

MARKETING THE MPA DEGREE: THE CASE OF THE EXECUTIVE MPA PROGRAM AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY'S SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS BY STEVEN COHEN, OCTOBER 2000.

1.0 What is an Executive MPA Program?

In a review of the websites of the U.S. News and World Report's top 125 MPA programs, we were able to identify the 27 (22%) self-identified executive programs listed in Exhibit 1. The nature of these programs varies widely. Some are specifically tailored and feature specially scheduled course offerings, while others are tailored curriculum designs using existing course offerings. Some programs mix the two. Obviously, the cost of offering an executive program is much lower if it is possible to use existing courses rather than fielding new ones. Some executive programs are non-degree certificate programs such as those offered by the Heinz School at Carnegie Mellon. Most are courses of study leading to a Master of Public Administration.

Some Executive Programs, such as the one we have begun at Columbia's School of International and Public Affairs, offer a weekend or evening schedule. This type of program is designed to tap into a large local market in a major metropolitan area, or to a more concentrated market in a government capital where students are expected to continue working while going to school. Other Executive Programs such as those at the Kennedy School and the Maxwell School offer intensive one-year in-residence programs for students willing and able to leave their jobs for a year. Some programs such as those at Rutgers-Newark and the University of Utah have weekend schedules complemented by intensive weeklong sessions in the summer.

The notion of an Executive Program may seem peculiar to many traditional MPA programs, since much of their current constituency are part-time students who are currently "in-service" to government. Many NASPAA schools are located in state capitals and serve as a professional education and training resource to state governments. For example, the Public Affairs Program at the University of Massachusetts at Boston offers *all* of its classes on weekends and evenings and therefore

we have included this *entire* program as an Executive Program in Exhibit 1. Executive Programs may sometimes simply be the same old wine in a brand new bottle. The move by some schools to establish explicit, stand-alone Executive MPA programs appears to be an effort to imitate the successful practices of business schools to develop and market a separate program and support system for mid-career students.

At Columbia and many other schools with executive programs this tends to be characterized by some or all of the following features:

- A curriculum that replaces internship requirements with work experience.
- An effort to allow the student to utilize their workplace as a subject for research projects, and assignments which require the student to use workplace examples in place of more traditional case material.

Exhibit 1 ^[1] – Summary Master in Public Administration and Public Policy Executive Programs	
Program Name	Program Summary
American University – The Key Executive Program	36 credits; 20 month course
Brandeis University, The Heller School, The Master of Management Evening Program	16 courses completed in three or more years. 11 courses in management; 2 electives in management; 3 elective courses in policy.
Carnegie Mellon, The Heinz School – Certificate & Executive Education Programs	½ day to 3-week training sessions (on or off campus). Most held over the summer.
Columbia University, School of International and Public Affairs- Executive Master of Public Affairs	Students enrolled in the Executive MPA program may complete the degree in either two or three years of study, depending on the course load they wish to carry. A single concentration in advanced management and finance is offered with courses in accounting, public finance, management innovation, nonprofit management and finance, and public sector marketing and communication. Similarly, the program offers a three-course context sequence with seminars in the economic environment of public policymaking, the political environment of policymaking, and public sector ethics. Students are granted 9 graduate credits of advanced standing for previous professional and management work experience. Those credits, along with the 45 points earned during the program of study at SIPA, comprise the 54 points of the Executive MPA program.
CUNY (Baruch) – Executive MPA Program	42 credits to be completed in 2 years. Classes only held on Saturdays.

Harvard University – Mid-Career MPA	2 semesters w/ 1 summer session. Average Age = 39; 210 members; 52% US Citizens.
Kansas University, Edwin O. Stene Graduate Program in Public Administration Career Option	The career option is for those who are already working in the field of their choice and desire an MPA degree for career development and advancement. Career-option students may enter the program in any semester. Most career-option students enroll part-time, but it is possible to be a full-time career option student. Career-option students complete the same course work as internship-option students, with the exception of the last 6 hours. Instead of the Professional Development Seminars, career-option students take two additional elective courses or may write a Field Project Report. This report relates the theoretical perspectives and technical skills learned in the classroom to the practical issues faced at work.
NYU, Wagner School of Public Service- The Saturday MPA Program	15 courses over 3 years. (4 the first year, 6 the second and 5 the third).
Portland State University, - Executive MPA Portland State (Continued)	Choice of Certificate or Degree Credit. Students have option of receiving a “Basic Certificate in Public Management” after taking 15 credit hours or an “Advanced Certificate in Public Management” after completing additional 15 credit hours. Takes approximately 3 years of p/t study. Classes offered in a weekend intensive format, typically held Friday evening and all day Saturday every 3-4 weeks.
PrincetonUniversity- Woodrow Wilson School MPP for Mid-Career Professionals	1-year program begins w/ intensive five-week summer program in economics, statistics, and policy analysis. Typical student has 7 years of work experience.
Rutgers University, New Brunswick- Master of Public Affairs and Politics /Eagleton Fellowship Program (MPAP, one-year program)	The Department of Public Policy (in collaboration with the Eagleton Institute of Politics) offers an intensive one-year degree in public policy. The MPAP degree program is designed to help students develop or refine their competence in analytic and quantitative skills and to form a thorough understanding of the political institutions and processes through which public policies are formulated and implemented. The MPAP program requires a total of 30 credits over two semesters of full-time study (some students engage in part-time study as well). NOT DESIGNATED AS EXECUTIVE, BUT 1 YEAR ACCELERATED PROGRAM.
Rutgers University, Newark – The Executive MPA Program	30-39 credit hours of coursework.
Syracuse University- Maxwell School Executive Education Programs	30 credit of coursework. 1 year of full-time coursework to get degree.
The University of Missouri-Kansas City, Henry W. Bloch School of Business & Public Administration- Executive Public Policy Programs	Certificate program in public policy through EMBA program – courses in the dealings of the federal government as they relate to the business world.
UC Berkeley – Executive & International Program	Provides certificate courses on strategic management for professionals in public organizations. The certificate courses are designed to improve the public administration skills of mid-career professionals. The course introduces the students of public administration to key ideas in the “new public management.” Through lectures, readings, Class discussions, presentations, and panel discussions, students examine such issues as sensitivity to “client” needs, development of management strategies, “outsourcing” of services, and tactics to maximize job effectiveness.
UMass-Boston MPA Program	Entire MPA program geared towards people who are working full-time. Program operates entirely on an evening and weekend schedule.

University of Colorado, Denver- Executive MPA Program	36 semester hours of credit. Takes approximately 2-2 ½ years to complete the program.
Indiana University- Executive MPA Program	1 year program – 36 credit hours.
University of Maryland (College Park) School of Public Affairs – Office of Executive Programs	The Office of Executive Programs at the Maryland School of Public Affairs partners with government agencies and communities committed to improving, through education, the capacity of mid-career professionals and leaders to serve the public effectively. The Office of Executive Programs offers educational programs in the areas of housing and community development, environmental policy, public sector financial management and general government, and health and human services. Clients include federal, state and local agencies, non-profit organizations and foreign governments. Programs are offered in residence and by day at University of Maryland campuses, at client sites, and by distance learning technology. Over 800 students attended OEP programs in 1999.
University of Maryland (Continued)	
University of Michigan-Ann Arbor MPA Program	The MPA Program is only for mid-career students (3 years-minimum work experience). 1 year program/30 credit hours. Completion of four courses selected from the M.P.P. core sequence, normally the quantitative methods and economics courses; (2) completion of a public management course; (3) completion of three electives selected from courses offered in the University's other graduate departments and schools.
University of Minnesota Twin Cities, Humphrey School – EMPA (Executive Master's of Public Administration)	10 years of work experience required. At enrollment, participants will assess their educational interests and put together learning plans that include the degree's three core courses and additional courses at the Humphrey Institute or elsewhere at the University of Minnesota. The degree requires 30 semester credits, including 8 credits in a synthesis seminar and workshop; 4 credits in leadership; 9 credits in a focus area such as economic development, foreign policy and international affairs, social policy, 6 credits in skills courses; and 3 credits in electives.
University of Pittsburgh, GSPIA, Master of Public Policy and Management for Mid-Career Professionals	10 courses for a total of 30 credit hours. (Four components to curriculum: foundation seminar, specialized area of study, elective courses and policy seminar.)
University of Texas at Austin, LBJ School of Public Affairs	35 hours of course credit. Can be completed in 2 semesters and one summer by going full-time w/ 4 courses/semester. The p/t program takes about 2 years including summers. 10 years work experience expected.
University of Utah, Center for Public Policy & Administration- Executive MPA Program	Two year program. Classes meet on weekends and for one-week summer sessions. The weekend classes consist of 3 hours of class on Friday evening and 7 hours of class Saturday. Classes meet on 4 alternating weekends.
University of Washington, Evans School of Public Affairs- Mid-Career Evening Degree Program	54 credit of coursework. Students take 2 evening courses each quarter and graduate in 3 years. Some take classes over the summer. (21 credits in core, 21 credits of electives, 12 credits of leadership.)
USC – Master of Planning and Development Studies (M.P.D.S.)	This degree program is designed for mid-career professionals in planning, development or related disciplines that desire to improve their professional skills and careers. The curriculum includes core courses covering urban planning analysis, research and analytical methods, as well as methods and problems of the planning process. Areas of concentration include economic development and project management, international planning and development, and environmental policy and planning.

Washington State University – Vancouver MPA Evening Program

The MPA degree can be completed entirely in the evenings while students work full-time. The degree takes a few years to complete depending on the number of classes taken per semester. 34 credit hours for degree.

- A schedule that allows, and in fact requires, students to continue to work while in school.
- Additional support services such as automatic registration, assistance in obtaining reading materials, and additional help in quantitative courses.
- Conference –like amenities such as higher quality, professional-style classrooms and meals or snacks provided by the program.

Business school Executive Programs sometimes charge a premium over regular program tuition levels for the additional services provided to mid-career students, and we saw some evidence of this in Executive MPA Programs (e.g. The EMPA Program at Baruch College of the City University of New York). At Columbia we decided to offer about a 30% discount below the normal rate of tuition, but eliminated fellowship support for these students.

The remaining sections of this paper will focus on Columbia's Executive MPA Program as a case study. We recognize that our program may not be typical, but hope that some of the lessons we have learned will be of value to colleagues in other MPA programs.

2.0 WHAT IS THE CURRICULUM OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY'S EXECUTIVE MPA PROGRAM?

Our first step in marketing an Executive Program was to design a curriculum that we thought would have market appeal, but would maintain the rigor that our faculty would support and employers have come to associate with our program. For reasons of cost and space we designed a program that was totally separate from our non-executive program. Courses would be offered on Saturdays and weeknights in the summer, when no other courses were offered. This meant that the programs of study would offer no elective courses—all students would take the same analytic core courses, courses on the context of public policy and concentration courses. This eliminated choice—a major marketing advantage of our non-executive program where MPA students were enrolled in approximately 300 different course sections and a dozen different concentrations during the 1999-2000 academic year. In place of choice, we opted for a clear, highly focused skill-building curriculum.

The decision to prohibit electives made our curriculum choices of critical importance. The first year core curriculum was modeled after the non-executive MPA. It included a yearlong course in applied microeconomics and policy analysis and a yearlong course in statistics and applied quantitative analysis. In the fall semester, EMPA students enrolled in a public management case-based seminar and in the spring semester they were required to take our core course in financial management. These courses were very similar to those offered to the non-executive students, but adjusted to meet the needs, background and schedule of the executive students.

Executive MPA students were given advanced standing for the non-executive program's year long "Practicum" which features public sector speakers and discussion and analysis of the viewpoints presented by the speakers. They were also given credit for the required course in professional development. These courses, as well as the internship requirement and the workshop in applied public management/policy analysis, were considered unnecessary for these more experienced students. In place of the workshop requirement Executive MPA students enrolled in a Portfolio Presentation course. In that course they worked with a faculty advisor to develop a case study of a management problem faced by the organizations where

they worked. They also were required to articulate at least five pieces of written work they created at their place of employment

while at Columbia to indicate how their professional written work reflected lessons learned in the program.

In the non-executive MPA program, our students must complete three courses on the political, economic, social and historical context of public policy. Students can select these courses from over two hundred course offered each year by Columbia's Arts and Sciences graduate departments in political science, economics, history and sociology and from the offerings of SIPA and Columbia's other professional schools. EMPA students were required to enroll in three specific required context courses:

- The Political Environment of Policymaking
- The Economic Environment of Public Policy
- Public Sector Ethics

They also were offered a single concentration, a five-course sequence in advanced management and finance with the following required courses:

- Accounting
- Public Finance
- Public Sector Marketing, Strategic Planning and Communication
- Nonprofit Management and Finance
- Management Innovation

The concentration in management was selected because it was the most popular area of study for Columbia's non-executive MPA students. This decision was made after a focus group of MPA alumnae suggested that if only one concentration was offered that it be analytic and skill building rather than oriented toward a specific policy area such as environmental policy or social welfare policy.

3.0 HOW DO WE MARKET OUR NON-EXECUTIVE AND EXECUTIVE PROGRAMS AT SIPA?

Once we decided to launch an Executive Program, we developed and implemented a marketing plan that was in certain respects more ambitious than our marketing of our two other larger and older degree programs. Because it focused on a limited geographic market it was different from our more global approach to marketing our non-executive programs. To provide a comparative perspective on EMPA marketing, we will first describe SIPA's typical marketing campaign for its non-executive programs.

Marketing Non-Executive Programs at Columbia University's SIPA [\[2\]](#)

Our non-executive programs include our Master of International Affairs (750 students) and our Master of Public Administration (230 students). Our marketing efforts for those programs include a wide range of activities. A key activity is simply being prepared to respond to requests for information. Each year we receive more than 30,000 requests for information from prospective applicants. Our recruiting efforts can be divided into four major categories: the SIPA web site, direct mail, print advertising, and campus and recruiting fair events.

The SIPA web site offers prospective applicants a great deal of information about the School and its programs. The Admissions and Financial Aid section allows prospective candidates to read our viewbook and bulletin and request printed versions of those documents. They can also print a copy of our application, review our recruiting schedule, read about the SIPA financial

aid process and access the web version of the *SIPA Directory of External Funding Sources*. Prospective applicants can review hundreds of course syllabi and several dozen course web sites. The home page also provides a link to Embark, a company under contract to Columbia University to provide an electronic application service. This allows students to submit application forms, essays and application fees electronically.

The School and its programs undertake a number of efforts to reach prospective students via direct mail. In order to accomplish this effectively, SIPA has contracted with a mailing service, Speedy Mail, to both send materials and store our publications. Using a mailing list obtained from Peterson's Guide (which we update yearly) and our own internal list we mail approximately 6,000 posters to undergraduate schools and colleges around the world. These posters have postage paid response cards attached, which can be used to request information from SIPA.

Since our alumni are our most valuable source for identifying suitable candidates for admission to the School, the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid, in conjunction with the Office of Alumni Affairs and the Office of Student Affairs, has developed a plan to involve recent alumni in the admissions process. This year we mailed a SIPA viewbook and a response form to alumni from the classes of 1990 to 2000, approximately 4,500 graduates, and asked them to volunteer their time to assist the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid in a variety of ways. We also requested that they pass the viewbook, which contains our application, to any prospective applicant they might know.

Drawing upon the University database, we send specific mailings to targeted groups announcing upcoming events, such as a Master of International Affairs (MIA) or MPA Open House or an off- campus recruiting event. The Graduate Program in Public Policy and Administration targets several sectors of government or the nonprofit community every year for a direct mailing, which includes the SIPA Viewbook and the SIPA Recruiting Poster.

SIPA spends approximately \$50,000 every year on its print advertising campaign for non-executive programs. The Columbia Office of Publications designs our advertisements. In placing ads in publications like the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Wall Street Journal and the Economist, the School hopes to accomplish two things: to draw potential applicants to the School, and to raise the profile of the School in the eyes of potential employers.

The School also places approximately 40 ads in college newspapers around the United States. While the average entering student is 27 years old, approximately 15% do come directly from their undergraduate experience. Additionally, these ads are an inexpensive way of bringing SIPA to the attention of potential candidates who may not apply for several years. The School also pursues a vigorous travelling recruiting campaign. This year we will visit schools and cities in a total of 14 states and 7 countries over a period of about 40 days.

Marketing the Executive MPA Program

Executive MPA marketing benefits from the general SIPA branding accomplished through the SIPA-wide publicity effort. The Executive MPA marketing effort has a different emphasis than the school-wide campaign and a more specific geographic emphasis on the New York metropolitan area.

Marketing an executive program at Columbia University may differ in degree from marketing in other places, but it does not differ in kind. It is difficult and expensive to capture attention in a major media market like New York, but communicating to prospective students is a challenge to all programs. The Executive MPA recruiting program includes the following elements:

- **Print campaign.** In 1999-2000, our second year of marketing the program we spent approximately \$70,000 on advertising in the Sunday New York Times (see Exhibit 2), The Economist, Crain's NY Business, the New York Observer and the Civil Service Chief. The New York Times ads were the most effective and expensive at \$6,000 per placement. These ads were timed to advertise the program and our open house recruitment events. For a sample of ad copy see Exhibit 2.

- **Mail campaign.** A number of mailings were sent to about 600 regional alumnae of the regular MPA program, government, nonprofit and selected private sector human resource directors. The mailings included a program CD-ROM, a poster, a flyer, a bulletin and a personalized letter. The school also purchased several mailing lists that were used in a mailing campaign. Lists were purchased from Governing Magazine and the Chronicle of Philanthropy. Mailings were sent to Federal, State and City agencies in New York City and to all mid and senior level managers at Columbia University. Also, all those who requested information by phone and Internet were sent information packets including the flyer, bulletin and a personalized letter. Finally, a voicemail message was sent to all university employees prior to the program's final open house event.
- **The web.** One of the program's first steps was to develop a program Bulletin-Brochure and a web site based on its content. The web is a critical marketing tool for the program that is growing in importance. The website was designed by Columbia's Office of Publications^[3] and included an application that can be downloaded. The site was "hit" by people outside the university about 10,000 times last year and was a major method of information dissemination for the EMPA Program.

Exhibit 2: Sample Ad Copy for Columbia University Executive MPA Program

- **Open Houses.** As the advertisement above indicates, the program held three Open House events, which drew between 30 and 50 prospective students to formal presentations and informal discussions with faculty, staff and students. Open House events coupled with one-on-one visits to the program's staff, faculty and classes were critical elements of the marketing effort. The Picker Center for Executive Education at SIPA administers the EMPA program and its assistant director, Melissa Poueymirou, organized these group and individual site visits. According to Ms. Poueymirou, program recruitment involves a great deal of one-on-one communication and is quite labor-intensive.
- **Site Visits.** In 1999-2000, Ms. Poueymirou and Picker Center Director Eimicke conducted several visits to employers that might have employees interested in the program, and plan to conduct at least two dozen such visits during the 2000-

2001 Academic year. This will include visits to government agencies and other private and non-profit employers. Site recruitment visits involve meetings with alumnae of the school or with human resources directors to explain the program, and to request assistance in contacting prospective students and possibly holding a briefing for employees interested in the program.

4.0 HOW DO EMPA'S FINANCE THEIR STUDIES?

The tuition at Columbia University is expensive, and even though the EMPA tuition about 30% lower than our regular program, it still is far from inexpensive. In 1999-2000, tuition was \$725 a point. Students enroll in 45 points

Exhibit 3

PAYMENT METHODS OF EMPA STUDENTS

METHODS

Full Employer Sponsorship (non-CU employees)	4
Partial Employer Sponsorship (non-CU employees)	0
CU employees -- full tuition	9
Stafford Loans *	9
Private Loans	1
Scholarship SIPA	0
Scholarship Non-SIPA	0
Personal Funds	19
Payment Plans	4
Combination of Methods	19
Total # of Students	65

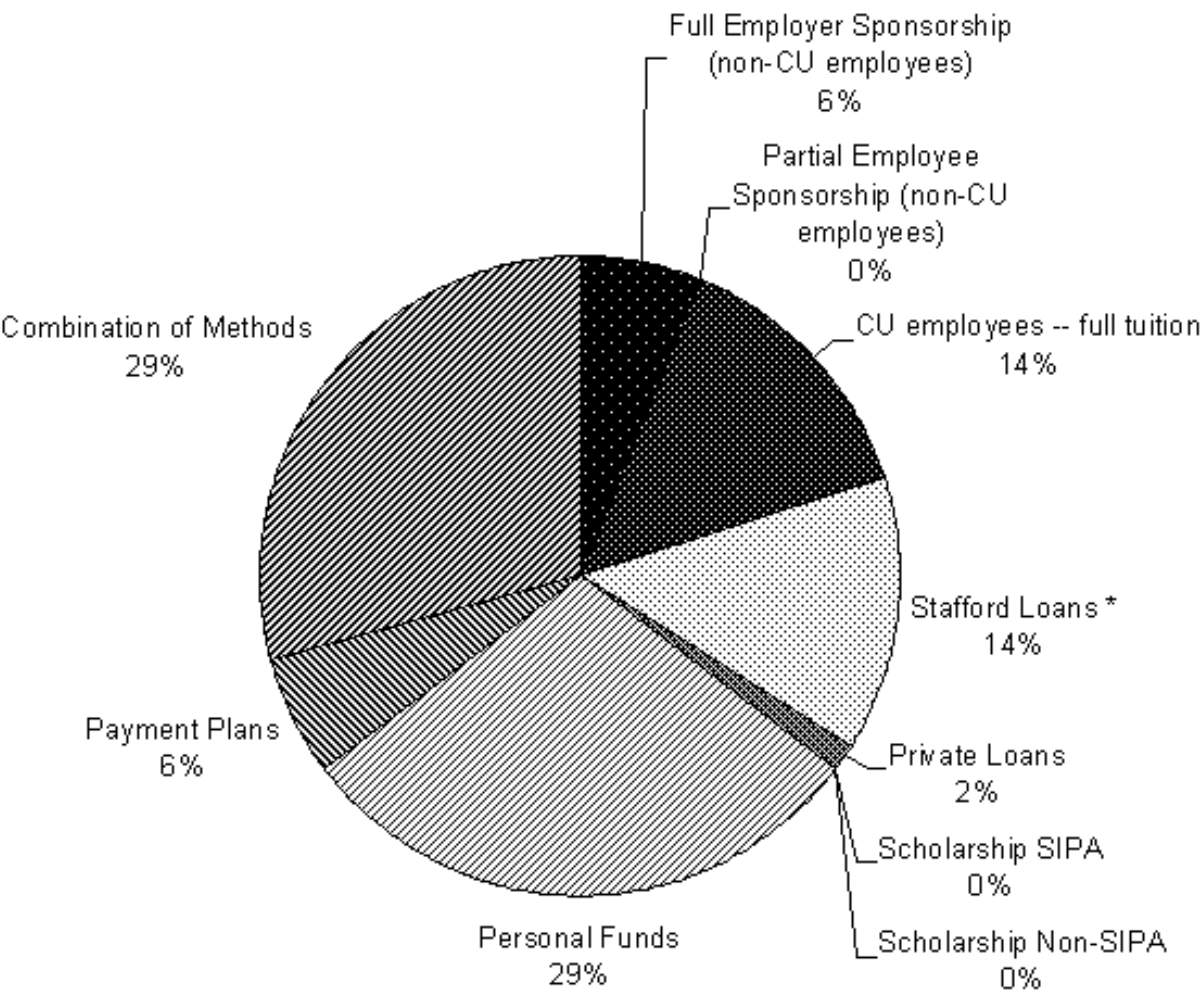
BREAKDOWN OF COMBINATION METHODS

Stafford and Private	4
CU and Stafford *	6
Stafford and Company	2
Scholarship and Personal	1

Personal and Stafford *	2
Payment Plan and Stafford	2
Scholarship, Personal and Stafford	1
Personal and Employee Sponsorship	1
Total # of Students in Combination Plan	19

* **Note:** For most students in the two-year plan, the maximum amount of Stafford loans of \$18,500 does not cover tuition. However, the category of Personal and Stafford indicates students who borrowed a part of the \$18,500 to supplement their personal contribution. All others in the Stafford only category borrowed the full amount. Before 2000-2001 CU employees enrolled in the program were taxed at a rate of 47% for the tuition benefit they receive. Many borrowed to compensate for the loss in income. Under new rules, students whose employers certify that the EMPA degree is job-related do not pay tax on their tuition benefit.

Payment Methods of EMPA Students



and are given advanced standing for 9 points, that they do not pay for. [\[4\]](#)

This totals \$32,625 of total tuition costs; a number that rose by 3% in 2000-2001 to \$33,604. This is expensive until it is compared to the financial burden faced by our non-executive students. Our non-executive students forgo most of their income for twenty-one months, and must come up with about \$50,000 to cover two years of tuition and fees. While non-executive students are eligible for over \$5 million of fellowships, Assistantships and work study jobs, and can work part time during the academic year and full time during the summer, many still must borrow substantial amounts of money to go to school.

In order to fund their tuition expenses, EMPA students have relied on a variety of strategies as indicated in Exhibit 3. About 16% are borrowing money to pay tuition, and about 20% are funded by their employers. Approximately 29% are relying on personal funds, 6% have signed up for monthly payment plans and 29% have combined methods. Some are combining partial employer sponsorship with loans, while others are combining loans with savings.

5.0 WHO ARE COLUMBIA'S EXECUTIVE MPA PROGRAM STUDENTS AND WHERE ARE THEY EMPLOYED WHILE IN SCHOOL?

An analysis of the demographics of our Executive Program and their career backgrounds indicate that we are tapping into a market that previously went to other regional MPA programs or simply avoided graduate professional education. On average, new EMPA students are on average thirty-five years old, or eight years older than our average starting non-executive MMPA student. There are more people of color in this group and of course, all EMPA students are from this region –as compared to about 20% of the students in the non-executive MPA program. About one third of our non-executive MPA students are from outside the United States, while about 15% of the EMPA students were born outside the U.S. The international population

of Columbia's EMPA program reflects the diversity of New York's regional demographics; however, all EMPAs have lived and worked in the region for at least a few years.

Exhibit 4 provides data on the current employers of our EMPA students. Note that only 14 students or 22%, currently work in government. Due, in part, to the fringe benefit of free tuition for Columbia University administrators 16 or 25% of the EMPA students are employees at Columbia University and 19, or 30% of the student body work at educational institutions. Non-university non-profit organizations are the source of 20 or 31% of our students, and 11 or 17% of the student body work at private firms. If university employees were counted as they could be as employees at nonprofit organizations, then 61% of our students could be categorized as employees of nonprofit organizations.

Exhibit 4: Employers of Current Executive MPA Students

Government and Quasi-Governmental Organizations (N=14)

Brazilian Consulate General
Colombian Consulate of NY
NY Assemblyman Lafayette
New York City Court Systems
NY State Attorney General's Office
NY State Department of Civil Service
Office of the State Deputy Comptroller for NYC
Oman Mission to the United Nations
U.S. Customs Service
Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA), Bridges and Tunnels
NJ Sports and Exposition Authority
Office of National Drug Control Policy, NY/NJ High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area
Rockland County Highway Department
The United Nations

Non-Profit Organizations (N=20)

The Advertising Council
African Services Committee, Inc.
AFS Intercultural Programs
Alianza Dominicana, Inc.
Chamber Music America
Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation
Community Health Center
Covenant House

Greater Harlem Development Board
Homes for the Homeless
Housing Works, Inc.
Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning
Liz Claiborne Foundation
MOUSE (Making Opportunities for Upgrading Schools and Education), Inc.
NY Botanical Garden
New York City Audobon Society
Partnership for a Drug-Free America
The Vera Institute for Justice
Wildlife Conservation Society
World Trade Institute

Exhibit 4: Employers of Current Executive MPA Students (Continued)

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Educational Institutions (N=19)

Columbia University (16)
Mount Sinai School Of Medicine
Universidad Externado de Colombia
Weill Medical College of Cornell University

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Private Companies (N=11)

Chase Manhattan Bank (2)
Credit Suisse First Boston
HypoVerinsBank AG
IBM, Global E-Business
IBM, Global Financing
Newsday
Pricewaterhouse Coopers LLP
Salomon Smith Barney
Vectormex
Yash Technologies

6.0 ANALYSIS AND CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Executive programs are a growing element of the array of products that MPA programs are using to maintain and increase their market. At Columbia 64 (22%) of the 290 students enrolled in our MPA program are Executive MPA students. This program is in its second year and has already grown to the size we had projected in its fifth year. Changed patterns of employment contribute to the growth of executive programs and their increased popularity. Executive programs such as those at the Kennedy, Maxwell and Wilson schools benefit from the fact that fewer people spend their entire career with one employer and may make a choice to interrupt their careers to obtain a masters degree. In the case of foreign students, changes in political regimes may provide an excellent opportunity to study in the United States, retool skills and refresh the spirit. Weekend and evening programs benefit from the increased need for master's degrees for professional advancement. As our society has become more educated, the master's degree has replaced the bachelor's degree as a fundamental prerequisite for professional advancement. This degree inflation has been coupled with a labor shortage in recent years. Bright, ambitious students are recruited directly out of college and receive early promotions, but in some cases find that after a while they hit a ceiling and are losing opportunities to people who hold masters degrees. This is the market niche that Columbia's executive MPA is designed to occupy. These students are unwilling to take a year off their career ladder to obtain a degree. For personal reasons they cannot forgo income for 21 months to obtain a degree. For these students, an evening or weekend program is ideal.

We noted earlier that for many traditional MPA programs, particularly those in state capitals, a large portion of their market is comprised of state government officials who work full time and attend school part time. Public administration as a field has long practiced in-service education. These programs may need to decide whether a move to an "executive education" format and support system is necessary. As public sector careers often involve employment in government, nonprofits and public-oriented parts of the private sector, we may find that we are competing with business schools that are offering in-service education in an "executive education" format. In those instances some public administration programs may need to explore executive education as a method of holding onto their current share of the mid-career market.

[1] [1] *The authors gratefully acknowledge the research assistance of Jennifer Amigone (MPA '01) in creating this table. The methodology used for this exhibit involved researching the websites of the top 125 Master's in Public Administration and Public Policy Programs as published by US News and World Report.*

[2] *This section is based on a report by Patrick Bohan, Director of Admissions and Financial Aid, School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University*

[3] *The website, ad campaign and publications for the EMPA program were designed by Sandy Kaufman, Director of Columbia's Office of Publications and managed by JoAnn Crawford, SIPA's Director of Publications and Special Events.*

[4] *The advanced standing for EMPA students is given for the non-Executive MPA program internship, workshop and practicum courses. EMPA students do not enroll in this "pre-professional" core since they are already accomplished practitioners and they have no need for that element of the MPA curriculum.*