

PUBLIC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT CENTER AT WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY

History

The Public Policy and Management Center provides research and community service begun by Dr. Hugo Wall, a professor who served the University for forty-two years, from 1929 to 1971. In the mid-1940s, Professor Wall began envisioning an academic unit that would link the University and the community. Professor Wall's vision first emerged when the University established the Center for Urban Studies to conduct applied research and community service under his direction.

Stable funding for the Center began in 1965, shortly after the transition of the University of Wichita into Wichita State University. City of Wichita voters approved the adoption of a citywide mill levy dedicated to the new state university, and the University allocated a portion of the mill levy to the Center for Urban Studies for research and service focused primarily on the city.

An instructional component, the Master of Urban Affairs degree (MUA), was added in 1972, the first degree being awarded in 1974. The MUA was a multi-disciplinary, problem-centered program drawing faculty and resources from a number of academic units across the university. Over time, the MUA began to focus more and more on public policy and on the administration of policy. In 1979, public administration faculty who had been a part of the department of political science moved to the Center for Urban Studies and additional faculty positions were added to the program. The MUA curriculum was revised in the early 1980s to better reflect the public administration emphasis of the program and its faculty. In 1983, the Center was named after Professor Hugo Wall, founder of the Center and national leader in city management professionalism. In 1984, the Kansas Board of Regents approved changing the MUA to the Master of Public Administration (MPA).

Through the spring of 1993, the Hugo Wall Center for Urban Studies operated as a separate, integrated academic unit, offering instruction and conducting research and service, and reporting directly to central administration of the University. In Fall 1993, in response to preferences that the Center be housed in a degree-granting college and as part of several university-wide organizational changes, the Hugo Wall School of Urban and Public Affairs was created and placed in Fairmount College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Initially the School housed the MPA program and the Center for Urban Studies, as well as graduate and undergraduate programs in gerontology and criminal justice, and undergraduate programs in minority studies and social work. In 1994, the Kansas Public Finance Center was created as an additional research and service unit in the School.

As a result of changing requirements in 1999, the Hugo Wall School was split into three units - a School of Social Work; a School of Community Affairs containing criminal justice, gerontology and minority studies; and a school that housed the Master of Public Administration degree program, which retained the name Hugo Wall School of Public Affairs. In 2015, the Center for Urban Studies was renamed the Public Policy and Management Center to reflect our mission of advancing excellence in public service. In 2017, the Public Policy and Management Center was moved from the Hugo Wall School to the WSU Division of Diversity and Community Engagement.