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THE MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION DEGREE: NATIONAL UNIVERSITY'S ACADEMIC TRAINING MISSION IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

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Abstract

This concept paper considers public administration education in China and whether there is opportunity for National University to consider the expansion and growth of its public administration programs in China. Considering China's National Outline for Medium and Long Term Educational Reform and Development, drivers for change in Chinese public administration, and the competitive landscape for graduate studies in public administration with study abroad programs characterize a potential opportunity for expansion and growth of National University's public administration programs in China.

Keywords

Public administration, China, Public Service

1. Introduction

The University's intent is to share the tenets and models of the United States and create an initiative for universities in China; the goal is to mirror the US and encourage China's

students to pursue graduate or undergraduate degrees in Public Administration (in their country or as visiting scholars to the US). The United States is one where freedom of speech makes it possible for degree candidates to enter public service and express their views to improve the opportunities in education, health and welfare for the citizenry. As the “connectedness” of the world may enhance these opportunities for societies to achieve higher quality of life, the consumption driven model elevating standards of living will likely bring pressure on resources and the way in which consumption occurs. As such, public administration offers a pragmatic approach to organizing, managing and deploying resources for the public welfare. While there are indications of China’s growth slowing, China now has a growing middle class in which there is greater demand for products and services leading to greater consumption. Chinese investment has shifted from the acquisition of natural resources to investments satisfying the growing demand of a wealthier population. In short the standard of living has risen in China with an affluent middle class. Now is the time to invest in public administration programs which serve to educate and share best practices between the United States and China.

In defining public administration consider that public administration has been called many things; a subset of political science or at least its offspring, a process of government that has been formalized into a discipline, and even a subject matter in search of a discipline. Public administration is a process and as such has been around as long as governments have existed. (Prentice, 1984)

The process and practicalities of managing government and public institutions for the benefit of constituents requires a focus on education so that individuals acquire the knowledge and practical skills to become the best public administrators for continuous improvement of the public welfare through the institutions managed by these enlightened administrators.

2. The Opportunity

In 2010, China released its The National Outline for Medium and Long Term Educational Reform and Development. This outline called for a strategic focus on “fulfilling modernization of education, building a learning society and turning China into a country rich in human resources.” Seeking innovation and challenging institutions of learning to explore and take risks in the quest to build a “learning society.” Moreover, coupled with education reform, China has had several rounds of public administration reform starting in the 1970’s and continuing. Some

of the key drivers for public administration reform are linked to the notion of learning best practices for continuous improvement. (Xue, 2012) (See Table 1).

Table 1: Drivers for Change in Chinese Public Administration

Territorial Policy	Domestic Reform	International Integration
Supply-side	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The leadership’s vision and judgment • Consider local successes and past mistakes 	Consider the experiences and best practices of the developed countries
Demand-side	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition of the economic system • Pressures from local governments 	Economic integration to become part of the international community

In 2010, the Chinese economy grew overtaking Japan as the world’s second largest economy. The high economic growth rate has encouraged greater expectations for public administration and its continuing reform and evolution since the Chinese government sought to reform and make efficient Chinese public administration since the 1970’s.

2.1 The Competitive Landscape

Western universities have sought to establish presence in the Chinese market and address the changes sought by the Chinese government. In fact, recently in 2014, Georgia State University executed an agreement with China’s University of International Business and Economics (UIBE) in Beijing, China. This agreement calls for dual degree programs for the MBA and MPA. In turn, Georgia State University and UIBE obtain faculty exchange and student programs as well as research collaborations to advance the interests of both universities.

George Washington University has had its faculty members participate in the Fulbright Scholar program teaching MPA courses at Renmin University of China, China’s first university to offer an MPA program. Renmin University of China is considered to offer one of China’s top public administration programs. The University now has a full time MPA program as well as an executive MPA program. Note that Chinese government approved the MPA as an official degree in China and now China has nearly 100 public administration programs.

From 2006 to 2011, the region of East Asia and Pacific was the second highest ranked region with public administration, Fulbright Scholars. (Adams, 2011) (See Figure 1)

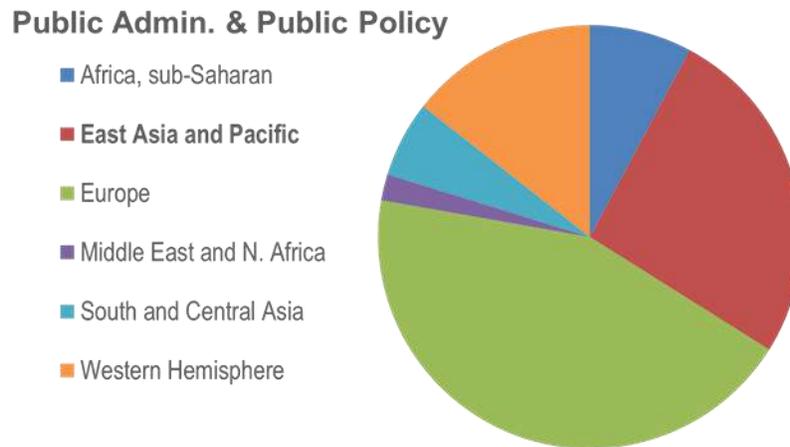


Figure 1: 2006 to 2011 *Public Administration, U.S. Fulbright Scholars and Region*

There is evidence to suggest that the current public administration programs in China offer up opportunities for U.S. and Chinese universities to collaborate and advance best practices in the area of public administration. With a large population, China offers a unique perspective on public administration such that a partnership would enable a rich learning experience through an academic exchange. National University's unique format may offer differentiation for National University's programs in public administration in China. More diligence is necessary to verify the foregoing assertion.

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