The following are the five NASPAA universal competencies.

1) To lead and manage in public governance.

2) To participate in and contribute to the public policy process.

3) To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions.

4) To articulate and apply a public service perspective.

5) To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry.

The MPA faculty at Albany State University defines the five competencies as follows:

1. To lead and manage in public governance: ASU MPA graduates possess skills, knowledge and abilities (competencies) that indicate an understanding of organizational structures, processes and behaviors, leadership styles, and techniques that enhance their ability to manage people and their work, information, and ideas as well as financial resources (Evidence for this competency can be obtained from course work in PADM 5011, PADM 5262, PADM 5126, PADM 5501, and PADM 5851).
2. To participate in and contribute to the public policy process: ASU MPA graduates demonstrate an understanding of the policymaking process, including its actors and institutions. They are familiar with major theories that shape public policy development and the ethical dimensions involved in transforming public problems into policies. Also, they have the ability to analyze or evaluate policy options. Evidence for this competency can be obtained from coursework in: PADM 5011, PADM 5302, and PADM 5781).
3. To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions: ASU MPA graduates demonstrate an ability to employ methodologies necessary for research endeavors, employ analytical tools for collecting, analyzing, presenting and interpreting data including appropriate statistical concepts and techniques. They comprehend and apply statistical and decision making tools for public management, generate new knowledge or application through the synthesis of information, evaluation and analysis of critical questions, issues or problems related to public administration and policy. Moreover, they have the capacity to identify, analyze and evaluate underlying assumptions of public policy alternatives and have familiarity with the use of computer information systems to address public administration issues Evidence for this competency can be obtained from: PADM 5011, PADM 5501, PADM 5502, PADM 5781, PADM 5851, and PADM 5907).
4. To articulate and apply a public service perspective: ASU MPA graduates show an understanding of and a commitment to personal and administrative responsibility, accountability and efficiency within the context of public and non-profit service programs. Responsibility also encompasses concepts of equity, representativeness and the application of ethical and public service values to policy management decisions and the opportunity to make a contribution to society. Accountability encompasses duty and responsiveness to both political and administrative oversight as well as the public interest, professional values and standards. Efficiency encompasses the possession and practical application of technical knowledge, skill and capacity in the interest of effective administration and optimal service to communities, society and the public (Evidence for this competency can be obtained from PADM 5011, PADM 5126, PADM 5262, PADM 5851, and PADM 5781).
5. To communicate and interact productively with a diverse and changing workforce and citizenry: ASU MPA graduates demonstrate an understanding of the concepts, skills, procedures, and the legal requirements for recruiting and retaining the best talent in diverse workplaces. They have a familiarity with the activities and behaviors that prepare graduates to work in and contribute to diverse work places and communities, issues of social identity categories such as race, ethnicity, gender, class, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, disability, age and veterans status (Evidence for this competency can be obtained from PADM 5011, PADM 5262, PADM 5551, PADM 5600, and PADM 5781).