Special Consideration Requests
DATE: February 2, 2010

TO: Dr. Robert C. Webb  
Interim Dean of Graduate Studies

THROUGH: Dr. Sam Kirkpatrick  
Executive Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Management  
Bush School of Government and Public Service

FROM: Dr. Charles F. Hermann  
Program Director, Master of Program in International Affairs  
Bush School of Government and Public Service

Dr. Jeryl L. Mumpower  
Program Director, Master of Public Service and Administration Program  
Bush School of Government and Public Service

SUBJECT: Request for Change in MPSA and MPIA Student’s Advisory Committee

We seek your assistance in changing the policies regarding students’ advisory committee for both the Master of International Affairs and Master of Public Service and Administration programs of the Bush School. The present policy requires a three-person committee with at least one member from outside the School. We find that this is an overly elaborate structure, no doubt a vestige of the days in which master’s degrees required theses, which as you know is not a condition for the master’s degrees we award. The present committee structure adds nothing of value to the student advising process while creating substantial additional procedural burdens and running a high risk of delays because of the difficulties in achieving approvals from all concerned in a timely fashion.

We propose that the current committee structure be replaced with the following, which is adapted from the procedure used by the Mays School. We have chosen the Mays School as a model because the professional MBA degree has much in common with the professional MPIA and MPSA degree. We are confident that the proposed new policy will serve students’ academic interests as well or better as the current policy, while at the same time achieving a substantial reduction in procedural complexity.
The following Graduate Catalog language should be used in place of the current 2009-10 entries (attached) for each of our two degree programs.

For the MIA degree:

The Bush School MIA student's advisory committee consists of the student's designated faculty advisor and the Program Director of the Bush School's MIA Program, who has the responsibility of approving the proposed degree plan for an MIA student. The Program Director serves as chair. When necessary, recommendations in cases of academic deficiency will be made to the Office of Graduate Studies.

For the MPSA degree:

The Bush School MPSA student's advisory committee consists of the student's designated faculty advisor and the Program Director of the Bush School's MPSA Program, who has the responsibility of approving the proposed degree plan for an MPSA student. The Program Director serves as chair. When necessary, recommendations in cases of academic deficiency will be made to the Office of Graduate Studies.

We appreciate your consideration of our request. We may be reached at 458-2276 (Charles Hermann) or 862-8821 (Jeryl Mumpower) should you have any questions or need any further information.
Policy regarding Student’s Advisory Committee for the Bush School’s MIA and MPSA programs
Source: 2009 – 2010 Texas A&M University Graduate Catalog

Student’s Advisory Committee
After receiving admission to graduate studies and enrolling for coursework, the student will consult with the program director concerning appointment of the chair of his or her advisory committee. The student’s advisory committee for the master’s degree will consist of no fewer than three members of the graduate faculty representative of the student’s fields of study. The chair or one of the co-chairs of the advisory committee must be from the student’s department, and at least one or more of the members must be from a department other than the student’s major department. The chair, in consultation with the student, will select the remainder of the advisory committee. The chair will then notify the tentative members of the advisory committee, giving the student’s name and field of study, and request that they consider serving on this committee. The student will interview each prospective committee member to determine whether he or she is willing to serve. Only graduate faculty members located on the campuses at College Station, Galveston, Texas A&M University-Temple Campus or Institute of Biosciences and Technology-Houston may serve as chair of a student’s advisory committee. Other graduate faculty members, including the Texas A&M University System graduate faculty, may serve as co-chair with an individual located at College Station, Houston, Temple or Galveston. The chair of the committee, who usually has immediate supervision of the student’s degree program, has the responsibility for calling required meetings of the committee and for calling meetings at any other time considered desirable. If the chair of a student’s advisory committee voluntarily leaves the University and the student wants the chair to continue to serve as the committee chair, the student is responsible for adding an additional member of the current University Graduate Faculty, from the student’s academic program and located on the College Station campus, to serve as the co-chair of the committee. If the chair of the student’s advisory committee is unavailable for an extended time in any academic period during which the student is involved in activities relating to an internship and is registered for 684, 692 or 693 courses, the student may request, in writing, that the department head appoint an alternate advisory committee chair during the interim period. The duties of the committee include responsibility for the proposed degree plan and any professional study or project. In addition, the committee, as a group and as individual members, is responsible for counseling the student on academic matters, and, in the case of academic deficiency, initiating recommendations to the Office of Graduate Studies. The committee members’ approval on the degree plan indicate their willingness to accept the responsibility for guiding and directing the entire academic program of the student and for initiating all academic actions concerning the student. Although individual committee members may be replaced by petition for valid reasons, a committee cannot resign en masse.