

Lean in Government

A short seminar course offered by The Evergreen State College Masters in Public Administration

Course Dates: February 21-23, 2014
Course Meeting Times: 5:00 – 9:00 Friday, 9:00 – 5:00 Saturday and Sunday
Instructor: Larisa Benson
Classroom: Seminar 2 (Room TBA)

Purpose of the course

A key concept in the Masters of Public Administration course of study is the idea that people, resources and operational systems must be aligned with the organizational mission in order to create public value. In this course, we will construct a framework for defining, measuring and improving this “public value.” We will view public value through the lens of “lean management” and sharpen our focus on the process of transforming resources into results that actually matter to the public we serve.

What is our role in achieving “quality of life” or “public safety” or “social justice” or “life, liberty and happiness”? What are the limitations of our role in these pursuits? How do we know if we are actually making a difference? These questions lie at the core of this course. We will explore how we answer these questions for ourselves as leaders and public servants, how we can inspire a culture of curiosity and persistence within our organizations in order to continuously improve results, and how we measure and express the value of our mission to both internal and external audiences.

In the private sector, the methods for measuring the bottom line are well defined. Around the world, there is widespread agreement in the accounting profession on how to calculate shareholder earnings, profit (or loss) and the returns on assets and equity. In the public and nonprofit sectors, we define our missions in terms of justice, strong families, a vibrant economy, communities that are prepared for natural disasters and children who are safe and healthy and educated and ready to achieve their dreams in a new global economy. How do we evaluate and compare “return on investment” in terms of public service?

These things resist easy measurement. Yet the performance imperative persists. The citizens and clients we serve, the taxpayers and donors who fund our programs, and the public and institutions that have granted us authority all demand some form of evidence that we can deliver public value.

“Lean” has inspired curiosity in the social sectors in recent years, especially as the current and previous governors of Washington State and several local elected leaders are pursuing lean as a strategy to increase the public value of the services they deliver. With roots in the manufacturing sector and popularized as the “Toyota Production System,” the translation of lean principles, tools and techniques to the social sectors is still very much an emerging field that is rapidly evolving.

To actually deliver public value, to develop innovative solutions to the complex problems our society faces, to continue to find ways to do the vital work of the public sector better, faster and with fewer scarce resources, leaders must also be change agents. Change agents challenge the status quo and are always looking for a better way to get more done. Change agents don't have all the answers, rather they ask great questions - questions that inspire, mobilize and transform. Change agents bring together the people in the system with the people affected by the system to transform the system. This course will explore what it means to be a change agent and dive into the critical questions change agents ask: what do we do? Who do we do it for? Why do we do it? And most importantly, how can we do it better?

As professionals in the public and nonprofit sectors, we are measured by many things, including whether we are able to deliver results. We will explore this aspect of professional competence as we develop the necessary knowledge, skill and judgment required to improve public value through the application of lean management tools applied in the social sectors.

Key Concepts

As an integral part of the Masters in Public Administration degree program, this course serves as a bridge between the *analytic techniques* presented in the statistical analysis and policy, finance and budget and *leadership and management principles* presented in the Core courses.

Aligning the people, resources and operational systems to achieve the mission is critical, but alignment alone cannot achieve results. Resources must be actively managed, results must be measured and analyzed, and processes must be continuously improved in order to achieve value. In this course we will introduce, review and practice applying specific tools and frameworks for understanding and improving operations and results, including:

- defining public value from multiple perspectives
- measuring customer satisfaction and managing demand
- logic modeling and process mapping
- process improvement using the A3 problem solving method
- measuring performance and setting targets for process improvement
- visual management, including data collection and analysis displays
- innovation and leading change

Cultivating a perpetual curiosity can fuel your desire to learn more about how your organization and its people actually operate. A performance leader transmits this knowledge, power and passion through people inside the organization and broadcasts it to people outside the organization. As you nurture the mission, the mission energizes and renews you. Leadership aspects we will cover in the course include a review of previous course themes and introduction of new ways of thinking about:

- motivating other people and motivating yourself
- innovation and leading change
- creating a culture of performance and continuous improvement
- engaging customers and citizens

Learning approach

We will use a blend of lecture, case study, hands-on exercises, class discussion, self-reflection, and written analyses to master the material, deepen our own understanding, and learn from one another. The learning approach is designed in layers:

- Reflect on our own organizational experiences and challenges.
- Introduce, explain and test new concepts, definitions and frameworks.
- Consider these new concepts in a specific context using real world case studies.
- Practice applying new tools techniques through exercises and group work.
- Develop a plan for applying what we have learned to our professional or community work.

Outline of the course:

Session	Topic
1	Introduction and grounding in the purpose of the course
2	Simulation exercise and debrief
3	Basic principles, tools and techniques of Lean
4	Logic models and applications of lean in state and local government
5	Using data to inform strategy and improve results
6	Introduction to systems thinking and team member roles
7	Process improvement, mapping and operational service delivery
8	Customer focus
9	Brief review of process improvement and customer concepts
10	Leading change to achieve better results: a case study
11	Innovation
12	Course conclusion: Creating a performance based culture

Assignments and Expectations:

Each student is expected to have thoroughly prepared by reading the case studies, articles and other materials included on the course website and jotting down thoughts based on the study questions. Additional details and specific readings, study questions and any special preparations will be posted on the website prior to the course.

Class participation will account for 40% of your evaluation for the course. Participation will be assessed by the instructor based on the insights and questions you contribute during the course of class discussion, indications that you are able to listen to, respect and integrate

the thoughts and ideas of fellow students, your recall and application of course material during group study and class discussions, upholding the class ground rules, and your level of engagement during the in-class exercises.

Written assignments will account for 60% of your evaluation for the course, with the weight given to each assignment as indicated below.

Assignment #1: Reflecting on your career and life experiences to date, identify a specific major change initiative you either led, participated in or observed closely. The change effort you choose to write about could come from the organization where you are currently employed, or one where you are a member or volunteer, or an organization you would like to be a part of or learn more about. For your assignment, consider these questions and write a short paper summarizing your thoughts about what worked, and what didn't. What was the stated purpose of the change initiative? What was the motivation? Who was involved, and in what ways were they involved? Where there any players inside or outside the organization that influenced the outcome? What did people think, say and do in response to this initiative? What results were achieved? In your opinion, what worked, what didn't, and why?

Length of paper: 1-2 pages

Due date: February 16

Weight in evaluation: 20%

Assignment #2: Write a case study analysis demonstrating your ability to apply one or more of the strategies or frameworks presented in this course. The case study and instructions for this assignment will be handed out in class.

Length of paper: 1-2 pages

Due date: Feb 22 (in class)

Weight in evaluation: 10%

Assignment #3: Write your own reflections and a plan for applying one or more of the strategies or frameworks you discovered during class. The instructions for this assignment will be handed out in class.

Length of paper: 3-4 pages

Due date: March 3

Weight in evaluation: 30%

Course Evaluations are also due on March 3

Agreements

Participation & Attendance: Students are required to attend each class meeting. Participation includes focusing on class content, being engaged in class and seminar, listening to others, taking notes, completing class interactive exercises, avoiding distractions, and listening to and dialoging with the guest speakers. If an absence is unavoidable, *student must notify instructor prior to a class absence*. Makeup work must be completed by the end of the quarter in question for course credit.

Late assignments: Turning in assignments late is unacceptable. If you have a need to turn in an assignment late you must contact your seminar faculty no later than the original assignment due date to discuss options. Parameters are left to the discretion of the faculty on a situation-by-situation basis. *Late assignments must be completed by the end of the quarter the assignment was originally due to ensure course credit.*

Format of Assignment Submissions: All papers will be submitted via the Moodle website and all communication/feedback regarding submissions will be conducted via Moodle. Therefore, it is imperative that you regularly check email and the Moodle site. All papers must meet assignment parameters and cite works using the [American Psychological Association \(APA\) citation style](#). All written work will be of high quality, grammatically correct, clear and without spelling errors. If you require it, please request resource writing assistance from faculty and/or contact the Graduate Writing Assistant. Check assignment details for each submission. Sometimes your faculty will ask you to work with the Graduate Writing Assistant; if so, you are required to do to the satisfaction of your faculty member.

Use of Electronic Devices: this course is Moodle-based. We understand, and expect, that you will need to use electronic devices in class. However, the class is also participatory and the learning community is dependent upon people being present to what is happening in class. This means that electronic devices should not be used for anything other than for class-related activities. Resist the siren call of all the ways in which your devices can distract you from what is going on in the classroom. We will ask people to put away their devices, except for note taking, for guest lectures. Please extend similar courtesies to the faculty when they are lecturing.

Credit: Students will receive 2 graduate credits at the completion of each quarter if all course requirements have been satisfactorily completed to meet course objectives. No partial credit will be awarded. Incompletes may be offered on case-by-case basis. Refer to the MPA student handbook. Plagiarism (i.e., using other peoples' work as your own), failing to complete one or more assignments, completing more than one assignment late, or multiple absences may constitute denial of total credit. Students will be evaluated based upon their progress towards the learning goals, assessed from classroom, seminar, and assignment performance. Students at risk of losing credit will receive written notification prior to the end of the term.

Evaluation: Written self-evaluations and a seminar faculty evaluation are required for credit at the end of each quarter, along with faculty evaluations of students. *Evaluations are due .*

Multiculturalism & Diversity: Faculty and students work toward weaving multiculturalism and diversity throughout our learning in readings, lectures, seminar and group projects.

Learning Styles: Faculty endeavor to provide information in multiple formats: auditory, visual, kinesthetic, etc. However, style applications are limited to means appropriate for the classroom environment. Consult your seminar faculty to discuss learning style options or personal challenges.

Accommodations: are provided for any student who desires them through a working relationship with Access Services, the Writing Center and the Quantitative and Symbolic Reasoning Center. To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the office of Access Services for Students with Disabilities (867-6348 or 6364). Information about a disability or health condition will be regarded as confidential. Please refer to TESC's Students With Disabilities Policy [here](#).

Other Expectations of Students and Faculty: We commit to promoting a cooperative, supportive atmosphere within the community; give everyone opportunity for self-reflection and expression; use high standards in reading the text and preparing our papers, lectures, and comments in seminar; handle all disputes in a spirit of goodwill; respect our differences; and, discuss any problems involving others in the learning community directly with the individuals involved.

We abide by the [social contract](#), the [student conduct code](#) and the [non-discrimination policies and procedures at TESC](#).

Readings: (all posted to Moodle)

- ❑ Chapters 5-6 from *Extreme Government Makeover* by Ken Miller (Governing Books, 2011)
- ❑ Chapters 3-5 from *We Don't Make Widgets by Ken Miller* (Governing Books, 2010)
- ❑ *Lean Consumption*, by James P. Womack and Daniel T. Jones published in the Harvard Business Review (March 2005)
- ❑ *The Darker Side of Lean: An Insider's Perspective on the Realities of the Toyota Production System* by Darius Mehri published in Academy of Management Perspectives (May, 2005)
- ❑ Chapters 3-4 from *Measuring Performance in Public and Nonprofit Organizations* by Theodore Poister (Jossey-Bass, 2003)
- ❑ *Seven Skills People Need to Create a Lean Enterprise* by Doug Howardell, blog posting to the Lean Enterprise Institute www.lei.org
- ❑ *Lean Thinking in the State of Iowa*, by David Drickhamer, published by the Lean Enterprise Institute www.lei.org