

The University at Albany's Rockefeller College of Public Affairs and Policy ranks among the top schools of public affairs in the nation. Over the past two years, a partnership between CTG and the College has resulted in a completely redesigned specialty in information strategy and management, which itself ranks in the top five percent. The new information strategy and management curriculum offers specially designed courses as well as internship and research opportunities that focus on the real-world issues of information management and technology in government.

"The purpose of revisiting our nationally ranked concentration in information management is to keep it 'on top of the curve,' and make effective use of the other academic programs on campus," says Sharon Dawes, CTG Director and an associate professor in Public Administration and Policy. "The program takes excellent advantage of the close relationship and relative strengths of the Department of Public Administration, CTG, and other programs such as information science."

As a result of its work with all levels of government, CTG has a unique practice-based perspective on government operations and the role of information technology and management. That perspective is reflected in new courses with a strong emphasis on professional practice.

The curriculum also responds to the results of a CTG-conducted survey of members of the National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO) and the NYS Forum for Information Resource Management (NYSFIRM) that asked practicing government managers what they believe new government managers need to know about information technology.

The survey results emphasized the importance of incorporating IT into the mission of an agency and working with people in different roles to craft systems that make sense and deliver value. These topics include project management, business process analysis, user needs analysis, aligning IT with the agency's mission, and rethinking service delivery in light of e-government technologies.

A second group of topics focused on design and implementation issues. Some pertain to the decision to invest in IT, others to the way organizations adapt to it. Interorganizational information sharing, data quality and management issues, e-commerce, and security concerns all come into play here.

Technology fundamentals also showed up as useful but less important than the policy, strategy, and organizational issues. This consensus was best summarized by one respondent who said: "While the technical level knowledge is certainly desirable, I think more emphasis should be placed on the ability to leverage technology to meet mission goals."

"Our Information Strategy and Management curriculum places high priority on topics such as information strategy, IT-mission alignment, user focus, process analysis, and IT-enabled service delivery models," explains Sharon Dawes. "By placing these topics in the mainstream of public management education, they are presented in the critically important context of politics, institutional constraints, and democratic principles."

These new courses are now offered in the Master of Public Administration (MPA), Master of Public Policy (MPP), and Doctorate in Public Administration, as well as in certificate programs for returning students in public management and policy analysis. The Certificate of Advanced Study (CAS) in Information Strategy and Management is especially designed for students who have a prior masters degree in public administration, public policy, or a related field.

For admissions information, contact Dori Brown in the Department of Public Administration and Policy. For more information about the program content and structure, contact David Andersen, Sharon Dawes or Theresa Pardo.