Public Affairs is an ideal program if you want to be in good company. Graduates of Western Carolina University’s public affairs degree program are working at the executive level in city and county management, community development, natural resources administration, legal defense, law enforcement administration, municipal government administration, and corporate management.

Graduates have held such positions as:

- Leslie Anderson, Leslie Anderson Consulting, Asheville, N.C.
- Paige Roberson, town manager, Sylva, N.C.
- Cory M. Blankenship, treasurer of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Nation
- Jeff Greene, professor of political science, University of Montana, Missoula
- Sheila Hayle, executive director, Southwestern Child Development Commission, Webster, N.C.
- Joel Mashburn, retired county manager, Iredell County, Statesville, N.C.
- David McNeill, emergency management coordinator, Transylvania County, Reveal, N.C.
- Laura Jeffords, executive director of the Mediation Center, Asheville, N.C.
- Brenda Mills, director of administrative services, City of Asheville, N.C.
- William Annarino, retired chief of police, City of Asheville, N.C.
- Craig Honeycutt, county manager, Alamance County, N.C.
- Kevin Grant, unit chief Federal Bureau of Investigation, Clarksburg, W.Va.
- Laura Foor, foreign trade zone administrator, Charlotte Regional Partnership, Charlotte, N.C.
The curriculum leading to the MPA degree combines a core of general public managerial courses with courses in a specialization chosen according to the student's career plans. The core classes emphasize applied skills in management, budgetting, policy analysis, and quantitative methods. Elective courses are offered in areas such as non-profits, state and local government, planning, environmental policy and human resources, among others.

Most Western Carolina MPA courses are offered in the evenings at our location in Asheville’s Biltmore Park Town Square. Some elective classes are also offered on the Cullowhee campus and online. Faculty have recently offered hybrid classes that combine in-class and online learning.

**Faculty** MPA faculty bring theoretical knowledge combined with professional experience to each class. Our faculty have won awards for their teaching and are actively engaged in research and community service. They regularly publish their research in public affairs and public policy journals, help local governments with data analysis and survey research, and are frequently quoted in local and national media. Faculty also serve on regional board and commissions.

**The University** Western Carolina University is located in the scenic Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina, an ideal setting for graduate study. The Cullowhee campus is about 50 miles southwest of Asheville, N.C., and about 150 miles northeast of Atlanta. The Blue Ridge Parkway, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and some of the South’s finest resort areas are nearby. WCU offers several programs in Asheville at its location in Biltmore Park.

One of the 16 four-year campuses of the University of North Carolina, Western Carolina University enrolls more than 9,000 students annually, including more than 1,900 graduate students. The university operates on a semester system. The Graduate School offers programs leading to 12 master’s degrees in more than 50 areas, the education specialist degree, and the doctorate in educational leadership.

**Research Facilities** WCU’s Hunter Library contains more than 590,000 books and bound periodical volumes, and one million units of microform. Approximately 3,000 serial subscriptions are received, including regional, national, and international newspapers. Most journals and library materials can be accessed off campus through the Internet to make it easy for students who may not live near Cullowhee.

The MPA program also houses the Public Policy Institute, an applied research institute that seeks to improve the practice of government in the western region of the state. Students are encouraged to get involved with PPI research projects.

**Time To Finish** The program consists of 39 hours of coursework and is often completed within four semesters. Many students choose to work on the program part-time, however, and may take as little as one class per semester.

**Tuition and Fees** in 2012-2013, tuition and fees for a full-time in-state graduate student total $1,870.00 per semester. Out-of-state students are charged $8,662.50 per semester for tuition and fees. Students may also choose to attend the MPA part-time and pay per credit hour. Additional funds are needed books and living expenses. For the most current tuition and fees information, please visit tuitionfees.wcu.edu.

**Financial Opportunities** Graduate assistantships are available for many full-time students. These assistantships provide valuable experience in public affairs and help defray the cost of a student’s education. Please contact the MPA director for more information. In addition, a limited number of Chancellor’s Fellowships and Graduate School Study Grants are awarded. Students are encouraged to apply early to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies. Information about financial aid is available through the Office of Student Financial Aid, Killian Annex, 828.227.7290.

**Admissions** Prospective graduate students must hold a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university. Completed applications must include the following:

- Official college/university transcripts
- Satisfactory scores on GRE, taken within the last 5 years
- TOEFL and score 550 or higher (paper version) or 213 or higher (computer version)

Citizens of other countries, whose degrees are not from a U.S. institution, must take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and score 550 or higher (paper version) or 213 or higher (computer version).

All admission requirements must be met before the faculty selection committee will take final action. Students can be admitted to the MPA program throughout the year in fall, spring, or summer semesters. Decisions on assistantships are usually made in early spring for the following fall semester.