sole focus on the business aspect of Oceanside, which allows other community elements to fall through the cracks. Her job is to make sure the businesses in Oceanside succeed. Therefore, her bias is that she favors policies that touch on this subject. Furthermore, pushing for more businesses often silences the community's opinions about whether they want these implemented. Of course, she will claim that it benefits the community. However, there are already complaints about increased living costs due to increased tourism. Natives of Oceanside may feel ignored or even pushed out of their city. Lastly, we could have asked her a question about the community's response or perception of the current development that is taking place in Oceanside.

Moving forward, with Johnathan, an emphasis was placed on his job of overseeing Oceanside. Oceanside continues to grow and expand, meaning that funding will play a role in determining the trajectory of the city's development. However, the city is already encountering some adversity. As Michelle had claimed, "Unfortunately, you know, police kind of get lumped into one category so it's hard to recruit now." We see the overlap between the two, that maintaining law and order is difficult enough now with the low number of police officers in the city; therefore, problems in the future will persist. Both interviewees agree that funding will help alleviate several issues, but with recruiting, the stigma behind law enforcement can discourage many individuals. The growing population may be accompanied by increased criminal activity, so this issue must be prioritized for the community's safety.

We received the city perspective because those who are a part of the community were not interviewed. However, given their expertise, this should uphold Michelle and Johnathan's credibility. For Michelle, three significant themes were discussed the most: 1) services provided, 2) priority issue areas, and 3) the

demand for a labor force. As Michelle had stated, "Public works is pretty much everything that you see around you in Oceanside." Her department strictly focuses on the business aspect, where she connects them to the resources that are needed to succeed.

Furthermore, during the pandemic, funding businesses to continue operating outside while following restrictions was crucial. She also emphasized how plenty of grant opportunities exist for companies needing extra push to get started. Regarding priority issues, Michelle claimed it was economic development where "we partner with organizations that provide workforce development, training, kind of job matching." She also talked about how many veterans are in the area, given the closeness of the Camp Pendleton base. Jobs are everywhere and she assists in connecting individuals to those occupations. Lastly, the demand for the labor force is high, and Oceanside has encountered problems recruiting police officers. She claimed, "Unfortunately, you know, police kind of get lumped into one category so it's hard to recruit now." which is alluding to the stigma police officers have been receiving in recent years. It is difficult enough because in Oceanside, officers must attend some level of college. High expectations ensure the individual is qualified at the cost of having trouble recruiting. Additionally, she described jobs that must be introduced much earlier in an individual's education career. An example was how a "[Wastewater Operator] is an extremely important and lucrative career. It is not the 'sexiest' career, but there is good money and a demand for jobs."

As the city manager, Michael highlighted how his MBA degree has helped him succeed in his current role. "I found that when I was in my MBA program, the courses that I got the most value out of were the most applicable and helpful in the role that I'm in today… The value of an MBA is certainly proven in this line of work and a lot of people get it and use it as a tool." When discussing the potential demand and interest in a CSUSM MPA program, he stated that "if there is a way to have a direct pipeline of city employees to the MPA program, that's certainly something that we would absolutely be willing to look into. Anything that we can do as employers to further the education, especially in an MPA program, would be a big benefit to us."

San Marcos

Team One: Marissa Gonzalez, Olivia Ohm, Anelly Brown, and Akram Salaymeh

Interview Respondents: Tiffany Boyd-Hodgson (Vice President of Vallecitos Water District), Tess Sangster (Community and Economic Development Director of the City of San Marcos)
We interviewed two officials from the Vallecitos Water District and the city of San Marcos. Dr. Tiffany Boyd-Hodgson is an elected official on the board of directors for the Vallecitos Water District. She represents Division 5, which includes San Elijo Hills, Discovery, and Lake San Marcos. Tess Sangster is the city of San Marcos's Community and Economic Development Director. Dr. Boyd-Hodgson and Ms. Sangster were very cooperative and excited to participate in the survey.

Both interviewees identified their priorities and challenges when providing services to local communities in San Marcos. Dr. Boyd-Hodgson prides herself on delivering San Marcos with reliable, clean, safe, and affordable water. However, she also identifies affordability, maintaining water infrastructure, and the price of water as primary challenges. As the city's Community and Economic Development Director, Tess

Sangster mentioned her position overseeing economic development communications, housing, neighborhood services, parking enforcement, and crime prevention. Furthermore, she says every city has core services like street maintenance signals and safety measures from police and fire departments. However, the city also needs some help with growth and development. For example, some community members are growing concerned about traffic, crowds, more housing, and safety issues.

A couple of common themes in our research are a genuine interest in an MPA program at CSUSM and a demand in the labor force. Dr. Boyd-Hodgson mentions that individuals must have certification in wastewater treatment before earning an MPA. As she stated, "It (the MPA program) would be a pipeline for jobs... I love hiring local folks. And I love like giving back to the community in that way because it's expensive to live here." Dr. Boyd-Hodgson also mentions that individuals must have certification in wastewater treatment before earning an MPA. Tess Sangster discussed the benefits of introducing an MPA program to CSUSM, which could positively affect who they hire in the future. She mentions that many employees their facilities currently hire could take the MPA program at CSUSM part-time since Long Beach is the closest CSU that offers an MPA.

Temecula

Team Five: Camren Pierce, Ava Harlan, Rafael Alvarez

Interview Respondents: Connie Stopher (Executive Director of the Economic Development Coalition)
Our group interviewed Connie Stopher, the Executive Director of the Economic Development Coalition in Temecula. Mrs. Stopher is responsible for assessing the economic needs of various communities and helping develop their economy based on those needs. According to Mrs. Stopher, her organization prioritizes "elevating the economic profile and sustainability of our communities," which is accomplished through attracting new businesses, creating high-wage jobs, and assisting existing businesses. This may include bringing in small businesses or corporations based on the needs of that community. This job is essential to the community's economic survival, yet she works with a tiny team of herself and her marketing specialist.

Mrs. Stopher has obtained an MPA degree and understands how it can be utilized in various careers. According to Mrs. Stopher, "There is going to be a lot of people retiring in the next ten years or so. So having more people trained to work in the public sector is going to be important." She also stressed the importance of certificate programs. As she says in her interview, "I think an MPA is the gold standard, but for employees, I would be hiring, because I understand that economic development is niche, I would be happy with certificates if they had that. For example, the international certification".

She also gave us some insight into what areas she found most helpful during her time in an MPA program. For Important focus areas for the program, she said, "Healthcare and state and local government and nonprofit would be very valuable." She also stressed the importance of healthcare, saying it "[...] is one of the largest growing fields across the country, so from a demand perspective for labor, having people who know how to run healthcare facilities would be valuable". She also stressed the importance of an incoming workforce, as she noticed a lack of younger employees within her

profession. For Mrs. Stopher herself, she would prefer in-person courses. However, she knows online classes would be more manageable for her employees while working full-time.

Team 6: William Connor, Connor Liske, Will Prouty, and Natalie Paulson

Interview Respondents: Christine Damko (Economic Development Director), Aaron Adams (City Manager)

We interviewed Christine Damko, the Economic Development Director for the City of Temecula, and Aaron Adams, the City Manager. In her job role, Mrs. Damko assists businesses with economic development and serves as a friendly face for businesses on behalf of the City of Temecula. Her office acts as a liaison for local businesses that need help with permits to facilitate their growth. According to Mrs. Damko, the city government promotes the Temecula "brand." For example, "Whenever you see a Temecula street pole, banner, social media, flyer, it all has the same look and feel." Mr Adams is head of the personnel system for the entire city. Responsible for all day-to-day operations and delivery of sound policy recommendations. He has worked in the organization for 28 years and held a city manager position for 12 years. Mr. Adams mentioned that he is currently working on projects throughout Temecula to provide a better quality of life, and public safety is his number one priority for the communities.

When discussing the demand for the MPA program, Mrs. Damko explained how there are varied fields and opportunities to work your way up in the field of Public Administration, specifically for the City of Temecula. "We have a ton of different employees. We have maintenance workers, finance people, interns, lifeguards at our community pool, and recreation leaders. Our City Manager started as an intern and has worked his way up through the organization. We have a few new staff members that we hired, but our City Manager, our Assistant City Manager, and I have all risen through the ranks here." She also highlights a high demand in the labor force "with valley cities such as Elsinore and Menifee, which are some of the fastest growing cities in the state so the need for more government workers will increase."

This is why Mrs. Damko thinks an MPA program would be very beneficial, and the need for one is widespread. "It is common in this organization to get your MPA because that's what we do. When you're going to get an MPA, you use your real-world experience. There would be strong interest. As you rise through our organization, it's not a requirement to have your master's, but it is expected." When discussing potential collaboration opportunities, she also mentioned that the city "would be willing to do all three--Internship programs, tours, and guest speakership opportunities--would all be something that we would be interested in pursuing with CSUSM if this program were implemented."

Mr. Adams, the city manager, also spoke highly about implementing a program for Public Administration at CSUSM. One of his biggest concerns for his employees and residents of Temecula was location. By having a program offered at CSUSM, those residents will have in-person experience with their instructors without having to drive over an hour to UCI, UCR, or SDSU. Mr. Adams mentioned, "Nowadays, anyone mid-manager or above the level you're going to want an MPA or advanced degree. Those who obtained their MPA would be able to compete for higher level jobs, such as a mid-manager or above, and have the experience necessary to fulfill those positions to the best of their abilities. Mr. Adams also expressed a high interest in partnering with CSUSM to implement a master's program in

public administration, highlighting the fact that he wants the residents of Temecula to have the opportunity to further their education.

Vista

Team Four: Maribel Hernandez, Diego Ruiz, and Luis Mendoza

Interview Respondents: Rachel Beld (CEO Chamber of Commerce)
Our team interviewed Rachel Beld, the CEO of Vista's Chamber of Commerce. The Vista Chamber of Commerce is a non-profit organization that works to support local businesses and work closely with government agencies, particularly the city of Vista. According to Mrs. Beld, the main goal for her institution is to offer ways for businesses and the city to pursue more economic growth while providing more opportunities and resources to the public. "I see the chamber being a very nimble resource because we're not a government agency. We have different rules and regulations. Sometimes, the city or someone may want to accomplish a goal, but it may take longer or be more costly going through government, and oftentimes, we can do things more quickly or less expensive."

With the significant challenges and priority areas that her organization faces, Mrs. Beld believes that an MPA program can assist in maintaining relationships with its stakeholders and staying relevant while also communicating that relevancy to businesses to help them further. At her institution, "everyone needs to have an understanding of the work that other people do." Their primary function is "creating and maintaining relationships, personal relationships with everyone and all the stakeholders." "So staying relevant is the first piece but then communicating that relevancy to our constituents is the next most important thing. So, people know what we can do and how we can help them."

Furthermore, she states that having a local resource would prove beneficial for those who want to obtain a graduate level degree, for the other schools that offer a graduate level degree either are too far or the availability of said School is inaccessible. She mentioned that some employees in their organization are interested in a graduate-level degree, particularly an MPA or MBA. Furthermore, she noted, "I know a number of people that work for North County cities in Vista San Marcos Oceanside Del Mar Encinitas Solana Beach that don't have MPA. That would be interesting, having to look and having a local resource." Furthermore, when local access to a graduate-level degree is accessible and affordable, it can encourage many of them to pursue such education. "City employees did it as a cohort together and the classes were offered just after work hours. So, people could take the classes together as a cohort."

Discussion & Conclusion

Summary of Findings

This research project assesses the viability and desirability of establishing a Master of Public Administration (MPA) program at CSUSM through faculty-guided, team-based collaborative student research. To achieve the research goal, we employed survey and interview methodology to collect input from community partners and students within the CSUSM service region.

The survey and interview results generally indicate that most CSUSM students, community partners, and service providers have genuine interests and support for an MPA program at CSUSM. Over 80% of community partners consider the level of interest in a CSUSM MPA program to be high or moderate. Similarly, over 80% of the student respondents said they are or may be interested in applying for a CSUSM MPA program. Furthermore, community partners and service providers demonstrated a strong interest in collaborating with the potential program. They cited their interest in providing resources and inputs through internships, teaching or instruction, community board input, and liaison.

Community partners and student respondents also provided important insights into the curriculum design of a potential MPA program at CSUSM. Of all the concentrations we listed, the most likely in high demand are nonprofit management, public/social policy analysis, local government, and public finance and budgeting. In addition, most respondents across the provider and student surveys prefer hybrid and in-person modalities, citing the benefits of flexible schedules and in-person communications.

Student Team Observations

Without exception, all student teams consistently find genuine interest and demand for a CSUSM program. Their specific research observations and conclusions are presented below.

Team One: Marissa Gonzalez, Olivia Ohm, Anelly Brown, and Akram Salaymeh

In other interviews that our classmates conducted, they found the same results, indicating that there is a genuine interest in an MPA at CSUSM. The interview was conducted in Oceanside with the city manager, Jonathan Borrego. When asked about the importance of an MPA, he said it could be a pipeline for city government jobs. In conclusion, the same theme is wanting to work with CSUSM for an MPA program. An MPA program can create more job opportunities and connect people to the community. Also, it can open doors for future processes in the surrounding area. "People who already work in city governments are interested in hiring individuals with an MPA and working with CSUSM to make it happen."

Team Two: Maya Sepulveda, Nic Regal, Vincent Santiago, Taylor Bolanos, and Katie Gordon

Our interviews and research found that our interviewees expressed an interest in an MPA program and found it essential to teach the younger generations. We also found that environmental concerns, food security, and housing opportunities are the most pressing issues in Oceanside. It should be mentioned that "priority" and "pressing" may be perceived differently by respondents since "pressing" can be seen to imply a time limitation while "priority" denotes importance. Additionally, issue sets may vary from city to city; "environmental concerns" in Oceanside sometimes denote re-sanding beaches, while the same thing in Escondido could be more related to brush fires. That said, the questions reflect a general

mood of city officials throughout North County; the environment, housing, and homelessness are paramount issues that need addressing, for example."

Team Three: Ana Jaimes, Hayden Rivera, and Juliette Corona

We discovered a quantity of helpful information through our research. We learned from our survey results that there is a wide range of demand for the MPA program in North San Diego and Riverside counties. We learned through the knowledge of Rebekah Kramer (City Manager) and Gina Gonzalez (Economic Development Director) through our interviews with them about the challenges the city of Menifee faces, how the city is currently dealing with those challenges, as well as the planning going on to improve the city's future. Through Gina Gonzalez, we found an increasing need for an MPA program, and she sees it as beneficial and necessary. Overall, we feel that our group learned a lot through the interview process and acquired a lot of new information regarding MPA programs and their importance to our society's success in the future. We found both Mrs. Kramer and Mrs. Gonzales to be very resourceful and accommodating, and we enjoyed speaking to them in the interview process.

Team Four: Maribel Hernandez, Diego Ruiz, and Luis Mendoza

In our survey responses, we noticed a large number of non-profit organizations responded. This can affect the data by skewing the results to what nonprofit organizations favor as opposed to what North County would favor as a whole. However, considering this, it's reasonable to suggest that nonprofit management would be among the top three, only taking up the first spot by 1%.

Furthermore, in the survey responses, the theme of accessibility is prominent. This is later reinforced in the interviews. The majority of the responses advocated for a hybrid modality. One of the interviewees, John Tenger, stated that "the programs that the folks are in now are all online. But it is always nice to connect with people like you see people. Although you may see them in a room on a computer, it's different.... you feel that atmosphere. I think that would be the same in my own opinion." Similarly, Rachel Beld stated: "City employees did it as a cohort together, and the classes were offered just after work hours. So people could take the classes together as a cohort."

In addition, the themes in our survey data are much more visible in our interview sessions. Both our interviewees advocate heavily for the MPA to be community-oriented and flexible. Both Interviewees expressed how CSUSM offering an MPA program will benefit the respective industry and the greater community as a whole. Moreover, both Interviewees felt that their community needed more local resources, which they felt could be a contributing reason why those qualified for this degree don't obtain it. Rachel Beld states, "I know several people that work for North County cities... that don't have MPA. That would be interested in having to look and having a local resource". John Tenger echoed a similar sentiment, stating, "There's going to be folks that if it's local, that it's put on by instructors at our local, you're going to find an interest in that just because it's here right."

Team Five: Camren Pierce, Ava Harlan, Rafael Alvarez

Based on the information that we have gathered from both the student survey and public official interviews, we can confidently conclude that both students and public officials would like to see the creation of a CSUSM Master of Public Administration Program. The data from question 2, which shows us that roughly 43% of students are interested in or intend to take some form of master's Program,

could point to these students potentially choosing an MPA for their master's program. Other results from the student survey suggest that most students plan on pursuing a career in Business or Local Government, both areas that could benefit from this program. Another result from our survey unveiled that 42% of students would be interested in an MPA program specifically. This allows us to conclude that there is a demand for this sort of program at CSUSM. This inherent interest added to an accessible and affordable CSUSM Master of Public Administration, would seal the way for many of these students.

Team Six: William Connor, Connor Liske, Will Prouty, and Natalie Paulson

After concluding our research, the primary generalization we have found is that there is a high interest in an MPA program. This finding can be related to both the student body here at CSUSM and the City of Temecula, which we gathered from our questions sent to campus and interviews with Christine Damko and Aaron Adams. Beginning with the questions we were tasked with analyzing, question three is "What was your intended career goal(s)?". The top five answers were business, local government, administration, social services, and law, all of which a MPA program would help tremendously. An MPA allows students to learn skills, information, and practices that can be directly correlated to jobs in the respective fields related to their education. As for question four, "Where do you plan to live after graduation?" over 50% responded in San Diego County. 25.57% of those respondents opted to stay in North County San Diego. This means that an MPA program at CSUSM would benefit them in terms of location. Additionally, with the option of a hybrid or fully online modality, the other students who chose to live somewhere farther from North County San Diego would still have the ability to take the MPA program at CSUSM.

While local government was not the most popular response in a survey for finding interest in a public administration program at CSUSM, these results are encouraging. These responses are encouraging. Use for a master's in public administration is not limited to local government. Politics, business, administration, social services, and law are all career paths that could use a master's degree in public administration for a competitive edge in their field for employment opportunities.

The most popular response answer was North San Diego County, which means that students intend to live near CSUSM, whether this means accessibility for a local master's degree or nearby employment opportunities. These student survey results are encouraging because most students want to live in or near San Diego. This, combined with the responses from our interviews with workers from Temecula, conveys that San Diego will be a popular destination for employment and higher education after graduation.

Team Seven: James Carmody, Dominique Contreras, Kaley Goins, and Anastacia Phillips

Despite the challenges and limitations we faced during this project, the general conclusion of our research is that we desire an MPA program from both our students on campus at CSUSM and from city leaders of Carlsbad. Both interviewees supported that their employees and potential employees wanted to further their knowledge. The interviewees across the different groups generally said they found value in educated employees, and ours were no exception. While more information would be needed, both groups expressed interest in potential partnerships. Though the answers were less specific, our survey questions also supported this conclusion. To reiterate a key finding from the survey results, we found

that 42% of student responses said they would be interested in an MPA program, the majority of the three response choices for that question. The results showed favoritism towards program installment.

Furthermore, a theme found across survey responses was that implementing said program would help students advance their careers. In the responses from our research question alone, career or internship opportunities were tied for the most important consideration when choosing an MPA program. Thus, there is an overall consensus favoring the potential implementation of an MPA program at California State University of San Marcos, as it would benefit both students and employers in the job realm.

Team 8: Wyatt Steele, Grace Manuel, Jacob Shafer, and Rob Weiler

The data from other groups similarly matches ours because most cities were willing to participate in an MPA program, such as Temecula. The results from gathering data from students and service providers have highlighted the need for and desire for an MPA program at CSUSM. Many providers who have gone through the same program have shown how this program has improved their careers. The students at CSUSM have responded in such a way that they show their enthusiasm for continuing their education and, more specifically, doing that through an MPA program at CSUSM. This program can benefit various people, employers, and those entering the workforce. The responses given throughout this research clearly defined how this program can impact the community positively.

Research Limitations

Before concluding this report, we commend all our student teams for their dedication to completing the feasibility study. We also want to recognize that given the short time frame of one semester, there are some potential limitations to our research findings. Such limitations include the sampling frame issues associated with survey design and the logistic challenges of organizing and conducting interviews. We have only surveyed community partners and service providers in selected cities in the North San Diego and Riverside regions. In addition, only some survey and interview requests have received active responses. Due to time constraints, we could only distribute the student survey among selected departments and programs at CSUSM rather than university-wide. Finally, we could not survey CSUSM alums with limited resources and time, which could help identify additional demand and interest in the program.

PSCI301 is an introductory research methods course, and many of our students had yet to gain experience in conducting applied research before this project. Our students had to deal with some significant challenges throughout the research process. While commending their efforts and achievements, we also encouraged students to share research challenges they have encountered and reflect on how they have successfully or attempted to address the challenges. In general, students mentioned how they were nervous reaching out to public officials, difficulties in logistic challenges related to securing and conducting interviews, and communication and logistic issues related to teamwork. Below are comments from the students when sharing their experience:

- "The only issue our group has encountered throughout this research would have been that one of the providers we were supposed to interview was not reciprocating our communications. However, this was quickly resolved, and our solution was to find a different provider to interview that can give us a similar perspective to our original interviewee."

- "We did not encounter many challenges when going through this process and conducting these interviews, other than the interviewees tending to sometimes stray off of the initial question asked and talk about more than we had intended from the question."

- "One of the main challenges we faced was during the interview portion of our research. We had a hard time trying to receive responses from the individuals we reached out to. Apart from the two people we conducted interviews with, we contacted five other people and failed to receive responses. While it may have slightly pushed our schedule back, giving it time was the only solution to this challenge. A major limitation regarding our interview process was the time limit set when physically conducting the interview. We chose to utilize the free website Zoom to conduct the interviews, as that allowed for more flexibility in scheduling. However, the site limited our interviews to a maximum meeting time of 40 minutes. That being said, many of the responses we received tended to be a bit rushed, simply due to our time restraint."

- "Our group's most difficult challenge during the research process was finding availability for the officials we wanted to interview. In particular, we struggled to find a second person for our interview due to a lack of communication from the city official or availability to join our interview."

- "We as a group did not face many challenges other than getting over the nerves of presenting our information, but we did have one that called for a change in plan. We were originally given Lisa De Forest, the mayor of Murrieta, as one of our interviewees. Still, seeing as she is the mayor, it was tough to get a hold of her. Instead, we contacted other officials from the City of Murrieta and got a response from Mrs. Crane. We were extremely grateful that she was willing to participate and were happy with the information she provided as she was extremely insightful."

- "One of the only challenges we encountered in our research process was finding time to work together. Concerning this issue, setting up interviews with Mrs. Damko and Mr. Adams was also slightly difficult to find a time that worked for our interviewees and group members. To alleviate this issue, we created a group chat to have quick, constant communication in case any issues arose that we needed to solve. Other than that, our group worked very well together."

Appendixes

Appendix I   Qualtrics Provider Survey Questionnaire

CSUSM MPA Feasibility Study: Provider Survey

Start of Block: Introduction

Introduction
Greetings!

California State University San Marcos (CSUSM) is developing a Master of Public Administration (MPA) program to meet the regional demand for labor in the public sector. The program is intended for individuals interested in managing municipal functions, planning for the future, and guiding political leaders to good decision-making.

We selected your organization to complete this survey because your organization best reflects individuals who would incorporate a degree in public administration into their careers. Please have the appropriate staff person complete this brief survey on behalf of your organization. Your organization's information will be confidential and reported as an aggregate. Your responses will help us determine the breadth and availability of MPA and public administration training opportunities for our students.

Thank you for your consideration.

Q2 Contact Info: Please provide your contact information below.

○ Name (1) _____

○ Title (2) _____

○ Agency/Organization (3) _____

○ Email (4) _____

End of Block: Introduction

Start of Block: Organization Information

Q1 Which of the following entities best describes your organization?

○ City Government Agency (1) (1)

○ Public Service Agency (2) (2)

○ Chamber of Commerce (3) (3)

○ Non-Profit Service Organization (4) (4)

○ Other, please specify (5) (5) _____

Q2 What service(s) does your organization provide to local communities? Please select all that apply.

☐ Water Operations and Maintenance (1) (1)

☐ Parks & Recreation (2)   (2)

☐ City Clerk & Management (3) (3)

☐ Human Resources & Risk Management (4) (4)

☐ Development Services (5) (5)

☐ Public Safety (6) (6)

☐ Other, please specify (7) (7)

_____

Page Break

Q3 Which of these are priority issue areas in your city or service region? Please select all that apply.

☐ Food Security (1) (1)

☐ Job Opportunities (2) (2)

☐ Mental Health/ Addiction Rehabilitation (3) (3)

☐ Healthcare (4) (4)

☐ Housing Opportunities (5) (5)

☐ Services for the Homeless/ Unhoused (6) (6)

☐ Environmental Concerns (7) (7)

☐ Veteran Assistance (8) (8)

☐ Other, please specify (9): (9)
_____

Q4 Which of the following issues are the most pressing? Please rank each issue on a scale of 1-3.

	3 = Most pressing (1)	2 = Somewhat pressing (2)	1 = Least pressing (3)
Food Security (1) (1)	○	○	○
Job Opportunities (2) (2)	○	○	○
Mental Health/ Addiction Rehabilitation (3) (3)	○	○	○
Healthcare (4) (4)	○	○	○
Housing Opportunities (5) (5)	○	○	○
Services for the Homeless/ Unhoused (6) (6)	○	○	○
Environmental Concerns (7) (7)	○	○	○
Veteran Assistance (8) (8)	○	○	○
Other, please specify (9): (9)	○	○	○

End of Block: Organization Information

Start of Block: Demand for MPA Program

Q5 In your opinion, what is the level of need for a Master of Public Administration (MPA) program in the North San Diego or Riverside County region?

○ High (1) (1)

○ Moderate (2) (2)

○ Low (3) (3)

○ None (4) (4)

- -

Q6 Do you anticipate there are individuals in your organization who would be interested in a MPA program?

○ Yes (1) (1)

○ Maybe (2) (2)

○ No (3) (3)

- -

Q7 How would your organization be interested in engaging or collaborating with CSUSM's MPA program? Please select all that apply.

☐ Community Board Input (1) (1)

☐ Prospectively Teaching or Instruction a course for the program (2) (2)

☐ Program Liaison for a concentration area within the program (3) (3)

☐ Internships (4) (4)

☐ Not interested in collaboration at this time (5) (5)

☐ Other, please specify (6): (6)
_____

End of Block: Demand for MPA Program

Start of Block: Curriculum Design and Implementation

Q8 In your opinion, which concentrations should be prioritized in the MPA program? Please select all that apply.

☐   Health Policy and Management (1) (1)

☐   Homeland Security and Emergency Management (2) (2)

☐   Local Government (3) (3)

☐   Nonprofit Management (4) (4)

☐   Public Finance and Budgeting (5) (5)

☐   Public/Social Policy Analysis (6) (6)

☐   Other, please specify (7): (7)

_____

- -

Q9 In your opinion, which modalities should be offered by the CSUSM MPA program? Please select all that apply.

☐   In-person (1) (1)

☐   Hybrid (2) (2)

☐   Online (3) (3)

☐   Other, please specify (4): (4)

_____

End of Block: Curriculum Design and Implementation

Start of Block: Conclusion (additional comments, thank you message)

Q10 Thank you for your responses. Do you have any general comments or suggestions for our emerging program?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

End of Block: Conclusion (additional comments, thank you message)

Appendix II Qualtrics Student Survey Questionnaire

CSUSM MPA Feasibility Study: Student Survey

Start of Block: Introduction

Introduction
Greetings!

California State University San Marcos (CSUSM) is considering developing a Master of Public Administration (MPA) program to meet the regional demand for labor in the public sector. The program is intended for individuals interested in managing municipal functions, planning for the future, and guiding political leaders to good decision-making.

This survey should take about 2 minutes to complete. It will have 5 to 10 questions, depending on your responses. Your responses will be kept anonymous and confidential, and the results will be reported as an aggregate. Completing the survey is voluntary. However, your reply will immensely help us evaluate your interest.

Thank you for your consideration.

End of Block: Introduction

Start of Block: Academic/Career Goals

Q1 What is your immediate goal after graduating from college? Please select all that apply.

☐   Get a job or continue with an existing job (1) (1)

☐   Enroll in a postbaccalaureate or graduate program (2) (2)

☐   Do not know (3) (3)

☐   Other (4): (4) _____

Q2 What is the highest academic degree that you intend to obtain?

○ Bachelor's (1) (1)

○ Master's (2) (2)

○ Doctorate (Ph.D, M.D., J.D., etc.) (3) (3)

○ Professional Certificate / Other, please specify (4): (4)
_____

Q3 What is your intended career goal(s)? Please select all that apply.

☐   Teaching (1) (1)

☐   Administration (2) (2)

☐   Research (3) (3)

☐   Social Services (4) (4)

☐   Health Care (5) (5)

☐   Law (6) (6)

☐   Business (7) (7)

☐   Local Government (8) (8)

☐   Other, please specify (9): (9)

_____

Q4 Where do you plan to live after graduation? Please select all that apply.

☐ North San Diego County (1) (1)

☐ Elsewhere in San Diego County (2) (2)

☐ Imperial County (3) (3)

☐ Orange County (4) (4)

☐ Riverside County (5) (5)

☐ Los Angeles County (6) (6)

☐ San Bernadino County (7) (7)

☐ Elsewhere in California (8) (8)

☐ Other (9) (9)

End of Block: Academic/Career Goals

Start of Block: Graduate Program Interest

Q5 What is important to you when choosing a graduate program? Please select all that apply.

☐ Cost of tuition (1) (1)

☐ Curriculum (type of courses) (2) (2)

☐ Degree requirements (number of units, coursework, graduation requirements) (3) (3)

☐ Faculty accessibility (4) (4)

☐ Scholarship / Financial aid availability (5) (5)

☐ Skills acquired (6) (6)

☐ Career/internship opportunities (7) (7)

☐ Time (length of curriculum) (8) (8)

☐ Location (9) (9)

☐ Other, please specify (10) (10)

_____

Q6 Would you be interested in applying to a CSUSM Master of Public Administration (MPA) program? This program is intended for individuals interested in managing municipal functions, planning for the future, and guiding political leaders to good decision-making.

○ Yes (1) (1)

○ Maybe (2) (2)

○ No (3) (3)

Q7 You indicated that you would be interested in a CSUSM MPA program. Please use the space below to share why you would be interested in this program:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Q8 Which of these concentrations within a CSUSM MPA program would you be interested in?

	Interested (1)	Maybe (2)	Not Interested (3)
Health policy and management (1) (1)	○	○	○
Homeland security and emergency management (2) (2)	○	○	○
Local government (3) (3)	○	○	○
Nonprofit management (4) (4)	○	○	○
Public finance and budgeting (5) (5)	○	○	○
Public/Social policy analysis (6) (6)	○	○	○
Other, please specify (7) (7)	○	○	○

Q9 Which of the following modalities would you prefer for a CSUSM MPA program? Please select all that apply.

○ In-person (1) (1)

○ Hybrid (2) (2)

○ Online (3) (3)

○ Other, please specify (4): (4) _____

End of Block: CSUSM MPA Program Interest

Start of Block: Further Comments

Q10 Please use the space below to provide additional comments regarding your potential interest in the program. Your response may be used to inform program development efforts at CSUSM.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

End of Block: Further Comments

Appendix III Community Partner Interview: Recruitment Script and Interview Protocol Templates

Recruitment Script for _____

Dear [insert name],

Our names are _____, and we are _____ from the Department of Political Science at California State University San Marcos (CSUSM). We are writing to invite you to participate in our research study about the feasibility of a Master of Public Administration (MPA) program at CSUSM. You're eligible to be in this study because of your knowledge/expertise of _____- in [Name of City]. I obtained your contact information from Dr. Godfrey Gibson, Dean of Extended Learning at CSUSM.

If you decide to participate in this study, you will complete a 1-hour interview with us. You will be one of more than 20 government officials, policy experts, and service providers across cities participating in this research. We will use the information to understand and evaluate the feasibility and demand for a Master of Public Administration (MPA) at CSUSM. This project is co-sponsored by CSUSM Extended Learning, the Office of Civic Engagement, and the Department of Political Science.

We are contacting you specifically because [insert reason this person is pivotal for our research] and [insert reason this organization is crucial for our research]. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You can choose to participate or not. If you'd like to participate or have any questions about the study, please email or contact us at _____.

Thank you very much for your time, and we look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

Student names and signatures

Interview Protocol Template

GREETINGS, INTRODUCTION, AND VERBAL INFORMED CONSENT

Thank you for participating in our study and sharing your valuable insight with us. Our interest lies in understanding the feasibility of a Master of Public Administration (MPA) program at California State University San Marcos (CSUSM). We need your assistance in assessing the regional needs and challenges in providing services to local communities, the demand of the labor force in the public sector, and how such needs and demands may inform our decision regarding the development of an MPA program at CSUSM.

This research project results from a collaboration between the CSUSM Extended Learning, the Office of Civic Engagement, and the Department of Political Science. We are undergraduate students majoring in political science who are conducting interviews with city officials for this project under the guidance of our faculty instructor in PSCI301 Practice of Political Research. If you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns about the overall project, you can contact the Dean of Extended Learning, Dr. Godfrey Gibson, or Dr. Xiaoye She, our instructor.

This interview will take approximately one hour. We will ask you some questions regarding your organization and take notes during the interview. If you allow, we may record the interview and transcribe your answers to facilitate our analysis. Your answers will be integrated with other interviews with local officials and survey results with service organizations and undergraduate students to get a comprehensive understanding of possible regional demand for the MPA program.

Participating in this research is entirely voluntary. You can withdraw your participation in our research at any point. If specific topics appear that you are not comfortable discussing, we can skip past them. The results from this study will be shared with you, among other interviewees, as well as other stakeholders at CSUSM and our service region, to establish a baseline for developing the MPA program.

Thank you again for your time!

Before we start, we would like to ask you if you are comfortable being recorded.

___Yes _____ No

We will begin whenever you are ready.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

Insert Interview Questions (organized by themes) below:

Organizational Information:

1. Could you briefly describe your role within the city government in Canyon Lake?

2. What services does your organization provide to local communities?

3. What are some priority areas in serving local communities?

4. What are some major challenges in serving local communities?

5. What kinds of employees do you have at your organization? (what kind of employees and what their qualifications are)

-- What is their average age, educational background, and previous job experiences?

6. What is the long-term demand for the public sector labor force within _____?

Needs and demands for the MPA program:

7. Do your employees often incorporate a degree in public administration in their career pathways? If so, how?

8. At which universities have they pursued public administration degrees?

9. CSUSM is interested in developing a MPA program. What do you think is the level of need/interest for the MPA program at your organization?

10. Will your organization/staff be interested in collaborating with our MPA program?

-If so, what collaboration opportunities may you be interested in? (Provide examples)

Curriculum & Modality for the MPA program:

11. If we are going to develop the MPA program, what subfields/issues areas/concentrations do you think we should prioritize? Why?

12. Would your employees be interested in a certificate program focusing on specific issue areas? If so, what are those areas?

13. What modality do you think your employees will most prefer? In-person, hybrid, online, etc.?

Additional comments and suggestions:

Do you have additional comments and suggestions for us?

END OF INTERVIEW

Thank you so much for your time and effort. Your participation is valuable to us and will promote a better understanding of issues and challenges in serving our local communities, the labor force demand in the public sector, and the feasibility of an MPA program at CSUSM.

Please feel free to ask any questions you may have about this research. If you would like to contact us at a later time, here is our contact information. [PROVIDE CONTACT INFORMATION]