

# CLEMSON

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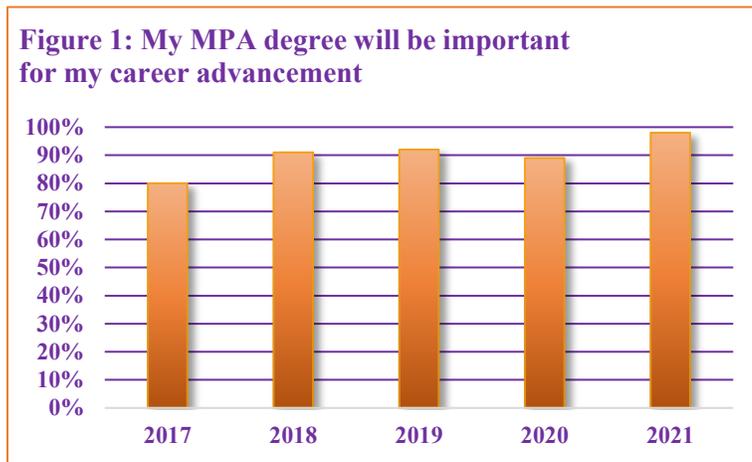
## MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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### Overview: Spring Survey 2021 Results

The Clemson University Master of Public Administration program conducts surveys of its students and recent graduates each spring in order to assess program strengths, opportunities for improvement and an overall understanding of how the program can best provide the education and training necessary for successful careers in the public sector. The program utilized Qualtrics software to collect 2021 data and centered survey questions around:

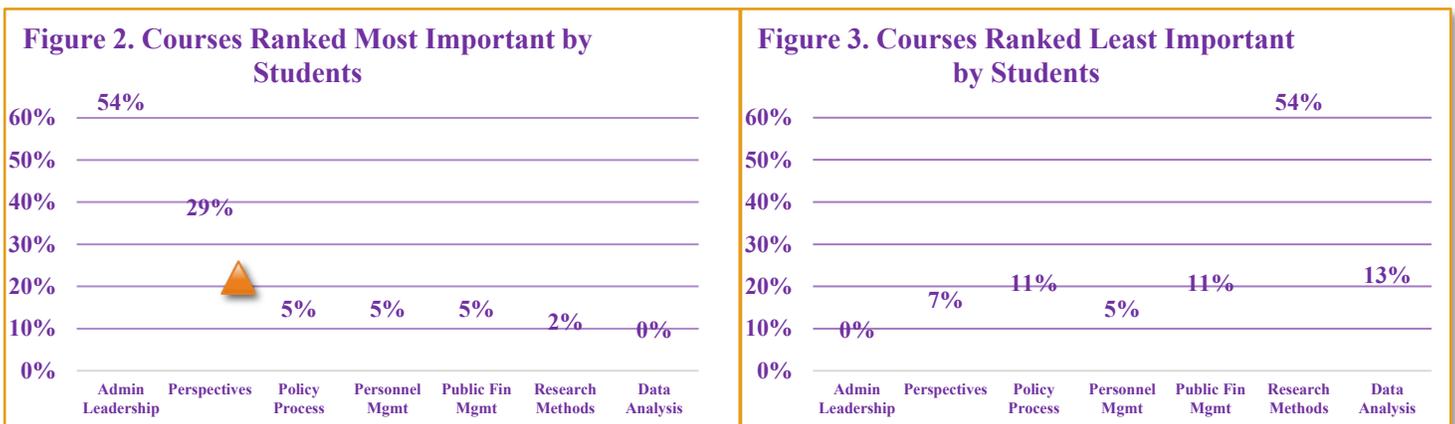
- Overall program perceptions
- Advising needs of students
- Perception of existing concentration areas
- Current technology requirements and needs



Ninety-eight percent of student respondents indicated that earning the Clemson University MPA degree will be beneficial to their professional development. This is in line with responses from the past five years, where positive responses to this question have remained high (Figure 1). In this portion of the survey, 93% of students also responded positively to the statement, “I would recommend the Clemson MPA program to friends or colleagues.” Over the last five years, this statement has consistently received support of eighty-five percent or higher support.

### Core Coursework

The survey asked students to rank the “relevance and value” of classes offered as part of the core coursework for the Clemson MPA program, listing the names and allowing students to rank them from Most Important (1) to Least Important (7). Figures 2 and 3 show the results of this question:



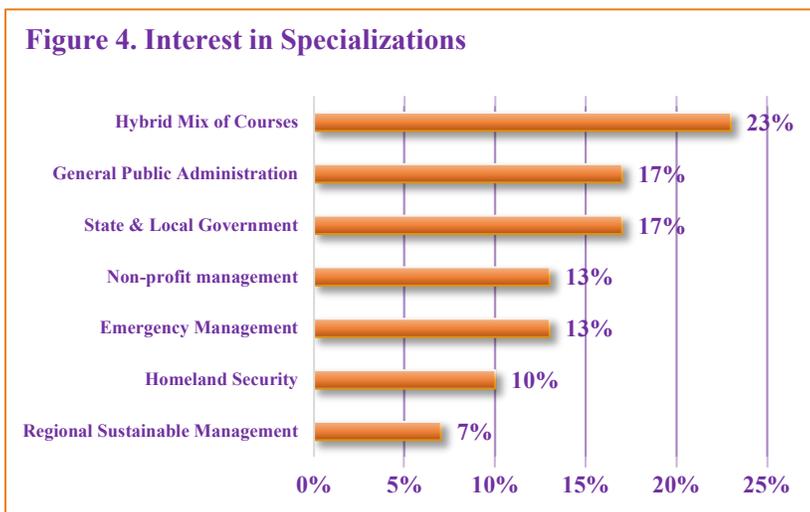
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Administrative Leadership was ranked as the most valuable core course offered, with 54% of respondents placing it in the first position, and none ranking it last. Conversely, Research Methods was recognized as most valuable by only 2% of students, while 54% ranked it the least valuable course in their public administration education. Students also found Perspectives of Public Administration as a valuable course for their education, with 29% of students ranking it as the most relevant to their coursework.

### Specializations

**Figure 4. Interest in Specializations**



To gauge the relevancy of the current specialization areas offered by the Clemson MPA program, students were asked which of the specializations they most were interested in pursuing. While each of the currently offered specializations garnered a significant amount of attention by students, the options Hybrid Mix of Courses (23%) and General Public Administration (17%) received the highest number of responses. Further, students were also asked if the currently offered specializations were a reason for choosing this program; with 57% of students responding yes and a growing number of students (43%) answering no, up 3% from last year's survey.

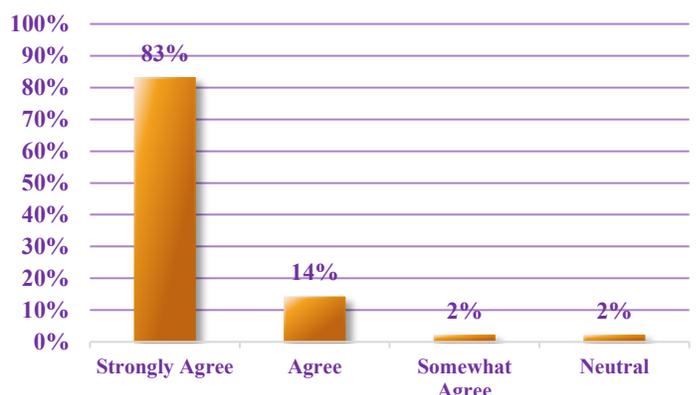
Of those that find interest in the specializations, State and Local Government garnered the most attention (17%), while Regional Sustainable Management had the least (7%), although interest for this area is higher than last year (2%).

### Advising Needs

Ninety-seven percent of student respondents answered that they either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, "Throughout the program my advising needs and questions have been met in a timely and effective manner" (Figure 5). This is consistent with last year's responses (92%), as well as those of 2019 (86%). Students were also asked to provide comments for how advising can be improved, and suggestions included:

*"A publicly accessible calendar (students can view only) that shows open advising hours for the entire MPA staff that a student can then electronically book rather than book through back and forth emails."*

**Figure 5. My advising needs have been met in a timely and effective manner**



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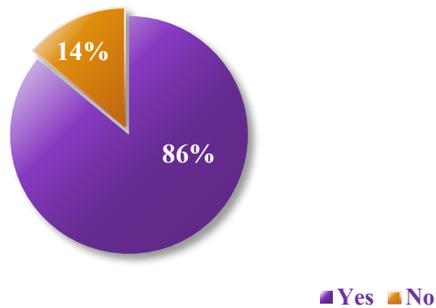
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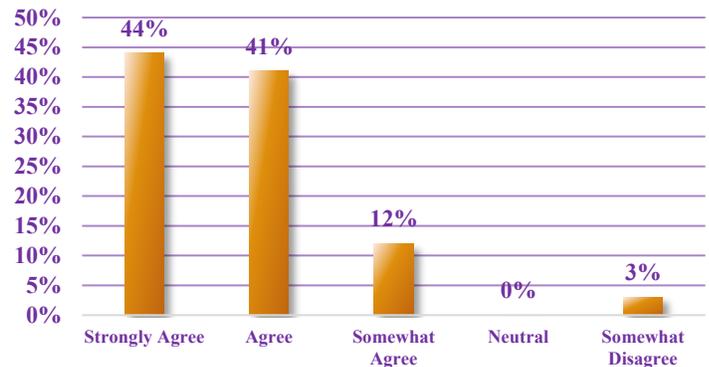
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### Technology Needs and Requirements

**Figure 6. Did you choose this program because of the synchronous online environment?**



**Figure 7. Canvas is an effective organizational tool**



A portion of the survey asked students about their experiences with the technology requirements for the program. First, eighty-six percent of students stated that the synchronous, online format of classes was a motivating factor for them in choosing the Clemson MPA program (Figure 6). When asked to provide suggestions on how to better utilize the current Zoom software being used for these meetings 95% of students did not respond. However, a few comments suggested:

*“I think break out groups are important for all classes to allow for interaction between students which builds confidence in communication.”*

*“Using camera is super helpful. Finding a way for students to get to know each other, icebreakers have been used effectively.”*

Students were also asked if they agreed that their professors used Canvas in a way that is effective as an organizational class tool (Figure 7). Eighty-five percent of students either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement, with another twelve percent somewhat agreeing. The survey also provided an option for students to elaborate on their experiences with Canvas, and answers included:

*“Maybe more consistency amongst professors in how they use/label things. They all seem to use Files/Pages/Modules/etc. differently.”*

*“It would be helpful if there were a standardized template for how professors use Canvas to share information. Reorienting to Canvas every course is sometimes time consuming and confusing.”*

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### Value of a Clemson MPA Degree

A portion of the survey was dedicated to asking students about their overall experience with the program, and how they perceive it will impact their careers. Sixty-three percent of students agreed that the program has already impacted their professional lives in a positive way. Similarly, 69% of student respondents agreed that the program either has been or will be important for their career advancement. Finally, a full 93% of students either strongly agreed or agreed that they would recommend the Clemson MPA program to friends and colleagues (Figure 8). In many of these questions, an open-ended section was given for students to elaborate on their thoughts, and responses included:

*“In the short time I’ve been in the program, I’ve grown professionally and was promoted prior to earning my degree.”*

*“The courses so far have allowed me to have a deeper and clearer understanding of the theory behind what I do daily and have exposed me to new information to apply to my current and future work. Additionally, the engaging classes have allowed me to learn from others and enjoy increasing my understanding of public administration and sustainability.”*

*“Best professional decision I have made. It has helped me move up in the organization that I work for. I have recommended the Program to other colleagues.”*

*“I will earn a small salary increase upon graduation but will also have the chance to promote within my organization.”*

### Concluding Thoughts

In conclusion, the Clemson MPA program is serving its students well overall. Students agree that the program is valuable to them now and will be in the future as well. Some areas of improvement include review and revision of the Research Methods and Data Analysis sequence of courses and more standardization of Canvas use across the program. The program will continue to build on existing strengths and continue to work on opportunities for growth and development of the program. Potential opportunities include the development of an alumni advisory board, a Washington D.C. study course and further development of internships and Capstone project connections.

**Figure 8. I would recommend the Clemson MPA program to friends and colleagues**

