Assessment of the undergraduate Public Administration (PUBA) for 2013-2014 consisted of 4 interrelated components: 1) curricular review; 2) review of student course work; 3) review of student responses to a department survey; and 4) discussion among curricular faculty to determine critical areas for improvement in student performance. This process was used as a means of gathering comprehensive information about the program in order to develop and submit a revised curriculum proposal which remains under development. The PUBA curriculum revision is being undertaken in light of administrative determinations to retain the PUBA major; the major was previously scheduled to begin closure through attrition beginning in 2013-2014.

Curricular faculty discussions about areas for improvement and review of student work (sample of assignments in courses taught by tenure-track faculty) indicate that writing is a key area in which significant skill development is needed. If developed, improved writing skills will benefit student performance in the major overall. The University Writing Committee approved the PUBA writing plan in Fall 2014; this plan is essentially a plan develop a feasible writing plan during 2014-2015 and is due to the Writing Committee not later than August 2015. As noted in the PUBA Writing Plan, additional development time is critical given the lack of tenure track faculty teaching the major; this capacity issue has been addressed through recent tenure track faculty hires.

Responses to the student survey (graduating seniors in Political Science Department) indicated that it was difficult to determine increases in knowledge, skills, or abilities related to public administration from the questions that were asked. In addition, the response rate from students in the major was so low that it cannot be used as a reliable indicator. As a result, a new instrument will be developed and implemented in the major in 2014-2015. Going forward, curricular faculty will assess knowledge, skills, and abilities related to public administration content following the competency-based principles that underlie the accreditation of its graduate program (Auburn MPA). The curricular faculty for the undergraduate program are also the core faculty in the nationally accredited Auburn MPA graduate program. To accomplish national reaccreditation of the graduate program under new competency-based standards, Auburn MPA established a schedule of assessment around the core competencies established by its accrediting body, NASPAA. Every year, MPA assessment focuses on one of the five so-called Universal Competencies established by NASPAA.

Although no such external requirement for competency-based assessment exists for undergraduate public administration programs, the concept has been adopted by the curricular faculty as the basis for its assessment of PUBA students going forward. The broad competency areas of student achievement specific to the public
administration discipline are: 1) measurement and analysis; 2) public service philosophies; and 3) civic agency. Beginning Fall 2014, PUBA students will be assessed on the basis of their ability to demonstrate knowledge, skills, and abilities in these areas on a rotating basis as follows:

2014-2015 – Measurement and analysis
2015-2016 – Public service philosophies
2016-2017 – Civic agency


**Undergraduate Public Administration Major**

**Learning Outcome One (2014-2015)**

*Analyze and synthesize information from multiple sources about a public service problem*

**Assessment Method 1: Student Written Projects and/or Oral Presentations**

A random sample of student products from written projects and/or oral presentations assigned in the courses required for the undergraduate major will be collected and analyzed. These courses include POLI 3250, 3260, 3270, 4140, and 4160. Additional courses key to the major that may be included are POLI 3000 and POLI 2100. Analysis will distinguish between class rank (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior) as a way to gauge progress.

**Assessment Method 2: Student Survey**

A survey of undergraduate majors will be conducted in Spring 2015; the survey contains several questions that pertain to the topic of information analysis and synthesis. Students will provide data on the extent to which they agree with the following statements:

a. In my Public Administration courses, I learned to gather information from a wide range of sources.

b. My Public Administration courses have helped me gain an understanding of how to evaluate sources of information for accuracy, bias, and legitimacy.

c. My Public Administration courses have significantly increased my understanding of the tools used to analyze information.

d. My work in the Public Administration program has provided me a more sophisticated understanding about how information is used in American administration, politics, and policy-making work.
e. I better understand how to compile and analyze information from multiple sources in preparing recommendations about solutions to public service issues since I entered the Public Administration program.

Analysis will distinguish between class rank (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior) as a way to gauge progress.

Learning Outcome Two (2015-2016)

Articulate a public service perspective

Assessment Method 1: Student Written Projects and/or Oral Presentations

A random sample of student products from written projects and/or oral presentations assigned in the courses required for the undergraduate major will be collected and analyzed. These courses include POLI 3250, 3260, 3270, 4140, and 4160. Additional courses key to the major that may be included are POLI 3000 and POLI 2100. Analysis will distinguish between class rank (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior) as a way to gauge progress.

Assessment Method 2: Student Survey

A survey of undergraduate majors will be conducted in Spring 2015; the survey contains several questions that pertain to the topic of public service perspectives. Students will provide data on the extent to which they agree with the following statements:

a. In my Public Administration courses, I learned about a wide variety of administrative theories and approaches to analyzing public management issues.

b. My Public Administration courses have helped me gain an understanding of a variety of recurring controversies in public administration.

c. My Public Administration courses have significantly increased my understanding of the public administration profession.

d. My work in the Public Administration program has provided me a more sophisticated understanding about how American administration, politics, and policy-making work.

e. I better understand the arguments for and against different administrative behavior since I entered the Public Administration program.
Analysis will distinguish between class rank (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior) as a way to gauge progress.