The Journal of Public Affairs Education (JPAE) is the flagship journal of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA). Founded in 1970, NASPAA serves as a national and international resource for the promotion of excellence in education for the public service. Its institutional membership includes more than 250 university programs in the United States in public administration, policy, and management. It accomplishes its purposes through direct services to its member institutions and by:

- Developing and administering appropriate standards for educational programs in public affairs through its Executive Council and its Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation;
- Representing to governments and other institutions the objectives and needs of education for public affairs and administration;
- Encouraging curriculum development and innovation and providing a forum for publication and discussion of education scholarship; practices, and issues;
- Undertaking surveys that provide members and the public with information on key educational issues;
- Meeting with employers to promote internship and employment for students and graduates;
- Undertaking joint educational projects with practitioner professional organizations; and
- Collaborating with institutes and schools of public administration in other countries through conferences, consortia, and joint projects.

NASPAA provides opportunities for international engagement for NASPAA members, placing a global emphasis on educational quality and quality assurance through a series of networked international initiatives, in particular the Network of Institutes and Schools of Public Administration in Central and Eastern Europe (NISPAcee), the Inter-American Network of Public Affairs Education (INPAE), and the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (GIPA). It is also involved locally, for instance, directing the Small Communities Outreach Project for Environmental Administration Education (SOPAE), and the Georgian Institute of Public Affairs (GIPA). It is also involved locally, for instance, directing the Small Communities Outreach Project for Environmental Administration Education (SOPAE).

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From the Editor

This issue of the *Journal of Public Affairs Education* is dedicated to the memory of Jack M. Rabin, professor of public administration and policy at Pennsylvania State University at Harrisburg, whose life and work we honor and whose untimely death on November 13, 2006, we mourn. Fortuitously, one of Jack’s final publications, the article coauthored with Yeager, Hildreth, and Miller titled “What Difference Does Having an MPA Make?” is part of this double issue of *JPAE*.

With a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Georgia, Jack Rabin taught at Auburn University and Rider College before joining Penn State in 1988. There he helped develop the Ph.D. program in public administration and more recently served as coordinator of the Master of Public Administration Program.


Jack was long active in both the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs Education and the American Society for Public Administration, and he founded the Southern Public Administration Education Foundation, which became the venue for several of his pioneering online journal ventures. He was founder and editor-in-chief, editor, or co-editor of the *Journal of Management History*, the *Journal of Public Budgeting, Accounting and Financial Management*, the *Journal of Health and Human Resources Administration*, the *International Journal of Organization Theory and Behavior*, and the *International Journal of Public Administration*, as well as *Public Administration and Management* and *Public Administration Quarterly*.

Author of more than 20 books, Jack was a leading scholar, but he really became something of a legend for the way he selflessly—and often insistently—involves countless faculty in research for publication. He did so for professors at all stages of their careers, but especially younger faculty, whom he thereby helped immeasurably in tenure and promotion reviews. Although his own publication record will comprise a great deal of his legacy, it may well be the way in which Jack...
Rabin touched the lives of so many colleagues in the United States and around the world that earns him the most enduring place of honor in the discipline. Yet another telling legacy is the *Jack Rabin Collection on Alabama Civil Rights and Southern Activists*, an important archive he donated to Penn State Harrisburg that chronicles the history of the civil rights movement in Alabama (available online at http://www.libraries.psu.edu/speccolls/FindingAids/rabin.frame.html). In a number of ways, these papers are indicative of Jack’s commitment to human and civil rights. His work as member of Scholars for Peace in the Middle East reflects this same commitment.

His article in this issue gives some of Jack’s and his coauthors’ reflections on the state of public affairs education and in particular of the master of public administration degree. It may be hoped that this issue, with its interrelated themes of the state of the MPA curriculum, graduate education for leadership, and community-based education and service, will serve as a fitting, if small, memorial to a generous colleague who will be long missed. Jack Rabin was one of the most influential scholars and editors in the field of public administration and a great friend and mentor to many in the profession.

It is also fitting, in light of Jack’s innovative work in electronic publication, that this issue marks a shift for *JPAE* from traditional printing and distribution to publication on demand, as well as a transition toward PDF file access and online availability. These changes have grown out of a sustained consultation initiated by NASPAA President Kathryn Newcomer that has involved NASPAA’s Executive Council and executive director, past and present editors-in-chief of the journal, and others. It is hoped that this dialogue will continue and broaden for months and years to come.

Also growing out of this dialogue are changes in *JPAE’s* editorial roster, in particular my appointment as editor-in-chief, Nicholas Giannatasio’s as managing editor, and Marc Holzer’s as senior consulting editor, all by the NASPAA Executive Council. Changes in contributor guidelines should also be noted, because manuscripts are to be sent henceforth to Nick Giannatasio.

While Marc Holzer has been involved with the journal for some time and is well known to our readership, Professor Giannatasio’s appointment is new, warranting a brief biographical note. Holding an MPA and a Ph.D. in public administration from Rutgers, he is professor and chair of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. He is a member of the editorial board of *Public Productivity and Management Review* and the Board of Trustees at the National Center of Public Productivity. He has published in *Public Administration and Management*, the *International Journal of Public Administration*, *Public Administration Quarterly*, the *International Review of Public Administration*, *The Encyclopedia of Public Administration*, and the *Handbook of...*
of Research Methods in Public Administration. He has also recently edited a symposium for the Journal of Public Budgeting, Accounting and Financial Management.

Beginning with this issue, former editors-in-chief Frederickson, Perry, Jennings, and Perlman will constitute a new Editors’ Council that will be expected to continue to help envision and realize the journal’s future. Members of JPAE’s Editorial Board, NASPAA members and journal subscribers, and all others interested in the future of the journal are invited to join the Editors’ Council in its deliberations.

—Mario A. Rivera, Ph.D., Editor in Chief

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The *Journal of Public Affairs Education (JPAE)* is dedicated to advancing teaching and learning in public affairs broadly defined, which includes the fields of policy analysis, public administration, public management, and public policy. *JPAE* pursues its mission by publishing high-quality theory, empirical research, and commentary. The core values of *JPAE* are rigor, relevance, clarity, accessibility, and methodological diversity.

**Articles:** *JPAE* welcomes contributions from all public affairs educators who seek to reflect on their professional practice and to engage *JPAE* readers in an exploration of what or how to teach. *JPAE* articles are intended to influence experienced educator-specialists but also to be comprehensible and interesting to a broad audience of public affairs teachers. Articles appropriate for publication in *JPAE* include comprehensive literature reviews and meta-analyses, carefully constructed position papers, critical assessments of what we teach and how we teach it, thoughtful essays about commonly shared teaching challenges, experimental and quasi-experimental assessments of students’ learning, evaluations of new curricula or curriculum trends, national and international/comparative disciplinary and pedagogical developments, and field studies of particular teaching methods.

In addition to articles, the editors welcome proposals for symposia. Proposals that are accepted will be announced in the journal and will be accompanied by a call for papers. Submissions for symposia will be considered through the normal review process.

Decisions about the publication of all articles are based on the recommendation of members of the editorial board using a blind review process. Substantive content, writing style, and length are all relevant to a decision to publish a manuscript. Depending on the type of manuscript, the review process takes into account the following criteria:

- Research-based: adequacy of theoretical grounding; reliability and validity of findings; significance of the topic; significance of the findings.
- Interpretive, reflective, critical, theoretical: significance of the topic; quality of the argument; quality of the supporting evidence.
- Creative pedagogy: creativity of the approach; soundness of the explanation; evidence of effectiveness; utility for faculty.
- Case studies: pedagogical value; scope of potential use; clear teaching purposes.
- In all cases, writing quality is an important consideration.

Manuscripts that are obviously inappropriate or insufficiently developed will be returned without formal review. Interested authors can better understand the journal’s audience and its expectations for content, quality, and focus by examin-
ing what JPAE has published in recent years or by contacting members of the editorial board or staff.

Manuscripts submitted should not have been published and should not be under consideration elsewhere. Papers presented at a professional conference qualify for consideration; in fact, the submission of manuscripts that have been thoroughly revised following presentation at a professional meeting is encouraged.

In general, authors are strongly encouraged to have their work reviewed and evaluated by colleagues prior to submission for formal review in order to facilitate the editorial process.

Manuscripts should be sent to jpae@uncp.edu. Only electronic submissions sent to this email address as Microsoft Word attachments will be considered. Any accompanying message should be addressed simply to “Editors,” not to a particular editor.

In order for manuscripts to be reviewed as quickly as possible, authors are asked to observe the following requirements:

• Ensure that the manuscript is anonymous by leaving off your name and putting self-identifying references in a separate Microsoft Word file and as a separate attachment.
• Use margins of one and one-half (1-1/2) inches at the left, right, top, and bottom of the page.
• JPAE uses the in-text parenthetical reference system with all references at the end of the text in alphabetical order. Notes are to be kept to a minimum. See the Chicago Manual of Style for guidance.

It is important that you identify the type of manuscript you are submitting: (1) research based; (2) interpretive, reflective, critical, or theoretical essay or position paper; (3) creative pedagogy; or (4) teaching case study.

Creative Pedagogy: The purpose of Creative Pedagogy is to feature innovative approaches to teaching specific public affairs subjects or concepts. The goal of this feature is to present experimental exercises, simulations, role plays, or other creative teaching technologies in a format that colleagues can readily use. Submissions are peer reviewed.

Contributions to Creative Pedagogy must include substantive details (e.g., text for the case, role descriptions for a role play exercise) and a narrative discussion about how the pedagogy is used, student response to it, suggestions for instructors who may wish to use it, and results associated with its use. The presentation of the pedagogy should be thorough and lively so that teachers reading the article will be stimulated and able to use the information.

Submissions for Creative Pedagogy should be sent to Editors, JPAE, at jpae@uncp.edu, as indicated above.
Review Essays: Reviews will commonly use a cluster format in which several books, videos, software programs, cases, CD-ROMs, Internet sites, or other instructional materials will be compared and contrasted in an essay. Review essays should offer a point of view but should seek to treat each item in the cluster fairly. Essays could be structured around a comparison of related resources, resources related to the public affairs education enterprise, or resources that directly or indirectly have something to say about public affairs education. Review essays should strive for clarity, brevity, and timeliness. Inquires about review essays should be sent to Nicholas Giannastasio, Managing Editor, at jpaed@uncp.edu.

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What Difference Does Having an MPA Make?

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W. Bartley Hildreth, Wichita State University
Gerald J. Miller, Rutgers University
Jack Rabin, The Pennsylvania State University

Abstract
The value of the master of public administration (MPA) degree is arguably a big question in public administration graduate education. This exploratory study of a national sample employs four outcome measures of master’s-level education, including return on educational investment (ROI), willingness to recommend degree program to others, salary, and satisfaction with salary. Furthermore, this research draws distinctions between MPAs and those who work for government but hold the competitive MBA degree. Additional insights are gained by restating the ROI measure as either pass/fail. Advice is derived for MPA programs. The results buttress NASPAA’s call for program assessment based on outcome measures.

Faculty in master of public administration (MPA) programs recruit students and students select MPA programs in the belief that their educational experience will yield a superior return on investment (ROI). The expectation is that students who invest their time and effort will acquire new skills, knowledge, and abilities that will enhance their career opportunities and success. Given this value orientation, the consequential question is “What difference does having an MPA degree make?”

According to Grode and Holzer (1975), the earliest study of the impact of MPA programs is Graham’s 1941 study of the applicability of MPA courses based on a sample consisting of alumni from seven MPA programs. Since that beginning, research on MPA program outcomes has focused on a wider variety of issues including relevance, evaluation of program content, overall assessment of the
program, alumni career progress, the nature of the work alumni perform or job responsibilities, a government employee’s perception of the utility of the degree, and job-related attitudes such as satisfaction (Andersen, Desai, DeShon, and Fry, 1991; Thompson, 1978; Mohapatra, Rose, Woods, and Lake, 2001).

The work experience of alumni enables them to answer questions about the relevance of their MPA degree. For example, results from a survey of human resource professionals by Thompson (1978) indicated that an overwhelming percentage of practitioners found great practical value and relevance in having an advanced degree. Similarly, they viewed using “administrative standards” taught in universities positively. These positive perceptions existed regardless of the respondent’s own level of education, whether the respondent held an MPA or master of business administration (MBA) or not, level of government, region of the country, size of the city, race, gender, or age.

Surveys of alumni have often been used to assess MPA programs (Andersen, Desai, DeShon, and Fry, 1991). More than likely, almost every MPA program that has gone through accreditation by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) has used an alumni survey to help meet assessment criteria. These surveys often include questions about perceived value of specific courses and the entire degree program, and the linkage between educational preparation and the respondent’s job, career, achievements, and willingness to recommend the program to others.

Research suggests the need to include measures of achievement such as job entry, promotion, and pay. For example, Ishida, Spilerman, and Su (1997) tested the linkage between education and career by focusing on job entry and promotion accessibility/achievement. Sloane and O’Leary (2004) found that additional education results in higher remuneration with differences by degree type and gender.

Grode and Holzer (1975) investigated the relevance of MPA courses using multiple samples that included alumni of two MPA programs (and their supervisors) and members of two professional organizations, most of whom held an MPA. Respondents felt slightly more knowledgeable and competent as a result of obtaining their MPA. Scores for specific types of knowledge/courses ranged from 3.4 to 4.6 on a 1–5 scale. In an overall assessment, more than 80 percent of these MPAs perceived that their degree had higher utility than other kinds of master’s degrees for their work. Despite the ubiquity of this perception, some MPA graduates indicated that other kinds of degrees, such as the MBA, would have been of equal or greater value. The value of the MPA degree and how it compares to the MBA are questions that still resonate.

For example, Lewis (1987), citing work by Thai (1982), Golembiewski (1979), McCurdy (1978), and Smith (1977), raised questions about the relative value of an MPA degree versus other types of graduate degrees such as MBA and law degrees. Based on a sample of federal employee personnel records in 1982, Lewis found that graduate education resulted in a higher grade level and salary as well
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as a greater likelihood of an employee being either a manager or a supervisor. MPAs and MBAs had essentially the same benefits on these measures of career success. However,

the average holder of a graduate degree in public administration in the federal civil service in 1982 was a GS-12 and earned $35,000. There was a 35 percent chance he was a manager or supervisor. MPA graduates tend to hold positions half a grade higher and to earn $2,000 more than average graduate degree holders, all else equal (411).

MPA students derive a variety of skills, knowledge, and values from their MPA programs. King, Britton, and Missik (1996) identified 28 such outputs and outcomes. They asked alumni of two MPA programs to assess how much of each of these outcomes they derived, and how important these outcomes were to their career. They found that

alumni agree that developmental and communications skills, as well as general personal and intellectual growth, are the most important MPA program outcomes in their careers. More instrumental capabilities like computer, budget and finance, and research skills in addition to the more democratic or macro-societal issues are important, but less so, than general developmental and communications skills (155).

These results mean that “it is more important to have the ability, capability and capacity to acquire specialized knowledge when needed” than to have specialized knowledge. The authors concluded that the key to future career success of an educated public administrator in a changing world “does not rest on the skills s/he possesses, but solidly in the intellectual and personal transformation a graduate education provides.”

Traditionally, as the literature reviewed above suggests, MPA students seek an MPA degree for its expected career benefits. Alternatively, students may pursue a public service degree for more altruistic reasons. There is growing evidence that MPA students, alumni, and other practitioners say they want to be able to make a difference and contribute to the public good (Houston, 2006; Light, 1999; Perry and Wise, 1990; Wright, 2001). However, these two value perspectives are not inconsistent because they both require a foundation in the appropriate skills, knowledge, and ability necessary to handle more challenging or interesting work and for leadership positions.

Research suggests the need to determine whether differences exist between MPA alumni who were in-service or traditional students. King et al. (1996) found that traditional students (full-time and continuing straight from their un-
ndergraduate degree) wanted to become better managers, improve their careers, and obtain higher salaries than what they might otherwise achieve. Outcomes may be affected by the point in a person’s career when the MPA degree is received. In-service and traditional students bring different perspectives and needs to the program (Gibson and Hildreth, 1977; Durant and Taggart, 1985; Lewis, 1987; Denhardt, 2001). Impacts of the degree may be lower for in-service students (Sloane and O’Leary, 2004). Traditional students are starting a career after graduation. In-service students are not. Working students are either trying to move up or change careers. For other in-service students the degree might be a means of ensuring job security. Traditional students are primarily concerned about finding a job or starting their career (King et al., 1996). Lewis (1987) found that “70 percent of the federal employees with MPA degrees and 60 percent of those with MBA degrees earned them after joining the civil service” (412). This result suggests that a study of public managers would find a high percentage of those with either an MPA or other graduate degree would have obtained the degree as an in-service student.

Evidence from some of these studies suggests greater benefit from increasing levels of educational attainment for women than men in terms of salary. More education results in higher returns from education. This phenomenon is moderated by field of employment (Sloane and O’Leary, 2004). Lewis (1987) found significant differences too. Specifically, among federal employees in 1982, “men are, on average, in positions 0.44 grades higher and earning $2,100 a year more than women and minorities with the same educational background, age, and level of federal experience” (406). Using EEO-4 data for state and local governments employing more than 250 individuals in 1987, Lewis (1994) reported significant differences between the salaries of white males and all other groups, although occupation segregation by race and sex declined.

The quality of the educational institution (ranking) is an important factor affecting desirable alumni outcomes such as job access and achievement of subsequent promotions (Ishida, Spilerman, and Su, 1997). Also, they identify significant intervening variables such as age, ethnicity, gender, lateral entry, seniority, and college major.

Program ranking may affect MPA alumni outcomes. Ranking efforts have been based on program reputation among academics (Morgan et al., 1981) and practitioners (Morgan and Meier, 1982), research productivity (Brewer, Douglas, Facer, and O’Toole, 1999), and the number of Presidential Management Internships that a university’s students received (Adams, 1983). Since 1995, MPA programs have been ranked semi-annually by U.S. News & World Report. Programs that rank high in the magazine make the most of this status by prominently displaying these rankings on their Web sites, newsletters, paid advertisements, and in the program literature sent to prospective students and NASPAA peer institutions. By prominently using this information, high-ranking programs seek to gain a competitive advantage during recruitment.
These marketing efforts occur despite methodological criticism that questions the validity and value of the rankings (Teasley, 1995; Perry, 1995; Ventriss, 1995; Frederickson, 2001a, b), criticisms of rankings in general by prominent public administration scholars (Morgan and Meier, 1982), and despite the fact that some of the programs touting these rankings house some of their most vocal and persuasive critics (e.g., Frederickson, 2001a, b). Another mechanism used to rate MPA programs is faculty productivity, measured in terms of the number of journal publications whole faculties produce (e.g., Douglas, 1996). These studies are also criticized on methodological grounds (Douglas, 1997; Golembiewski, 1997; Guyot, 1997; Rohrbaugh and Anderson, 1997).

Another form of ranking depends upon whether a program is accredited by NASPAA or not, because that standing is used in marketing too. Baldwin (1988) examined the perceptions of MPA program directors and found that, among this group, NASPAA-accredited programs are widely believed to be more effective than programs that are not accredited. Baldwin cites research by Daniels and Johansen (1985), Dennis (1984), and Thai (1985), indicating that “NASPAA is instrumental in developing quality curricula, attracting quality faculty and students to programs, and enhancing the prestige and marketability of MPA degrees” (882), and, from Uveges (1987), that NASPAA standards have a significant impact primarily on curriculum and program jurisdiction and autonomy. Yet the focus should be broader than just program directors. As noted by Daniels and Johansen (1987), “More research is especially needed on the attitudes and perceptions toward NASPAA accreditation held by MPA students, faculty members and practitioners (84).”

Even the accreditation process is subject to criticism, but this method of evaluating MPA programs is sounder than the reputational approach to ratings. Fredrickson (2001a, b) criticizes U. S. News rankings of MPA programs because they are inaccurate. This conclusion is based on the fact that rankings are based solely on a program’s reputation, whether the rater has any substantive basis for their conclusion about a program’s reputation and ranking or not, and do not include input from students and alumni of MPA programs. Fredrickson points out that, unlike rankings, the accreditation process incorporates some input from students and alumni. This input occurs through the self-study report each program prepares and through site team interaction with students, alumni, and practitioners. Therefore, accreditation status has more validity as an evaluation measure than magazine rankings.

**Research Questions**

A “big” question in public administration education is the value of the MPA degree. In and of itself, this “timeless and enduring concern” (Denhardt, 2001) is too broad to test on its own. Consequently, this paper addresses five research questions:
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1. How do MPA alumni evaluations and achievements compare with those of individuals holding the competitive management degree—the masters of business administration (MBA)?
2. How do MPA alumni perceive the quality of their degree program?
3. Do MPA alumni who gave their program a passing grade differ in career perspectives from alumni assigning their program a failing grade?
4. How are factors affecting a MPA graduate’s career reflected in the perceived return on education investment (ROI)?
5. Does accreditation make a difference in how alumni assess their MPA program?

Evaluating an educational program must focus on outcomes. This study uses the following outcome measures: ROI from having a MPA degree; willingness to recommend their degree program to others; salary; and satisfaction with salary. Return on investment is a central concept, since it is an overall measure linking education and career. Willingness to recommend their degree program is an action that conveys satisfaction with that degree program. Willingness to recommend may be dependent on perceived ROI. Salary and type of position held are powerful measures of educational impact. The final outcome measure is satisfaction with salary, a commonly used assessment of job satisfaction that complements salary.

RESEARCH METHODS

This exploratory study reports findings from a survey of public sector financial professionals. These findings come from a sampling frame consisting of a 20 percent stratified sample of Government Finance Officers Association members (1,512), a 20 percent sample from the Joint Financial Management Improvement Program mailing list (251), 366 respondents to an earlier survey of financial professionals, and 98 top-level financial executives currently working in state government.

Data for this study were collected using a mail-back survey mailed in early June 2001. A reminder card was sent 10 days after the initial mailing to enhance the response rate. Of the 2,227 cases in the sample, incomplete addresses resulted in 1,917 surveys mailed. Of these, 389 were returned by those surveyed, and 186 were returned unopened because of incorrect addresses. These factors resulted in an effective response rate of 22.47 percent.

Three factors affected the response rate in a negative way. Many addresses for identifiable respondents to the previous survey were out of date. Second, the mailing addresses on the Joint Financial Management Improvement Program list were possibly out of date because of the flux following the change of administrations in Washington. Finally, the survey instrument was very lengthy. Admit-
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Predominantly, this is only a sample and as such it may or may not reflect the response patterns of the universe of public finance managers or of public sector employees and of MPA alumni. The survey variables used in this study are summarized in Appendix A.

The respondents are located in 48 of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. Delaware and Vermont yielded no respondents. Most of the respondents are Caucasian (95.1 percent) and more than 61 percent are male. Respondents’ average age is 48.17 years with a standard deviation of 8.81 years. More than four-fifths are over 40 (81.3 percent). Respondents are well educated with 51 percent of them having a master’s degree or better. Only 4.9 percent did not have a college degree.

These individuals are seasoned, experienced professionals. Most of them (91.8 percent) have either a major role or some involvement in budgeting. Career tenure averages 18.52 years, with a standard deviation of 10.05 years. Tenure in the current job averages 6.93 years, with a median of 4.0 years. Finally, 74.4 percent currently work in local government, 13 percent in state government, 7 percent in federal government, and the rest in other types of organizations (universities, schools, and nonprofits, for example).

Findings

In addressing differences by type of degree, respondents with MPA and MBA degrees differ significantly only on satisfaction with salary (see Table 1). Differences in ROI, willingness to recommend their degree program, and salary are not significant.

In addition, ROI is recoded so that alumni give their MPA program either a passing grade (using 70 to 100, in essence an “A”, “B” or “C”) or a failing grade (using 0 to 69, in other words a grade of “D” or below) on the return on investment. When looking at these pass/fail grades, MPAs and MBAs do not differ significantly in the percentage of ROI pass/fail grades they assign to their degree programs (chi square = .141).

MPAs and MBAs are also analyzed separately (see Table 1). MPAs who gave their degree a passing grade on ROI differ significantly from those who gave their degree a failing grade on ROI, willingness to recommend their degree program, salary, and satisfaction with salary. In contrast, MBAs who gave their degree program a passing grade on ROI differ significantly from those who gave their degree program a failing grade on only ROI and willingness to recommend their degree program (see Table 1).

How do MPAs in these programs evaluate their degree program? As shown in Table 2, those who assigned their MPA program a failing grade on ROI see a poor fit between the program curriculum and their first job. Program content is related to degree assessment. Alumni who gave their degree program a passing grade saw course content as relating well to their professional career at a signifi-
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cantly higher level than those who assigned a failing grade. Similarly, those assigning a passing grade saw the skills and knowledge acquired in their degree as fitting their career demands significantly better than their peers who gave failing grades.

Many alumni saw the MPA as enhancing their ability to move up in their career field. Alumni who gave their degree a passing grade rated the degree’s impact on their career mobility as significantly higher than those who assigned a failing grade.

Regardless of the rating assigned to their MPA program, alumni do not differ significantly on their evaluation of the help they got finding their first job and they see their MPA programs as giving little help in finding their first job.

Alumni viewed faculty as up to date regardless of whether they gave their MPA program a passing or failing grade on ROI. It appears that faculty achievements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Comparison of Outcome Measures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Degree</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*T-test alpha significant at the .05 level or better.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. MPA Program Characteristics for the “ROI” Subgroups (Mean Results)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum related to first job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest degree fit first job better than career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course content related well to my profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills and acquired in the degree fit career demands well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree gave me mobility to move up in career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College helped me find first job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty were up to date in their fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failing Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*T-test alpha significant at the .05 level or better. Range of response is 1 to 5.

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of this kind are not as important in assessing the worth of their degree as are payoffs from the degree itself.

Return on investment from getting an MPA is reflected in job characteristics, employee attitudes, and the nature of the ethical environment in which MPA alumni work. Table 3 shows that MPA alumni who gave their MPA program a failing grade have a significantly lower salary than those who gave their program a passing grade. The perceived percent of their last pay raise that was based on merit is significantly higher for those giving their degree program a passing grade. This may reflect satisfaction with pay that is significantly higher for the passing grade group as well.

Alumni reporting failing grades on ROI tend to have lower rank in their organization. In terms of position type, respondents assigning a passing grade are more likely to occupy top and middle management positions, while those who give failing grades are significantly more likely to be either non-supervisors or first-line supervisors.

Consistent with the finding about type of job, those giving failing ratings to their MPA have positions in which there is significantly more routine work activity than for those who assign passing grades.

Table 3. Career Characteristics of MPA Graduates for the “ROI” Subgroups (Mean Results)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Failing Grade</th>
<th>Passing Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>7.59</td>
<td>9.38*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of Pay Raise Merit Based</td>
<td>18.71%</td>
<td>45.86%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with Pay</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>3.89*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position Type</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>3.38*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of Job Routine</td>
<td>8.29</td>
<td>6.15*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number Positions You Evaluate</td>
<td>16.82</td>
<td>21.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chance of Being Promoted</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>2.30*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with Job Itself</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>4.14*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with Promotion Opportunities</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>3.23*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>16.31</td>
<td>19.09*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback Timeliness</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>3.35*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People Outside Work Unit Ask for Favors and Special Treatment</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>3.27*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in Work Unit Demonstrate High Personal Integrity</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>4.71*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*T-test alpha significant at the .05 level or better.
Range of the attitudinal items is 1 to 5. For Total Job Satisfaction the range is 5 to 25. Range of degree of job routine is from 3 to 15.
What Difference Does Having an MPA Make?

Number of persons supervised directly does not differ significantly between those assigning either a passing or failing grade. Although those assigning passing grades supervise an average of 22 persons compared to the 17 of failing graders, this difference is not statistically significant.

Those who gave their MPA a failing grade on ROI see significantly less chance of being promoted than those who rated their MPA more favorably. This finding is expected, given that the rationale for obtaining an MPA is to gain the skills, knowledge, and abilities necessary for career entry, success, and advancement.

The evaluations that alumni give their MPA program are also reflected in job satisfaction. Alumni who gave their MPA a failing grade on ROI have significantly lower satisfaction with the job itself and satisfaction with promotion opportunities than alumni who gave their degree a passing grade. Overall job satisfaction is significantly higher for those giving their MPA program a passing rather than a failing grade on ROI.

Feedback timeliness is significantly higher for those giving their MPA program a passing grade. This is consistent with earlier research indicating that most individuals want to know how they are doing at work (Yeager, Rabin, and Vocino, 1995).

Perceptions of the work environment differ significantly. Those who give their MPA program passing ROI evaluations encounter significantly less ethics pressure in the form of demands for favors and special treatment from people outside of their work unit and more personal integrity among their coworkers.

How are factors affecting a MPA graduate’s career reflected in ROI? These factors include graduating from an accredited program, having an internship, receiving the degree while in-service, having a mentor, being female, and spending one’s entire career in the public sector. Three of these five variables have a significant impact on ROI (see Table 4).

Advocates of MPA program accreditation would expect that accreditation affects alumni assessment of ROI. Graduates of accredited programs (accreditation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MPA Program Accredited?</td>
<td>82.37</td>
<td>70.00*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had Internship?</td>
<td>82.14</td>
<td>76.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received Degree While In-Service?</td>
<td>84.76</td>
<td>76.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had Mentor?</td>
<td>85.00</td>
<td>74.36*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female?</td>
<td>84.76</td>
<td>76.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spent Entire Career in Public Sector?</td>
<td>83.67</td>
<td>71.00*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* T-test alpha significant at the .05 level or better.

The variables in the left column are dichotomous.

Table 4. “ROI” Means for MPA Degree Holders by Variables Affecting Career

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status as reported by NASPAA in 2001) rate the return on investment for their MPA program significantly higher than graduates of other MPA programs.

Internships are a springboard to a job, and a means of jumpstarting a career (Streib, 1995; Gabris and Mitchell, 1989). Therefore, an internship is expected to result in a higher perceived return on investment. However, in this study MPAs do not differ on ROI regardless of whether they had an internship or not.

In-service students were already working when they obtained their degree. Common reasons for obtaining an in-service degree are the expectation that an MPA would improve their promotion prospects or enable them to change careers. What is known from this study is that those who received a degree in-service do not differ significantly on ROI from those who were traditional students.

Having a mentor on the job can boost an employee’s career. Mentors teach their associates the ropes, introduce them to other employees, provide feedback, and sponsor them for choice assignments, including promotions (Allen and Eby, 2004; Henderson, 1985; Kram, 1985; Kuo, 2000; Noe, 1988). Therefore, it is expected that those with a mentor will have higher ROI than those without. This expectation is supported by the fact that MPAs who had a mentor reported a higher ROI than those not having one.

Research indicates that women benefit more from education than men (Ishida, Spilerman, and Su, 1997), and that education is a powerful factor leading to career success for women in public service (Mani, 2001). Therefore, it is expected that ROI will be higher for women than for men. However, in this sample, the difference in ROI for women and men is not statistically significant.

A traditional career pattern means going to work for an employer and spending ones entire working life with that employer. In fact, low turnover rates suggest that a large percentage of public employees spend their entire working life with one employer (Levine and Kleeman, 1992). Moreover, in-service students tend to get their degree and stay in their organization (Swope, 2001). Career changes such as promotion or transfer to a better job occur within that organization. Accordingly, we expect that spending ones entire working career in the public sector would positively affect ROI. Those who spent their entire working life in the public sector report significantly higher ROIs than those whose career involved one or more changes in type of employer. Clearly alumni see career stability as an advantage and they report a higher ROI when they have stable careers.

Accreditation makes a difference in how alumni in this sample assess their MPA program. Specifically, ROI and willingness to recommend ones MPA degree program are significantly higher for those who graduated from an accredited MPA program than those who did not (see Table 5). Even though graduates of accredited programs earn an average of $11,130 more per year than those from nonaccredited MPA programs, this difference is not large enough to be statistically significant in this sample. Likewise, satisfaction with salary does not differ significantly based on degree accreditation.
What Difference Does Having an MPA Make?

Discussion

Five research questions are addressed in this study. First, how do MPA alumni evaluations and achievements compare with those of individuals holding the MBA? MPAs were more satisfied with their salary than MBAs. No differences were found on ROI, willingness to recommend their degree program, and salary. Perhaps MPAs being more satisfied with their salaries is due to the fact that MBAs typically have higher salary expectations than MPAs (Swope, 2001). The fact that MPA and MBA students do not differ significantly on ROI and willingness to recommend their degree program was a surprise based on the expectation that a graduate degree oriented toward the public service would naturally be expected to have higher utility, or job fit, than one designed for profit-seeking enterprises. Another possibility is that the individuals in this sample of public finance professionals may have more in common despite the degree because of the financial acumen required for these positions. A sample representing a broader range of work functions might find different responses.

Most alumni give their MPA degree program a passing grade on ROI. This finding means that having an MPA degree can result in a graduate being well suited for a public sector position.

A passing grade on ROI affects one’s willingness to recommend his or her degree program and the individual’s salary level and pay satisfaction. MPA alumni who gave their program a failing grade on ROI are significantly less likely to recommend their MPA program to other persons. This has implications for all MPA programs. Individuals who are not alumni can evaluate the quality of a particular program by judging the work and character of graduates whom they encounter either at work or in social settings. Another basis for these personal assessments is listening to what program alumni have to say about their education. The implications of these conclusions are that MPA programs should build and maintain relations with students and alumni. The education experience does not stop at the classroom door. It continues through the life of each student and potentially with every person whom that alumnus interacts.

Table 5. Impact of Accreditation on Outcome Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome Measures</th>
<th>Accredited: Mean</th>
<th>Unaccredited: Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ROI</td>
<td>81.95</td>
<td>71.19*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to recommend one's MPA degree program</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>3.59*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>$98,255</td>
<td>$87,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with salary</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>3.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* T-test alpha significant at the .05 level or better.

The willingness to recommend and salary satisfaction measures have a range from 1 to 5. ROI varies from 0 to 100, and salary is coded as shown in Appendix A.
An alternative explanation of the differences in MPA program assessments and career characteristics between the ROI pass and fail groups is that the demographics of each group differ in some way. This alternative is examined and rejected. The ROI pass/fail cases do not differ significantly in demographic characteristics such as education, age, career tenure, and tenure in their present jobs (t-tests of differences were not significant). The proportion of males and Caucasians in the pass/fail groups do not differ significantly (chi square test results were not statistically significant).

Second, how do MPA alumni perceive the quality of their degree program? Alumni see MPA programs as giving little help in finding their first job. It appears that little has changed since Yeager, Rabin, and Vocino first studied this question (1984). MPA programs can address this by putting more resources into placement of students.

Alumni who gave their MPA program a passing grade believe that their education prepared them for their career and enabled them to advance and that their degree did not just prepare them for their first job. An initial poor job fit is likely to have negatively affected their performance, performance evaluations, access to career development opportunities, and future career potential. Poor job fit is a difficult issue to address for public finance professionals, because the MPA is a generalist degree not designed to prepare students for one particular type of position. Students may emphasize either finance and budgeting or something else when completing their degree. To help MPA graduates find a first job, programs could provide more help in placing their graduates.

These results confirm that MPA curricula should have an educational rather than vocational focus. In other words, MPA programs can better serve students by preparing them for a broad range of career opportunities rather than focusing narrowly on one type of job. This may be especially important in today’s competitive international environment, in which it is only a matter of time before governmental entities discover that they can save money by outsourcing and private contractors, then offshore many types of work including “back room operations.”

Third, do MPA alumni who gave their program a passing grade differ in career perspectives from alumni assigning their program a failing grade? Alumni assigning a passing grade on ROI have significant higher career characteristics including pay, position, job satisfaction, satisfaction with pay, and promotion chances. Failing grades are associated with lower level, more routine jobs, and greater ethical pressure. Perhaps individuals holding low rank and routine jobs are less likely to face demands for favors because they lack the power and discretion to give special treatment.

Fourth, how are factors affecting a MPA graduate’s career reflected in the perceived return on education investment? Graduating from an accredited program, having a mentor, and spending one’s entire career in the public sector are more likely to be reflected in a higher level of ROI.
What Difference Does Having an MPA Make?

MPAs do not differ on ROI regardless of whether or not they had an internship. This is surprising, given the common expectation of a positive return from an internship. Perhaps this reflects differences in the disparate nature of internships with some position having significant developmental experiences, challenging assignments, and mentoring while other internships are nothing more than short-term orientations in which organizations expect and invest little. Also, perhaps an internship is perceived as more significant earlier in a career and the impact declines as a career progresses.

Given their career motivation and experience, in-service students might anticipate a high return from the degree. These factors have a positive impact on their education and ROI (Durant and Taggart, 1985). However, it is more complicated than this. If a student’s expectation was realistic and the MPA opened the doors expected, then ROI might be high. On the other hand, if expectations are unrealistically high, then ROI might be low. This study did not examine either motivations or test for how realistic their expectations were. The results indicate that those who received a degree in-service do not differ significantly on ROI from those who were traditional students. Even so, for MPA programs and in-service students, no difference is a positive result. If in-service students received fewer benefits than traditional students why would they engage in this activity and how could faculty honestly encourage anyone to pursue an in-service degree? In-service students have to go to school in addition to their regular work, thereby incurring high opportunity costs by missing other activities such as family life and leisure.

Last, but certainly not least, does accreditation make a difference in how alumni assess their MPA program? These results suggest that accreditation matters. Why? Accreditation is a mechanism that allows academic programs to differentiate themselves from their competitors on the basis of perceived standards of excellence. MPA programs seeking this distinction have embraced NASPAA standards. These standards influence program design, course offerings, resource commitments, and the measurement of results. A program’s success in achieving accredited status is used in marketing to current and prospective students, alumni, and potential employers. Consequently, perceptions of one’s MPA program may reflect the actual or perceived quality of the program.

The results about ROI, the nature of their MPA program, and career success suggest the need to consider self-efficacy as a factor affecting assessment of ROI from one’s education (Rotter, 1966). An individual might blame the MPA program for his or her lack of career success, while professors and work supervisors might see instead an unmotivated person. Future research should investigate this question.

Subsequent research might easily replicate this study using a larger sample drawn from a more diverse population. This would allow examination of the questions addressed here to move beyond the exploratory research stage. Like-
wise, a sample that has respondents from a more diverse range of career fields than public finance would enable a more extensive examination of the MPA versus MBA comparison.

NASPAA requires that MPA programs identify their mission and measure outcomes against that desired result (Aristigueta and Gomes, 2006). This study uses outcome measures to examine program assessment by alumni. The results buttress NASPAA’s call for outcomes assessment.

Although additional research is needed to provide a more definitive answer to this “big” question of public administration education in this study, a compelling issue confronting all public administration programs is the difference that accreditation makes in alumni career outcomes. These results convey the value of the MPA degree itself and how favorably the MPA compares with the MBA, and they suggest that accreditation adds value to MPA programs.

NOTES
1. A preliminary version of this paper was presented at the annual conference of the American Society of Public Administration, Milwaukee, WI, April 2005.

REFERENCES
What Difference Does Having an MPA Make?


What Difference Does Having an MPA Make?


### APPENDIX A

**Variable Names and Questionnaire Items**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLE NAME</th>
<th>QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outcome Measures</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return on investment</td>
<td>On a scale of 0 (low) to 100 (high), rate the return on time and money invested in your highest academic degree? [Coded: “pass” = 70 to 100; “fail” = 0 to 69]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to recommend their degree program</td>
<td>I would recommend to others the degree program from which I obtained my highest academic degree. (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary</td>
<td>Your salary for your current position (January 1, 2001 salary, to nearest thousand): Less than $9,999; $10,000–$19,999; $20,000–$29,999; $30,000–$39,999; $40,000–$49,999; $50,000–$59,999; $60,000–$69,999; $70,000–$79,999; $80,000–$89,999; $90,000–$99,999; $100,000–$124,999; $125,000 or more. [Coded at mid-point of each category except the bottom and top categories, which were coded as $9,999 and $140,000, respectively.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with salary</td>
<td>How satisfied are you with your pay? (1=very dissatisfied, 5=very satisfied)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education Characteristics</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPA or MBA</td>
<td>Name of degree: master’s degree ______. [Coded from responses.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum related to first job</td>
<td>The curriculum related well to my first job. (1=not very well, 5=very well).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest degree fit first job better than career</td>
<td>My highest academic degree was more helpful in getting my first job than in preparing me for my career. [Reverse coded.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills, knowledge, and abilities fit career demands well</td>
<td>The skills and knowledge acquired in my last academic degree program fit very well with the demands I have faced in my career. (1=not very well, 5=very well).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree gave me mobility to move up in career</td>
<td>The degree gave me mobility needed to move up in my career field. (1=not very well, 5=very well).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course content related well to my profession</td>
<td>The content of the degree curriculum related well to my profession. (1=not very well, 5=very well).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College helped me find first job</td>
<td>The college helped me find a job. (1=not very well, 5=very well).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty were up to date in their fields</td>
<td>The faculty kept up to date with developments in their fields. (1=not very well, 5=very well).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What Difference Does Having an MPA Make?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MPA program accredited</th>
<th>Coded from “Name of degree granting institution” for highest degree, and the NASPAA list of accredited schools in 2001. [Coded 1=yes and 0=no.]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Had internship</td>
<td>Did you have an internship after completing one of your degree programs? Yes No [Coded 1=yes and 0=no.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received degree while in-service</td>
<td>[Coded 1=years since receiving master’s degree &lt; relative career tenure; coded 0=years since receiving master’s degree &gt;/= relative career tenure.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had mentor</td>
<td>Have you had a mentor at any time during your professional career? Yes No [Coded 1=yes and 0=no.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Gender (circle one): Male Female [Coded 1=female and 0=male.]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Career Characteristics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of pay raise merit based</th>
<th>What percentage of your pay raise in 2000 was based on evaluation of your individual performance? (0–100%) _____</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position type</td>
<td>Nature of your current position (please check one): _a. nonsupervisory; _b. supervisory (responsible for a group of employees to whom you give orders directly and whose performance you evaluate); _c. middle management; _d. top management. [Coded 1 through 4.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree of job routine</td>
<td>Would you say your work is routine? Do you do about the same job in the same way most of the time? Are your duties repetitious? (Each question coded: 1=to a small extent, 5=to a great extent.) [Summed.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of positions you evaluate</td>
<td>Number of employees you currently supervise and evaluate? _____</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with job itself</td>
<td>How satisfied are you with your job itself? (1=very dissatisfied, 5=very satisfied)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with promotion opportunities</td>
<td>How satisfied are you with your promotion opportunities? (1=very dissatisfied, 5=very satisfied)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with pay</td>
<td>How satisfied are you with your pay? (1=very dissatisfied, 5=very satisfied)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with supervisor</td>
<td>How satisfied are you with your supervisor? (1=very dissatisfied, 5=very satisfied)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with coworkers</td>
<td>How satisfied are you with your coworkers? (1=very dissatisfied, 5=very satisfied)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total job satisfaction</td>
<td>Sum of the above five job satisfaction facets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback timeliness</td>
<td>Information that I receive about my performance usually comes too late for it to be of any use to me. (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree) [Reverse coded.]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What Difference Does Having an MPA Make?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People in work unit demonstrate high personal integrity</th>
<th>The people in my work unit demonstrate high standards of personal integrity. (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People outside work unit ask for favors and special treatment</td>
<td>People outside my work unit ask work unit members for special treatment. (Question coded: 1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree) [Reverse coded and summed.]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chance of getting promoted</td>
<td>What are your chances of promotion with your current employer? (1=low, 5=high)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spent entire career in public sector</td>
<td>[Coded based on responses to employment history questions as 1=yes and 2=no.]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demographic Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Respondents asked to respond to an open-ended question by filling in their city, state, and zip code.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>An open-ended question.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Year of birth [2001—cited year]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement in budgeting</td>
<td>How involved are you in the budgeting process? (circle one) major responsibility, some responsibility, no responsibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career tenure</td>
<td>Year your career in budgeting/financial management began? [(2001—cited year)/age]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure in current job</td>
<td>Number of years in position.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form of government</td>
<td>Current employer type.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Education: some college, bachelor’s, some post-bachelor’s; master’s; some post-master’s; doctorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accredited program</td>
<td>Respondents identified their university, which was then compared to the list of 2001 accredited MPA programs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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What Difference Does Having an MPA Make?

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Teaching Leadership and Policy Change in a Public Affairs School

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Abstract
Public affairs graduate schools may have difficulty integrating public leadership and management and the analysis of public policies and the political process. Too often in the curriculum, process is separated from analysis, and policy issues are separated from politics and the mechanics of policy making. This article describes the design and operation of a two-course sequence, taught at the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota, that fosters this integration and helps students gain a stronger sense of themselves as leaders and stronger skills for intervening in the policy process from a variety of standpoints.
of the shared-power world and requisite leadership capabilities in such a world. A key assumption is that any complex public problem exists in a shared-power environment and that shared leadership will be required to tackle the problem effectively. By shared-power environment, we mean that many individuals, groups, and organizations have some responsibility and some of the resources to resolve the problem, but none of them has enough power and authority to do so alone (Crosby and Bryson, 2005b).

The Transforming Public Policy Seminar focuses more intensely on policy entrepreneurship, the work of coordinating leadership capabilities over a policy change cycle. Sessions are devoted to particularly useful tools and disciplinary approaches. Student teams identify and define an important public or community problem and develop a viable solution, including an implementation plan and a winning political strategy. The course, in other words, links analysis and process, or politics, which typically are taught in separate public affairs courses.

**BACKGROUND ON MPA AND COURSE DEVELOPMENT**

The Humphrey Institute launched the 30-credit MPA degree in 1999. The new degree responded to the demand of professionals and community leaders for a master’s-level education that would help them build on prior experience, renew their energies for public service, and gain conceptual and practical skills that would enable them to lead effectively. Since its inception, the degree has attracted a diverse group of learners—journalists, teachers, nonprofit managers and executives, elected and appointed officials, artists, government agency managers, lawyers, athletes, consultants, and community organizers. Several learners have been Humphrey Institute international fellows from around the world. U.S. participants tend to be Minnesota residents and are from diverse ethnic backgrounds. In recent years, many of these have been from newly arrived immigrant communities.

The MPA degree includes three required courses: Leadership for the Common Good, Transforming Public Policy, and the Synthesis Workshop (which includes a client-focused team project). The content and methodology in the first two courses were heavily influenced by the midcareer seminars offered by the Humphrey Institute’s Reflective Leadership Center (RLC) during the 1980s and 1990s (see Crosby and Bryson, 2005a). (The RLC was merged with other Humphrey Institute programs into the Public and Nonprofit Leadership Center in 2003.) The courses also were shaped by the results of several focus groups and surveys.

Initially, we taught the courses, but as the program grew we were joined by two other instructors, Professor Katherine Fennelly and Senior Lecturer Gary DeCramer. When enrollments are large (reaching 30 to 40 learners), the courses are team taught, so that participants benefit from the skill of more than one instructor and the instructors’ attention can be more personalized. Other authors—for example, Spee (2003)—have noted the benefits of team teaching in leadership.
We have found that male and female instructors working as partners tend to be most effective. The pairing models power-sharing across gender lines and possibly enables all participants to see themselves more readily in leadership roles.

**Overview of the Two Courses**

The Leadership for the Common Good seminar has four main learning outcomes:

- understand theories, tools, and strategies of leadership
- understand how policy entrepreneurs develop and manage ideas for achieving the common good
- build a learning community
- assist learners in developing leadership strategies for their own work.

The first of the 15 evening sessions introduces participants to each other and to the framework of the course. Participants begin the work of self-awareness, a foundational element of personal leadership, through the ‘Leadership Highs and Lows’ Exercise (Crosby and Bryson, 2005b, 50). We discuss the shared-power world, the nature of public problems, and the desirability of focusing on stakeholders in public problem solving. We explain the importance of “forums, arenas, and courts” – the three inter-related shared-power settings in which, respectively, human beings develop an understanding of public issues, make and implement governing policies, and adjudicate disputes and resolve residual policy conflicts. (We link visionary leadership to the wise design and use of forums, political leadership to the wise design and use of arenas, and ethical leadership to the wise design and use of courts.) The second session emphasizes competing views of leadership. Through a role-playing exercise developed by our former colleague Robert Terry, participants realize that definitions of leadership are multiple, socially constructed, and contested (Drath, 2001; Fairhurst, 2007). The debate in this session illuminates the individual participants’ diverse views of leadership and provides a snapshot of the class’s view of leadership. The debate also introduces participants to central scholarly debates.

Subsequent sessions are devoted to each of the main leadership capabilities: leadership in context, and personal, team, organizational, visionary, political, and ethical leadership. The final session provides a review and transition to the second course and its focus on policy entrepreneurship.

The sessions usually include guest speakers, mini-lectures, reflections from participants, interactive exercises, and small and large group discussion. Study groups are organized early in the course and meet before class to review readings and discuss assigned exercises. Group members often provide mutual support for individual writing assignments—mainly annotations of books and articles and a 25-page leadership case analysis.
The overall goals of the Transforming Public Policy seminar are to help participants address important public problems by coming up with ideas that are worth implementing and can be implemented and to help them create the coalition necessary to adopt the ideas and protect them during implementation. Participants are expected to demonstrate in class and in individual and team papers their knowledge and skills in the concepts, techniques, and tools of policy entrepreneurship. Key topics and concepts include the policy change process; public interest and the common good; institutional design; and contributions and limitations of markets, government, and nonprofits in building a free and just society. Skills include disciplinary and interdisciplinary policy analysis, stakeholder analysis and involvement, action-oriented causal mapping, systems thinking, and action research.

The policy change cycle (Crosby and Bryson, 2005b) is introduced in the first session and is continually emphasized throughout the seminar. The cycle consists of phases similar to those identified by other scholars such as Roberts and King (1996). The phases are linked by numerous feedback loops, in contrast to a linear, multi-step process (see Figure 1). Like Robert Terry (2001) and John Kotter (1996), we emphasize that the phases build on each other and that failure to build a solid foundation in a particular phase is likely to spell trouble for subsequent phases. The phases are initial agreement, problem formulation, search for solutions, proposal formulation, proposal review and adoption, implementation and evaluation, and continuation, modification, or termination.

The second session introduces key concepts and tools of policy analysis, mainly from the perspective of the professional analyst using microeconomics principles.

![Figure 1. Policy Change Cycle](image)

**Figure 1. Policy Change Cycle**
but with some attention to competing models such as participatory policy analysis (Durning, 1993). The following session focuses on competing views of the common good and questions of whose common good is pursued, what the common good is thought to be, and how it is obtained. Participants consider what constitutes a “public realm,” in which these questions are contested.

The first three sessions are followed by two skills-oriented sessions on stakeholder analysis and involvement, action research, systems thinking, and action-oriented strategy mapping. The sixth session focuses on institutional design in relation to a specific policy change initiative in Minnesota—the introduction of “choice” mechanisms, such as open enrollment, charter schools, and access to college courses, in K-12 education. The seventh session focuses on cross-sector collaboration in tackling public problems.

Subsequent sessions on disciplinary analysis focus on two disciplines—economics and political science—that are prominent at the Institute and in many schools of public affairs. A session on science and technology also highlights the role of the natural and physical sciences in public policy making and considers the strengths and limitations of positivist approaches to science. Recently we have added a session on the role of the arts in policy making.

Consideration of the roles of the public affairs professional is woven into some sessions. In particular, participants grapple with the tensions among the roles of expert adviser, facilitator, organizer, and advocate. For example, participants are introduced to Eugene Bardach’s eight-step policy analysis process (1996), which casts the analyst as expert adviser, and to Harry Boyte’s highly participatory process casting the analyst as organizer or “professional citizen” (2004). The message is to prepare to lead in whatever role learners choose or find themselves.

The two courses are overlapping and complementary. In Leadership for the Common Good, the emphasis is on building leadership capacity, and policy examples are used to ground the leadership concepts and skills. In Transforming Public Policy, policy making and change are in the foreground, but we continually emphasize how the work of policy change is linked to the leadership capabilities that participants explored and developed in the first course.

**Approach and Methods**

Leadership development at the Humphrey Institute—whether in non-credit or for-credit programs—has long been intentionally based on principles of adult education and reflective practice propounded by scholars like Stephen Brookfield (1998), Chris Argyris (1982), and Donald Schön (1987). In the seminars described here, we explicitly recognize that the participants already have a wealth of skills and experiences that are resources in the work of the class. Our goal is to help them deploy those resources more effectively and develop additional ones through interactions inside and outside the classroom (see Merriam and Caf-
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farella, 1991); indeed, a frequently cited, highly valued gain from the seminars is learning from other participants. The emphasis is on knowledge for action.

To increase interaction and respond to multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1993), we keep one-way lecturing to a minimum and use multiple presentation methods, though we do rely heavily on mini-lectures supported by PowerPoint slides. Music from different parts of the world plays in the background as we set up the class and is sometimes used in the sessions themselves. Some exercises require participants to move about the room; around the tenth week of the leadership course, everyone becomes an artist as participants create collages of their personal leadership visions.

We assign before-class readings and exercises to prepare participants to participate fully in each class session. In Leadership for the Common Good, we begin each session (except the first) with a brief reflection from one or more participants about the previous class and its connection to something that they know or care about. In Transforming Public Policy, participants lead brief class discussions of readings. In both classes, we invite other faculty members and community leaders to present concepts, skills, and experiences that are connected to a particular session’s theme. For example, in Leadership for the Common Good, we invite three leaders in the Minnesota and U.S. disability rights movement to explain how different individuals and groups designed and used forums, arenas, and courts to pass the Americans with Disabilities Act at the national level and to make numerous gains in Minnesota. As a man who uses a wheelchair and two people who are guided by seeing-eye dogs speak of triumphs and setbacks in their campaigns, the class itself becomes a forum for developing deeper shared meaning about the barriers faced—and increasingly overcome—by people with disabilities.

To enable participants to engage easily in small group exercises, they are seated around tables that accommodate six to eight people. Because the classes cover about three and a half hours, and many participants do not have time to eat before they arrive, either the instructors or class members bring snacks and drinks that are available in the back of the classroom. Both classes are supported by Web sites that help participants prepare for each class session, communicate with each other, share biographical information and annotations of books and articles, and access policy-related Web sites and other resources.

We make explicit our desire to create a seminar environment in which the clash of ideas and opinions is valued but personal feelings and needs are respected. We build in time for informal interaction through breaks, the study groups, and potlucks at professors’ homes, which helps participants and instructors learn more about everyone involved and establish relationships that can foster and reduce destructive classroom conflict (Meyers et al., 2006). Additionally, at the outset of both classes, we ask participants to establish a set of norms that will guide class sessions. Explicit attention to norms helps class members reveal how they hope
the class will operate and prompts public commitment to crucial components like respect for diverse viewpoints and mutual support. Usually the construction of the norms through a “snowcard” exercise (Crosby and Bryson, 2005b, p. 72) reveals a desire to create a safe environment in which individuals can talk about personal struggles and even unpopular views; regardless, the instructors frequently emphasize the need for such an environment in order to facilitate authentic learning and community building. When conflicts do heat up, the instructors often help class members probe the conflict for its learning potential as Ron Heifetz does with his “case-in-point” method (Parks, 2005).

Particularly in Leadership for the Common Good, we use reflective exercises such as the Exploring Personal Highs and Lows (Crosby and Bryson, 2005b, 50) and role playing to promote the self-awareness that is so vital to effective leadership (Avolio and Luthans, 2006). Role playing can help participants develop improvisational skills that are useful for dealing with uncertainty and change; such exercises also help mitigate power imbalances in classroom, because they usually remove participants from their zones of comfort and expertise (Antonacopoulou and Bento, 2004). Role-playing, extensive use of stakeholder analysis methods, and strategy mapping (Bryson et al., 2004) also help participants develop the vital leadership skill of being able to see multiple perspectives and develop integrative solutions. We seek what Mezirow (1990) has called “emancipatory learning” or “perspective transformation”:

Perspective transformation is the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our presuppositions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about our world; of reformulating these assumptions to permit a more inclusive, discriminating, permeable, and integrative perspective; and of making decisions or otherwise acting upon these new perspectives. (14)

Both classes focus on real leadership and policy challenges through examples in the readings but more importantly through the individual cases and team projects on which team members choose to work. The emphasis is on problem-solving skills, adaptive work (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz and Linsky, 2002), and public work (Boyte, 2004). Ron Heifetz argues for an adaptive approach to dealing with complex problems that have “no easy answers.” Adaptive leaders assist others in problem solving rather than seeking to find solutions and then influencing others to adopt them. Similarly, Harry Boyte argues that ordinary people, not just elected officials, are key to public problem definition and resolution. He urges them to get involved in this “public work” and reminds government officials and employees that they ultimately serve the citizenry. Like these scholars, we emphasize that leadership for the common good depends crucially on perspective tak-
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ing, conflict management and relationship building and less on heroic individual achievement, the ability to command, or assumption of personal responsibility for the fate of a group.

We emphasize problem-based learning (Hmelo, 1998) and argue that transforming public policy in beneficial ways begins not by moving quickly to possible solutions but by thoroughly understanding the problem at hand and recognizing that complex problems are never likely to be solved, but rather resolved, reframed, or managed. For example, participants in Transforming Public Policy use stakeholder analysis techniques to identify the multiple ways in which various groups view or “frame” the problem and understand the implications of these views for solutions that will be supported by the groups.

**Group and team development.** In Leadership for the Common Good, participants are assigned to five to six-member study groups, which are encouraged to meet for at least an hour before each class. To achieve a measure of diversity, we seek a mix of genders, ethnicity, and nationality within each group. The study groups serve two main purposes: Because Leadership for the Common Good is the introductory core course, the study groups are a way for new MPA students to connect more solidly to their peers and to form a habit of supporting each other in coping with the demands of graduate school. They also are given assignments that prepare them to engage in the upcoming class session. Group members work out their own ways of carrying out the purposes. Some might divide up reading assignments and go over them together before class; many share meals or other social activities off-campus.

In Transforming Public Policy, we assign class members to teams based on interest in a general policy area—for example, K-12 education, environmental protection, drug abuse, transportation, or criminal justice. We seek the same types of diversity in the teams as we do in the study groups described earlier and try to limit the size to four or five members. In consultation with the instructors, the teams decide on the specific policy problem they will analyze. Teams seem to work best when they combine experts on the problem, or people with a direct stake in the problem, as well as nonexperts, an observation supported by extensive research reported in James Surowiecki’s recent *The Wisdom of Crowds* (2005). An exception occurs when an expert member begins, not necessarily intentionally, to dominate the group or a committed advocate insists single-mindedly on setting the group’s agenda.

The teams ultimately are required to prepare a report that applies the policy change process and course tools to the public problems the teams have selected. The report is developed incrementally, roughly in sync with the progress of the course through the phases of the policy change cycle. The report-as-it-is-so-far is submitted to the instructors at several points, and their feedback is used to prepare the next iteration.
Team projects in a way are “simulation plus.” Learners are advised to act as if they are working with a client group or organization. They are required to put together a strategy for policy change based on analysis of actual stakeholders and on current and projected conditions, including political realities. In some cases, the teams do operate as advisers to a public or nonprofit organization or advocacy group. We encourage teams to produce detailed analyses and recommendations and to share them with policy makers and other stakeholders. We provide extra credit if the editorials that are a required part of the final product are published in popular media. The projects provide what is for many of the team members a rare chance to drill deeply into a current policy issue, thus giving them an appreciation for the complexity of policy change. The projects also link theory and practice and help students achieve the self-efficacy and mastery so vital to leadership development (Bandura, 1997). They incorporate real-life and often immediate problems that make the learning meaningful (Conger and Benjamin, 1999). In essence, the projects are design challenges of the type Schön (1987) describes:

Designers juggle variables, reconcile conflicting values, and maneuver around constraints—a process in which, although some design products may be superior to others, there are no unique right answers…. Analysis and criticism play critical roles within their larger process. Their designing is a web of projected moves and discovered consequences and implications, sometimes leading to reconstruction of initial coherence—a reflective conversation with the materials of a situation. (42).

The class takes on more of a “studio” character (Denhardt and Campbell, 2005) as the seminar progresses.

One of the toughest assignments for the teams is the requirement that they spend some time “wandering in the policy wilderness.” Despite being introduced early on to the multiphase policy change cycle and hearing the instructors emphasize the importance of the initial agreement and problem formulation phases, many tend still to move too quickly to consideration of one of more solutions and conclude that the real problem is winning the adoption of the team’s preferred solution. When this occurs, the instructors have the chance to once again highlight the assigned reading by Paul Nutt (2002), which emphasizes that one of the prime reasons that decisions fail is the rush to solutions.

STRENGTHS OF THE COURSES
The courses combine fun and seriousness. Laughter is encouraged and instructors highlight the humorous and sometimes absurd aspects of policy change efforts. At the same time, we encourage deep reflection and self-revelation. We
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echo the admonition attributed to economist E.F. Schumacher: “Our problems are so serious that the best way to talk about them is lightheartedly.”

Learning is communal. Participants mention time after time in their evaluations of both courses that the opportunity to learn from class members with rich experiences is as valuable as, if not more valuable than, any other part of the course.

The organizing framework gives participants a way to make sense of their previous experiences. Along with practice with course tools, the framework also gives them greater hope for success in their future leadership and policy change efforts. The course helps participants develop “learned optimism” (Seligman, 1998) by showing them how challenging public problems may be addressed effectively. Participants report emerging from the courses with a much richer understanding of leadership and policy change. Often they see themselves as actual or potential leaders for the first time.

Both courses offer a chance for cumulative learning—that is, sessions build on each other, and instructors attempt to link new concepts to those introduced in prior sessions. The model of leadership at the heart of courses is itself cumulative; that is, personal leadership and leadership in context form the foundation, and the others—from team leadership through policy entrepreneurship—build consecutively on that foundation. This cumulative learning is especially evident in Transforming Public Policy, in which the team projects develop in stages tied to the policy change cycle. The instructors also continually tie the leadership capabilities emphasized in Leadership for the Common Good to the challenges arising at different phases of the policy change cycle.

In both courses, participants come face to face with multiple types of diversity and with issues surrounding race, nationality, gender, and sexual orientation in particular. Some readings and presentations highlight issues of diversity and power differences, but much of the attention to these issues emerges from the participants who embody the diversity themselves.

The team projects in Transforming Public Policy give participants experience with overcoming difficulties, logistical and temperamental. Instructors and the course process provide the “holding environment” that Ron Heifetz (1994) has identified as crucial for helping groups solve complex problems. We give feedback on projects at many points and meet with each team at mid-semester, sometimes at off-campus coffee shops.

The courses are designed to overcome the division of “hard” and “soft” skills, or analysis and action, that too often exists in public affairs education. The analysis emphasized in these courses embraces statistical and microeconomic analysis and relational analysis. In Transforming Public Policy, we insist that teams produce reliable data about the public problems they are tackling; at the same time, we insist they bear in mind Deborah Stone’s reminders that what counts as data and how data are interpreted depends a lot on individual and group interpretive
schemes and power (Stone, 2001). We insist that teams go beyond developing sound policy recommendations to develop viable political strategies for adopting and implementing the recommendations. This process requires a careful analysis of existing and potential relationships among stakeholders. In Leadership for the Common Good and in Transforming Public Policy, we continually promote action research (Susman and Evered, 1978; Eden and Huxham, 1996) that weaves together data-gathering and analysis with commitments to accomplish beneficial change in organizations and communities.

The standard evaluations used by the University of Minnesota report consistently high rankings for both courses. In those evaluations, students rated several aspects of the course on a 7-point Likert scale (1=very poor, 4=satisfactory, and 7=exceptional). Table 1 reports the results for the four general evaluation questions for all sections of the courses taught during the academic years 2004-2005, 2005-2006, and 2006-2007 (eight sections of Leadership for the Common Good and four sections of Transforming Public Policy). For both courses, average ratings of instructors’ knowledge of the subject matter and respect and concern for students was close to exceptional. Instructors’ teaching ability was rated near exceptional for Transforming Public Policy and only slightly lower in Leadership for the Common Good. Level of learning was also quite high.
Weaknesses of the Courses

Especially in the Leadership for the Common Good seminar, participants sometimes complain about the lack of time to explore thoroughly the main concepts and tools. Each course tries to cover a lot in a few hours each week over 14 to 15 weeks.

Because of the importance of the study groups and project teams, more attention is needed to team leadership, particularly to conflict management. Sometimes study group members disagree about the group’s purpose, and participation may be uneven. The teams in Transforming Public Policy occasionally blow up over perceived free-riding and the stress of producing a first-rate report and other products in a relatively short time. (For these teams, the stakes are considerably higher than for the study groups, because half of everyone’s final grade depends on the team project.) Team members must often grapple with tensions caused by different styles and disagreements over process. Cultural differences may come into play, because the instructors try to ensure that each team has some ethnic and national diversity among its members.

We have built in some early warning mechanisms to deal with study group and team conflicts. We let participants know that they may switch groups and teams early in the process if another team will accept them. In Transforming Public Policy, we occasionally allow participants to undertake an individual project if that is the best way to make the course work for them.

Additionally, we require class members to submit mid- and end-of-semester evaluations of the study groups and teams. The study groups are given a suggested evaluation form but are allowed to develop their own evaluation mechanism. We ask everyone on a team to submit a confidential evaluation of the contribution of each member (including oneself) to various aspects of the team’s work. This helps the instructors know how well the team is functioning and how to advise the team. It helps us grade individuals’ team participation and increase individual accountability for team outcomes. Nevertheless, these evaluations are flawed. Some people are very self-critical; others are prone to ignore their own flaws and focus on those of others. Some people don’t like evaluating team members and simply give full points across the board. We use these evaluations as a deciding factor for learners whose course grades are on the margin, and we give the most credence to uniformity of opinion across team members. This process helps us provide the external feedback that Wheelan (2005) deems so vital for effective teams, but we still don’t have a magic formula for fostering the frank, internal feedback among members that Wheelan also endorses.

Although Transforming Public Policy teams can blow up, members have always avoided coming to blows; they invariably manage to resolve their conflicts or at least patch them over enough to complete their projects. Usually teams wind up with a great sense of accomplishment, satisfaction and, yes, relief. Very
occasionally, some team members report having a residual bitter taste about unresolved conflict or free riding.

Many Transforming Public Policy teams also struggle with project management. The projects deal with complex public issues that could benefit from months of data-gathering and analysis. The projects can easily become all-consuming for some participants. To cope with this, we instructors insist that all teams submit a work plan early in the process, and we continually counsel them to be realistic about what can be accomplished in a semester. The requirement that teams turn in interim products at several points in the semester also assists in keeping the project manageable.

Participants in both courses may feel they are being unduly insulated from other frameworks of leadership and policy change, because the authors of the main text are part of the instructional team. At the same time, many are appreciative of having instructors who can credibly and clearly articulate the thinking behind the course framework, key concepts, and the like.

Often enrollments in these seminars are too high (between 30 and 40 learners) to foster a true seminar atmosphere. We use small group activities and participatory discussion methods to avoid the feel of a big class where a few speak and most listen, but we are always struggling to keep everyone involved in a large class that meets for several hours in the evening.

These courses can be challenging to teach in a traditional university classroom. The best setup requires tables seating about six learners; walls with space for posting flip chart sheets, sorting and mapping ideas, or displaying other visual aids; a good audiovisual system; and plenty of space for group activities and the provision of snacks.

Finally, not everyone responds well to our interactive approach. They expect professors to spend a good deal of class time underscoring and explicating themes from the readings. Some participants also would prefer to have fewer guest speakers, but most participants are pleased by the mix of practitioners and scholars that we invite to present experiences and research or to demonstrate analytic and problem-solving methods.

Outcomes

The major tangible outcomes of the courses are the individual case studies produced in Leadership for the Common Good and the reports, posters, editorials, and presentations produced in Transforming Public Policy. The leadership case studies may focus on personal leadership (by the authors or others). Recent examples of this type are a study of a police official’s work in a conflict-ridden community in India and a comparison of the leadership styles of two U.S. governors on transportation issues. Many of the cases analyze the ways in which leaders within their organizations are handling organizational challenges; often the
authors of these cases develop insights or plans that will help their organizations become more strategic or functional. Some cases analyze leadership of a reform movement—for example, a recent study focused on the campaign by former U.S. Treasury Secretary Paul O’Neill and others to eliminate human errors in hospital patient care.

Most of the Transforming Public Policy teams focus on U.S. and Minnesota problems (for example, looming deficits in Social Security funding, Minnesota’s dismal rates of kindergarten readiness, or traffic congestion in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area). Some projects are much more global (focusing for example, on malaria in sub-Saharan Africa, or the plight of highly indebted poor nations). Often, however, because teams typically include people from outside the United States, even the projects with a U.S. or Minnesota focus are linked to similar issues in other countries. For example, a recent project delved into the murky system of tracking attendance in Minnesota public schools, but two team members from India added short studies about how India deals more effectively with compulsory school attendance and student records. Another team analyzed the energy policies of two of the world’s biggest emitters of atmospheric carbon dioxide—China and the United States. The team developed innovative, linked strategies, tailored to each country’s political, social, and economic conditions, for reducing the countries’ emissions and thus their contribution to global warming.

Participants fill out qualitative evaluations for every session of both courses, and they see the overall results at the next session. This allows the instructors to monitor the pulse of the class, to respond to participant reactions and questions, and to make adjustments to comparable sessions in future courses. It also gives participants who do not speak up in class a chance to make their reactions public.

Additionally, the instructors hold informal in-class reviews at mid-semester and in the last session. The mid-semester review helps us make adjustments in the remainder of the course. As noted earlier, participants also rate the instructors and the course on a number of dimensions included in the end-of-course evaluation forms administered by the University of Minnesota, and the Humphrey Institute asks participants to fill out additional evaluation forms during the final class session.

Discussion during informal evaluations and responses to open-ended questions on the formal evaluations indicate that participants come away from the two courses with

- richer definitions of leadership than they had when they began the courses
- approaches and methods for analyzing leadership and public problems and taking beneficial action at the team, organizational, and societal levels
greater ability to make sense of leadership and the policy process. Participants often cite the usefulness of understanding the shared-power world; forums, arenas, and courts; and the policy change cycle.

• belief in the value of learning communities and a sense of responsibility for each other’s learning. Participants often emerge with a realization of the benefits and challenges of diversity among class members (and even within themselves)

CONTINUING DILEMMAS

After teaching these two courses for eight years, we have learned a lot about how to enhance participant outcomes. With our fellow instructors and with suggestions from students, we have striven for continuous improvement. Nevertheless, we are left with certain persistent dilemmas. We cannot cover all aspects of leadership or of the policy change process in a semester. If we choose, as we did recently for the first time, to devote part of a session to the role of journalists and the media in policy change, we have to sacrifice something we have highlighted in the past; in this case, program evaluation. We emphasized, of course, the importance of evaluation and referred learners to assigned readings, but we could not help but feel the topic was short-changed.

We provide considerable written and oral guidance for constructing the leadership case study and the team reports and other products. We make available, with the authors’ permission, examples of papers and projects from prior classes. Yet, we want to keep guidance minimal and general enough to allow teams space for creativity and discovery.

We continually strive to ensure that the course appeals to people with diverse learning styles and backgrounds—thus the use of different teaching methods and attention to diverse perspectives on policy issues through readings, speakers, and encouragement of the diverse course participants to speak their minds. Nevertheless, we acknowledge that a course in an institute named for Hubert Humphrey will be expected to concern itself with social justice, and these two courses certainly do; thus they cannot be said to treat every perspective equally.

As in any graduate course, we encounter participants with varying levels of commitment to the learning process. In the case of midcareer learners, the variation in commitment may be especially noticeable, because of the many other commitments in their lives, from child rearing to full-or nearly full-time jobs. Of course, we can counsel learners to reduce outside commitments while in graduate school, but we always must recognize that not everyone can or will be fully prepared for a particular class, and class members will have to deal with the varying commitments within their teams as well.

In courses that include a number of guest speakers, adjustments in the schedule must be made each semester to accommodate speakers’ availability or to try a new speaker. We face the dilemma as we prepare for each semester about how to
adjust the flow of sessions to fit in particular speakers and about how to balance presentation time between instructors and guest speakers.

While the majority of learners in these courses are from Minnesota and the United States, a sizable number are from outside this country. Thus, examples and cases should relate to global as well as domestic issues, and not just because of the presence of non-U.S. learners, but also because so many leadership and policy issues these days have global dimensions. Additionally, people from the various U.S. communities, but especially people from other countries, may struggle to relate to a leadership framework that presents leadership as the work of all kinds of people, in and outside formal positions of authority. Again, we have no perfect way to deal with the dilemma of balancing domestic and global examples and perspectives; we simply try to keep weaving them together and publicly recognizing the tensions arising from the dilemma.

The teaching team thus far has been Euro-American. We have had experience living and working in other countries and with U.S. communities of color, but we still are limited in our ability to relate to people from these communities and other countries. In addition, we are from the dominant U.S. cultural group and thus have all the limitations of people who are privileged simply by virtue of their skin color.

**Summary and Conclusions**

The paired Humphrey Institute graduate seminars Leadership for the Common Good and Transforming Public Policy are designed to help public affairs practitioners gain conceptual and practical skills that can help them become more effective leaders in their organizations and communities in the United States and abroad. They become more skilled in analyzing their own and others’ leadership, understanding and formulating public problems and solutions, crafting viable communal visions, and developing implementation strategies. They gain skills in team and coalition building. They produce case studies and policy change strategies. The instructors use multiple, interactive methods to ensure that learners are able to apply the concepts and tools presented in the course. Group exercises and team projects, as well as class activities, help learners benefit from each other’s knowledge and experiences. The instructors use methods from room arrangement to potlucks to build a learning community.

Key strengths of the courses are their cumulative and reflective nature. They help participants build on previous experience and develop additional experience along the way. Because participants have a chance to review and renew their commitments, they become more inspired and inspiring. Participants also become skilled at dealing with multiple perspectives and analyzing causal stories and relationships. As they apply new tools in the courses (and often in their workplaces or communities) and then reflect on their experience, they develop greater optimism and sense of efficacy in their work.
Key weaknesses of the courses are the time demands of the team projects and some large class sizes. Instructors should probably devote even more class time than we do to the skills of conflict management and project management.

In general, participants emerge from these courses with a stronger sense of themselves as leaders and stronger skills for intervening in the policy process from a variety of standpoints. They also gain expertise in the policy areas they have chosen for their team projects. The instructors emerge with a considerable admiration for the participants’ ability to engage in self-examination and mutual support as they deepen their capacity as public servants and craft outstanding policy projects.

Together the two Humphrey Institute seminars—Leadership for the Common Good and Transforming Public Policy—integrate analysis and synthesis, content and process, within a comprehensive view of leadership and followership, for the purpose of advancing the common good. This integration rarely happens in the public affairs curriculum, except for capstone courses, and then the public problem to be dealt with may already be fairly well defined. Too often in the curriculum, process is separated from analysis, and policy issues are separated from politics and the mechanics of policy making. These courses demonstrate one way of ending this separation; we have offered this description of their design and operation in the hope that others will improve on them.

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Teaching Leadership and Policy Change in a Public Affairs School


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Helping Legislators Legislate: An Executive Education Program for State Senators

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Abstract
This paper reports on lessons learned from designing and delivering a two-day executive education program to help state senators be better senators. We provide 10 lessons on the process of creating and delivering the program and five lessons about its content. We base these lessons on observations we made during the program and evaluations submitted by the participants. We frame the lessons in ways that apply to a range of legislative institutions.

A state senator asks you, a university professor versed in the ways of political science, public policy, and public administration, “Can you provide training to help my colleagues and me improve our performance?” How do you respond? The answer is, “Yes, of course,” without coming across as presumptuous. If your offer is accepted, the real work begins.

This paper reports on lessons learned from designing and delivering a two-day executive education program to help state senators be better senators. To our surprise, searching the literature for articles about custom-designing educational programming for state legislators generated little. With 50 state legislatures, surely we were not the first university to be asked for assistance. Web searches identified programming, but nothing about “how to,” leaving us with names of people to call for advice at organizations such as the National Council of State Legislatures and the Eagleton Center at Rutgers University. If academics have produced programs of this sort, they have not published much about it.

The legislative body in question is the Oregon State Senate, which, with the Oregon House, meets every two years. It is a citizen legislature with a modest full-time staff that expands to include volunteers and temporary paid staff during each session. The 90 districts in the House fold into 30 Senate districts. Turnover
means that the institutional history held by any set of legislators has been modest. During the past several sessions, no political party has had a veto-proof command of the legislature. Until 2007, different parties had majorities in the House and Senate, making at least one, sometimes both, different from the governor’s party. Furthermore, the Oregon legislature has had to deal with divisive issues resulting from events beyond its control, such as an economic recession, unemployment ranking among the highest in the nation, and no sales tax and state funding for elementary and secondary schools following successful enactment of a ballot initiative. It also has had to deal with divisive issues within its control, such as a progressive state health plan that became increasingly expensive. Not surprisingly, the legislative sessions have been contentious, so much so that some legislators began promoting nonpartisan elections as a solution to gridlock.

However unique Oregon might be in the constellation of state legislatures in the United States, the lessons learned about designing an educational program to encourage effective legislating are not. The Oregon Senate is a group of individuals, elected from geographic jurisdictions and operating within a set of constitutionally mandated and institutionally crafted rules. It has committees, formal leadership positions, and other trappings of a collective, deliberative, decision-making body. Many factors contribute to the effectiveness of a legislative body, not least the personalities of the individuals and the leaders they select. If comity declines, partisanship increases and gridlock sets in. An educational program is not the sole solution, but it can be part of one. The problems of designing and delivering such a program are not daunting, but they are real. The lessons are best understood in two related categories: process and content.

**Ten Lessons on Process**

1. **Ensure bipartisan Senate ownership of the program.**

   A request for executive education best comes from senators themselves. They have to be ready for it and to perceive value to themselves as individuals, if not to their institution. What creates value for a legislator is something that can help advance his or her agenda or career and that justifies stepping away from innumerable demands to focus on decision-making within and as part of a group. In sum, if they are going to incur the costs, they have to reap the benefits. They have to own the program.

   Furthermore, if the request for assistance comes from the member of one party, whether minority or majority, a precondition for success is co-sponsorship of the request from a member of the other party. Partisanship pervades everything that occurs in a state legislature. It cannot be eliminated, but it can be mitigated. Even if an executive education program intends to improve the political process, not by promoting changes in the rules so much as by encouraging the legislators to work more effectively within them, the participants must perceive that neither political party will gain an advantage from the changes or from the processes that
generate them. Legislators learn early that process can dictate outcomes. Bipartisan support for expending time and resources on an educational program is one way to manage expectations about the program.

2. **Treat the legislator as your client.**

Clients have experience, if not expertise, in the topics on which they are seeking outside advice, and legislators are no different. Moreover, legislators are not seeking a general education for its own sake, but rather specific understanding and skills that demonstrably improve their performance. The legislators themselves, therefore, should play a significant role in establishing the training agenda. This entails interviewing the sponsoring legislators to understand their perception of their needs, proposing a training agenda, receiving feedback, redesigning the agenda, and receiving more feedback until it appears that the agenda has gelled. If the legislators want to do a better job of negotiating without making disagreements personal, academics know how to teach those skills. If the legislators want their members to better understand the constraints that state constitutions place on their ability to legislate, academics know how to convey that knowledge. Academics, however, have to guard against the temptation of telling the legislators what they think the legislators need; instead, they must stick to what they know best: teaching the topics they know.

After interviewing senators, we understood that they wanted to develop a better understanding of how an elected official pursues an agenda—individual or collective—as one among many; how one best operates in a highly public environment where even perceived conflicts of interest can be fatal; and how one achieves legislative success while sustaining the values and mores of the legislative institution. We called the program a Senate Leadership Institute because we wanted to build on the senators’ perceptions of themselves as leaders. Typically, they have served in leadership roles in their jurisdictions before seeking elective office. They may have served in formal leadership roles within the legislature as committee chairs or whips or in informal leadership roles as leaders of coalitions trying to enact legislation.

3. **Engage staffers.**

Like administrative assistants and secretaries in organizations throughout history, legislative staffers hold the keys to the kingdom. They know and understand the institution better than anyone, in part because they carry on while elected officials come and go. They have a stake in its operation, efficient or otherwise. In addition, they can be crucial in managing communications during the process of planning an executive education program. If the path to legislator’s policy heart is through constituents, the path to a legislator’s institutional behavior is through staff members.

Legislatures can have two types of staff: what amounts to the secretariat of the body, typically reporting to its president or leadership, and the personal staff...
who serve individual legislators. The secretary of the Senate was our liaison to the institution. Her advice proved to be invaluable in reading the sense of the leadership and the membership, advising us on ways of delivering a program that would be most credible and would best engage our audience. Each legislator’s staff members also have a unique perspective on the mechanics of the institution and the individuals who comprise it. Elected officials rely on them. If these staff members believe an educational program is folly, so will the legislators. On the other hand, if you ask staff members to suggest ways in which the legislators could act to make their institution run more smoothly—which will, typically, make staff members’ jobs easier—they will be at no loss for suggestions.

We met during the planning stages as a group with two senators from each political party as well as staff members. Notes from our meetings and reviews of our email exchanges confirm that we asked quite a few questions and listened more than we talked. After our first meeting, we began formulating specific program agendas so that the group could react to concrete proposals. By exploring the reasoning behind group members’ reactions and by being responsive, we learned more about their needs. The final program they accepted looked little like the first one we proposed. The design process promoted engagement and ownership by the senators and their staffs.

4. Ensure that legislative leaders participate.

Legislators are notoriously independent, but requests from their formal party and institutional leadership get their attention. The designated legislative leaders can make or break an educational intervention. If the leaders tell their members to attend but do not themselves attend, the signal is clear: this program is not a high priority. The membership will feel as though something is “being done to them” and they will bristle. If the leaders schedule other institutional business at the same time as the training program, their signal is also clear: the program and the outcomes to which it aspires are optional.

If, however, the legislative leaders participate in the program, the members know their absence will be noted. If the legislative leaders make the program the legislature’s business, then the membership will get the correct message. We sought to involve the legislative leaders from both parties by giving them leadership responsibilities, at least symbolically (so that they would have little to prepare). We asked them to serve as masters of ceremonies, introducing the program and setting its objectives in terms of their expectations. We also asked them to close the program, summarizing the “take-aways” they wanted their members to have.

5. Set outcomes early and evaluate.

Evaluation is always left for last, even though we know it should not be. In this case, the design team needs to know where it’s going before it can start. A request for assistance is likely to come to the university in the form of a vaguely
articulated problem: things aren’t working well. The question for the design team is, at the end of the program, how will the legislators know that things are working better? Ideally, the answers will allow measurable outcomes, although that might be hoping for too much.

Based on our interviews with senators and staff members, we established several objectives, all under the rubric of encouraging a more productive and efficient legislative session. Our primary objective was not substantive: the members should have opportunities to get to know each other so that they will be more comfortable together and, if not build relationships, at least be civil in their interactions. The substantive objectives were secondary, but important. We wanted the members to understand

- the importance of setting priorities, individually and collectively, and their role in the session’s success;
- the ethical aspects of their decision-making and decisions;
- the constraints and opportunities under Oregon’s constitution;
- the nature of legislative conflict and negotiation; and
- the realities of moving a bill through the legislature, independent of the formal rules.

At the conclusion of the program, we asked the senators to evaluate the effectiveness of each session; those results are reported later in this article.

**6. Apply principles of active learning.**

Legislators legislate. They question. They decide. They inform. To get to the legislature they communicate—they sell themselves and their ideas. The best of them listen but then react or act. By nature, they are not passive; they are not empty vessels waiting to be filled. On the job, they learn from experience. The “sage on the stage” model of education will have limited efficacy for them. In executive education in general, and legislative leadership programs in particular, the audience wants to leave with something more than a feeling that they enjoyed the lecture. They want to do something with it. They want to use it, which is good, because, as a rule of thumb, the half-life of learning in a program like this is 10 days: if the participant isn’t using what he or she learned, half of what was covered is lost every 10 days. The lesson, then, is to design the program so that participants learn by doing.

In our case, no matter what the learning objective, we strived to replace lectures with interactive exercises whenever possible. We included role-playing exercises, discussions led by senators, and discussions facilitated by instructors. Want legislators to understand the impact of the state’s constitution on their proceedings? Create a game of constitutional Jeopardy!, where law students design the questions and a professor of law plays the role of Alex Trebek. Want legislators to understand legislative-executive branch relationships? Use a concise case from the Electronic
Hallway or the Kennedy School Case collection. Want legislators to conduct hearings productively? Cull existing audio or videotapes of past hearings for examples of appropriate and inappropriate behavior, then ask the participants to critique them.

In fact, we did not have sufficient time or money to build the infrastructure for the more complex experiential exercises suggested above, even if we thought they might be more effective for learning. We substituted simpler ones. In a few cases, like the matter of constitutional constraints, we asked a recognized expert and law school faculty member who had been an Oregon Supreme Court judge to lecture. We found that the senators appreciated a speaker’s or panelists’ clear presentation of nuts-and-bolts information if the information was presented clearly and the senators felt that they could ask questions as the presentation went along. Examples of topics that matter to senators and can be covered this way include:

- the state budget process
- state ethics guidelines
- public records retention law
- legislative rules and procedures
- the relationship of the legislature role to that of state agencies
- the development of fiscal impact statements.

If a topic is likely to generate many questions on the part of the senators, including a knowledgeable moderator in the session helps.

Occasionally, our liaison felt the senators would be uncomfortable with an exercise we proposed and we relied upon her judgment. In all cases, we provided take-aways in the form of condensed, concise readings and materials. No matter what the topic, we related it to the decisions legislators face every day.

7. Use instructors with street credibility.

Among legislators, academics certainly have credibility by virtue of their subject matter and teaching expertise, but those who have actually lived in the world of the legislature have greater credibility. Like the business person who solicits advice only from someone who has had to meet a budget or hire and fire people, legislators will engage better with someone who has walked in their shoes rather than only studied them. Former legislators, judges, lobbyists, staffers: these experts have street credibility. The more they can be employed in the educational process, the greater the likelihood that the message will be received, accepted, and internalized. The caveat here is to attend to politics, especially partisanship. Anyone in government with the sort of expertise that could contribute to an executive education program will have a past, and that past might interfere with the acceptance of the message. Candidates must be vetted. The best candidates will be seen as people who will engage in a good, fair fight and then go out for a drink afterwards, who are knowledgeable, who have fallen on the sword a time or two in the interests of the institution, and who will tell it like it is.
In our Senate Leadership Institute instructor line-up, we drew on practitioners and faculty. All potential participants were reviewed and approved by our Senate liaison who, in turn, had checked with key senators before issuing an approval. In one case, for example, a person who was a private consultant specializing in dispute resolution, but had been a faculty member and a state representative, made his participation as an instructor conditional upon approval by our liaison because he had once served in the House with several of the current senators. He was approved. We also used a former justice of the state’s Supreme Court, the head of the state’s ethics commission, and several former legislators now serving as lobbyists or directors of state agencies. As one participant put it in an evaluation, “For me it was historical to have had three former legislators who were also very powerful give insight and feedback.”

8. Hold the program off-site.

The idea is to create an environment conducive to reflection and learning. Removing participants from the site of their day-to-day business encourages them to focus on the way they conduct their business. It also encourages the participants to engage in the sort of informal exchange—between formal sessions of the programs—in which considerable learning takes place. Of course, in the era of cell phones, wireless laptops, and Blackberries, physical distance will no longer guarantee a program free from interruptions and distractions—another reason to emphasize active learning, because it requires participants to focus on the issues at hand, lest they show disrespect to their colleagues. Had we held the program in a legislative facility, we could have made it work, but the psychology of some physical distance helps.

We held the Senate Leadership Institute on our university campus. The physical separation was more of a psychological than a physical barrier and was essentially symbolic. Still, in politics, symbolism is important and is understood by the players. Using our facilities also helped to keep expenses low and to avoid the appearance of boondoggle. Furthermore, this gave us access to the infrastructure of education: appropriately lit rooms with comfortable and moveable seating, audio-visual equipment, white boards, projectors, and so on. Although other venues can reproduce the equipment, they do not provide the ivy on the walls that says, “this is a place of learning, so...learn.”

A related and important issue has to do with the role of the media. Should the program be open to reporters? Do state sunshine laws require that reporters have access? Should reporters be invited? On one hand, having reporters observe, if not engage in, an exercise with legislators to see them as human, professional, and cooperative, has its merits. On the other hand, having reporters present invariably puts a chill in a room where you are asking participants for candor in examining, critiquing, and improving their decision-making, and asking participants to engage in experiential, active learning exercises in which, by definition, they learn by making mistakes.
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For the Senate Leadership Institute, the president of the senate listed the activity as the business of the Senate for the two days involved and posted that on the public calendar with its location. We did not invite reporters. If any chose to attend, we planned to advise them that senators were speaking off the record and not for attribution, but, of course, that’s not enforceable. As it happened, no one from the media attended.

9. Use the senators’ time efficiently.

Time and timing matter. Getting legislators away from their jobs for any significant period of time is an accomplishment. We began planning a three-day program off-site that would allow participants to work together in the evenings. That ideal quickly met reality, and our liaison disavowed us of it.

If the program takes place well before the session begins, participants may be able to focus on the subject because their legislative duties have not begun, but they may forget much of what they learned by the time the session begins. If the program takes place well into the session, they may not be able to separate themselves from their duties; indeed, they likely will not participate. Keeping these things in mind, we ran the Senate Leadership Institute during the second and third days of the legislative session. (See the appendix for an outline of the agenda.) The pomp and circumstance of the opening day before had everyone in the mood to think broadly about what the session might accomplish. And legislative duties were imminent but not yet distracting.

10. Obtain independent financial support.

Many practitioners will contribute their time to a program like this. Some will do it out of the goodness of their hearts. Some will do it as a way to market themselves and help build relationships with the legislators. Some will do it for the fun of it. Some will do it because helping legislators understand a particular topic will make their own jobs easier. Faculty may contribute their time as part of their service obligations. Compensation helps, however. With food, facilities, and materials, if not instructors, you get what you pay for.

The university might be willing to support the program in the public interest. It is also possible to solicit support in the form of sponsorships from large lobbying organizations. The specter of conflict of interest, perceived if not real, hangs over both of these sources, perhaps more so for the lobbying organizations. Even if the funds from lobbying organizations are given through the university, if there is any sort of quid pro quo—like allowing representatives of their organizations to participate—the taint exists. Legislators live in a fishbowl, and everything they do, especially when it entails an expenditure of money, has to appear benign in the public’s mind—not only in the way the public might read a headline, but in the way a conservative or liberal commentator might “spin” the story.
The ideal solution is to identify a private foundation or good government organization willing to provide sufficient resources to underwrite the program. These organizations have agendas, too, but they generally command broad public support. The Ford Family Foundation, an Oregon-based organization, provided a $10,000 Leadership Assistance Grant to our university for the Senate Leadership Institute. The foundation’s mission is to help individuals be contributing and successful citizens through organized learning opportunities and to enhance the vitality of rural communities in Oregon and Siskiyou County, California. The values of its founders guide the Foundation in performing its responsibilities:

- Integrity—promoting and acknowledging principled behavior.
- Stewardship—responsibility to give back and accountability for resources and results.
- Respect—valuing all individuals.
- Independence—encouraging self-reliance and initiative.
- Community—working together for positive change.

Had we not received support from the foundation, the university could have provided funding, albeit less, through its Public Policy Research Center. None of the substantive programming would have changed, but we could not have offered as many supportive amenities or honoraria for the instructors.

**Five Lessons on Content**

The content of an educational program will in large measure depend upon the context-specific needs of the legislators. Some lessons, however, are generalizable. An overarching lesson is that unprogrammed interactions are as important as the programming itself. Informal exchanges help the participants know each other as people, the grease that allows the wheels of any organization to turn. As in a traditional classroom setting, a measure of the success of the formal program is the extent to which it stimulates participants to continue talking about the subject during breaks and meals. Especially in short-term, intensive executive education programs, scheduling breaks, meals, and social opportunities—including instructors—should be an explicit part of the plan. Furthermore, learning exercises wherein legislators work jointly to solve problems unrelated to the specific policy disagreements of the session teach them that they can work with each other. These noncognitive experiences may, at the end of the day, be the most valuable ones.

1. Focus on basics and process

To find substance behind the vaguely expressed desire for an educational program, we listened. We heard that legislators needed a sense of policy priorities and, with that, a sense of focus toward which they could channel their limited time and resources. Some have pursued political agendas at the expense of the
institution; for example, at each session a set of proposals would make it to enactment, but their sponsors knew the governor would veto them or the courts would declare them unconstitutional. We became aware of a sense that some legislators were not treating each other or their constituents with the decorum and civility sufficient to sustain productive conflict resolution. Some legislators, especially the newest ones, did not understand the nuts and bolts of how bills become laws—what is required to get a bill through their own chamber, as well as through the other chamber—and not just the legal requirements, but also the political mechanics. We also became aware of a concern that some legislators were insensitive to perceived conflicts of interest, undermining the public’s confidence in the institution.

From time to time, a legislator might try to direct the agenda of the educational program toward an objective near and dear to that legislator’s heart, whether in terms of institutional behavior or a specific policy outcome. For example, one senator wanted us to teach economics. This kind of request appeals to a faculty member’s basic instincts: if decision-makers better understood the faculty member’s discipline, policies would be better. And, of course, they would be.

This approach to designing an executive education program about leadership is risky, however. Unless demand for this subject is widely expressed, it hijacks the program for the policy agenda of a subset of the legislators, such as those who feel economic development or transportation investments should be priorities. Teaching learning theory might generate better policies on education; teaching epidemiology could inform public health policy. Unless consensus exists on the need for substantive programming about a particular subject, this approach will alienate legislators who have different policy agendas.

In designing a program such as this, one must decide what one cannot do. Teaching economics or psychology or learning theory in 90 minutes or three hours is not feasible. If legislators want to understand a subject better, they hold hearings, they read papers, and they talk to committee staff members. For the purposes of an educational intervention designed to help members of a political institution be more efficient and effective, focus on process.

Finally, the program has to remain fresh and add value, session after session, for seasoned and returning senators. This can be accomplished by adding new topics and activities in each Institute, discarding less popular or less effective sessions and updating others. For example, have at least one interactive exercise on a public policy problem that is likely to emerge as an important theme during the upcoming legislative session. In our 2005 Institute, an exercise incorporated funding for K-12 education; in our 2007 Institute, an exercise incorporated the creation of a state rainy-day fund.

2. Incorporate public policy problems indirectly.

While the purpose of the program is not to resolve particular public policy issues, it can capitalize on the legislators’ energy and enthusiasm for addressing
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them. The challenge is to frame the educational exercises so that the legislators do not engage in political debate so much as learn to debate productively. The underlying principle for accomplishing this is to separate the legislators from the issues in place or time so that they do not see themselves as accountable. Separating them in place means, for example, putting state legislators in the role of addressing the issues at a federal level, or asking them to role-play advisers to legislators in a different state. Separating them in time means asking them to address the issue as it might arise 10 years in the future or putting them in a hypothetical situation in which they are looking back in time on the issue.

For example, among our objectives were 1) to help the senators understand the importance of creating an institutional agenda with priorities that would give individual senators focus during their session, and 2) to help them understand the importance of institutional rules and procedures, informal and formal, to keep them moving ahead. After talking with colleagues at other universities, we used an exercise designed by Professor David Harrison from the Evans School of Public Affairs at the University of Washington. Called “The Commission,” the exercise has been used successfully for many years with many groups of executives and leaders. Professor Harrison, joined by former legislators now serving as directors of state agencies, presented themselves as a federal commission working in the year 2014 charged with studying the successes of state legislatures in the past. In this scenario, the commissioners are visiting Oregon to learn how the 2005 state legislature did such a masterful job of dealing with public policy issues of the day. Participants are broken into smaller groups of five to six, asked to identify the key issues of the day and the ways in which their body managed themselves so that the public perceived them to be remarkably successful. Each small group testified before the Commissioners, who asked questions and then summarized their findings.

This was the first exercise in the program, immediately following welcoming remarks from the leaders of each party. By asking the participants to go to work immediately, we intended to send several messages: 1) this is your program, not ours; 2) what you get out of it will depend on what you put into it; and 3) you’re going to have fun learning or we’ll die trying. For the first 10 to 15 minutes, we observed the members settling into the role-play, some more comfortably than others. As the breakout groups dug into their assignments, we could see interpersonal and political dynamics at play, a certain amount of posturing and pontificating, and kidding, both gentle and sharp. Because we assigned one member of each group to be responsible for keeping it on task and kept the groups small enough that a nonparticipant would have to be drawn in, they soon fell into animated discussions and began thinking seriously about priorities and procedures designed to accomplish them. One of the things they discovered in this exercise was how much they had in common, despite their political and personal differences.
3. Discuss civility.

People working in close proximity as legislators invariably behave in ways that, intentionally or not, deplete or promote the social capital of the body. Legislators probably do not discuss these behaviors in their institutions because they may see them as uncomfortably personal, because they simply do not take the time, or because they do not think their actions can change these behaviors. These are not just the inevitable faux pas committed by new members; they include the tolerated foibles of the senior members. The history of incivility in American electoral politics is long, albeit episodic, and perhaps inevitable; its appearance inside the legislative arena as an impediment to effective government is unavoidable but not unmanageable (Cooper, 2005; Uslaner, 1993; Rosenthal, 2004).

Putting these behaviors on the table for discussion has several benefits. First, people may be unaware of the impact that their behaviors are having on others. Simply identifying the behavior, if not the people who engage in them, can induce changes. Second, discussing these behaviors openly in an educational program gives the members license to discuss them after the program, whether to request that a colleague refrain from a certain behavior or to compliment a colleague for being helpful. Third, open discussion helps new members learn acceptable behaviors that they would otherwise have to absorb by observing behavior that is tolerated or encouraged around them.

In 2005, we wanted to use a standard team-building exercise in which members of a group create a basic list of rules for their team to follow (such as arriving at meetings prepared and on time) and then having the legislators signal their commitment to the rules and to enforcing them by signing a list of the rules. This asked too much of the senators. They were willing to identify and discuss, but not to sign. To be responsive, we chose again not to have an expert or a member of the Senate lecture on decorum, which could come across as formal and preaching. Instead, we stayed true to our commitment to active learning by designing a working lunch, setting an open, informal tone for a potentially uncomfortable topic. We relied on the senators to personalize the subject, to gently chide or encourage each other, and, thereby, to promote reciprocity.

We asked our liaison to the Senate to compile a list of behaviors that were either pet peeves of the senators or highly respected by them. For example, it bothered some senators that some members addressed each other respectfully during public hearings as Senator X or Senator Y but addressed members of the public giving testimony by their first name, such as Bob or Susan rather than by title, such as Commissioner or Director or by Mister, Ms., or Doctor. We distributed the list (Table 1) during lunch, and asked a senior senator who felt strongly about these behaviors to start a discussion by highlighting, illustrating, or adding to it, then inviting other members of the Senate to the podium to do the same.

We could not predict how the group would respond to the exercise. However, we trusted their natural proclivity to talk and critique. We hoped that the tone of
engagement we set with the opening exercise in the program would induce them to participate in this one. We were rewarded with a steady stream of senators coming to the podium to tell stories, lots of heads nodding in agreement, and expressions of surprise and appreciation of the resulting candor.

In the 2007 Institute, we showed video clips from Senate floor sessions with examples of bothersome behaviors. The clips were of specific instances recalled by the senators organizing the discussion and involved situations in which the poor behavior was attributable to virtually the entire body so that no individual senator was singled out. This drove home the point while not stepping on any toes. One example involved senators on the floor failing to pay attention while courtesy introductions were being made—in this case, for the mother of a fallen Oregon soldier.

In their evaluations, the senators gave this session a median score of four out of five for usefulness. Their comments were along the lines of “Too many times we, as a group, take it for granted that we’re on the floor and the cameras, because we don’t see them, are not rolling.” “It was great.” “Spontaneity was the best. Wish it could have been longer.” “Format prevented any one person from preaching.” “Good ownership of issue and concerns on part of members. Open mike worked.” Indeed, the respondents noted the credibility of the sessions were enhanced because they had been organized and moderated by senators who were considered paragons of good manners and politeness.

4. Discuss ethics early and often.

Discussing ethics with state legislators means discussing conflicts of interest, which are endemic in their work (Rosenthal, 1999). Because violations have become grist for the media mill, many states have strict and detailed laws, rules, and regulations that appear, at least on first inspection, to be more onerous than those imposed on businesses through Sarbanes-Oxley. The rules are often so detailed, however, that no one can easily master them and a well-intentioned state legislator can run afoul of them without realizing it. Whether they care about them or not—and most with whom we dealt take them quite seriously—legislators need to know about them. The consequences of failing them can be expulsion from office, a lost election, civil penalty, or worse. Thus, teaching state legislators about ethics is a challenge on many levels. One can hope to create a degree of sensitivity to ethical issues and to provide rules of thumb for dealing with them. However, not much can be done in an educational setting of limited duration to give a legislator the motivation to be ethical or to have the character to act ethically.

Our initial plan called for scheduling a discussion of ethics on the second day of the program, but we were soon encouraged by experts and senators alike to place it earlier. No one knew how many of the senators would return after the first day. The issue was seen as too important to leave for later. We opted for a two-
### Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bad Behaviors</th>
<th>Good Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chewing gum or candy while trying to talk.</td>
<td>Committee chair explaining process to public.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unwrapping candy very loudly right in front of microphone.</td>
<td>Members explaining when they leave the committee that they have another meeting, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee members carrying on private conversations with each other while someone is testifying.</td>
<td>Committee chair laying out process of allowing those who travel the farthest to testify first.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abruptly leaving a committee meeting without explanation.</td>
<td>During controversial meeting, committee chair setting limits on testimony to give everyone a chance to make their views known and enforces limits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dressing inappropriately.</td>
<td>Dressing appropriately and giving attention to the witness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing up late and being disruptive (e.g., asking a question that has already been asked and wasting the committee’s and witness’ time).</td>
<td>Committee members excusing themselves for private conversations just outside the hearing room, so staff does not have to hunt them down for committee actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slumping in chair, yawning, staring with mouth open.</td>
<td>Committee members taking responsible for their own committee materials, i.e., bringing their info to the meeting and taking it with them when they leave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading unrelated material during committee meeting and not paying attention.</td>
<td>Listening to the debate of other committee members and public testimony.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using cell phones and electronic devices while meeting is going on.</td>
<td>Always being aware that you are on camera! (Microphones are extremely sensitive, even to a whisper.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not taking the hint that the committee needs to move on with current agenda.</td>
<td>Committee members being aware of their body language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee member is conducting business of one committee (of which he/she is chair) while participating in another committee.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling other meetings on top of regular committee meetings and requesting staff to interrupt and take them out.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impugning the integrity of another member.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
A pronged approach. First, we found in the literature a variety of short cases that could be the basis for discussion (Allison and Liebman, 1980). We also found that asking current or former senators privately for examples of ethically questionable actions generated more than we could use. For example,

*You are a newly elected senator and practicing attorney. On behalf of a client of your law firm, you intend to introduce a bill to amend state land use regulations, permitting a real estate development that would not otherwise be allowed. You can draft the bill so as not to attract widespread opposition by using language such that the only beneficiary will be your client.*

Breaking the participants into groups of five to six, we asked each group to discuss a different scenario and to be prepared to report to the larger group on whether they identified an ethical problem, whether they desired more information to help resolve it, and what action they would recommend and why.

We preceded this 20-minute exercise with a 10-minute lecture about understanding ethical problems as conflicts of interest, and followed it with a 15-minute discussion to tease out principles for analyzing ethical issues in terms of rights, justice, or social utility. We also provided written material in the form of a primer on ethics that they could use later. Again, the scenarios were so real to members of the audience that we had to assure them that we had not knowingly prepared them with knowledge about any participant’s behavior. Discussions were animated and, at times, intense, as the participants disagreed about whether situations of the sort illustrated here constituted unethical behavior or the responsibilities of the job.

Second, the case discussion created more questions than answers, as it was intended to do, setting up a panel of authorities who provided more answers than questions about Oregon’s ethics laws. The panel included the president of the Senate, the director of the state’s ethics commission, and a deputy legislative counsel. These presenters clearly had street credibility. The members paid rapt attention and asked incisive questions. Had members of the media been present, perhaps participation would not have been so widespread and candid.

The senators perceived this to be one of the most useful parts of the program, giving it a median score of five out of five on their evaluations. The senators made suggestions about how to make it even more productive and concrete. Typical comments in their evaluations were: “I thought this was the most thought-provoking session.” “Extremely important to look at real situations and to ask questions.” “Great information. Good panel. Could have been longer. Could have gone into public records more. Very good fact situations.”

*5. Treat conflict resolution as a skill.*

To legislate is to resolve conflict, because any government action invariably creates winners and losers (Baron, 2005). Whether drawing on game theory and...
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Economics or psychology, conflict resolution is now a well-regarded area of scholarship, complete with practical tools. Even legislators with reputations as excellent negotiators, coalition builders, and mediators can benefit from a structured exposure to the topic.

Recognizing the diversity of decision-making styles that underlie conflict—indeed of substantive disagreements—is one of the first tools. In 2005, this was covered with a one-hour lecture and discussion. An alternative, which would require at least 50 percent more time, would be to administer one of several available instruments on decision-making style to the individuals and then to analyze their meaning and distribution within the group. Our liaison warned us away from this approach because legislators are inundated with and skeptical of anything that looks like a survey or questionnaire.

Next, a former state representative and consultant/trainer on negotiation (with an excellent sense of humor) spent almost two hours with the senators, creating a collective learning experience in which the senators and presenter empathized with each other. This session cut past the theory and went straight to practical skills, using the terms of art that legislators know. In such a short period of time, one can only hope to convey two to three points. That is true of almost every topic in the program, but if the points are well chosen, the time is well spent.

In 2007, we repeated the session on negotiation but supplemented it with an interactive unit on interpersonal communications, taught by two consultants who had retired from the faculty of the University of Oregon. The senators clearly understood the value of the time they spent on both topics. They gave these sessions their highest evaluations. Their comments included: “Very useful discussion about things that are obvious but not. We engage in these behaviors without knowing it. [The instructor] gave me tools to think differently about the art of negotiation.” “I found this and the last session on personality traits to be the most valuable. Anything that gets us talking and learning about each other.”

Other topics that might be worth addressing in similar interactive exercises include dealing with difficult people, developing working relationships in building coalitions, structured brainstorming, or ethical decision-making.

Final Thoughts

Not everything went as planned. Despite continually cutting back, we probably tried to do too much in the day and a half allocated to the program. The senators appreciated the session on constitutional law but it was sufficiently complicated that the takeaways likely were minimal. The senators saw the session on how a bill really becomes a law as more entertaining than adding value.

That said, at least some senators in every session expressed the desire that more time be allotted to it. Members of the leadership wished their colleagues in the House had gone through the same program. One senator told his staff early on the first morning that he was going to make an appearance so the leadership
would see him but he would return to the office in an hour; he not only stayed throughout the first day, he also returned for all of the second. We’ll interpret that as the best testimony for the efficacy of the program.

Appendix: Schedule

Tuesday
8:30–8:45 A.M. Welcome and Overview
University Senate Leadership Institute Program Managers
Majority and Minority Party Senate Leaders

8:45–11:45 The National Commission on Legislative Excellence:
Looking Back from the Future
Chair: David Harrison, Evans School of Public Affairs, University of Washington, with three Oregon executive branch officials and former legislators as Commissioners

12–1 Lunch—Group Discussion: Order, Respect, and Decorum
Facilitator: Senator

1–1:45 Identifying Ethical Issues
University Professor

1:45–2:45 Panel Discussion: Ethics Guidelines for the Oregon Senate
Panelists:
President of the Senate
Chair, Oregon Government Standards and Practices Commission
Senior Deputy Legislative Counsel

3–4 Decision-Making and Learning Styles
Director, Ford Institute for Community Building

4–5:30 Reception

Wednesday
8:45–9:45 Oregon’s Constitution
Professor, University School of Law

10–11:45 Effective Negotiation in the Legislative Arena
Negotiation consultant and former state representative

12:00–1:15 Lunch—Panel Discussion: How a Bill Really Becomes a Law?
Seasoned Senators’ Insights into Effective Legislating

1:30–2 Wrap-Up
Senator Majority and Minority Leaders
Helping Legislators Legislate: An Executive Education Program for State Senators

REFERENCES

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How Might Action Learning Be Used to Develop the Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Capacity of Public Administrators?

Robert Kramer
American University

Abstract
Action learning is a powerful tool for self-awareness and group-awareness that accomplishes four objectives simultaneously: (1) it helps organizations solve urgent problems, (2) it helps build groups that learn, (3) it helps enhance the leadership skills of group members, and (4) it helps develop the emotional intelligence of individuals and groups as a whole. This article explains the use of action learning to help develop the emotional intelligence and leadership capacity of senior public administrators in the U.S. government and the European Commission.

In listening to others, we are gathered into compassion.
—Levin, cited by Stivers, 1994, 366

Academics who teach in schools of public affairs have long been ambivalent about the constitutional legitimacy of career public administrators who want to take the lead in governance. “We do not really want administrative leadership,” insisted Don K. Price (1962), dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Public Administration, “we want political leadership which requires a strong administrative underpinning” (184). Aren’t administrators merely supposed to be conservators or guardians of public goods and values (Redford, 1969; Terry, 1995)? Shouldn’t administrators be tightly accountable to political superiors who are the only ones with constitutional authority to lead? Doesn’t this imply that administrators are responsible solely for following mandates granted from those who are elected to represent the will of the people?
How Might Action Learning Be Used to Develop Emotional Intelligence and Leadership?

In this widely held view, administrators are followers, not leaders. Administrators follow laws and regulations. Administrators follow the will of elected officials, political appointees, and legislators who control the power of the purse. Administrators follow the election returns. Administrators are cogs in the machinery of government. Administrators are mechanical transmission belts. Administrators receive the emotional energy imparted to them from above, making no additional contribution to the total effort. What they see, hear and feel is irrelevant to implementing the will of the people. Only elected or appointed political officials have the right to lead. How dare unelected administrators take the lead in governance? Wouldn’t this open the door to administrative tyranny and arbitrariness? Is it ethical for administrators to see themselves as “leaders” in governance?

On the other hand, Robert Behn (1998) has argued that leadership is not merely a right of public administrators. It is a necessity:

Leadership from [public administrators] is necessary because without leadership public organizations will never mobilize themselves to accomplish their mandated purposes. Leadership from [public administrators] is necessary because the elected chief executive can provide leadership for only a few of the many agencies and programs for which he or she is responsible. Leadership from [public administrators] is necessary because the legislative branch of government gives public agencies missions that are vague and conflicting and often fails to provide enough resources to pursue seriously all of these missions. Leadership from [public administrators] is necessary because a narrow interest can easily capture a public agency and redirect government programs for their own gain. Leadership from [public administrators] is necessary because the citizenry often lacks the knowledge and information (or will) necessary to perform its responsibilities (209).

As a career public administrator who served in the U.S. government for more than two decades, I frankly side with Behn. In my view, all governance is people governance, and all public service is people service. It is all people. Human relationships are the DNA of governance. Without public administrators who can develop emotionally trusting relationships with political superiors, peers, subordinates, citizens, and all other stakeholders, there is no governance. Governance is more than the machinery of public administration, and more than the machinery of impartial cost-benefit analysis. Human relationships are at the heart of governance. To the extent that public administration mirrors the hearts and minds of people, it is governance: “In listening to others, we are gathered into compassion” (Levin, cited by Stivers, 1994, 366). To the extent that public administration is
How Might Action Learning Be Used to Develop Emotional Intelligence and Leadership?

disconnected from people, it is not governance. Public administrators are much more simply human than otherwise. Like the rest of us, public administrators are people too.

Followers Can Be Leaders and Leaders Can Be Followers

“The only definition of a leader,” according to Peter Drucker, “is someone who has followers” (1999, xii). In other words, without willing, active, and committed followers, there are no leaders. Because leadership is a relationship of deep listening, any person in the "administrative space" of governance can “take the lead” and any person can “follow the lead.” These roles are not fixed. They can alternate. We shift frequently in ordinary group relationships from one role to the other without even thinking about it. In my Saturday morning prayer circle I can be a leader. In my Sunday night bowling club I can be a follower. A new view of “followers,” first articulated by Joseph Rost (1991, 109), is now emerging in the context of governance relationships:

- One person does not make a relationship. If leadership is a relationship, then it is not possible for leadership to equal a single person.

- Only active people are followers. Only people who engage with others in the leadership relationship should be called followers. Passive people have chosen not to participate in a relationship. Passive people are not followers. Passive people are non-players. Passive people have chosen to withdraw their social capital from public life and invest it in their private life.

- Followers can be transformed into leaders and leaders into followers. Sometimes we choose to lead and other times we choose to follow. People are not stuck in the same role all the time. In one meeting on Monday morning I can be a leader, and in another meeting on Monday afternoon I can be a follower. Few people have interest in leading 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In public life, some people choose to be followers much of the time and some people choose never to participate in any leadership relationships.

- Followers are not doing followership, they are doing leadership. Both leaders and followers co-create one relationship that is “leadership.” If a leader’s influence is based more on persuasion than on authority, position, or status, then followers actively and deliberately choose when, where, why, and how they allow themselves to be influenced. Followers and leaders continually influence each other. If they did not influence each other, they would not be in leadership relationship.

Public leadership, therefore, is a relationship between leaders and followers who develop mutual understanding and trust by repeated experiences of deep
How Might Action Learning Be Used to Develop Emotional Intelligence and Leadership?

listening. People who participate in this relationship are the stakeholders in governance. Depending on the situation, time, and place, we may call these stakeholders “leaders,” “followers,” “Administration officials,” “legislators,” “judges,” “elected officials,” “political appointees,” “public administrators,” “government employees,” “constituents,” “citizens,” “customers,” “interest groups,” “NGOs,” “academicians,” “media,” or any other name for a human being that designates an active and willing partner in governance.

But why, one wonders, is it so hard for public administrators actively engaged in governance to know when to administer and when to lead? Why is it so hard for career public administrators to know when—in the daily process of working with their political superiors, bosses, peers, interest groups, legislators, media, civil society, or ordinary citizens—it is necessary for them to behave as leaders and when to behave as administrators? Why is it so hard for them to see that, to administer laws and regulations, to implement public policy, to build trust in governance, they must learn how to blend, on a day-to-day basis, the law-based knowledge of an administrator with the equally vital skills of an emotionally intelligent leader? Why is it so hard for civil servants to see that they must, in fact, combine the skills of an administrator and the skills of a leader in one and the same person? Neither the responsibilities of administration nor those of leadership can be ignored, yet most public administrators focus narrowly only on their administrative roles. Why? To be honest, I’m not sure, but I have a hunch.

Are Emotions Intelligent?

Based on more than two decades of service in the U.S. government, during which time I met few public administrators who were genuinely interested in or capable of taking the lead in governance, I have come to suspect that the unexamined assumptions of the Weberian model of “man as machine” contribute, to a large extent, to the absence of a leadership mindset in career civil servants. According to Weber (1922), bureaucracy compares with other organizations exactly as does a machine: “The more perfectly the bureaucracy is dehumanized, the more completely it succeed in eliminating from official business love, hatred, and purely personal, irrational and emotional elements which escape calculation” (15).

Weber’s model of human nature assumes that efficiency and effectiveness are harmed if human emotions influence the rational actions of public administrators. Emotions are not intelligent. Emotions are opposed to reason. Emotions are irrational. Emotions are unproductive. Emotions are subjective. Emotions should never guide administrative actions. The purpose of bureaucratic hierarchies, division of labor, classification of positions, standard operating procedures, and pay grades is to legislate against intrusive and irrational emotions. To end nepotism,
How Might Action Learning Be Used to Develop Emotional Intelligence and Leadership?

prevent capricious or subjective administration, and promote equal justice under law, emotions must be eradicated. For reason to rule, public administrators are to become souls on ice.

In the classic formulation of Max Weber (1922), public administrators must be without affection or enthusiasm—\textit{ohne Zorn und Eingenommenheit}:

Bureaucratic administration means fundamentally the exercise of control on the basis of knowledge. This is the feature of it which makes it specifically rational. The dominance of a spirit of formalistic impersonality, \textit{“Sine ira et studio”}, without hatred or passion, and hence without affection or enthusiasm. This is the spirit in which an official conducts his office. Otherwise the door would be open to arbitrariness (15-16).

Weber’s lifelong project was to conquer the world of administration for rationality (Diggins, 1996). Excellent administration is “control on the basis of knowledge.” \textit{Administration, therefore, is about control}. Excellent administration, in this logic, is about limiting discretion. Excellent administration is about preventing arbitrariness and tyranny. For this reason, civil servants do not establish relationships to persons. Governance is impersonal. Human relationships are positively harmful for excellent administration. Once the boxes on the organizational chart are drawn, once the responsibilities of positions are delineated, once the irrationality of human emotion is eliminated, the organization will be a smooth running, lean, and efficient machine, easily able to follow orders and implement public policy. Public organizations must be cool arenas for dispassionate reason, clear-headed analysis. Administration without people is the most efficient and effective governance. Administration without people, by definition, is excellent administration. Under the guidance of emotions public administrators cannot be intelligent. Under the guidance of emotions public administrators cannot be rational.

This is a prescription, of course, for transforming people into machines. But machines cannot build the trusting relationships needed to govern. Only people can govern. Yet, for those immersed in the culture of bureaucracy, the prescription against interpersonal relationship virtually mandates that the daily actions of public administrators—namely, all encounters with political superiors, bosses, staff, peers, interest groups, media, legislators, civil society, or ordinary citizens, all relationships with all stakeholders—be conducted \textit{Without Sympathy or Enthusiasm} as Victor Thomson once suggested in the title of a 1975 book.

At the time impersonal public administration was proposed a century ago, it was a necessary and essential corrective for nepotism. Standardized rules and pro-
cedures were revolutionary breakthroughs in administrative thinking and retain value as a safeguard against corruption even today. We must never let down our guard against administrative or political tyranny. The separation of executive, legislative, and judicial powers, with each power being able to check and balance the others, is the best antidote to tyranny. However, I do not think that an assumption of “man as machine” is compatible with late 20th century discoveries in evolutionary biology and neuroscience. The classical bureaucratic assumption of “man as a machine” is, on the contrary, perhaps the single biggest contributor to the “occupational psychosis,” (John Dewey), “professional deformation” (Thorstein Veblen), and “bureapathology” (Robert Merton) so often observed in the behavior of civil servants all over the world, including the U.S. government.

The assumption of “man as machine” has induced in career public administrators a state of unconscious incompetence and trained incapacity for leadership, according to the sociologist Phillip Selznick (1976):

Mechanical metaphors—the organization as a “smooth running machine”—suggest an overemphasis on neat organization and on efficient techniques of administration. It is probable that these emphases induce in the administrator a trained incapacity to observe the inter-relationship of policy and administration, with the result that the really critical experience of organizational leadership is largely overlooked. (3)

In the 1937 Papers on the Science of Administration, Luther Gulick argued that efficiency must be built into the structure of government just as it is built into a “piece of machinery.” Following Weber’s assumption about the harmful effect of emotion, public administrators, asserted Gulick, are supposed to be smooth running machines—transmission belts—for carrying out the will of the people as expressed by elected officials. In 1976 Gulick, one of the most influential framers of orthodox American public administration, examined and, for the first time, regretted his assumptions four decades earlier about the merits of a mechanistic, dehumanized, and emotionless model of administration:

There is good reason for dropping the idea that government is a machine. We should never have abandoned the notion that any team of people working together for a purpose is an “organism” not a machine…. If we think of government as an organism, a living organism, we have a totally different and more accurate and constructive understanding of a government organization. [Public administrators] are no longer cogs, they are suborgans.... They do not
merely transmit the energy imparted to them from above, they each
make an added contribution to the total effort, influenced by what
they see, feel and are doing” (cited in Gawthorp, 2002, 85).

So why does it remain so hard for civil servants to see that they must blend, on
a day-to-day basis, the essential skills of an efficient administrator with the equally
vital skills of a leader? I can’t be certain, but I suspect that it is a problem of un-
examined assumptions. It is extremely painful and anxiety-provoking to examine
deply ingrained tried-and-true assumptions. But isn’t examining assumptions
the very definition of learning?

Let us inquire, therefore, into the assumption that emotions are irrational.
Evidence from cognitive psychology, evolutionary biology, and neuroscience is
overwhelming that emotions are, in fact, highly intelligent, and that they have
primacy over IQ for building group intelligence and social capital:

In meetings and other group settings where people come together
to collaborate, there is a strong sense of group IQ, the sum total of
intellectual knowledge and skills in the room. However it turns
out that the single most important element in group intelligence is
not the average, or highest, IQ, but emotional intelligence. A single
participant who is low in emotional intelligence can lower the collective IQ of
the entire group. Chris Argyris, from Harvard, asks: "How can a group
where everyone has an individual IQ of 130 together and collectively
end up with an IQ of 60?” (Cooper and Sawaf, 1997, xxxiv)

IQ alone cannot build group intelligence. Group-level emotional intelligence
means that each member takes responsibility for contributing in both small and
big ways to building trust and mutual respect. Without emotions we could not
attach meaning to the word “interest” in the term “public interest.” Organized
society could not function without emotional intelligence. Without emotions
we could not attach meaning to the word “organized” in the term “organized
society.” Emotions—especially hatred, greed, vengeance, and lust—can certainly
be harmful to governance. “There has never been any doubt that, under certain
circumstances, emotion can disrupt reason,” says Antonio Damasio, professor of
neurology at the Medical School of the University of Iowa. “Yet research shows
that reduction in emotion may constitute an equally important source of irratio-
nal behavior” (Cooper and Sawaf, 1997, xxxiii).

MANAGEMENT VS. LEADERSHIP?

Now let us probe further the assumptions underlying our taken-for-granted
usage of the words “management” and “leadership. The word “manage” derives
from the Italian word *maneggiare*—which means “the handling of horses.” In American sign language, the sign for “manage” is to hold the reins of a horse. *Like administration, management is essentially about control.* Management is about restraining energies. Management is about limiting discretion. In public administration, control and restraint—especially in the expenditure of taxes collected from citizens and businesses—is a prerequisite to demonstrate accountability to elected officials, legislators, and citizens. In a democracy, law-based public administration is essential (Newbold and Terry, 2006). Therefore, control of financial resources is absolutely necessary for public administrators. *All public administrators must also be good managers.* All public servants—whether they are elected politicians, appointed political executives, or career civil servants—must take an oath to protect monies in the public treasury from being spent illegally, imprudently, or unethically. The behavior of all public administrators—elected, appointed or otherwise—must be monitored and “controlled.” It is impossible to argue this truth away, even for the strenuous advocates of the entrepreneurial philosophy of New Public Management (Kamensky, 1996, 247).

*Leadership, however, is not about control.* For decades, many scholars have assumed that leadership is excellent management (Rost, 1991). This is wrong. Leadership is not about restraining energies. Just the opposite. Leaders move themselves and others to committed action. The word “lead” derives from the Old English *leden,* which means “to go before as a guide; to take a journey.” The word “motivate” derives from the Latin *motere,* which means “to move.” The word “emotion” also derives from *motere,* to move. By drawing on their deepest emotional energies, leaders take themselves and us on a journey. Leaders begin initiatives. Leaders challenge the process. Leaders inspire a shared vision. Leaders enable others to act. Leaders model the way. Leaders encourage the heart (Kouzes and Posner, 1997). Leadership cannot be about control. *Leadership is about releasing human energies.* Leaders lead by tapping their own emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1997) and blending it with the emotional intelligence of others (Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, 2002). Leadership for public service is about influencing all stakeholders in governance to work together to achieve higher, more ethical goals than they could on their own.

According to James McGregor Burns (1978), who founded the field of leadership studies, a leader’s fundamental act is to lead “people to be aware or conscious of what they feel to be their true needs so strongly, to define their values so meaningfully, that they can move to purposeful action” (44). In other words, leaders listen so deeply to the emotional messages inside themselves and their constituents that, sometimes, they have the capacity to register needs not even fully conscious to themselves or their constituents.

Leadership is a major contributor to social capital. Leadership, says Burns, “raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led,”
and thus has a transforming effect on both” (Burns, 1978, 20). Building social
capital, therefore, depends more on leaders than managers.

While we still appreciate Weber’s genius as the premier sociologist of his gen-
eration, his model of “man as a machine” has had unintentionally perverse effects
on post-industrial public administration and in navigating the “permanent white
water” (Vaill, 1996) of change. Man as machine continues to serve as a major bar-
tier to accepting the constitutional legitimacy of administrative leadership and
to building more effective 21st century governance. The fall of communism, if
nothing else, demonstrated that rigid, inhumane Kafkaesque bureaucracy is not
superior to other forms of organization. Moreover, it is not even true that “imper-
sonality” is the best guide to rational decision-making. Charles Darwin showed
as early as the 19th century that emotions were adaptive in the evolution of hu-
man beings, but there is no evidence in Weber’s writings that he understood the
implications of Darwin’s revolution in biological science (Weber 1978). “Many
emotions are products of evolutionary wisdom, which probably has more intel-
ligence that all human minds together,” according to Joseph Ledoux (1996, 36),
of the Center for Neural Science at New York University. Neuroscientific discov-
eries in the last three decades show that rationality and emotions are not separate
compartments in the brain. Rather they are inextricably woven into all cognition.

Recent work in psychology by scholars such as Martin Seligman, Richard Laza-
rus, Anthony Ortony, and Keith Oatley and recent research in neuroscience by
Joseph Ledoux and Anthony Damasio show conclusively that emotions are a form
of intelligent awareness. Emotions are intelligent. Emotions are what make us
human. Emotions tell us what is valuable and important to us and to others. They
signal the meaning of events. Emotions are just as “cognitive” as other perceptions.
They serve as essential guides for humans to make rational choices. Emotions are a
form of thinking as well as a form of feeling. All thinking is infused with the intel-
ligence of emotions. Without the guidance of emotions, one becomes irrational,
detached from reality. Is not this detachment from reality the very definition of “occu-
pational psychosis” (John Dewey), “professional deformation” (Thorstein Veblen),
“trained incapacity” (Philip Selznick), and “bureaupathology” (Robert Merton)?

We now have conclusive biological evidence that decision-making is neurologi-
cally impossible without being informed by emotions. Contrary to the classical model,
decision-making is arbitrary when it is not infused with the intelligence of emo-
tions. Empirical research by organizational scholars on three continents shows
that emotional intelligence is the very marker that distinguishes administration
from leadership and the marker that distinguishes dead organizations from living
organizations (Ashkanansy, Hartel, and Zerbe, 2000). The latest neuroscientific
research shows stunning differences between the classical bureaucratic assessment
of emotions and current scientific understanding (Cooper and Sawaf, 1997, xxxii-
xxxiii):
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bureaucracy on emotions</th>
<th>Modern neuroscience on emotions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Make us inefficient</td>
<td>Make us effective</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sign of weakness</td>
<td>Sign of strength</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interfere with good judgment</td>
<td>Essential to good judgment</td>
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<td>Distract us</td>
<td>Motivate us</td>
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<tr>
<td>Obstruct, or slow down, reasoning</td>
<td>Enhance, or speed up, reasoning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arbitrary and tyrannical</td>
<td>Build trust and connection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weaken neutrality</td>
<td>Activate ethical values</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inhibit the flow of objective data</td>
<td>Provide vital feedback</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complicate planning</td>
<td>Spark creativity and innovation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undermine administration</td>
<td>Enhance leadership</td>
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For public administrators, management and leadership skills are not mutually exclusive. We should not make the mistake of stigmatizing management and glorifying leadership. They are complementary. Managers lead and leaders manage; however, the two functions reflect different—at times overlapping—sets of skills. Both are essential. Public administrators need to expand their repertoire of skills to include both functions, without minimizing one at the expense of the other. “What is needed are both managers and leaders (ideally, both in the same body),” according to a panel of the National Academy of Public Administration “with the need for leaders growing immensely as predictability and order give way to change and ambiguity” (1997, 5). A genuinely democratic and ethical civil society demands the development of a cadre of public administrators skilled in leading, not just in administrating and managing. Civil servants at times administer laws, at times manage budgets, and at other times lead people and change. Civil servants are not just administrators and they are not just managers. They are also leaders who have a responsibility to share democratic values, represent a broad range of social groups, and view themselves as accountable to much broader constituencies than before.

“We need a government,” writes Peter Drucker, the father of modern management, “which knows how to govern and does so. Not a government which ‘administers,’ but a government which truly governs” (cited in Potucek, 1999, 28). All governance is people governance. All public service is people service. It’s all people.

And leading in the turbulent context of today’s public service means immersion into “permanent white water” (Vaill, 1996). Under such conditions, splitting the process of leading from the process of administering (or managing), following the conventional wisdom of Zaleznik (1977), is not helpful. Following Vaill (1996, 52), I call public servants who are committed to effective governance “administrative leaders.” Permanent white water means that administrative lead-
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Administrative leaders face daily predicaments that, as a regular course, they cannot even define with clarity, much less resolve, and yet require immediate action. Today, according to Vaill (1996, 10–12), permanent white water characterizes public service organizations in five ways:

1. Permanent white water conditions are full of shocks and surprises.
2. Permanent white water conditions produce novel predicaments with no single correct solutions.
3. Permanent white water conditions feature wicked problems that are messy, ill-defined, unpredictable, and difficult to solve.
4. Permanent white water conditions are expensive.
5. Permanent white water conditions tend to recur.

In this permanent white water environment, where the only constants are surprise, pain, and confusion, administrative leadership must be reframed as the capacity to tap emotions intelligently in the process of learning continually. And learning how to learn in such a fluid, emotionally labile environment is perhaps the single most important requirement for leading others to perform effectively in public service. Administrative leadership, according to Vaill, cannot be taught and cannot be learned: administrative leadership is learning (1996, 126).

Hostile to the expression of administrative leadership and allergic to the intelligence of emotions, bureaucracies are designed to not learn. According to Howard McCurdy, “a bureaucracy, by design, is an organization that cannot correct its behaviors by listening to its errors” (86).

A bureaucratic organization is not only a system that does not correct its behaviors in view of its errors; it is also too rigid to adjust without crises to the transformations that the accelerated evolution of industrial society makes more and more imperative (Crozier, cited in McCurdy, 1977, 95).

In bureaucracies, ownership for taking action is impeded by the boxes on organization charts. Responsibility is easy to avoid in any hierarchical system. “The power of any official to oversee another depends completely on their relative position in the official hierarchy; it has nothing to do with their personal skills or competence” (Crozier, cited in McCurdy, 1977, 75).

As educators for public administrators trapped in the “iron cage” of bureaucracy, how do we address the tremendous emotional and learning challenges of administrative leaders in public service? How do we plant the seeds of a learning organization in an anti-learning and anti-emotional culture? As educators, how do we grow administrative leaders who show the creativity, open-mindedness,
and emotional intelligence to meet the learning challenges of performing the public’s work in conditions of permanent white water?

What is Action Learning?

Here’s one way, based on my own experience. From 2002 thru 2005, I served as director of the executive MPA program at American University. An executive cohort at AU consisted of about 20 participants, of whom about 50 percent were female and 30 percent were African-American. Most worked in federal, state, or local government, with the rest coming from NGOs. On taking over as director in 2002, my first challenge was to address the problem of transfer of learning from the classroom to the workplace, a problem that had languished at American University—and at every other university—for decades.

Traditionally, after 20 months of intensive weekend courses, the executive MPA program at AU culminated with a “comprehensive” exam, which required executive participants to prepare detailed answers in academic writing style, over a 48-hour period, to a set of questions. I was supposed to formulate these questions from facts woven into a three-page case study drafted by a rotating group of faculty. No matter how hard they tried, however, the faculty who graded the exams could rarely reach consensus on the “right answers” to these questions. Because the case study was always too brief to explore the full context of the problem, and none of the actors identified in the case could be interviewed, faculty always saw the “right answers” through the lens of their functional discipline—policy formulation, government ethics, administrative law, politics, research and evaluation, etc.—leading to interminable disagreements in grading and to not a few near-nervous breakdowns by executive participants.

I decided to abandon this comprehensive exam, the main result of which seemed to be to infantilize adults, who were being forced to answer questions about problems they cared nothing about and, in any event, could take no action to resolve. But what should take its place? After much reflection, I chose to replace the executive MPA comprehensive with action learning. I would require each of my executive participants to negotiate a “learning contract” with me for the conduct of a real-time work-related project. (See the Appendix for an example of such a learning contract).

What is action learning? Action learning is a group process that promotes emotional intelligence and learning in the here-and-now while participants tackle an organizational challenge with work colleagues in real time. While public administrators are working in a small group to solve an urgent problem, action learning simultaneously plants the seeds of an organization that draws on group-level emotional intelligence to make decisions.

Action learning is a powerful tool for self-awareness and group-awareness that accomplishes four objectives simultaneously: (1) it helps organizations solve urgent problems, (2) it helps build groups that learn, (3) it helps enhance
the leadership skills of group members, and (4) it helps develop the emotional intelligence of individuals and groups as a whole. By practicing action learning, participants learn more about themselves and others. Leaders high in emotional self-awareness are attuned to their inner signals, recognizing how their thoughts and feelings affect them and others. Self-awareness is a form of listening to oneself—listening to the emotional music underlying our words.

Action learning is not new. Widely adopted over the last decade by Fortune 100 companies, the methodology of action learning was first designed by Reg Revans (1971, 1980, 1982, 1983) in England more than 60 years ago and substantially improved in recent years by Michael Marquardt (1999, 2000, 2004). Revans intended the word “action” to refer to changes in the organization that the group effects in the workplace; and the word “learning” to changes emerging in the mindset and emotions of group members.

The basic principle of action learning is that only those who have learned how to change their own mindsets—their own taken-for-granted assumptions, beliefs and attitudes—can change the taken-for-granted assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes embedded in the culture of an organization. This requires deep exploration of emotional experience at both the individual and group levels. “Those unable to change themselves,” wrote Revans (1983, 55), “cannot change what goes on around them.” Action learning enhances emotional intelligence while building a community of learners who can transfer what they learn in the process of solving an urgent problem today to solve other, even more complex, workplace problems tomorrow. The optimal group size in action learning is five to seven, and meetings usually take place at least one day a month, but sometimes weekly or even daily, over the course of a project.

Conventionally, directors of executive master’s programs in public administration have assumed that, to develop leaders, participants need to be taught academic theories and facts in government ethics, team building, administrative law, budgeting, leadership, policy evaluation etc. Universities excel at this kind of teaching, which, in practice, means the transmission of what Revans called “programmed knowledge” (Weinstein 1999, 36) by means of lectures, textbooks, PowerPoint slides, case studies, classroom exercises, and role plays. Under this model, emotions get in the way of faculty transmitting programmed knowledge to students.

Programmed knowledge consists of the set of consensually agreed-upon concepts, ideas, theories, models, and conclusions accumulated through the process of peer-reviewed research and publication in any academic discipline. University professors, trained in the language and methods of their disciplines, are comfortable in teaching about, and lecturing on, programmed knowledge. But leading in conditions of permanent white water cannot be learned by “depositing” programmed knowledge about public administration theory and practice into the memory banks of those who want to become public service leaders.
In contrast to the “banking model of education” (Freire 1970, 58), action learning is designed to develop leaders in real time by transforming their invisible emotional worlds at the same time they are engaged in transforming the external visible practices and systems in their organizations. What, exactly, is “invisible” about the emotional world of human beings? Everything.

We can all see another person’s body directly. We see the lips moving, the eyes opening and shutting, the lines of the mouth and the face changing, and the body as a whole expressing itself in action. The person himself is invisible.... All our thoughts, emotions, feelings, imaginations, reveries, dreams, fantasies are invisible. All that belongs to our scheming, planning, secrets, ambitions, all our hopes, fears, doubts, perplexities, all our affections, speculations, ponderings, vacuities, uncertainties, all our desires, longings, appetites, sensations, our likes, dislikes, aversions, attractions, loves and hates—all are themselves invisible. They constitute "oneself" (Nicoll, cited by Pedler, 1997, 34-35).

The purpose of the executive MPA, as I revisioned it, was not merely to “master” the intellectual knowledge contained in the academic silos of public administration: administrative law, human resource management, statistics, policy evaluation, budgeting, etc. We would continue to require that executive participants study public administration through the traditional lenses and vocabularies of each of these functional courses. According to Robert Kegan (2000), functional courses such as these are valuable since they represent “learning aimed at increasing our fund of knowledge, at increasing our repertoire of skills, at extending already established cognitive capacities” (48). This is what Kegan calls “informational learning”—learning that deepens our knowledge about an existing frame of reference. “Such learning is literally in-form-ative because it seeks to bring valuable new contents into the existing form of our way of knowing” (Kegan, 2000, 49).

However, learning of this kind, no matter how useful, does not encourage an epistemological transformation—which always requires an emotional shift—in learners. It is not “transformational learning,” which, according to Kegan (2000) radically shifts the frame of knowing itself by questioning the taken-for-granted assumptions of the existing epistemology. This is “trans-form-ative” learning (Kegan, 2000), where the frame of reference itself—the “form” of knowing—undergoes a radical and discontinuous shift. Informational learning, although valuable because it can stimulate “a change in behavioral repertoire or an increase in the quantity or fund of knowledge” (Kegan, 2000, 48), cannot stimulate a shift in emotions or mindset. In essence, informational learning is closely correlated with the received wisdom, accepted beliefs, standard models, or prevailing ideologies held by public administration academics.
How Might Action Learning Be Used to Develop Emotional Intelligence and Leadership?

By adopting action learning, I revisioned our purpose as executive educators to grow learning leaders in public service. What, exactly, are the characteristics of a learning leader?

- A learning leader is a person who models inquiry and critical reflection while grappling, under conditions of high anxiety, with wicked public problems when no one knows what to do but immediate action must be taken.
- A learning leader is a person who learns all the time, not merely for the purpose of applying one of the functional tools of public administration to get a job done.
- A learning leader is a person who demonstrates a high level of sensitivity to the anxiety that others (especially subordinates) may experience in learning, and who possesses the emotional intelligence—i.e., self-awareness, courage, creative will, and empathy—to enable others to learn.

These characteristics of a learning leader led me to formulate a second, equally vital outcome for executive education: in addition to learning leaders, we were going to develop teaching leaders in public service. What does a teaching leader teach? Not programmed knowledge or the conventional wisdom found in public administration texts or learned through prepackaged experiential exercises or role plays. By definition, programmed knowledge deals only with past solutions to past problems, and it is insufficient for those who need to learn continually under conditions of permanent white water, when fresh problems arise that have never been considered by anyone and, therefore, cannot possibly have programmed answers (Heifetz 1994).

So what does a teaching leader teach? A teaching leader teaches in day-to-day, face-to-face relationships with subordinates, peers, and superiors in the workplace—"learning as a way of being" (Vaill, 1996). Learning leaders, in short, model the way for others to learn continually. Therefore, I required each executive participant to teach the action learning model to others inside their organization. As they taught action learning to other organizational stakeholders, they were stretching their capacity to lead. Not surprisingly, as they got better at teaching, they would find that they were learning how to lead. Learning how to teach would constitute, in part, learning how to lead. And learning how to lead would merge, finally, into learning how to learn.

Administrative leaders in public service do not see themselves as adult educators or as teachers or as learners. Yet leading, teaching, and learning are, at bottom, synonyms. "Leading" adults is the same as "educating" adults. The word "educate" derives from the Latin educare < e—, out + ducere, lead.
LEADING = TEACHING = LEARNING

For the successful completion of their action learning comprehensive exam, my executive participants would need to demonstrate to me that they had developed the creative will and courage—the emotional intelligence—to make a huge paradigm shift: to transform themselves from bureaucrats trapped helplessly in the “iron cage” into learning leaders and teaching leaders. I made clear to them that there was no such thing as failure in the conduct of this final project, because whatever they learned during the process was the right thing for them to learn. How could it be otherwise? Each participant would be undertaking a unique leadership, learning, and teaching journey.

I invited them to reflect on the following questions, all of which would touch on their deepest emotions, in the course of conducting their leadership journey:

• During this project, what am I learning about myself?
• How are these learnings evolving over the course of the project?
• How does my mindset influence the data I am seeing, the decisions I am making, and the results I am achieving?
• What am I blind to? What do I still need to learn?
• In what specific ways am I growing or changing as a leader? What experiences are leading to these changes?
• In what specific ways am I growing or changing as a learner? What experiences are leading to these changes?
• How am I demonstrating that I have the capacity to learn how to learn?
• What am I learning about leading others to learn for themselves?
• What am I learning while teaching the action learning model to my team?
• To what extent do I now see myself as a learning leader? What evidence can I provide to support my self-assessment?
• To what extent do I now see myself as a teaching leader? What evidence can I provide to support my self-assessment?

Over the course of a five- or six-month project, the personal identities of the participants would transform dramatically. With the empathic support of colleagues in their action learning groups, they would experience many profound, anxiety-provoking, and disorienting learning moments during which they came to question their own mindsets or frames of reference—their previously unexamined assumptions and beliefs about who they were, what leading in their organizations meant, and what they were capable of accomplishing in public service. From administrators who did not see their task to be one that demanded challenging their own preconceived notions of how they saw reality, they came, slowly, to transform the way they apprehended knowing and knowledge itself. They changed their epistemologies, their meaning perspectives.
Epistemologies are how we make sense of the world. Meaning perspectives are the psycho-emotional filters that shape, usually without our awareness, how we see ourselves, our interpersonal relationships, our ways of knowing and problem-solving, our ways of responding to crisis and permanent white water, our ways of being and becoming. From administrators entrenched in bureaucratic silos, they were breaking through the anti-learning and anti-emotion bars of their “iron cages” from the inside and transforming themselves, day by day, with increasing confidence, into learning and teaching leaders.¹

In the setting of action learning, the anti-learning assumptions of Weberian bureaucracy, a model of organizing that has long been seen as contributing to “occupational psychosis” (Dewey), “professional deformation” (Veblen), “trained incapacity” (Selznick), and “bureaupathology” (Merton), could be questioned by these administrative leaders for the first time. “This is a process of emancipatory learning—becoming free from forces that have limited our options, forces that have become taken for granted or seen as beyond our control” (Cranton 1996, 2). My executive participants were learning, on the deepest intellectual and emotional levels, how to learn and becoming skilled at teaching others to learn how to learn—perhaps the most valuable leadership skill they would need in order to succeed for the rest of their careers in public service.

I want now, in the remainder of this article, to look more closely into the process of how action learning accomplishes this.

**How Does Action Learning Promote Emotional Intelligence and Leadership?**

As we have seen, action learning involves a small group of 5-7 people working in real time on an urgent organizational problem, asking questions, learning from beginning to end, and taking action to implement a set of solutions. At succeeding meetings, the group asks questions such as, “What happened after the action was taken? What worked? What could we have done better? What did we not see? What more do we still need to do to resolve this problem? Are we becoming more effective as problem-solvers? As leaders?” (Marquardt 2004, 77-80). Action learning builds a leadership culture for people to collaborate in the process of continuing to learn how to learn long after the project is completed (Raelin 2006). How does it do this?

The power of action learning comes from the many ways it develops the skills and habits of participants in questioning, reflection, and, most importantly, listening.

Emotional intelligence is registered through deep listening—listening to oneself and listening to others. People who are high in emotional intelligence know how to listen to their emotions and regulate their intensity so they are not hijacked by them. Emotionally intelligent people know how to keep disruptive emotions in check. Emotionally intelligent people sense the effect their emotions have

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¹ Numbers in parentheses correspond to the endnotes at the end of the article.
on others. Emotionally intelligent people can laugh at themselves. Emotionally intelligent people know how to deploy their strengths and compensate for their weaknesses. Emotionally intelligent people listen to other people’s emotions and can empathize with them. Emotionally intelligent people act ethically and build trust through integrity and reliability. Emotionally intelligent people admit their own mistakes and learn from them. Emotionally intelligent people are comfortable with new ideas and new information. Emotionally intelligent people are skilled at listening to a group’s emotional currents and discerning the power relationships. Emotionally intelligent people can negotiate and resolve disagreements. Emotionally intelligent people listen to other people and know how to communicate effectively (Kramer, 1997).

One of the most important skills a public administrator needs is the ability to listen—to self and others. “To the extent that others give us respectful attention, we eventually learn to respect ourselves and to reciprocate this respect and attention” (Stivers, 1994, 366). The Chinese characters that make up the verb “to listen” tell us something significant about this skill. Chinese characters are really picturegrams. “When in stillness,” reads this picturegram, “a king listens with the heart. The ear is worth ten eyes.” In order to be a good king, one must listen with ears, eyes, and heart, giving undivided attention to the people. In the philosophy of Taoism, a king is defined as a servant-leader who is a mindful listener.

In a sense, the Chinese pictogram suggests an ancient wisdom: “leadership” is a metaphor for being integrated, focused, and centered, a metaphor for emotional and intellectual balance in all aspects of life. Leadership is connecting mindfully and feelingly to what moves in one’s soul—and makes one come alive—and to what moves in the souls of others and makes them come alive. Administrative leadership, in this sense, must be soulwork.

Traditionally, leadership has been seen as a mysterious, lofty quality granted only to a few privileged people, and if one is not born with that quality, one cannot acquire it. Not so. Leadership is a composite of listening and speaking skills that can be learned, developed, and exercised by anyone in working with others to carry out a task. An outstanding public servant, according to the Chinese pictogram, is an administrative leader who

- Listens to the whole message—not only the words, but the “music”: the tone of voice, the facial expressions, the gestures, the emotions, and the silences between the words.
- Allows the speaker to feel fully valued and deeply respected.
- Is able to sustain concentration, focus intently, and recall the speaker’s message—the words, emotions and the “music”—many days later.
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- Listens to one's own thoughts and emotions as he or she speaks—carefully choosing words and nonverbal ways of expression (the "music") that match one's intended meaning.

As the last point suggests, leading is about speaking persuasively just as much as it is about listening deeply. By tapping emotional energies, leaders move themselves and others to committed action. Leaders know how to draw out enthusiasm, not merely compliance, in others. Authenticity—listening to oneself—is the most important prerequisite for public service.

Public service leaders know their deepest convictions, are true to them, and act with empathic understanding and positive regard for others' differences, without demanding that everyone else feel, think, or act the same way that they do (Kramer, 1995b). Public service leaders listen deeply as a way to find common ground for action and results. Public service leaders hold their ground and stay connected. Public service leaders are ethical. Public service leaders who have the capacity to listen deeply to themselves and others know five things. They

- know, deep down, what their values are and what other peoples' values are;
- know how to communicate what they need in order to get cooperation from peers, political superiors and others;
- know how to build coalitions to support the needs of peers, political superiors, and others;
- know how to say no to illegal or unethical acts of government; and
- know how to build social capital.

Emotionally intelligent behavior is a prerequisite for building bridges of mutual understanding and trust in the process of action learning. Questions are more important than answers during action learning. At first, action learners engage new ideas by asking questions to frame and reframe the presenting problem (Bolman and Deal, 2003). A frame is a mindset, a way of seeing the world, a paradigm, a form of knowing—an epistemology. A frame is a lens on experience that filters how group members see personal and organizational behavior and the meanings they construct from what they see. Unlike conventional problem-solving approaches, action learning is a process of finding, rather than accepting at face value what is presented as, the right problem:

Action learning emphasizes finding the right problem…. To find the problem, people engage in an active investigation that produces information, upon which they reflect. This leads to a reexamination of the problem, in a cycle that recurs three or four of five times before the project group can agree on a redefined problem (Marsick 1990, 32).
How Might Action Learning Be Used to Develop Emotional Intelligence and Leadership?

Action learning addresses “dilemmas” that often consist of the following four elements (Cutcher-Gershenfeld and Ford, 2005, 830):

1. No single alternative action is evidently superior to any other action.
2. Each alternative action requires painful trade-offs.
3. Any action may be irreversible.
4. Action is essential.

As action learning sessions unfold, while consciously framing and reframing the presenting dilemma—i.e., finding the right problem—participants are, at a preconscious level, also beginning to learn how to unlearn. Learning how to unlearn means that participants will be repeatedly revisiting taken-for-granted values, assumptions, beliefs, and biases and becoming more and more open to facing the emotional risk of questioning their own personal mindsets.

What, exactly, is a “mindset”? Without entering the thicket of neuroscientific research, a “mind” may be said to consist of a “set” of beliefs, ideas, thoughts, concepts, intuitions, assumptions, perspectives, uncertainties, presentiments, and puzzlements—all of which are soaked through and through with a range of positive and negative emotions. “To break open the shell of complacency and self-righteousness,” wrote Kurt Lewin (1951), “it is sometimes necessary to bring about deliberately an emotional stir-up” (229). In the field of intellectual history, no one has articulated the need to unlearn old, worn-out beliefs and emotions better than Isaiah Berlin, the pre-eminent 20th century historian of ideas:

We are enslaved by despots—institutions or beliefs or neuroses—which can be removed [or unlearned] only by being analyzed and understood. We are imprisoned by evil spirits, which we have ourselves—albeit not consciously—created, and can exorcise them only by becoming conscious and acting appropriately (cited in Weinstein, 1999, 17).

In what way are we “enslaved” by institutions or beliefs or neuroses? Berlin suggests that each of these “despots” is somehow related to the other two. A deeper question, therefore, is in what way is an institution or belief like a neurosis—and what, exactly, is neurosis?

In the early 1930s, Otto Rank, a founder of the modern relational approach to psychotherapy (Kramer, 1995a), challenged Freud’s then-reigning psychology of likeness, which had reduced all human beings to the same biological drive of sex, and proposed, instead, a psychology of difference which focused on releasing the “creative will” that lay buried underneath the inhibitions, symptoms, and anxieties of his clients—many of whom were blocked artists like Anaïs Nin and Henry Miller. As an overarching organizing principle, Rank replaced Freud’s biologi-
cal drive for procreative reproduction with the human urge to create—the drive for creative production. "The creative artistic personality," said Rank (1932/1989), “is thus the first work of the productive individual, and it remains fundamentally his chief work” (28).

Despotic institutions and beliefs deaden the creative energies and emotions of human beings, according to Rank, and foster a neurotic mindset that reinforces complacency and self-righteousness. In an organizational culture of anti-learning, other names for neurosis are “occupational psychosis” (Dewey), “professional deformation” (Veblen), “trained incapacity” (Selznick), and “bureaupathology” (Merton). So how do we break open the shell of our emotional complacency? How do we let go of our self-righteousness, our bureaucratic neurosis? How do we unlearn what, in essence, is part and parcel of our own identity?

In the “banking model” of learning, information is deposited “into” people by breaking into their shells from the outside. But unlearning (or what Kegan calls trans-form-ation) “can be gained only by breaking out from your own shell, from the inside” (Casey 1997, 223). Comparing the process of unlearning to the “breaking out” process of birth, Rank was the first psychologist to suggest that a continual capacity to separate from “internal mental objects”—from internalized institutions, beliefs, and neuroses; from the restrictions of culture, social conformity, and received wisdom; from surplus fear, guilt, and anxiety (Kramer, 1989)—is the sine qua non for lifelong creativity:

Life in itself is a mere succession of separations. Beginning with birth, going through several weaning periods and the development of the individual personality, and finally culminating in death—which represents the final separation. At birth, the individual experiences the first shock of separation, which throughout his life he strives to overcome. In the process of adaptation, man persistently separates from his old self, or at least from those segments of his old self that are now outlived. Like a child who has outgrown a toy, he discards the old parts of himself for which he has no further use ….The ego continually breaks away from its worn-out parts, which were of value in the past but have no value in the present. The neurotic [who cannot unlearn, and, therefore, lacks creativity] is unable to accomplish this normal detachment process.... Owing to fear and guilt generated in the assertion of his own autonomy, he is unable to free himself, and instead remains suspended upon some primitive level of his evolution (Rank, quoted in Kramer 1996, 270).

Unlearning necessarily involves separation from one’s self, as it has been culturally conditioned to conform to familial, group, occupational, or organizational allegiances. According to Rank (1932/1989), unlearning or breaking out of our
shell from the *inside* is “a separation [that] is so hard, not only because it involves persons and ideas that one reveres, but because the victory is always, at bottom, and in some form, won over a part of one’s ego” (375). This separation is extraordinarily painful. It has the potential to tear us apart emotionally.

In the organizational context, learning how to unlearn is vital “because what we have learned has become embedded in various routines and may have become part of our personal and group identity” (Schein 2004, 321). We refer to the identity of an individual as a “mindset.” We refer to the identity of an organizational group as a “culture.” Action learners learn how to question, probe, and separate from both kinds of identity—their “individual” selves and their “social” selves. By opening themselves to critical inquiry, they begin to learn how to emancipate themselves—how to unlearn. The slow process of breaking out of one’s self-imposed iron cage, of separating from one’s internalized objects, constitutes unlearning, which inevitably carries with it fear and emotional pain. “Your pain,” said the poet Kahlil Gibran, “is the breaking of the shell of your understanding” (cited in Casey, 1997, 223).

On commencing action learning, participants are likely to be emotionally attached to the unconscious assumptions, beliefs, and values inculcated into them during a lifetime of socialization into various roles—family, community, religious, educational, professional, and organizational. Bringing into awareness, and questioning, and—where necessary—unlearning these values, assumptions, beliefs, and expectations is essential for effecting personal and organizational change. This, at bottom, is the heart of developing one’s emotional intelligence.

Questions, according to Revans (1983), the founder of action learning, open up the minds and hearts of participants.

[They] ensure that no member of their set is allowed to coast along on the presentation of the others. All, with inexorable certitude, will be called upon to disclose much that they had for many years successfully hidden from themselves, such as what (if anything) they really believe in….or why they say the things they say, and do the things they do (135).

During sessions of action learning, mindsets, emotions, and organizational subcultures emerge, usually in fragments or short statements, during the mutual questioning process in the form of “perceptual frameworks, expectations, world views, plans, goals, sagas, stories, myths, rituals, symbols, jokes, and jargon” (Nystrom and Starbuck, 1984, 55). At the same time that participants are learning about, and unlearning, their own taken-for-granted norms and behaviors, they are learning how to inquire into the collective assumptions and emotional tones of the organizational culture.
In essence, participants in action learning dialogues are learning the capacity for self-reflection and culture-reflection. They are learning how to change mindsets—their own and those of their fellow group members—by examining taken-for-granted assumptions. They are increasing their capacity for mindful learning and unlearning. They are making conscious what is not conscious, making visible what is invisible. “How can we know if we do not ask? Why should we ask if we are certain we know? All answers come out of the questions. If we pay attention to our questions, we increase the power of mindful learning” (Langer 1997, 139).

Through questioning, participants are also learning that not knowing an answer does not make them an ineffective manager or leader. Not-knowing is reframed in action learning as an opportunity for learning, not as a sign of weakness, as it is traditionally seen by leaders who feel obligated to “have all the answers.” In action learning, participants learn how to hold in their laps the anxiety of not-knowing. Valuing not-knowing can inspire them and others in the organization to take committed action even in the face of unknowable and stress-provoking outcomes. Traditionally, successful administrative leaders have seen themselves as “answer” people rather than “question” people. As problem solvers, they are comfortable diagnosing problems swiftly and proposing ideas and quick solutions. This is not action learning.

By willing to be open to transforming their own mindsets, participants are creating a holding environment for themselves and their group colleagues to contain the anxiety of learning and unlearning (Argyris and Schön, 1978; Argyris and Schön, 1996). They are becoming learning leaders. Their learning is being inextricably tied to real organizational work. Working and learning are fusing into the same activity: self-transformation and organizational transformation (Kramer, 1995b). They are planting the seeds of a learning organization that leads itself with the intelligence of the emotions.

**Reflection: “Stepping Out of the Frame of the Prevailing Ideology”**

What is the emotional power of questions? Questions allow group members to “step out of the frame of the prevailing ideology” (Rank, 1932/1989, 70), reflect on their assumptions and beliefs, become more self-aware, and reframe their choices as administrative leaders. The process of “stepping out” of a frame, out of a form of knowing—a prevailing ideology—is analogous to the work of artists as they struggle to give birth to fresh ways of seeing the world, perspectives that allow them to see aspects of the world that no artists, including themselves, have ever seen before (Fox, 2002).

The most creative artists, such as Rembrandt, Beethoven, Michelangelo, and Leonardo, know how to separate emotionally even from their own greatest public successes, from earlier artistic incarnations of themselves. Their “greatness consists precisely in this reaching out beyond themselves, beyond the ideology which they have themselves fostered” (Rank, 1932/1987, 368).
What, exactly, “develops” in the process of leadership development? The word “develop” comes from the Latin *devolvere*, which means to unfold, unveil, cause to grow or bring into fuller view, to make visible that which is invisible—like a photograph developing out of its chemical solution. Through the lens of Otto Rank’s work on understanding art and artists, leadership “development” in action learning can now be seen as the never-completed process of learning how to “step out of the frame” of the ruling mindset, whether one’s own or the culture’s—in other words, of learning how to unlearn. “When this happens,” writes brain researcher Andrew Newberg (2006), “one’s sense of self is temporarily lost” (236).

The most powerful questions have a remarkably emotional impact: they allow us the uncanny possibility of becoming “other” to ourselves. “I have learned to put myself on the other side of what I believe,” said one manager (Taylor, 2000, 154). On being asked his name, the poet Rimbaud replied, “I am an other” (Mason, 2003, 27). To become “an other” is to become trans-form-ed, to become emotionally and epistemologically a different person. Because creativity is a process of continual “flow” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996), a surrender to the fluidity of emotional experience, the best outcome of a question in action learning often is not an answer but a higher quality, more thoughtful question.

**Asking High-Quality Questions**

*High quality questions open our minds.* They allow us to question what has been considered to be unquestionably true. They direct our attention to new vistas. They make us wonder about the assumptions and beliefs we have taken for granted.

*High quality questions slow down our thinking.* They allow us to consider new options before coming to closure. They allow us to value not-knowing. They let us breathe fresh air.

*High quality questions tap our emotions.* They connect to what is going on inside our bodies, to our deepest emotions. They reorient us to what’s important. They motivate us to take committed action.

Questions open our minds and hearts for learning about ourselves and others—and re-imaging both. Participants in action learning can transform their own mindsets and their organizations by changing their questions (Adams, 2004). The changes implemented in the organization are called “action,” while the transformations in mindset, beliefs, biases, emotions, blindspots, and assumptions are called “learning.”

Because action learning solves real problems in real time, it simultaneously advances emotional intelligence, leadership development, team building, paradigm shifts, organizational learning, and culture change. Unraveling layers of the problem, and learning about one’s own belief systems and the taken-for-granted assumptions of the organizational culture, is the central task. Action learning
makes inquiry and critical reflection central to the group as members learn with and from each other while taking action. Learning how to learn is a communal activity, done together with others in dialogue, never alone. This is transformative learning.

What is liable to be questioned in action learning? For starters: beliefs, emotions, assumptions, expectations, facts, habits, values, opinions, bottom lines, ways of doing, ways of being, ways of seeing, and existing power relations in the organizational culture (Vince and Martin, 1993).

What else can be questioned? Everything that is usually invisible: “Our scheming, planning, secrets, ambitions, all our hopes, fears, doubts, perplexities, all our affections, speculations, ponderings, vacuities, uncertainties, all our desires, longings, appetites, sensations, our likes, dislikes, aversions, attractions, loves and hates” (Nicoll, cited by Pedler, 1997, 34–35)

In short, what can be questioned is any emotion, idea, belief, or practice considered to be unquestionably true. Doubt rather than certainty is thereby legitimized as the essence of learning (Weick, 2001), and emotional intelligence is defined as the creative will to question any organizational value, assumption, belief, practice, or ideology that has become embedded in the culture. As Rank (1932/1989) observes in Art and Artist, “the ruling psychological ideology itself appears to be as much in need of explanation as the other spiritual phenomena which it claims, either wholly or at least satisfactorily, to explain” (xv).

**What is Transformative Learning?**

- **Question**
- **Higher Quality Question**
- **Examine:** assumptions, beliefs, “taken-for-granteds”
- **Ask problem presenter a “disorienting” question.**
- **Ask about others’ assumptions.**
- **What are the consequences if you deny an assumption?**
- **IT’S OKAY TO NOT KNOW AN ANSWER.**
How Might Action Learning Be Used to Develop Emotional Intelligence and Leadership?

Here are some examples of questions (adapted from Cranston, 1996, 86) directed toward taken-for-granted beliefs—ruling ideologies—that are typically asked during action learning:

- Was there a time when you did not hold this belief?
- Can you remember when you first came to believe this?
- Was this belief prevalent in your family, community, or schooling?
- Is this a commonly held belief in the organization?
- If you did not believe this, how would you act differently?
- If you continue to believe this, how will you act?
- Which people in the organization do not share your belief?
- What would be the impact if you changed your belief?
- What would be the impact if others changed their belief?

Obviously, as a prerequisite for this kind of deep questioning of the prevailing ideology, a high degree of emotional safety must be assured for participants. How is this accomplished? Marquardt’s (2004) recent insightful contributions to advancing the theory and practice of action learning provide the best approach: under the most important ground rule of action learning, group members do not offer statements, opinions, or viewpoints except in response to another member’s question:

This ground rule does not prohibit the use of statements; as a matter of fact, there may still be more statements than questions during the action learning meetings since every question may generate one or more responses from each of the other members of the group, or up to five to ten statements per question (76).

In a conventional task force, the purpose of asking questions is to get immediate answers. In action learning, rather than a quick fix, the group seeks to go deeper into the thinking and feeling process to uncover aspects of the problem embedded in the culture that may barely be visible. Sometimes, certain questions are so incisive, so powerful, that no one has an immediate answer. In action learning, it’s okay not to know an answer.

The most successful questioners adopt the mindset of Rainer Maria Rilke, who advised in *Letters to a Young Poet* (1934/1993) that poets “try to love the questions themselves”:

Do not now seek the answers, which cannot be given to you because you would not be able to live them…. *Live the questions now.* Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live your way some distant day into the answer (35).
By questioning each other’s assumptions and beliefs in a respectful but challenging way, with the support of an empathic learning coach (see below), group members can learn to see the problem more systematically. The group can make the invisible visible. Asking questions to open the minds of group members beyond the existing boundaries of their assumptions is the central method for problem solving.

Action learning invites participants to become as comfortable with not-knowing as they are with providing answers. Holding back from coming to quick closure is what the poet John Keats (1817/1936) called “Negative Capability”—the courage to remain “in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason” (193). Only by holding the emotional tension between knowing and not-knowing, only by “loving the questions themselves” without succumbing to the urge for quick action, can new thoughts and new intuitions and creative directions for action emerge. “Not-knowing is crucial to art, is what permits art to be made,” suggests the writer Donald Barthelme (1986). “Without the scanning process engendered by not-knowing, without the possibility of having the mind move in unanticipated directions, there would be no invention” (24).

**Role of Action Learning Coach**

To promote “Negative Capability” and ensure a high degree of psychological safety, at each session of the action learning group one member serves in the role of action learning coach, a role that often rotates among members. The coach only asks questions. Much practice, and a high degree of emotional intelligence, is required before members become skilled in the coaching role. According to Marquardt (2004, 133-158), an empathic coach is essential to promote safety in the real time learning of the group. The coach does not direct, instruct, or correct the group. Instead, the coach’s task is to pose challenging questions to support the reflection, learning, and unlearning of the members.

Modeling the three conditions that Carl Rogers found necessary for transformation in any interpersonal situation (Kramer, 1995a), the coach must be congruent, “fully present in the here and now, with no pretense of emotional distance, no professional façade” (Kramer, 1995a, 87), and show unconditional positive regard and empathy for members of the group as they struggle with questioning and unlearning beliefs that are no longer helpful. When intervening with questions, the coach intends to promote learning-in-action and learning-after-action. The word action in this sense refers not to the action that will be taken by the group to implement change in the organization, but to “speech-action” or dialogue that takes place inside deliberations of the group.

It is important to realize that speech is, in fact, the only “action” that takes place during action learning dialogue:
Speaking is the primary and most influential medium of action in the human universe—in business, in school, among parents and children, and between lovers.... People who speak of moving from talk to action are apparently not awake to the fact that talk is the essence of action.... The very best managers often have an intuitive appreciation for how much we are influenced by the nuclear dynamics of conversational action (Torbert 2004, 27).

Periodically, to promote learning-in-action, the learning coach will interrupt the group dialogue to pose questions such as, “What are we doing well as a group?”; “What might we do better?”; “Are we clear on the nature of the problem?”; “What is stopping us from taking initiative?”; “How creative are our questions?”; “What assumptions have we challenged?”; “What can we do to be more creative?”; “How do our mindset and assumptions influence our choices here?”; and “How might we expand our vision of what we can see about this problem?”

At the end of every session, to promote learning-after-action, the coach will ask members questions such as, “What did we learn about problem-solving during this session?” “About leadership?” “About team building?” “What did we learn that we can now transfer to other problem-solving settings in this organization?” (Marquardt, 2004, 133-158).

ACTING ON THE PROBLEM

After each meeting of an action learning group, acting beyond speaking must also occur. The process of action learning is not merely an opportunity for Socratic questioning and unlearning. Action needs to be taken on the problem, no matter how provisional or incomplete its definition. Action must be tested against the limits of the real organizational culture, with all of its normal constraints, in real time. “There can be no action without learning,” insisted Revans (1983, 16), “and no learning without action.” Action enhances and is imbued with learning, because acting on the problem provides an opportunity for deeper dimensions of inquiry and reflection when the group reunites to review outcomes of the action. The learning that occurs in the interval between adjournment and reunion of an action learning group is similar to the learning that occurs in the “after-action reviews” conducted in the wake of each battlefield maneuver by the U.S. Army.

After-action review, according to one Army commander, “has instilled a discipline of relentlessly questioning everything we do. Above all, it has resocialized three generations of officers to move away from a command-and-control style of leadership to one that takes advantage of distributed intelligence” (quoted in Mintzberg, 2005, 220). One might say that resocialization is sparked by the communal dialogue and reshaping of norms inherent in the processes of unlearning and learning. Unlearning itself may be another name for resocialization.
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Action learning, therefore, often leads to surprisingly creative solutions in the “finding” or the “defining” of a problem. As Weick explains, Army commanders often “fight empirically” against their enemies in order to discover, by retrospective sensemaking, what is ground truth in the battlefield:

Sometimes the officer will need to implement his or her solution with little or no problem definition and problem solving. Only after taking action and seeing the results will the officer be able to better define the problem that he or she may already have solved! (2001, 98)

Note
1. How do we evaluate the long-term effectiveness of action learning? Little research has been conducted on action learning (McGill and Brockbank, 2004). I am now beginning a two-year follow-up evaluation, using periodic in-depth interviews with the graduating executive MPA cohort members and their supervisors, peers, and subordinates. I am also conducting follow-up evaluations of the action learning projects I am collaborating on with senior public administrators at the European Commission in Belgium, Luxembourg, France, and Denmark.

Those interested in action learning may be interested in case-based examples found at http://spa. american.edu/executivempa/action.php.

References
How Might Action Learning Be Used to Develop Emotional Intelligence and Leadership?


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How Might Action Learning Be Used to Develop Emotional Intelligence and Leadership?

Robert Kramer teaches action learning at American University in Washington, D.C. He directed the executive MPA program at AU from 2002–2005. In 2004, he won the Curriculum Innovation Award from ASPA for infusing action learning into AU’s executive program. He has consulted to three universities on how to use action learning for leadership development: Roger Williams University (U.S.), Corvinus University (Budapest), and University of Sharjah (United Arab Emirates). He may be reached at kramer@american.edu.

APPENDIX

1. TITLE: Developing Leaders within the Drug Enforcement Agency’s (DEA) Office of Forensic Sciences

2. MANAGER: Executive Program Participant

3. SPONSOR: Associate Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Forensic Sciences, DEA

4. BACKGROUND
The DEA Office of Forensic Sciences (OF) has undergone many changes in the upper management structure of the Laboratory System during the previous eight years. The addition of eight associate laboratory director positions and numerous retirements of laboratory directors caused a considerable movement in the leadership positions within the Laboratory System. Additionally, a second associate deputy position was added to the staff assigned to headquarters to provide guidance within that office. The bulk of these vacancies were filled by individuals who were enrolled in the Fast Track Program.

The Fast Track Program was implemented during the 1990s as a process to prepare employees for leadership positions in the Laboratory System. The program’s primary requirement was that participants were willing to move among the laboratories and DEA Headquarters to gain knowledge and experience in the various roles within the system. Experience has proven that the Fast Track Program fails to provide critical elements that prepare employees to lead in an environment of scarce resources and changing cultures.

The workforce in DEA Headquarters and the laboratories lack cohesion and also lack an identity with a common purpose. The need for an adequate leadership succession process has contributed to a culture of division and conflict and created an urgent problem within the Laboratory System. The DEA Associate Deputy Assistant Administrator desires to change this culture by redefining the process to prepare employees for these leadership roles in the organization.
5. PROVISIONAL STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
How can the Office of Forensic Sciences redefine the process that prepares employees and then measures their abilities for leadership roles within the DEA Laboratory System?

Possible Core Issues:
- Structural: Does the current structure provide opportunities to develop leadership skills? Should we change to a new structure that requires program managers to develop and use leadership skills? How do we change to a new structure that is the optimal structure for this organization? How do we define a more clear statement of program manager responsibilities vs. the responsibilities of the laboratory directors in the new environment?
- Human Resource: How do we involve each employee in clarifying their individual role? How do we most effectively utilize our human resources in the new process? How do we effectively communicate our role and responsibilities to the larger organization? How do we move closer to becoming a “learning organization”? How do we move closer to becoming a “teaching organization”?
- Political: How do we align all internal SF stakeholders and incorporate them appropriately? How do we manage conflict constructively? How do we align all external stakeholders (e.g., Special Agents in Charge and other Agency Executives) and incorporate them appropriately?
- Symbolic: How do we build a common vision and purpose? How do we institute a high-performing culture of public service? How do we deploy the tools of action learning to grow learning leaders? How do we deploy the tools of action learning to grow teaching leaders?

6. CURRENT RAMIFICATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES
- Lack of a structured program to prepare staff for leadership positions
- Lack of cohesion among headquarters and laboratory staff members
- Confusion within the organization over roles and responsibilities
- Lack of a clear sense of purpose
- Inefficient use of human resources
- Poor communication
- Lowered morale
- Increased anxiety and conflict among staff

7. MEASURES OF SUCCESS
- Structured program with clearly defined staff roles
- Cohesion among staff members
- Clarity within the organization over roles and responsibilities
- A clear sense of purpose among employees
- Optimal use of human resources
- Strong communication within and outside organization
- High morale
- Constructive conflict resolution
- Use of action learning throughout the organization
8. MAJOR STAKEHOLDERS
   • DEA Administrator
   • DEA senior executives
   • SF staff, i.e., program managers and section chiefs
   • All Laboratory System employees

9. TEAM MEMBERS
   Program Manager, Office of Forensic Sciences
   Section Chief, Laboratory Support Section, Office of Forensic Sciences
   Acting Quality Assurance Manager, Office of Forensic Sciences
   Program Manager, Office of Forensic Sciences
   Program Manager, Office of Forensic Sciences
   Program Manager, Office of Forensic Sciences
   Program Manager, Office of Forensic Sciences
   Associate Deputy Assistant Administrator, Office of Forensic Sciences (as available, to provide direction to team)

10. RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT EFFORT
    A maximum of 25% of my workday will be dedicated to this project over three months.
    Team members will be used to identify and solve problems, biweekly, January-March 2007.
    Collaboration with other Program Managers, Section Chiefs, and Laboratory Directors.
    Administrative staff will be involved to edit and prepare a final report to the AD.

11. OTHER RESOURCES/LINKAGES
    SF Senior Management
    HR staff contacts
    Office of Personnel Management staff
    External federal laboratory executive staff contacts
    AU Professors in the Key Executive Program

12. POTENTIAL OBSTACLES/CONSTRAINTS
    Heavy workload/competing priorities of participants
    Lack of cooperation from other DEA offices and external agencies
    Work culture differences among laboratory employees
    Funding constraints

13. COURSEWORK I WILL DRAW ON FOR ACTION LEARNING
    I will draw on the following eight courses:
    Organizational Diagnosis and Change (Robert Kramer)
    Action Learning for Executives (Robert Kramer)
    Budgeting and Financial Management (Ron Rigby)
    Human Resources Management (Robert Lapidus)
    Research and Evaluation (Nancy Kingsbury)
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Executive Problem Solving (Brad Schoener)
Acquisition Management (Ed Girovasi)
Legal Issues in Public Administration (David Rosenbloom)

14. TEAM NORMS
Members will commit to following the ground rules of action learning.
Members will commit to taking action after each meeting.
Members will commit to valuing learning and unlearning just as much as action.
Members will reserve at least 15 minutes at the end of each session to respond to learning questions from the coach.
Meetings will occur only when at least four members and a coach are present.
Dialogue will be earnest, but members will never attack one another.
All members will carry their share of the responsibility.
Members will practice active listening to one another.
Members will respect the confidentiality of the group.

15. PROCESS FOR ACTION LEARNING
Essential Elements
• A problem
• The group
• The questioning and reflection process
• The commitment to taking action
• The commitment to learning and unlearning
• A coach to promote learning-in-action and learning-after-action

Common Understanding of the Problem
• Need to define and redefine the problem
• Full picture of problem and its context before attempting to solve it
• Underlying causes
• Obstacles and how to overcome
• Identify the true problem

Shared Vision/Alternative Future
• Short-range solutions
• Long-range solutions

Common Basic Assumptions
• Be self-aware of one’s mindset
• Examine “taken-for-granted” (TFG) assumptions of DEA culture

Models, Tools and Practices for Action Learning
• Kramer’s model of learning leader, teaching leader and teaching organization
• Kramer’s model of emotional intelligence
• Argyris’s ladder of inference
• Bolman & Deal’s model for reframing organizations
16. TEACHING ACTION LEARNING TO MY TEAM

At the beginning of the project, I will model the role of action learning coach and teach the following action learning model to team members:

To teach the model, I will follow or adapt guidelines from Marquardt, *Optimizing the Power of Action Learning*, 2004, pp. 161-196. (Guidelines may be adapted to fit special requirements of my project, legal constraints or political circumstances.)

All team members are expected to:
- Ask questions (answers may not be within the current set of knowledge and assumptions on which action is based)
- Reframe questions and perspectives
- Be aware of underlying feelings and thoughts behind the words
- Be an active listener vs. filtering/generalizing/forcing
- Be frank and honest, uncovering assumptions and differences
- Keep track of what we are learning
- Share one’s feelings about self-awareness
How Might Action Learning Be Used to Develop Emotional Intelligence and Leadership?

- Conduct frank appraisals of oneself and others
- Continually reflect on what is happening in the process, both implicitly and explicitly, and on the words, actions, and thoughts of all the members
- Rotate role of action learning coach, when possible, among team members
- The coach will use questions from Marquardt, Optimizing the Power of Action Learning, 2004, 133–158.

17. LEARNING JOURNAL

Over the course of the project, I will keep a learning journal to record my reflections. Entries in this journal will help me track my growth and development as a leader and learner. I will record my reflections after each meeting or session of my team. I will also record what I learned during the process of teaching the action learning model to others.

18. WRITTEN REPORT DUE APRIL 27, 2007

I will submit my written report on the date of my oral presentation: April 27, 2007. Questions I will explore in my written report:
- During this project, what did I learn about myself?
- How did these learnings evolve over the course of the project?
- How did my mindset influence the data I saw, the decisions I made, and the results I achieved?
- What was I blind to? What do I still need to learn?
- In what specific ways did I grow or change as a leader? What experiences led to these changes?
- In what specific ways did I grow or change as a learner? What experiences led to these changes?
- How did I demonstrate that I have the capacity to learn how to learn?
- What did I learn about leading others to lead and learn for themselves?
- What did I learn while teaching the action learning model to my team?
- To what extent do I now see myself as a learning leader? What evidence can I provide to support my self-assessment?
- To what extent do I now see myself as a teaching leader? What evidence can I provide to support my self-assessment?
- Which courses did I draw on in the process of conducting this project? At least four courses will be identified. Specifically, how did I apply these courses to the project? (For each of the courses, I will provide at least four references to the books, articles or scholarly readings I used for that course. Not all books, articles or readings need be cited, but the minimum number of references or citations in my written report will be sixteen. If I have doubts about what material to put in quotes, I will use the “four word” rule—more than four consecutive words will be set in quotation marks and cited. I will include a complete bibliography.)
- How feasible is it for action learning to be adopted by other managers or executives in this organization? What conditions would make action learning more likely to be adopted?
• I will add at least two more questions. I will answer all fifteen questions in a specific and clear way. I will not provide vague answers. The report will be no longer than 30 typed, double-spaced pages, excluding the appendix.

• I will seek help or coaching from others for copyediting.

At least two coaches will read and comment on my drafts before I submit the final paper. In an appendix, I will explicitly identify my two coaches’ questions and my responses.

The editorial quality of the paper will be excellent—at a professional level. I will plan to spend at least one-third of my time copyediting and improving the clarity of my response.

19. BEGINNING DATE AND CUT-OFF DATE FOR PROJECT

20. SIGNATURES
   This action learning contract will be considered approved by American University when the following three stakeholders sign and date the contract:

   ___________________________________________  ________________________
   MANAGER  DATE
   Executive Program Participant

   ___________________________________________  ________________________
   SPONSOR  DATE
   Associate Deputy Assistant Administrator
   Office of Forensic Sciences, DEA

   ___________________________________________  ________________________
   AMERICAN UNIVERSITY  DATE
   Robert Kramer, Ph.D.
   Department of Public Administration and Policy
Incorporating Service Learning into Public Affairs Programs: Lessons from the Literature

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Abstract
This article reviews the growing literature on citizen service since 1990 to identify design principles to guide the incorporation of a service learning pedagogy into public affairs programs. The article begins with an analysis of a bibliographic database of service-related research published between 1990 and 1999. Although little of the research focuses specifically on public affairs programs, it is a rich literature that proposes best practices, examines program outcomes, and identifies factors thought to influence the successful implementation of service learning. We build on this analysis by reviewing studies of service learning in public affairs published after 1999 to craft seven design principles: explicit connections between the service activity and learning objectives; reflection; appropriate time commitment; student input; faculty commitment; perceptible impacts; and feedback loops. Our hope is that the design principles provide guidance to those wishing to employ a service learning pedagogy and that subsequent research will test, refine, and expand them in ways that improve the likelihood that these experiences will produce desired learning objectives.

Service learning is becoming an integral part of higher education curricula in the United States. Accordingly, in higher education it is common to find a wide range of service learning opportunities available to students in professional education pro-
grams. Students regularly participate in activities ranging from providing literacy tutoring, helping the aging population, mentoring youth, working in community development programs, improving the environment, or serving in community programs. These activities occur in both classroom and co- or extra-curricular settings.

The literature contains a wide variety of operational definitions of service learning, but common characteristics include:

- it is primarily a pedagogical approach that uses instructional methods that promote learning through active participation in organized experiences that meet actual community needs;
- it is integrated into the academic curriculum;
- it provides students with an opportunity to use their skills and academic knowledge in real-life situations; and
- it promotes a sense of caring for others (Killian 2004; Reinke 2003).

We follow Barbara Jacoby (2003, 3) and view service learning as “a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development. Reflection and reciprocity are key concepts of service learning.”

Increased emphasis on service learning is part of the expanded role that service-related activities have played as a problem-solving instrument in American society since the passage of the National and Community Service Act of 1990. It is also easy to understand why there is growing support for incorporating service learning into the curricula of public affairs programs. Undergraduate and graduate students in public affairs programs are increasingly taking advantage of national service programs such as AmeriCorps to gain job-related experience and pay for their education. Service learning also encourages interaction between students, the public, and community agencies (Dicke, Doden, and Torres, 2004). Thus, courses focused on such things as civic engagement, policy analysis, community development, leadership, public and nonprofit management, program evaluation, and government service delivery provide fertile ground for using a service learning pedagogy to achieve learning objectives (e.g., Killian, 2004; Whitaker and Berner, 2004; Berstein, Ohren, and Shue, 2003; Reinke 2003; Bushouse and Morrison, 2001; Jelier and Clarke, 1999).

Given that service learning is used in a wide range of disciplines and there are a wide range of possible learning objectives, it is not surprising that the literature provides a range of rationales or perspectives on its use. For example, Dicke and others (2004) identified four common perspectives for using the service-learning pedagogy in public affairs programs:

- Community service perspective: service learning provides a way to incorporate meaningful community service into the curriculum to develop a sense of civic responsibility while developing academic skills;
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- Moral development perspective: service learning provides a means for faculty to develop socialization experiences that promote moral and ethical development;
- Political activism perspective: service learning provides a means of promoting social justice and helps combat public apathy, distrust, and contempt toward government; and,
- Instrumental perspective: service learning should be evaluated solely on its effectiveness as an educational tool (Dicke, Doden, and Torres, 2004).

Some of these perspectives are potentially controversial, such as when service learning is instituted for the purpose of moral development or political activism. Others are less so when the focus is on developing academic or professional skills while serving. In either case, what is clear is that each perspective emphasizes vastly different learning objectives and that the effectiveness of a service learning program should be defined in terms of its ability to achieve the desired learning objective.

It is not the intention of this article to critique the merits of these competing perspectives or to argue that one particular set of outcomes or learning objectives is most appropriate. Rather, this paper focuses on identifying elements of program design that can improve the effectiveness of service learning programs regardless of the perspective employed. We do so by drawing attention to the increase in the scholarly and professional service learning literature found in a variety of academic disciplines. This literature is used to suggest design principles that can be used to help implement a service learning pedagogy in public affairs programs. Much of this literature is theoretically based, but it is also informative to practitioners. In this way, the emerging scholarship on service learning helps to fill the gap between the ivory tower side of academia and the concern that many scholars in the social sciences have for addressing important societal and community needs. All of this points to the fact that there is a rich literature from a variety of disciplines that helps inform our understanding of the role service learning can play in public affairs programs.

The objective of this article is to present design principles that can be used to guide the incorporation of a service learning pedagogy into public affairs programs, regardless of one’s perspective on its use. Some of our design principles represent best practices that are widely discussed in the literature, such as the importance of reflection (Bringle and Hatcher, 1996; Hatcher and Bringle, 1997). Other principles identify critical program design issues such as the intensity or appropriate amount of time that should be devoted to the service activity. However, the research is unclear on how much contact is necessary. In either case, the design principles represent important avenues for future research.

We begin the paper by examining the growing research on citizen service since the adoption of national service legislation in 1990, in order to improve our
understanding of the factors that influence the effectiveness of service learning in public affairs programs. This involved drawing generalizations about the field of citizen service based primarily on an analysis of a bibliographic database of service-related research published between 1990 and 1999 (Perry and Imperial, 2001; Perry and Katula, 2001; Perry et al., 1999). While little of this research focuses on public affairs programs, it is a rich literature that proposes best practices, examines program outcomes, and identifies factors thought to influence the successful implementation of service learning. The second part of the paper builds on this analysis by using a review of studies of service learning in public affairs programs published after 1999 combined with the authors' personal experiences to craft a set of design principles that can be used to guide the use of a service-learning pedagogy in public affairs curricula. Our hope is that the design principles provide guidance to those wishing to employ a service learning pedagogy and that subsequent research will test, refine, and expand them in ways that improve the likelihood that these experiences produce desired learning objectives.

Developing the Database

The first step in crafting design principles involved reviewing a bibliographic database developed under the auspices of the Research Task Force of the Grantmaker Forum on Community and National Service as part of a larger research project on citizen service. The database was constructed by searching nine databases using a variety of search terms related to citizen service, service learning, and service-related activities for the period 1990–1999. Given the different terminology used in academic disciplines, our strategy was to cast a wide net. The databases searched were Academic Search Elite; Book Where; Dissertation Abstracts International; ERIC (Education); Government Documents; PAIS (Public Affairs); IPSA (International Political Science Abstracts); SocioFile (Sociology); and PsycINFO (Psychology). The product of these searches was a series of bibliographic records. We examined the individual database searches in order to remove unwanted records, such as references that included search terms but did not involve studies of citizen service. We then merged the individual searches into one database and duplicate records were removed. The remaining abstracts were coded and labeled with key words to facilitate searching the database. The result was a database containing 2,558 bibliographic records and abstracts of service-related research published between 1990 and 1999 (Perry et al., 1999).

The next step involved a further review of the database to identify records that were research oriented. This was done by examining such things as whether the study employed standard social science research methods, used quasi-experimental designs, developed conceptual or theoretical frameworks, or tested hypotheses. This produced a smaller database containing 997 records. From this subset of records, we identified 236 entries involving service-learning research focused on education at all levels. Because we were only interested in service-learning as
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practiced in higher education, a subsequent sort reduced the database to a total of 102 records. These database entries were then systematically coded and analyzed using procedures recommended in the literature (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

**Lessons from the Service-Learning Literature**

We learned a great deal by analyzing the abstracts in the larger database, and many of these findings are discussed in greater detail elsewhere (e.g., Perry and Imperial, 2001; Perry and Katula, 2001; Perry et al., 1999). Service-related research is found in a wide variety of academic disciplines and professional fields, including education, political science, public affairs, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and business. Unfortunately, there appear to be few cross-disciplinary attempts to synthesize this literature. It also appears that the work by researchers in one discipline is often neglected by those in other disciplines (Perry and Imperial, 2001).

Our detailed analysis of the subset of the larger database, focused on service-learning in higher education, also produced interesting findings. When we focused on the “service” component of these studies, we found that 59, or approximately 58 percent, involved some aspect of community service, 18 involved some type of volunteer activity (mostly in tutoring, mentoring, and literacy programs), and 11 involved working in primary or secondary education. Other policy areas where “service” was located involved programs dealing with community development (9), intergenerational or aging populations (8), character education (5), human needs such as poverty (4), and the environment (4). Accordingly, although only five studies specifically examined the use of service learning in public affairs courses, the literature clearly illustrates that this pedagogy has been used in a wide range of policy contexts.

Of specific interest to this study was the service-learning research focused on identifying best practices, program outcomes, or factors that influenced program effectiveness. After coding the 102 bibliographic records in our database, we found that 30 consisted primarily of descriptive case studies or other types of studies that did not focus specifically on best practices, outcomes, or factors influencing effectiveness. The discussion that follows is based primarily on the examination of the remaining 72 records that consisted of case studies focused on identifying best practices (11, or 15.3 percent), survey research involving students (17, or 23.6 percent), faculty (6, or 8.3 percent), service providers (4, or 5.5 percent), or program evaluations (27, or 37.5 percent), many of which employed quasi-experimental research designs (14, or 19.4 percent).

Table 1 illustrates the wide range of outcomes or learning objectives that researchers have examined. They also reflect many of the competing perspectives of service learning observed by Dicke and others (2004). In 19 studies, the specific learning objective was hard to determine or the outcome used was vague, like “make a difference.” The most common learning objective (17 studies) was to change the attitudes of the service participant. These were wide ranging, such as
the understanding of some social problem or attitudes toward diversity, racism, or the elderly. Twelve studies examined whether the service participant had a sense of increased civic engagement, while eight looked at changes in attitudes toward service or a general future commitment to volunteering. Five studies examined character development, and two looked at changes in empathy. Seven studies focused specifically on academic achievement and whether participation in service-learning led to higher grades. Another common set of outcomes focused on the development of various skills such as problem solving (4), communication (3), interpersonal (2), leadership (2), or organizational (1). Others examined cognitive dimensions (6), personal development (4), and self-esteem (2). Some of the studies also examined the impact of service-learning programs on faculty (2), their institution (2), and the community (5).

Measuring the impact of program characteristics on the service-learning experience is a more difficult proposition. Many studies produced mixed results. For example, a comprehensive study by the RAND Corporation found that participation in a service-learning course had only modest effects on students’ civic participation and life skills and no effect on their academic and career development. On the other hand, RAND found that participation in service learning was positively associated with gains in students’ civic and interpersonal skills and that the quality of the course made a big difference in the results (Gray et al., 2000, 39). It also observed no negative effects associated with participation, whereas other researchers have noted instances in which service led to negative outcomes (Marks, 1994; Blyth, Saito, and Berkas, 1997).

Further complicating matters is the fact that little of the research in the database focuses specifically on linking elements of program design to changes in outcomes. Instead, the research tends to identify factors that appear to influence program outcomes or help explain the presence or absence of desired findings. While the best practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Outcomes Examined in Service-Learning Programs (No. of Studies)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Used a vague measure (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic achievement (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes toward service (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes toward some sort of social problem or issue (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic engagement (12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive dimensions (usually associated with a specific learning model) (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal skills (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job placement and development (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership skills (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous skills (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral development and values (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational skills (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal development (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Research in our database does not focus specifically on identifying design factors, but it tends to rely on case studies rather than using research methods with greater generalizability (e.g., quasi-experimental designs). Perhaps more troubling is the fact that only two studies focused on older students at the graduate level. It is unclear to what extent the findings reported for undergraduates will hold for graduate students (Reinke, 2003).

Although there is clearly much that remains to be learned about using the service learning pedagogy in public affairs programs, the database does provide some clues about factors that affect the implementation of service learning programs. Table 2 indicates the wide range of critical factors or design principles identified in our review of the database. Some of the factors were identified as “best practices” while others represent factors that modified the success in achieving outcomes. It is clear from even a casual review of the factors in Table 2 that the list of potential factors is far from complete. The following section proposes a series of design principles based on our review of the database. Where research is lacking, we rely on our collective experiences with incorporating service learning into public affairs courses to craft design principles. Some design principles are obvious and represent best practices.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Design Factors Influencing Outcomes and Best Practices Identified (No. of Studies)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age of students participating (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of agency supervision (agency sponsoring server) (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of contact (e.g., hours served) (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class size (presumably related to faculty supervision) (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty motivation (often used to explain why pedagogy is used) (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of planning and designing service component (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional support (often used to explain why pedagogy is used) (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid vs. unpaid service activities (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership with the service providers (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of the student placement (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection—General importance (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection—Journals (11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection—Class discussion (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection—Student paper/project (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection—Progress reports (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection—Focus groups (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship student has with faculty member (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk management concerns (often used to explain why pedagogy is used) (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service is linked to learning objectives (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student involvement in planning service activities (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student preparation for service projects (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student supervision by faculty member (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students perceive they are making a difference (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students perceive the link to the course material (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students help set learning goals (1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
advocated in the service-learning literature. Others represent important program design questions that have received far less attention in the literature.

**Design Principles for Effective Service Learning**

Professional schools often focus on creating a variety of experiential learning opportunities for their students (Whitaker and Berner, 2004; Bringle and Hatcher, 1996). In public affairs programs, the service learning pedagogy has been incorporated into the curriculum in various ways such as through internships (stipended or nonstipended) (Bringel and Hatcher, 1996), some form of project-based classroom experience (Killian, 2004; Whitaker and Berner, 2004; Bernstein, Ohren, and Shue, 2003; Bushouse and Morrison, 2001; Jelier and Clarke, 1999), or capstone classes involving applied service projects (McGaw and Weschler, 1999). It is important to acknowledge that internships, class service projects, capstone classes, or other volunteer experiences associated with a public affairs program are not inherently service learning. Service learning is a pedagogy that involves explicitly linking a service activity to learning objectives and course material through reflection. Moreover, unlike internships, class projects, and practica, service learning is not necessarily skill-based as is often the case in professional education (Bringle and Hatcher, 1996).

Effective service learning depends on establishing clear learning objectives for the service activity, an effective program design, and then using appropriate evaluation tools to assess student learning (Dicke, Doden, and Torres, 2004, 200–201). In this section, we propose seven interrelated principles for designing effective service-learning programs. These include (1) explicit connections between service activity and the learning objective(s); (2) reflection; (3) appropriate time commitment or amount of contact; (4) student input; (5) faculty commitment; (6) perceptible impacts of the service activity; and (7) feedback loops. Some design principles, such as student input, precede others, such as reflection. Others principles such as perceptible impacts, reflection, and amount of contact with the service activity moderate the success of the service and learning components of a service learning experience. The design principles are also inherently linked by feedback processes. Like traditional models of experiential learning, in which theory is informed by experiences that, in turn, produce changes in the learner and the cycle is repeated again, we view the service-learning experience as an iterative process (Kolb, 1984).

**Explicit Connections Between the Service and Learning Objectives of an Activity**

Nine studies in the database identified the linkage of the service and learning objectives as being a critical factor in achieving desired program outcomes. This should not be surprising. As Tai-Seale noted, “Service learning is not synonymous with service—even if reflection and reciprocity are added. The service must be linked to learning objectives in the curriculum (2001, 14–15).” Moreover, as Dicke and others (2004, 199) argue, the “benefits of service learning pedagogy do
not occur just when a community-based project is added to a syllabus.... Successful service learning projects are designed with clear learning objectives in mind; without these objectives, the pedagogy can be a time-consuming and ineffective instructional tool." As noted earlier, instructors can have vastly different learning objectives based on their perspective of service learning and the course in question. Thus, the issue is not whether students are learning, but what it is that students are expected to learn and whether they are in fact learning it (Dicke, Dowden, and Torres, 2004, 201). Thus, the service activity should be designed to help students to gain further insight into principles or substantive issues that they are studying in the classroom (Kirlin, 2002; Rocha, 2000).

Several recent studies in public affairs programs have noted the importance of linking the service activity to learning objectives (e.g., Dicke, Dowden, and Torres, 2004; Bushouse and Morrison, 2001). What these studies suggest is that there are advantages to having explicit connections between service in the field and learning in the classroom. For example, students enrolled in a course on social justice served in a soup kitchen on four different occasions. The students returned to the classroom, where they reflected upon their experiences through a series of assignments that connected the service they had performed with substantive issues they were studying. Survey research showed that the students began thinking about social responsibility and their ability to cause social change (Yates and Youniss, 1998).

In another example connecting service with learning, college students enrolled in a course titled “Contemporary Political Issues” completed a questionnaire at the beginning and end of the course. Two of the eight sections of the course included a service component. Students in the service sections completed 20 hours of service at designated agencies during the semester. The authors found that participants

- were more likely to believe they had performed up to their potential in the class;
- finished the course with higher class attendance rates;
- achieved higher grades in the course; and
- gained/learned more from the class than students in the sections that did not include service components (Markus, Howard, and King, 1993).

The Active Citizenship Today program is another good example that illustrates the benefits of connecting student involvement in the community with academic skills and addressing public problems. Through integrating service with classroom experience, participants in the program

- experienced an increased sense of belonging to their community;
- experienced increased self-esteem and problem-solving capabilities;
- scored higher on civic participation attitudes; and
- experienced a more positive attitude toward school, community, family, and friends (Ford, 1995).
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Such results demonstrate why establishing explicit connections between service and learning is important. Explicit connections are fostered by building them into the service-learning experience, using student reflection and other methods. In addition, variations in student input, time on task, and incorporating feedback from students will also affect the way in which service experiences can be usefully connected with learning. What this suggests for public affairs programs is that service learning involves more than simply adding a requirement such as serving with an agency or doing an applied community-based project.

Reflection

Reflection is a critical component of any effective service learning program (Hatcher and Bringle, 1997). Our analysis of the database supports this conclusion with numerous studies identifying reflection as either a best practice or as a critical factor in determining whether outcomes were achieved. It is also clear that reflection comes in many forms, with a variety of studies examining the effectiveness of journals (11), class discussion (2), student papers or projects (2), progress reports (1), and focus groups (1). Similarly, the service learning literature on public affairs programs has noted the importance of reflection and the use of techniques such as journals and essays (Koliba, 2004; Whitaker and Berner, 2004; Dede, 2002; Bushouse and Morrison, 2001; McGaw and Weschler, 1999). The value of reflection is also well accepted within public affairs programs as illustrated in the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) internship guidelines (http://www.naspaa.org/principals/resources/internship.asp), which call for an academic seminar to strengthen learning from internships. Reflection is also frequently a part of capstone or project-based classes.

Reflection allows students and their instructors to consider the service in which the students have engaged and to connect the service experience with course material and with larger issues such as citizenship, ethics, and civic responsibility. The primary purpose of reflection is to provide meaning and context to the service students have provided. However, reflection can also help the instructor to pursue academic goals within a service-learning course. Reflection assignments can integrate concepts from the course with student experiences. Some of the positive effects that are frequently cited include

- enhancing the quality of student/faculty relationships;
- an increased ability to identify important social issues and to gauge the consequences of one’s actions; and
- valuing the potential of assuming leadership roles in one’s future.

This suggests that the positive benefits of reflective activities are not limited to students, but can also have positive effects on the development of student-faculty interactions (Eyler, Giles, and Braxton, 1997). Within the graduate public affairs
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arena, the reflection accompanying service learning differentiates it from traditional client-based practicum experiences, and Bushouse and Morrison (2001) believe it improves the overall MPA experience.

Various types of reflection may be used individually or they may be combined (Hatcher and Bringle, 1997). Reflection can also take a variety of written or oral forms. Students may keep journals of what they did during their service activities. They may also write papers that discuss their service experience along with other related issues. Seminar courses may require that students reflect on their experiences by gathering for discussion groups with each other and their instructors. For example, students in a philosophy course with a service component volunteered for 15 hours of service, maintained a journal, and wrote a four-page reflection journal that integrated their service experience with the course material. Students also reflected upon their experiences through interviews (Fenzel and Leary, 1997). Thus, reflection is a critical means of helping students understand the significance of the service in which they participated and helps reinforce the learning objectives addressed during the service experience.

Hatcher and Bringle (1997) provide some useful guidelines for developing effective reflection activities. They suggest that effective reflection activities: (1) link the experience to the learning objective; (2) provide guidance for the reflection activity; (3) schedule the activities regularly; (4) allow for feedback and assessment; and, (5) includes a clarification of values. Moreover, while each method of reflecting upon one's service may work well when used individually, we suggest using a combination of reflection activities, because written reflection is quite different from verbal group reflection. The former allows the student to explore personal experiences, and the latter permits students to learn from their peers’ experiences. Students also learn and process information in different ways, so using multiple techniques may improve the learning component of the service-learning project. One way of combining these methods is to have students keep a journal or write a statement about their service. Although this allows the student to reflect in an inward-looking manner, we also believe that students should share and discuss these statements with their colleagues. This will allow students to also reflect interpersonally by comparing experiences and viewpoints on the service they have performed.

One more note on reflection is in order. Very few studies, if any, have focused on appropriate levels of reflection within service-learning programs. However, reflection is not a practice that should be reserved until the end of a service experience. Instead, in long-term service projects, which may last, for example, over the course of a semester, reflection can and should occur often (Hatcher and Bringle, 1997).

Appropriate Time Commitment

Nine studies in the database examined the extent to which the amount of time spent on the service activity influenced the effectiveness of service learning.
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programs. Of particular interest is whether there is some minimum or maximum amount of time or contact that students should spend on a service project? Research results on this topic are worth reviewing.

In a study of students’ effectiveness as citizens, time had a positive and significant effect for students engaging in community-based service activities. However, this was the case as long as the amount of service did not exceed one or two hours weekly. Generally speaking, the study concludes that levels of citizen efficacy rise with the amount of time spent on service, but that this trend is not linear. The author concludes that if high schools sponsor service programs, a learning component and support structure should be included, as required service without these elements negatively affects students’ citizen efficacy (Marks, 1994).

One or two hours weekly might not seem like much time to engage in service. In another study that gauged service-learning effects on suburban high school seniors involved in community service, time played quite a different role than in the previous study cited. The author found no difference between attitudes toward the personal and social responsibility of students participating in a required 10 hours of community service and students not participating. However, students involved in required community service for more than 10 hours demonstrated a positive change in attitude toward personal and social responsibility (Williams, 1993).

In short, the complexity of the social world makes it difficult to gauge how many hours of service are appropriate for a given project. The key variables of any service project are likely to differ to a high enough degree to make devising an ex ante number of hours for service very difficult, if not impossible. In short, no obvious formula exists for arriving at the appropriate number of service hours. Instead, the designers of service learning will have to rely to a large extent on their knowledge of the attributes of the server, the attributes of the service activity, and the population to be served to make these experiences beneficial to the server and to the served (Perry and Imperial, 2001).

Although the specifics may vary from context to context, we believe that allocating appropriate time to the service activity is vital. By this we mean that students must spend enough time in a particular service activity to develop an understanding of the problem, appreciate their role in the service activity, and create a sense of ownership of the task they are to accomplish while serving. This can help to maximize the benefits derived from the service learning experience.

The issue of time spent on service remains one of the more troublesome in the field of service learning. The preceding results cast doubt on service-learning programs that mandate a particular number of hours per student, regardless of the nature of the task. This discussion does suggest, however, that designers of service-learning programs who take local and specific conditions into consideration when formulating service-learning programs are acting appropriately.
For incorporating service learning into public affairs programs, a 20-hour-per-week internship over the course of a semester or summer is probably sufficient time to achieve many of the goals that are typically established for internships. A semester-length project-based or capstone class is also probably an adequate period provided that the project is of sufficient complexity to demand more than an hour or two of a student’s time each week (Jelier and Clarke, 1999). Conversely, intensive capstone or project-based classes held over a two- or three-week period during an intercession or following a semester may allow adequate time for a service project, but may provide insufficient time for reflection.

**Student Input**

Experiential learning is particularly important for adults, because faculty members “assume that students are motivated to learn by their own values, including their professional and public service goals, rather than by grades or other extrinsic rewards supplied by professors” (Whitaker and Berner, 2004, 280). Accordingly, it is reasonable to assume that levels of interest and dedication in service learning will rise when the student servers have a voice in designing the nature of their service. Student input may also increase motivation and the likelihood that the learning objectives associated with the service project are readily understood and met. Two studies in the database suggest that student involvement in planning activities can influence the effectiveness of service learning programs. Another study suggests that student involvement in setting learning objectives can improve program performance. Recent literature also yields evidence that student input increases the quality of service projects (e.g., Morgan and Streb, 2000; Miller, 1997).

Let us illustrate how student involvement can be incorporated into service learning courses, using as examples internships and projects, the two most common modes for service learning in public affairs programs. Internships are probably the most common vehicle through which students in public affairs programs engage in service learning. Well-designed internships yield multiple benefits. Agencies receive skilled and inexpensive staff. Students build skills through real-world experience. This experience and the networking opportunities it affords can also help students to land jobs in the area they desire or can facilitate their transition to a new profession. The experience that students derive is not only an investment in their professional futures, but also allows them added insight when they return to the classroom (Denhardt, Lewis, Raffel, and Rich, 1997). Many public affairs programs have internships built into their degree requirements. Some are paid a nominal wage; others are unpaid. If students are going to serve as interns then they should be allowed some input in choosing where to serve. For example, students interested in a career in environmental regulation should be allowed the opportunity to serve in an agency engaged in the formulation or
implementation of environmental policy, in contrast to being assigned to a social service agency to simply satisfy a requirement.

A program leader can require that students study various agencies before choosing one in which to serve. Conducting such research allows students to determine if the activities of the agency fit their own interests and whether the experience and skills that they bring to the service experience will benefit the agency. This provides for a better overall match between the student and the agency. In the case of paid internships, students may even have to compete against other students for prized internships, which also should improve their motivation to do well and succeed.

Furthermore, there is an added benefit to having students study agencies before serving in them. Weaving student input into internship programs prepares students for the job search. The two processes can be very similar, because in both cases the student tries to capitalize on personal interests and skills as much as possible in finding a place to begin his or her career. The internship may also provide contacts that facilitate the job search.

Project-based courses can also be managed to provide opportunities for student input into the content of the project. This input is important because it provides students with a greater reason to care about the project and see its goals to fruition. It can also be designed to produce work products that enhance the students’ professional portfolio. For example, courses can be designed around local problems. In this case, the professor can try to match students with problems of interest to them and then supply students with information on local problems and agencies. Students can then study the problem and seek to remedy it through a responsible local agency or organization. Students can also work on projects that produce work products that are then presented to a client agency. Aside from producing a work product that can enhance a student’s professional portfolio, this type of experience can help simulate professional expectations and generate peer pressure for group members to produce high-quality work products.

In addition to these two structured ideas, students and professors can collaborate on a one-on-one basis, with the student designing the research and service to be undertaken. The professor can help to hone the focus of the project and to ensure that it is feasible, given local conditions. Another means for student input is to have them design a contract—signed by the student, the agency, and the faculty supervisor—that articulates roles, responsibilities, and learning objectives associated with the service activity.

**Faculty Commitment**

Institutional support, and most importantly faculty commitment, are important to the success of a service learning pedagogy. Nine studies in the database identify institutional support (e.g., funding, training, commitment from administrators and college leaders) as a variable to explain why faculty chose to incorporate service learning into the curriculum. More important is a faculty commit-
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ment to using the service learning pedagogy. The database identifies a range of potential variables associated with the level of faculty commitment, including faculty motivation (5 studies), importance of planning the service activity (2), developing an effective partnership with service providers (2), proper preparation of students for service projects (1), student supervision during the service project (4), and ensuring that agency sponsors provide adequate supervision (1).

The recent literature on service learning in public affairs programs provides similar observations. Faculty commitment to the service learning pedagogy is important because academic courses that engage the community require more extensive preparation by instructors (Tai-Seale, 2001; Jelier and Clarke, 1999). For example, instructors must specify learning objectives and link them to service activities, develop effective partnerships with service providers, provide information about the community being served and the nature of the service, ensure that students are properly trained for the work that must be done, and regularly provide feedback on reflection activities to ensure that the learning objectives are being met.

Of equal interest here are the reasons why some faculty find the service learning pedagogy intimidating to use. These include faculty not having the time to develop new course modules; not having the necessary contacts with community agencies; lacking the expertise across all areas of potential service learning projects; feeling isolated and alone when doing service learning projects; and lacking the resources (financial or otherwise) for such a project (Bernstein, Ohren, and Shue, 2003). Because the service learning pedagogy can be intimidating to use, having appropriate institutional support is important for it to flourish (Langseth and Plater, 2004).

Perceptible Impacts

A number of the factors identified in our analysis of the database suggest the importance of perceptible impacts or results of the service activity (Table 2). Such impacts might make it easier to develop effective partnerships between educators and agencies, increase the likelihood that agency sponsors provide adequate supervision for students, and lead faculty to see the benefits of using a service learning pedagogy as outweighing costs. Similarly, it may make their host institutions (e.g., colleges, departments) more likely to provide the support necessary for faculty to use the pedagogy.

Perhaps most important is that students can see the effects of the service activity and recognize the connection to the course material and learning objectives. In order for students to feel that they have really made a contribution by serving, we believe that the impact of their work must be perceptible to them on some level. For example, students interns should, by the end of their internship, feel that the time they have spent has contributed to some positive outcome. While this conclusion seems clear enough, designers of service learning programs often struggle with achieving this end.
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Service learning activities that involve community development make good use of this idea. In the Neighborhoods 2000 program, youths 21 years old and younger were brought together with community members 60 years old or older (Blyth, Saito, and Berkas, 1997). Benefits of the program included:

- eradicating age-related stereotypes;
- developing a sense of camaraderie between participants;
- enhancing a sense of citizen responsibility and community activism; and
- conveying a sense of cultural continuity.

There is also evidence that direct interaction between students and those served has effects that extend beyond the close of the initial service-learning experience. Youth in service-learning programs who got to know those they were helping reported that they were more likely to serve others in the future than youth who did not get to know those they were helping. In addition, other scholars have reported that one of the major reasons why students voluntarily engage in service learning is the motivation to help other people. There is also evidence that such altruistic behavior is passed intergenerationally (Verba, Schlozman, and Brady, 1995). This altruistic impulse suggests that outcomes that affect others should be built into the goal structure of service-learning programs. However, this does not mean that students performing service must work face-to-face with those benefiting from their service. For example, neighborhood clean-ups or work in parks can also yield direct, tangible benefits to others, without face-to-face interaction with residents (Astin and Sax, 1998).

Another example of establishing perceptible impacts from service comes from the University of Colorado, Denver (Robinson, 2000). Students enrolled in the “Urban Citizen” course engage in both physical service and also community organization and political agitation for fair housing standards in Denver. These service experiences accompany seminars dealing with issues of urban poverty and community development. The course has been so successful that in 1998 the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded a grant to the university to establish a community organizing and research center (http://thunder1.cudenver.edu/polisci/community.html). The message that the Urban Citizen course conveys to students is clear—that working for the good of the community can yield very tangible benefits.

This research offers some guidance in ensuring that service-learning experiences in public affairs programs have perceptible impacts. The service that students provide should have some potential to yield change that is visible or perceptible to the students taking part in the service activity. We use the word potential because in most situations change will be dependent upon a variety of variables, not just student service. Thus, the absence of an impact does not necessarily negate a possible learning experience. In fact, the failure to have an impact could provide important learning opportunities, related, for example, to lessons about bureau-
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cracy, how regulatory systems function and work in practice, or other fundamental aspects of public affairs.

Research also provides guidance for designing internships with a service-learning component. What is important is that students are placed in a position within a sponsoring institution that allows them an opportunity to make a difference. Accordingly, internships should be carefully designed so that a student is more than simply a part-time worker logging a certain number of hours per week in an organization. Instead, the student should be working on a meaningful project that can be completed during the prescribed timeframe, or at least is completed before they graduate from a program. Alternatively, they could be involved in providing information to decision makers and have an opportunity to witness what happens with this information. For a project-based class, it is important to design projects that can be completed in the specified period of time (for example, one semester). It also may be beneficial to incorporate projects for real clients so that the students have an opportunity to witness what is done with the results of their analysis.

Feedback Loops

The last design principle is a concept borrowed from teaching methodology. Feedback mechanisms should be established throughout the service-learning course to help students, instructors, and the agencies or individuals to be served achieve the optimum benefit from the experience. Recent literature on service learning in public affairs has noted the importance of providing feedback to students from faculty and their agency sponsors (e.g., Whitaker and Berner, 2004; Bushouse and Morrison, 2001). Moreover, the literature on reflective activities (e.g., journals, class discussion, papers, etc.) in the database as well as in recent public affairs literature also argues that feedback is important (Koliba, 2004; Dede, 2002; Hatcher and Bringle, 1997).

Feedback can be solicited from students, clients (those being served), agency sponsors, and faculty at any point during the service experience. For example, feedback about interns can be solicited from sponsoring institutions. Classes using community-based projects can solicit from client agencies feedback that is shared with the students in the class (Whitaker and Berner, 2004). The substance of the feedback will vary. From a faculty standpoint, they should be concerned with whether the learning objectives are being met. Students should also be allowed to offer feedback to the instructor during the course and presumably will evaluate the service-learning experience through a formal process after the course has ended. Suggestions offered in these evaluations should be used to improve future versions of the service-learning course. Alternatively, it is important that students receive the feedback and direction necessary to ensure that the learning objectives are met.
DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Although all the design principles are connected at a general level, some of these relationships are worth examining in future research to better understand their interrelationships and how they mediate the success of a service-learning activity. This could lead to additional design principles that would further enhance the effectiveness of service learning in the public affairs curriculum.

Student input appears to be closely tied to perceptible impacts. We draw this conclusion because the instructor, after considering input from students, must be able to gauge whether or not the service project will actually have potential impacts that are perceptible to the student. In this sense, the instructor acts as a regulator, allowing students as much leeway as possible in offering input into the design of the service project, but also making sure that the project will yield the desired results. Accordingly, it is worth improving our understanding of the relationship between student input, the presence of perceptible impacts, and the effectiveness of a service-learning experience.

Time devoted to a service-learning activity also appears to be related to perceptible impacts and the effectiveness of these activities. As noted earlier, the appropriate length of time devoted to service learning is debatable, but it appears that some nontrivial commitment of time to service may be critical for the success of a service-learning experience. While the amount of time required to achieve the learning objectives is unclear, an improved understanding of relationships among time devoted, perceptible impacts, and other design factors should improve the design of service learning programs.

There also appears to be a strong relationship between the quality of reflection—and therefore the quality of the overall service-learning experience—and designing an activity with perceptible impacts. As Zlotkowski (1995, 125) warns, reflection can too often amount to little more than student “discovering” a predetermined ideologically correct interpretation of the service experience. Reflection becomes more meaningful when students can readily see the point of their service activity and the connection between service and concepts studied in the classroom (or other learning objectives) is readily identifiable. The same is true of perceptible impacts. When students can witness the results of their service, their reflective activities are more likely to instill in them a sense of purpose and accomplishment. Accordingly, additional research on these interrelationships is likely to lead to additional design principles that can enhance service learning in public affairs programs.

Lastly, feedback loops tie into all of the design principles. Through steady interaction between students and the instructor, the various components of a service-learning experience can be adjusted to optimize the benefits to both the students and the agency or individuals served. While feedback loops are often advanced within the field of education, there is little research examining these
feedback processes and thus little guidance on how they can be used to enhance service learning in public affairs programs.

**Summary and Conclusions**

Developing design principles for effective service learning will become easier as time passes. Results that look less at the theoretical underpinnings of service learning and more at the actual results of various types of programs are increasing in number, and with the accumulation of information on specific programs more effective generalizations become possible. However, for the time being, some relatively safe bets can be made in designing a service-learning program. What follows might be considered a preliminary checklist of design principles and recommendations for developing an effective service-learning activity:

- Explicit connections between the service being performed and facts, principles, or ideas being studied and discussed in the classroom;
- Reflection that allows students to gain a better understanding of what they have done through service, why they have done it, and how their acts of service might relate to broader concepts of citizenship, morality, and public responsibility;
- An appropriate time commitment that should neither sour the student on the idea of service nor make the act seem trivial, but provides enough time to develop a sense of ownership of the task they are trying to accomplish and reflect on the meaning of the work;
- Student input that takes into consideration the nature of the service to be performed, how this service will be performed, and the goals of this service;
- Faculty commitment to doing what is required to use a service learning pedagogy;
- Perceptible impacts between inputs into the service and outputs as a result of the service that allows students, faculty, and agency sponsors to see the fruits of their labor;
- Feedback loops that allow the various parties to offer input on the service project throughout its course of completion.

There are clearly many ways to incorporate service-learning activities into a public affairs curriculum using these design principles. Internships, community-based projects, and capstone classes are common in many public affairs programs and provide important experiential learning opportunities that can use a service-learning pedagogy to enhance student learning. Service learning is a valuable addition to the curriculum because it enriches the academic experience while developing professional skills that potentially enhance both the employability and civic responsibility of students.
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Notes
1. For more information on the construction of the database and its contents, see Grantmaker Forum on Community & National Service, 2000; Perry and Imperial, 2001; and Perry et al., 1999. The products of this research project include Grantmaker Forum on Community & National Service, 2000; Perry and Imperial, 2001; Perry and Katula, 2001; and Perry et al., 1999.
2. The largest number of records, 475, or 48% of the total, are journal or periodical articles. Although many of these records are peer-reviewed, and therefore met one quality threshold, we were unable to code individual articles for the presence/absence of this attribute. The status of a journal as peer reviewed masks the fact that some articles appearing in peer-reviewed journals may not have been subjected to peer review. At the same time, some journals that are peer reviewed may have high acceptance rates, suggesting that peer review, by itself, is not a highly reliable indicator of quality. The second most frequent type of publication in the database is dissertations. The 194 dissertations in the database represent 20% of the total. The next most frequent type of publication is nongovernmental organization documents, encompassing 18% of the total.
3. The 236 records devoted to service-learning overstate the volume of relevant research from which we were able to draw. For example, only 102 of the 236 service-learning records in the database were focused on higher education. Many of the other studies looked at kindergarten through 12th grade.
4. There is some debate in the service-learning literature about whether a stipended activity can be considered service. Rather than take sides in this debate, we adopted a broad view of the service-related literature and recognized that service at times can include stipended activities.

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Not Your Father’s Public Administration

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Abstract
Globalization, devolution, outsourcing, multi-sector partnerships and networks, and a host of other social transformations are creating new challenges for schools of public administration and policy. These changes in the field demand greater focus on the inter-sectoral delivery of public goods and services, on globalization, and on the leadership of networks, but the core curricula in graduate public administration and policy programs have not yet changed enough to meet those demands. Until the curricula in these programs reflect the new realities of public management and the challenge of public accountability, graduates of these programs may not be fully able to meet the challenges facing today’s public leaders.

Like other institutions of professional learning, schools of public administration and policy are facing new challenges brought about by globalization, devolution, outsourcing, multi-sector partnerships and networks, and a host of other social transformations. With all of these adjustments, the question we ask is whether schools of public administration and policy are doing all they can to prepare their students to be successful public managers. If you believe that the world and the field of public management are changing, the likely answer is no—schools of public administration and policy are not fully meeting the needs of their students. This is not to say that these institutions are failing. Quite the contrary, the faculties of the top public administration and policy schools are undoubtedly imparting a wealth of vital knowledge that could well serve almost anyone entering into public service. And, of course, the principal value of graduate education is the critical thinking and analytical skills students learn in pursuing their degrees—something the best schools do well.

However, in agreement with several top scholars in the field, we argue that schools of public administration and policy are unduly relying on conventional core curricula, crowding out more contemporary curricula that would better serve
students as future public managers or policy analysts. Until MPA and MPP faculties begin to focus more on the inter-sectoral nature of public management, globalization, and the governance of networks, the graduates of these programs may not be fully able to meet the challenges facing today’s public leaders. We believe that central to this contemporary challenge is the concept of public accountability—ensuring the public interest in an increasingly complex, multi-sector, global delivery of public goods and services.

In this article we argue the following:

1. The changing world of public administration and policy requires more focus on the inter-sectoral delivery of public goods and services, on globalization, and on the leadership of networks.
2. The core curricula in public administration and policy programs (the MPA and MPP) have not yet been fully adjusted in response to these new challenges.
3. The curricula offered by schools of public administration and policy should reflect the new realities of being a public manager and the challenge of public accountability by including more courses on policy and administration of multi-sectoral arrangement, globalization, and the ethical leadership of complex networks.

We believe the time is ripe for change, and we offer the following ideas to encourage more debate over current MPA and MPP curricula.

**Changing World, Changing Roles**

The world of public management has radically changed since the middle to late part of the twentieth century, when many senior faculty, including us, received their graduate education. Today, public managers are being called upon to act in very different ways than they once were:

The traditional role of public servants is the delivery of public goods and services. Increasingly, however, public servants are asked not to deliver government services directly, but instead to manage others to accomplish that task. Although the United States has used nonprofit organizations and the private sector to deliver public goods and services since the nation’s founding, the academic disciplines of public policy and public administration did not develop until the 1960’s and 1970’s, a period of rapidly expanding public sector employment. The assumption of those disciplines largely has been that public servants would be the individuals doing the policy analysis, the decision making, and the providing of public goods and services. It may be
time to rethink that assumption, and, with it, the implications for those university degree programs that train today’s public managers (Forrer and Kee, 2004).

Schools of public administration and policy spend a large amount of time and effort preparing their students for employment in the government sector, yet that sector is declining as a share of overall public sector activity and civilian federal employment has actually declined in the last 25 years. Government service (as an activity of government planning, funding, and providing services directly to citizens) has been replaced with public facilitation and governance—the provision of public services through a network of public, private, and nonprofit actors. Public governance requires a new type of public management—engaging the para-public sector (nonprofit and for-profit organizations who operate primarily on government contracts), while maintaining public accountability.

Many government officials have been aware of the shift in the public manager’s role for some time now; for example, the military is increasingly relying on contractors to supplement its “all-volunteer” forces. Thus,

in the 1980’s the Secretary of the Navy announced that the Navy plans to reserve 100 of its 253 admiral slots for officers who have training and experience in procurement. Career “material professionals” would help ensure that Navy procurement personnel have experience and expertise comparable to that of the contractors with whom they deal (Keyes, 2004).

**Inter-Sectoral Management and Public-Private Partnerships**

Increasingly, public managers are involved in inter-sectoral management through their creation of new forms of public-private partnerships (PPPs) that require new types of governance structures and new methods to ensure transparency and accountability. E. S. Savas defines a public-private partnership “as any arrangement between government and the private sector in which partially or traditionally public activities are performed by the private sector” (Savas, 2000). For public managers, the PPPs that provide the greatest governance challenge are those that exhibit the following two qualities:

1. The relationship between the public and private sector organization is ongoing, rather than a one-time relationship, such as might occur in a contract for a good (such as office products); and
2. The private sector is involved in the production of a good or service that normally has been provided by the public sector.
Public-private partnerships have existed in the United States since its founding. During the Revolutionary War, the Continental Congress authorized the use of privateers to harass the British Navy. Later, much of the West was developed through a variety of PPPs, including the transcontinental railway and homesteading. The production of transportation infrastructure has often been undertaken with PPPs, from the development of private toll roads and canals during the nation’s early history up to the present Dulles Greenway—a privately financed, built, and operated toll road from Dulles Airport to Leesburg, VA.

After World War II, PPPs were often used in a variety of urban infrastructure projects. For example, partnerships have been used for urban renewal in which local governments provide tax concessions and improve infrastructure for private development in central cities. The federal government has been supportive in these projects through a variety of grant programs and tax credits. One recent, high-visibility partnership is the new Trans-Texas Corridor, a public-private partnership designed to deliver a complex transportation and infrastructure corridor from Dallas to Houston—to be provided by a global consortium of businesses.

PPPs also have increasingly been used to provide a variety of public services. At the federal level, service contracting in domestic agencies grew by 33 percent during the 1990s (Eggers and Goldsmith, 2004) and has played a key and somewhat controversial role in the war in Iraq, with the private sector feeding, housing, transporting, and even protecting armed service personnel. While the exact number of contractors in Iraq is not known, Eggers and Goldsmith estimate that the ratio of contractors to soldiers is one to 10, compared to one for every 50 to 100 in the 1991 Gulf War (Eggers and Goldsmith, 2004).

Globalization

Laurence O’Toole and Kenneth Hanf highlighted the growing influence of globalization on all levels of governance in their 2002 work *American Public Administration and Impacts of International Governance*. They assert that “the globalized future of public administration is already emerging” (2002). The authors examined how the increased interconnection of multinational authorities (United Nations, World Trade Organization, and European Union) and the influence of international nongovernmental organizations are shaping policies at every level of domestic government. Those public managers at the local level are increasingly having their work changed by global actions. From the external to the internal, international agreements can force modification of local law, while conversely local governments are entering into international agreements with the power to impact national policy. An example of the latter is state and local government use of tax breaks to encourage the location of global companies in their jurisdiction. These new inter-sectoral arrangements lead to a shift from program/departmental-based public organizational structure to a problem/policy-driven, cross-organizational, networked environment.
O’Toole and Hanf conclude that internationalization shapes the perspectives of U.S. administrators. The professional orientations of those involved are molded by their interactions, especially collegial ties with others working on similar challenges...[and] as a result, administrators are likely to develop a more transnational perspective (2002).

Globalization creates the situation in which a public manager’s closest working partner may be located across international and inter-sector borders rather than in the agency across the hall. Schools of public administration and policy need to prepare students for this possibility; students must have inter-governmental and cross-sectoral management skills that can be applied globally.

**Leadership in a Networked World and Public Accountability**

The leaders of twenty-first century organizations face an imperative to change or transform their organizations in this era of globalization, interconnectedness, and increased demands for greater productivity and effectiveness. Events such as the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, and the widespread organizational failures to effectively deal with the Hurricane Katrina disaster have illustrated the need for public and nonprofit organizations to become more nimble and performance oriented while maintaining public accountability.

Current bureaucratic structures, with their emphasis on hierarchy and “silo” delivery of programs, will necessarily have to give way to a heterarchy of systems that interact to meet citizens’ needs. While the exact shape of this heterarchy—a form of organization resembling a network or fishnet—is currently under discussion and is far from clear, what is more evident is that public and nonprofit organizations will have to transform themselves to meet the new challenges and better serve the public. In a heterarchy, authority is determined by knowledge and function—through horizontal linkages, not through the traditional hierarchical form of vertical authority.

To find examples of this trend, we only have to examine the most recent examples of leadership successes and failures during the Hurricane Katrina relief effort. Those leaders in organizations that emphasize leadership in a networked environment performed well. For example, during the first week of the relief effort, Coast Guard crews had rescued an estimated 22,000 people in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. Jim Elliot, helping to oversee rescues from Mobile, attributes the success of the effort to a unified command with states and local industries before the hurricane roared ashore. “We know how to join with other organizations to get the job done,” he said (Barr, 2005). Among other factors was the cross-training of employees and cross-functional teaming.
One of the most significant challenges in the leadership of complex networks is public accountability. Public accountability is the process by which public servants must balance the participating private market and nongovernmental organizations with traditional government structures in the provision of public services while maintaining a sense of accountability to the public being served. Under this concept, the role of the public managers is one of facilitator between the public and the private/nonprofit sector. In this role, the public manager is tasked with upholding the public interest while accruing the benefits of service provision via the inter-sectoral network.

Educating for the Past and Not the Future

The idea of the public manager acting primarily as a facilitator of inter-sector agreements for service or as a leader of multi-sector networks is not new for those now working in governments, nonprofits, and businesses. However, schools of public administration and policy may find themselves behind the reality of current public management practices. Paul C. Light discovered in his 1999 survey of top public administration schools that

[Of the 6.5 courses that constitute the average core curriculum, three courses deal with policy analysis and quantitative methods, a fourth centers on organization behavior broadly defined in this content analysis to include courses on organization theory, public and/or strategic management and general public administration, and a fifth involves public budgeting and public finance. The final one-and-a-half courses deal with a mix of courses ranging from leadership to policy process and ethics (1999).

The difference between traditional core public administration courses and more contemporary courses is representative of what Michael Barzelay described as the difference between the “bureaucratic paradigm” and the “post-bureaucratic paradigm”:

The bureaucratic paradigm informed public administrators that their responsibilities included planning, organizing, directing, and coordinating. Planning meant looking beyond the day-to-day operations of each function…. Organizing meant dividing work responsibilities and delegating…. Directing meant informing subordinates of their respective roles in implementing plans…. Coordinating meant harmonizing efforts and relationships among subordinates (1992).
Light and Barzelay argue that this paradigm existed under highly structured systems that are disappearing from the government and are increasingly rare in other sectors. Barzelay would shift the education of future public managers to the post-bureaucratic paradigm:

The post-bureaucratic paradigm values argumentation and deliberation about the role of the public manager…. [I]nformed public managers today appreciate such varied role concepts as exercising leadership, creating an uplifting mission, strategic planning, managing without direct authority, pathfinding, problem setting, identifying customers, groping along, reflecting-in-action, coaching, structuring incentives, championing products, building teams, and investing in people (1992).

Such ideas, as advanced by Barzelay, need translating into course designs at public administration schools. This translation into coursework has yet to make itself felt in many schools of public administration and policy. A report produced after a 2000 forum held by the School of Public Affairs at the University of Maryland on the direction of public management education stated that the deans and directors of 11 schools of public management were “surprised by the gap between their programs and student needs as expressed in feedback from graduates of those programs particularly in leadership and entrepreneurial training” (UMD, 2000). If the leaders of public management schools are unaware of the needs of today’s public manager, how can they possibly hope to craft programs to educate tomorrow’s public leaders?

While schools of public administration and policy are constantly revising their curricula to meet changing standards and needs, a recent review of leading schools indicates that they are still largely caught up in what Barzelay calls the bureaucratic framework. An examination in 2005 of some leading public administration schools—including the Maxwell School at Syracuse, George Washington University, and the LBJ School at Texas—demonstrated a continued heavy focus on skills that have limited inter-sector application. Of the required core courses, 50 percent primarily dealt with topics of managing a bureaucracy while the remaining 40 percent are analytical-based courses with such classic titles as Introduction to Statistics, Quantitative Analysis, Public Budgeting and Finance, and Policy Analysis. With so many analytical courses concentrated in the core, nearly one-half of the total courses within some programs, it is not a surprise that students struggle to find the time needed to gain the other skills that they need to be prepared for the modern, globalized, networked environment.

To check on recent curricula modifications, we examined the top 10 graduate programs in public affairs as ranked by the 2006 U.S. News and World Report. The survey, albeit informal, reveals only a few courses that fall under Barzelay’s
Although all of the schools and degree programs surveyed maintain a strong focus on quantitative and policy analysis, only a handful offer these core courses in a more globalized context or involve more of an inter-sectoral management focus. Of the 10 schools surveyed, only two of the degree programs included at least one globalized course in their core course requirements, in addition to the traditional policy and quantitative analysis courses requirements.

The first of those two schools is the Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy at Duke University, which offers a course titled Globalization and Governance as part of its core course requirements for the master of public policy. Duke’s Institute of Public Policy also offers Global Public Policy as one of two concentrations in its MPP degree program. The second school that offers a globalized course as part of its core curriculum is the Georgetown Public Policy Institute. The course, titled Ethics in a Globalized World, is an exploration of ethics in the setting of international development.

Among the 10 surveyed schools, only one public policy degree program incorporated at least one core course with a focus on inter-sectoral management. This program, at Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government, offers a course titled Markets and Market Failure. This course examines organizational and market behavior through the lens of microeconomic reasoning of public issues, policies, and programs.

In summary, U.S. schools of public administration and policy do not appear to have significantly invested in courses outside of the mainstream bureaucratic paradigm. There is little focus on globalization and inter-sectoral management and leadership issues and a continued standard focus on quantitative and policy analysis and management of the bureaucracy within the core curricula. However, international scholars have a significant interest in these topics, which eventually should be reflected in the curriculum.

Rejuvenating and Refocusing Public Administration and Policy Curriculum

In *The Tools of Government*, Lester Salamon called the problem facing professional public administrators, and thus schools of public administration, “the revolution that no one noticed” (2002). He argues that most core curricula have failed to keep pace with profound shifts in government and governance—the very areas in which these classes claim to prepare students. These curricula are stuck in

traditional public administration—preoccupied with the internal operations of public agencies...procedures, budgets, and task accomplishment...concepts that leave little room for the proliferation of new forms of public action featuring the wholesale surrender of
key elements of discretionary authority...and spending of public funds to a host of nongovernmental or other-governmental actors (Salamon 2002).

Salamon suggests that public managers need to replace the outdated idea that government is a hierarchal system of agencies focused on program execution with little interaction with the private sector. Public managers now work with policy tools, rather than within rigid programs, and do so in a world of inter-sectoral networks built on negotiation and persuasion—all to deliver service in accordance with citizens’ demands for a smaller but more responsive government.

Donald Kettl reminds us that "every major policy initiative launched by the federal government since World War II—including Medicare and Medicaid, environmental cleanup and restoration, antipoverty programs and job training, interstate highways and sewage treatment plants—has been managed through public-private partnership" (Kettl, 1993, 4). For future public managers to function, even within such traditional governmental programs as Medicare and Medicaid, they require a working understanding of the para-public network.

Paul Light gave four suggestions to schools of public administration in his 1999 work *The New Public Service*. First, counsel students on how to handle sector switching during their careers; Light reported that one-half of the graduates he had surveyed had switched sectors at least once. Second, schools should “liberate more time for other skills” besides quantitative methods and policy analysis—both of which ranked low among MPA/MPP graduates for on-the-job applicability—in the core curriculum. Third, students should be given more training on managing organizational differences across sectors; this would prepare students to be leaders regardless of the sector in which they are working. Fourth, and finally, Light suggests that schools need to eliminate the one-program-for-all-approach, allowing, for example, students focused on a nonprofit career to opt out of coursework solely meant for government employment. These students have many other options for where they receive their master’s degree; wasting their time with bureaucratic analysis classes will only drive them to seek other avenues to gain needed skills (Light, 1999). The same degree of flexibility might be offered to other students, depending upon their field of concentration.

As Salamon noted (2002), “[b]ecause of the shift in emphasis from command and control to negotiation and persuasion, the world of third-party government necessitates a significantly different skill set on the part of public managers and those with whom they interact.” With the varied backgrounds and professional objectives of students now entering public administration and policy schools, it is the responsibility of those schools to educate all those who will be involved in governance—the public manager, the nonprofit director, and the private contractor. All of these professions are viable careers for graduates of public administra-
tion/policy programs, all require these graduates to be prepared for the new realities of modern public service, and all require a highly developed understanding of the importance of maintaining public accountability.

To further this dialogue, we would make the following broad area suggestions, along with a few subsections, to those tasked with developing the public administration/policy/management curricula of the future.

**Inter-Sectoral Management**

Understanding how to manage and lead *public-private partnerships* and the critical skill of *contract management* should become part of the core of any public administration or policy program. MPA and MPP programs should require more classes that will give students the skills needed to succeed in the growing arena of public-private interaction as government procurement officers and inter-sector managers/leaders. The University of Southern California’s School of Policy, Planning and Development has developed a Cross-Sectoral Governance course that might serve as one model. The course seeks to help students to “recognize that the solution to many social problems requires the combined strengths of public, for-private, and non-profit sectors” (Tang, 2004). The George Washington University’s course titled Public-Private Partnerships and Contracting-Out is another possibility (Kee, 2007).

Kettle (2000) noted that “[a]s much of the work in public administration over the last two decades has shown, the federal government’s work is carried out through as elaborate network of contracting, intergovernmental grants, loans and loan guarantees, regulations, and other indirect administrative approaches.” This statement also holds true for state and local governments; as government becomes more engaged in networks of service provision with the nongovernmental public sector, the more the successful public manager will need to have a firm understanding for how those organizations operate.

The addition of courses that would build an understanding of how the public manager is to manage this inter-sectoral network would aid in the development of MPA or MPP students who can operate in the current multi-sector reality. This suggests courses in nonprofit management and managerial economics should be added to the course list for these public management students. In addition, Morse argues that successful collaborative leaders will need such skills as systems and strategic thinking, facilitation, stakeholder analysis and collaborative approaches, and openness and risk-taking (Morse, 2007).

Following the theme of managing the network, no program of public management education should be complete without classwork focused on the management of *inter-governmental relations.* As the business of government becomes more “horizontal—in search of service coordination and integration with nongovernmental partners” it is also becoming increasingly “vertical—through both traditional hierarchical bureaucracies and multilayered federalism” in operation.
Modern public policies do not lend themselves to unilateral action by one government; public managers must be able to work with other leaders across the boundaries of the federal system to achieve policy goals. Schools of public administration and policy should retool core classes to incorporate basic usage of inter-governmental network management tools, or graduates of such programs will find themselves ill-equipped to meet the complex challenges of inter-governmental policy execution.

**Globalization and Global Governance**

The concepts of *globalization* and *global governance* should be integrated into the new public administration curriculum. Governments are being buffeted by rapid globalization to develop new governance strategies to meet the needs of a changing population. Public managers are being pulled in new directions as they try to manage evolving relationships and challenges. These relationships exist in the geographic (migration of people, diverse cultural values), the inter-governmental (state-to-state, among different levels of governments), and the inter-sectoral (para-public). More focus must be given to the training of public administration in the productive handling of these horizontal and vertical relationships.

As O’Toole and Hanf note, “while ‘globalization’ has become a much-abused cliché, researchers and practitioners of public administration, particularly in the United States, have yet to recognize the myriad ways that transnational developments frame and shape virtually the entire gamut of specialties and issues facing the field…. [T]hese shifts call for a revision and critical reappraisal of our inherited notions of governance, management, and accountability. Even the contents and competencies of specialties in the practical details of administration are being refashioned in ways that scarcely have been noted, let alone examined in depth” (2002).

In addition to the Duke and Georgetown courses previously mentioned, other approaches to “globalized” courses include The George Washington University’s course titled Global Market Governance and Public Policy. This course allows students to examine how globalization is affecting traditional approaches to the formulation of certain public policies and their governance as well as new, emerging approaches. The course also allows for an analysis of the rationale for considering public policies as global public policies (Forrer, 2007a). In conjunction with the above course, George Washington offers one that uses the Dominican Republic as a case study for the integration of the public administration of global policy. The course, titled Approaches to Good Global Governance: Lessons Learned from the Dominican Republic, connects global policy with public administration through an interagency commission addressing Millennium Development Goal number six, which focuses on HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases (Forrer, 2007b). The case allows for detailed understanding of the administration of programs involving local, regional, national, and international governance.
Leadership in a Networked World

To create and maintain the above-mentioned networks and to ensure public accountability, the public manager will have to possess leadership skills that can cross every boundary. Ethical leadership training, as Paul Light discovered in 1999, will be one of the most difficult subjects to teach—he only found three schools that had courses addressing ethics and leadership—but one that students wish they had more opportunity to experience. The symposium on leadership education in the June 2005 issue of JPAE is a good first step in examining various approaches to leadership education. JPAE reported that, based on a recent NASPAA survey, the number of schools that emphasize leadership is increasing (JPAE, 2005).

Many good resources are devoted to leadership theories and ethics: Van Wart’s Dynamics of Leadership in Public Service (2005) offers a comprehensive overview of leadership in the public sector, although the book contains no discussion of ethical reasoning; Ciulla’s Ethics, the Heart of Leadership (2004) relates the two areas; Johnson’s Meeting the Ethical Challenges of Leadership (2001) covers the basics of ethical reasoning and includes a number of useful case studies; and Burns’ chapter on “The Structure of Moral Leadership” in Leadership (1978) is a classic in the field. New leadership concepts around the themes of spiritual leadership (Vaill, 1989), servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1998), and transformational stewardship (Kee, Newcomer, and Davis, 2007) are also worth exploring in the context of ethical leadership.

In addition, we observe a developing literature in the field of networked leadership. William Eggers and Stephen Goldsmith (former mayor of Indianapolis) argue for the need for a new pattern of government organization, characterized by the web of multi-organizational, multi-governmental, and multi-sectoral relationships that increasingly constitute modern governance (2004). Public agencies become less important as a service provider and more important as levers of public value. If true, the importance of ethics and public accountability become even more important. Some of these issues were addressed in a recent special issue of Public Administration Review on collaborative public management (December, 2006). One article discussed collaboration as the need “to cooperate to achieve common goals, working across boundaries in multisector relationships (O’Leary, Gerard, and Bingham, 2006).

Maintaining public accountability, while striving to increase private sector investment in the provision of public services, is rapidly becoming one of the most important roles of the public manager. The world is more complex, and public managers are relying on new ways of providing for the public they serve; it is not clear if these new ways are as effective as the traditional line government agency in meeting the public’s needs while remaining accountable to that public. The challenge is in understanding the relationships between the parties. Paul Posner points out that “[t]hird-party providers have independent bases of political power and potentially conflicting goals and interests,” so these “relationships are con-
sequently best characterized as bargaining relationships in which the third-party partners often have the upper hand” (Salamon, 2002).

Schools of public administration and policy must train students to identify public accountability needs, evaluate the accountability within public-private partnerships, and determine how to maintain that accountability while increasing engagement with the para-public sector. Students of public management must be taught why public accountability is critical to the inter-sectoral provision of service, what their role is as the defender of the public interest in the dialogue with the para-public sector, and how to execute these duties with a high level of professionalism. Case studies are a very valuable method of instruction in these areas. With these tools, future public managers will be able to ensure the public interest is represented and even the bargaining field, regardless of which side of the relationship they represent.

**CONCLUSION**

One of the panelists at the University of Maryland conference clearly stated that the problem facing public management education is “a blurring of boundaries among sectors which we [public management educators] must take into account in our curriculum” (UMD, 2000). It was the view of many participants in attendance at this conference that the academic field of public administration and policy needs to move toward a more interdisciplinary approach to teaching. Students must be encouraged to “roam disciplines and integrate them, to cross sectoral boundaries into the world of oversight of private sector contractors, of non-profit and faith-based organizations” (UMD, 2000).

One additional positive trend is a “transatlantic dialogue” conference that met for the third time in 2007, called Leading the Future of the Public Sector (University of Delaware, Newark). A number of papers presented by U.S. and international scholars addressed the themes of leading in a multi-sector environment, including networks, globalization, and new leadership forms.

These curriculum changes also may require changes in the faculty makeup of public administration and policy schools. New faculty with skills in emerging areas of interest and nontraditional public administration and policy studies will have to be welcomed into public affairs schools. Changes in core curriculum and degree focus, whether on nonprofits, global policy and management, or public-private policy and management, need to be implemented to keep pace with shifts in the provision of services. Trends in global governance, inter-sectoral, and inter-governmental public policy and administration must be brought in from the cold and included as essential components of the core curriculum. The ideal of the public manager/leader as ensuring the public interest in public-private partnerships need to be fully developed as a critical undertone to all public administration and policy courses. As these trends and issues intensify in the future, MPA and MPP graduates must be ready.
One issue that will have to be addressed is the standards and policies for accrediting schools of public administration and policy. Accreditation standards tend to be backward looking. They reward schools for conformance to past standards and criteria. University faculties may fear that attempts to create new courses around the themes suggested in this article may be viewed with suspicion by accrediting teams. Instead, we would argue that such bodies need to encourage experimentation and expansion of core curricula to reflect the increasing realities of our post-bureaucratic environment. Fortunately, the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) has launched a major accreditation effort (NASPAA Standards 2009), a three-year enterprise to develop and deliver a new set of quality measures and assessment processes to be used in MPA/MPP program accreditation. NASPAA is welcoming comments and appears to be open to addressing many of the ideas outlined in this article.

Are schools of public policy and administration doing the best job that they could in preparing their students to be successful public managers and policy analysts? The debate over which subjects warrant placement in the core curriculum and which topics should be relegated to elective course status is one that should be occurring in NASPAA and in every school of public administration and policy. Although some recent signs indicate that the schools of public policy and administration are beginning to catch up to the current realities of the practice of public management, there is still much to do.

Notes
1. We have used the term “public management” to represent the professional aspects of the field and “public administration” and “public policy” to cover the education of those public management professionals, those students in MPA or MPP programs. Public administration and public policy should be understood to include all the many names and subsets of the public management education field.
2. The term para-public was adopted from Carleton University course PADM 5109, titled Management in the Para-Public Sector (2005/2006 Carleton University Graduate Calendar, 312).
3. Public policy analysis rankings according the U.S. News and World Report, Graduate School Rankings 2006, are as follows: University of California-Berkley, Harvard University, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, Carnegie Mellon University, Duke University, Syracuse University, University of Chicago, Princeton University, University of Texas-Austin, Georgetown University.
4. Harvard University’s Kennedy School (www.ksg.harvard.edu) and Business School (Harvard_Business_School_Pub@hbsp.ed10.net) are a good source of cases. Others include the Electronic Hallway (halltalk@u.washington.edu), the Aspen Institute (caseplace@aspeninstitute.org), and the Richard Ivey School of Business (www.ivey.uwo.ca/cases).

References
Not Your Father's Public Administration

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Preparing for Work in Government

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**Abstract**

This paper applies a pattern-based concept of public sector functioning to the problem of preparing students for work in government. A set of complex factors influence the public service organization, which in turn forms complex and enduring patterns of organizational behavior (Glor, 2001a, b). The factors and their patterns are at work in innovation, in other change efforts, and in the way all things are done in government. To be effective, public servants should pay attention to these patterns. New entrants to government and students who are already public servants but who have changed their perspectives through education may be particularly interested in organizational change. Professors should teach these factors in an integrated way and should use the patterns as tools to prepare their students for work in government and especially for work on change.

When young students of public affairs begin to work in governments, they often suffer culture shock. From being regarded as competent individuals who have demonstrated independence and a formidable capacity to learn, and from having demonstrated readiness for senior academic status, they move to being low ranking in a hierarchy, often functioning in a system that does not fully make sense to them and in which they are the youngest employees, and that makes them feel like the odd people out. Whether working in policy, administration, program implementation, or specialties such as finance, auditing, and human resources, new employees’ expectations for the opportunity to be part of something important, to make a contribution to the public good, and to influence public affairs are rarely met in the short term. Even mature students and returning public servants can have an adjustment to make.
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While professors do what they can to prepare their students for this environment, beyond such aphorisms as “governments are large bureaucratic organizations” and “learn to adjust to your environment,” neither professor nor student usually has a useful model to explain the situation and why governments function as they do. Cynicism can be the result, and it is a shame. Although this may not initially seem so to new entrants, many current public servants are motivated by the desire to contribute. Public service cultures can function to support or to thwart this desire.

What is organizational culture about? To what, precisely, must former students learn to adjust? They are being asked to adapt to the way things are done in the organization—to individual, group, and organizational ways of functioning. They are being asked not to change this aspect of the organization, but instead to mold themselves to its patterns and its people. Organizations exert this pressure implicitly, and their members are likely not aware of it. While employees, like organizations themselves, must mould themselves to some extent to their environments, many organizations are interacting with environments that are changing faster than they are. Most organizations therefore need to reconcile the desire to enforce conformity with the need to learn to adapt more often and more quickly, without causing harm to their members. The members of organizations need to become aware of the patterns by which they function.

At the level of individuals, governments need the ideas for change that recent students have to offer, and the students need to become aware of the way things are done in their new environment. These ways of doing things can be an aid or a hindrance to organizational or individual effectiveness. Former students need to develop an understanding of these things, and the organization needs to ensure it is functioning effectively in response to its environment—that it is fit.

At the same time, former students of public affairs can be faced with a situation in which they perceive that change is needed but their colleagues in the organization perceive (often correctly) that change will not likely succeed. This can be discouraging on both sides. The people who can provide the most direct guidance for this kind of situation are organizational change experts.

Although organizational development is a fairly well-developed field, organizational change is less studied. W. Warner Burke (2002) argues that organizational change theory barely exists. If it is true to say that the field of organizational development has not developed a substantive theory of change, the need for organizations to adapt has not always been recognized in practice, either. Even when organizations have changed, usually the basic shape of the organization—its pattern of functioning—has remained entrenched and has even been enhanced.

This paper takes the theoretical framework developed to understand how one form of change, innovation, develops and takes root in government—or fails to do so—and applies those concepts to the experience of attempting to change government organizations more generally. This is done with a view to helping new
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entrants and newly educated public servants to understand and function better in their environment. The paper thus offers teachers and students a set of conceptual tools to help them make sense, in theoretical and practical terms, of the government workplace.

The suggested approach is integrative and holistic. It is also interdisciplinary, knitting together three multifaceted aspects of the workplace: the impact of the individuals, the group, and the challenges involved in moving the organization to approve, implement, and accept the specific change project(s) at hand. The model demonstrates how organizations form patterns that support service, responsiveness, and adaptation or, alternately, support authority, reactivity, and a lack of substantive action.

How should organizations and change in organizations be conceptualized? This has been an important question for those who attempt to work within and those who seek to understand organizations. Philosophy, sociology, political science, public administration, business administration, social action, and systems theory have each had their impact on our notions of organizations. Recently, the process of change within organizations has become of particular interest, and such concepts as contextualism, population ecology, organizational life cycles, power in organizations, political models of change, social action theories, and the use of metaphor have enriched the more structurally oriented descriptions of bureaucracies and public services (Morgan, 1986).

A number of these ideas are actually quite old, such as those of Heraclitus, who reputedly believed that the nature of everything is change itself. Still, by reintroducing these concepts, observers have been more able to see that, despite their seeming stability, organizations change all the time. These ideas value participants’ subjective perception of organizational structures and situations. Complexity theory has made it possible to recognize that organizations function in patterns rather than only according to static procedures, unambiguous products, and predetermined outcomes. This insight reveals that organizations often maintain their patterns as they change—that organizations remain the same and change at the same time, that they feel and seem the same, despite having changed. Maintaining pattern can be comforting, but it can also prevent adequate adaptation.

Today, an open systems approach is considered an appropriate framework for understanding the dynamics of change in organizations (Morgan, 1997). Based in part on systems theory, some authors use complex systems theory (Kauffman, 1995; Holland, 1995; Capra, 1996; Waldrop, 1992; Sterman, 2000) to describe the behavior of complex systems such as health services (see for example Begun, Zimmerman, and Dooley, 2005; and the NECSI Health Care Initiative), a run on deposits (van Tonder, 2004a), and how economic boom and bust occur (Holland, 1995; Surowiecki, 2004). Complex systems can behave in a linear fashion, but they are most adaptive at the edge of chaos (Kauffman, 1995). An intervention here will not necessarily produce a predictable outcome there, because the actors
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(agents in complexity theory) interact with each other. Patterns reflect the relationships among people, structures, and ideas at work in a complex organization, integrating the effects of these major elements (Wilson, 1992). Patterns make it possible to recognize that organizations may be predictable at the level of pattern despite being unpredictable at the level of organization (Kauffman, 1995; Stacey, 1996, 67-69). Stacey calls the movement for change within an organization the shadow system. Goldstein (1994) and others focus organizational interventions on breaking patterns in order to allow change to emerge.

An integrative model renders these several concepts and diverse patterns comprehensible (Glor, 2001a, b). The notion of organizational patterns helps to create a framework for understanding and predicting the outcomes of change initiatives in government. A focus on patterns also responds to Perry and Wise’s challenge to those who seek a new and more satisfying understanding of organizations to develop a “model that operationalizes the linkages between individual values, organizational environment and task structure, and outcome” (Perry and Wise, 1990, 372).

Everett Rogers, the dean of innovation studies, identified five key factors that determine the rate of adoption of innovations and the successful dissemination of innovations: perceived attributes of innovations, type of innovation decision, communication channels, nature of the social system, and extent of change agents’ promotion efforts (Rogers, 1995, 206-208, and Figure 6-1). Rogers and Eveland (1978) and Becker and Whisler (1967) identified the need for a theoretical framework that brought together external and internal factors, and structural and psychological factors. The innovation patterns identified above provide a theoretical framework, bring together factors external and internal to government, and deal with psychological, social, procedural, and process challenges in introducing innovations into a government.

In this paper, pivotal factors for innovation, change, and functioning in government are defined, eight innovation patterns distinguished, examples of patterns identified, and the nature of the problems, promises, and potential outcomes associated with the patterns explored. The same approach can be taken to understanding how governments function and change not just when introducing innovations, but in change more generally. Put another way, the same pattern emerges at many levels in an organization, reproduces, and therefore has an impact on all government activities. An understanding of the factors, the patterns they produce, and how and in what context change is likely to occur could be of assistance to professors, to new entrants to government, and to experienced public servants and managers.

**Three Complex Factors at Work in Government**

Organizations are not just about people, they are people. People’s efforts to create structures, to invent and agree to rules, to treat organizations as if they really

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exist and matter, and their social creations bring organizations into existence and maintain their existence. Without the people, organizations do not exist. It is the people who make organizations function, keep them functioning, and create a shared image of what they are. Nonetheless, organizations influence their employees. Organizational factors and patterns affect people immensely. Briefly, people interact in the workplace as individuals and through social manifestations (such as work units).

A large number of public service dynamics can be gathered together under three umbrellas that refer to individuals in the workplace, the impact of people at the group (social/cultural) level in the workplace, and the challenges that must be addressed to implement a change. These dynamics can be grouped together as individual motivation, organizational culture, and the challenge of implementation (Glor, 2001a). The impact of these three factors or types of dynamics can be implicit, however. In dynamic interaction, employees expressing the factors create organizational patterns that affect organizational functioning, innovation, and change (Glor, 2001b, 2006).

***Individual Motivation***

Individuals experience themselves and others whom they know in the workplace as individuals. It is not easy to choose one dynamic to represent the effect that the individual expresses. Some authors emphasize individual resistance to management initiatives or the effects of training. This paper uses the dynamic of motivation to represent the impact of the individual, in part because this concept makes provision for unconscious, conscious, and proactive relationships to work in the public service. Motivation is a concept that is frequently used to illuminate behavior in the workplace and that has been well explored in the psychological, social psychological, organizational psychology, and sociology of work literatures. Unlike many concepts, it has been considered in both the private and public sectors.

Motivation is that which “energizes, directs, and sustains behavior” (Perry and Porter, 1982). The notion that individual motivation to work is an important factor in the workplace is a well-established idea (Glor, 2001a, 2006). Whether this motivation is extrinsic or intrinsic makes a difference to the individual’s relationship to the organization, the work, and the productivity and endurance of work, and is influenced by the environment (Maslow, 1973; Herzberg, 1968; Bandura, 1977a, b). The concepts of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation refine this understanding of motivation.

Extrinsic motivation originates from outside the personal needs of the individual. It includes four managerial motivations: (1) productivity (efficiency), (2) service-enhancement, (3) organizational control, and (4) risk avoidance (Perry et al., 1993). Extrinsic motivation is influenced by (5) individual, job, work environment, and external environments (Perry and Porter, 1982), and (6) arbitrary
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rewards and goals (Cofer, 1996). Extrinsic motivation also includes Herzberg’s (1968) hygiene factors. Herzberg distinguished between what makes people unhappy at work (the way they’re treated) and what makes people happy at work (what they do or the way they’re utilized). The former—those that will not increase motivation as such but will decrease it—he called hygiene factors, and the latter he called motivating factors. Hygiene factors include (7) working conditions, salary, job security, and company policies.

Intrinsic motivation is thought by Thomas and Velthouse (1990) to be created through (1) meaning (value of the work goal or purpose); (2) competence (self-efficacy); (3) self-determination, defined as autonomy in initiation and continuation of work, plus self-determined goals (Cofer, 1996); (4) impact (influence on work outcomes); and (5) staff motivators being aligned with the initiative being undertaken. Intrinsic motivation is also induced through (6) the inherent reward of an act itself (Cofer, 1996) and (7) individual consciousness (Etzioni, 1971). Herzberg (1968) defined motivating factors as (8) positive motivation, deriving from people having a sense of achievement, recognition, responsibility, and opportunities for personal growth. Litwin and Stringer (1968) likewise defined intrinsic motivation as the need for achievement (the need to excel in relation to competitive or internalized standards), but also as (9) the need for power (a need for control and influence over others) and (10) the need for affiliation (a need for warm, friendly relationships) (Litwin and Stringer, 1968, 12–13).

As the variety of elements involved in motivation makes clear, individual motivation is not static or one thing. What motivates someone in one personal state and one environment will not be identical to what motivates them in another, but individuals tend to have patterns of motivation—to be typically intrinsically or extrinsically motivated.

While motivation is an individual matter, people are also affected by and affect social dynamics.

Organizational Culture

Some authors describe social phenomena in the workplace as organizational culture (Cummings and Huse, 1989; Schein, 1985), others call it organizational climate (Litwin and Stringer, 1968; Ostroff et al., 2003). Some management scholars and consultants (e.g., Seijts, 2006) identify the need to change organizational culture if fundamental change is to occur in an organization. Organizational culture is thus defined both as a problem and as something that is an object and can be changed from the outside. I do not think of organizational culture that way. Rather, I see it as a social consciousness that has emerged from within the group. It is a positive adaptation and has worked in a positive way for the group. It is seen as a positive representation by the group and helps to maintain its cohesiveness, but is largely unconscious and endures over time. It is a pattern.
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To imagine that executives can change organizational culture can be folly; nonetheless, sometimes it can be done. Imposed organizational culture change is almost always deleterious, in my experience. In such an environment, the negative characteristics can and do get reproduced; for example, bullying. Organizational change can occur—thus executives and managers can influence the culture—but the culture emerges as an expression of the group experience, not through imposition.

Corporate culture, according to Cummings and Huse, is “the pattern of basic assumptions, values, norms and artifacts shared by organization members” (1989, 421). These cultural elements are “generally taken for granted and serve to guide members’ perceptions, thoughts and actions” (1989, 71). Artifacts are visible manifestations of the other levels of cultural elements and include observable behaviors of members, structures, systems, procedures, rules, and physical aspects (Cummings and Huse, 1989, 421). Similarly, Schein defined organizational culture as “a pattern of basic assumptions—invented, discovered, or developed by a given group as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration—that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems” (1985, 9). Culture should be understood at three levels, according to Schein: artifacts (the visible level—constructed physical and social environment), values, and basic underlying assumptions. Assumptions are taken for granted, and are less conscious than observed behavioral regularities, norms, dominant values, organizational philosophy, rules of the game, or feelings and climates.

Authors disagree about whether organizational culture and organizational climate are the same or different. Ostroff et al. (2003) defined them as different things. Litwin and Stringer linked motivation and organizational climate, while Schein (1985) identified the need to link individual and organizational influences. Because it is subjective and perceptual in nature, organizational climate could have many representations. Litwin (1965, 29-30) defined organizational climate as a molar construct (according to the Canadian Oxford Dictionary, of or pertaining to mass, acting on or by means of large masses or units), representing a set or cluster of expectancies and incentives perceived directly or indirectly by individuals in the environment. Litwin identified three advantages of the concept of organizational climate as a molar concept: (1) it permits analysis of the determinants of motivation in actual, complex situations; (2) it simplifies the problem of measurement of situational determinants by allowing participants to think in terms of bigger, more integrated chunks of their experience; and (3) it makes possible the characterization of the total situational influence of various environments, so they may be mapped and categorized (Litwin and Stringer, 1968, 29-30). The same advantages apply to the idea of organizational culture. The advantages also apply more generally to the notion of organizational patterns.
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A top-down culture is characterized by (1) hierarchical relations and a focus on the control or authority structure; (2) centralization and formalization; (3) role and power cultures (Handy, 1986); (4) emphasis on formal communication patterns, with staff encouraged to “use channels”; (5) emphasis on structure and “one best way” of doing things; and (6) the provision of direction to change from above—from management to employees (Glor, 2000).

A bottom-up culture is characterized by (1) empowered relations, (2) decentralization; (3) organizational slack (excess capacity); (4) professional/people and task/business cultures (Handy, 1986); (5) emphasis on interpersonal communication patterns; (6) staff encouraged to have and cultivate exterior networks; (7) providing information to staff (although this point is not clearly demonstrated); (8) recognition of the organization as a social system based on conflict, politicking, and inherent tensions between individuals, departments, and organizations; (9) analysis of change from the perspective of the individual’s definition of the situation; (10) support of staff, and staff ideas getting attention, strategies created, and implementation (Glor, 2000); (11) involvement of staff and the placement of organizational resources under their control (Glor, 2001c); (12) some degree of democratic control in the workplace; and (13) organizational consciousness, parallel to Etzioni’s (1971) societal consciousness.

Although individual motivation and organizational culture are about people, challenge is about the task of change.

Challenge

Challenge is the risk and magnitude of the difficulty faced to accomplish or implement a change. According to Seijts (2006), implementation is the point at which most change action fails. Challenge basically has two aspects, risk and relative advantage.

A minor challenge involves (1) low risk to individuals and/or the organization and management in terms of status, opportunities, self-esteem, time, work, and psychic energy; (2) low personal risks, little loss of power, money, status, and respect; (3) low public risks, involving failure, career consequences, and public scrutiny and/or negative media attention; (4) low magnitude of change; (5) compatibility with existing values and past experience of the implementers of the changes; (6) low perceived commitment to further change and low threat of change; (7) change dealing with operational decisions, incremental change, status quo/expanded reproduction, and evolutionary transition; (8) no or minor changes in power and power relationships within the organization or vis-a-vis groups outside the organization; and (9) high relative advantage of the change compared to what it is superceding, low complexity both in terms of understanding and use, high testability of the change, and observability of the results (Glor, 2001a, b; Rogers, 1995).
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A major challenge includes (1) high risk to individuals and/or the organization and management in terms of status, opportunities, self-esteem, time, work, and psychic energy; (2) high personal risks, involving loss of power, money, status, and respect; (3) public risks, involving failure, career consequences, and public scrutiny and/or negative media attention; (4) high magnitude of change; (5) low compatibility with existing values and past experience of the receivers; (6) high perceived commitment to further change and high threat of change; (7) high threat, strategic change, revolutionary transformation, or changes in power relationships within or vis-a-vis groups outside the organization; and (8) low relative advantage of the change compared to what it is superseding, high complexity in terms of understanding and use, low testability of the change, and observability of results (Rogers, 1995).

Each of the three factors defined above is, itself, complex and dynamic. At this point, the idea of organizational patterns should best be regarded as one of Bacharach and Lawler’s (1980) primitive concepts, which sensitize to issues and aid theory construction. Within CAS, patterns emerge from complex factors if there is sufficient variety and reactivity within the environment (Rogers et al., 2005), because of what some consider to be an inherent urge toward order (Kauffman, 1995).

The influence of the patterns in the organization is often unconscious to its members, but determines what happens and how, just as much as plans and strategies. Patterns produced and reproduced by the three dimensions of motivation, culture, and challenge are explored below.

The Patterns

In departments and branches of government the three factors—motivation, culture, and challenge—form relatively stable patterns of behavior. How stable is discussed later. The pattern of an organization is one of the glues that hold it together.

Although often presented as if it is, the determination of the patterns and the understanding of them is not a straightforward analytic process. It is more like the putting together of a jigsaw puzzle. Once the pattern has been identified, and the picture has come into focus, the observer is in a position to put together a story about the organization. The construction of the story facilitates the observer—usually a participant—to think about a large number of elements affecting the organization and how it functions. The construction of patterns and the telling of stories about them allow participants and observers, including former students, to understand the organization better.

The first step in this interpretation process is to identify the work unit and its organizational pattern. At least eight innovation patterns emerge from the factors, as identified in Table 1 (Glor, 2001a, b).
Table 1. Individual, Social, and Challenge Dynamics Form Patterns

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation (Individual)</th>
<th>Organizational Culture (Social)</th>
<th>Change Challenge</th>
<th>Organizational Change Pattern</th>
<th>Direction of Movement (Kauffman pattern)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic</td>
<td>Top-down</td>
<td>Major</td>
<td>Imposed</td>
<td>Converging (Fixed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic</td>
<td>Top-down</td>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td>Converging (Fixed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic</td>
<td>Bottom-up</td>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Converging (Fixed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic</td>
<td>Top-down</td>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>Buy-in</td>
<td>Converging (Fixed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic</td>
<td>Bottom-up</td>
<td>Minor</td>
<td>Proactive</td>
<td>Neither converging nor diverging (Edge of Chaos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic</td>
<td>Bottom-up</td>
<td>Major</td>
<td>Necessary</td>
<td>Neither converging nor diverging (Edge of Chaos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic</td>
<td>Top-down</td>
<td>Major</td>
<td>Transformational</td>
<td>Neither converging nor diverging (Edge of Chaos)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic</td>
<td>Bottom-up</td>
<td>Major</td>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td>Diverging (Chaos)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Based on modeling done by Kauffman (1995).

The combination, for example, of extrinsic motivation, a top-down organizational culture, and a major challenge forms a pattern of imposed change. Because mountains must usually be moved in relationship to all three factors to bring about change in this environment, and therefore little change is likely to occur, an imposed organizational change culture can be seen as a very stable pattern, and perhaps the least likely to change. The combination of extrinsic individual motivation, a top-down organizational culture, and a minor challenge produces a reactive innovation and change pattern.

Intrinsic individual motivation, combined with a bottom-up culture and a minor challenge forms a proactive pattern. Like imposed change, the combination of these three factors forms a consistent pattern, and therefore a proactive pattern should be the pattern in which change occurs most easily. Although it does occur easily within the work unit, change is usually difficult to achieve without management support. If the organizational environment (as opposed to the work unit environment) is top-down, and management is not onside, change is less likely to
occur. Nonetheless, the imposed and proactive patterns are the most consistent of all the patterns.

The other patterns have more tension in them. The necessary pattern, for example, includes extrinsic motivation and a major challenge, which should resist change, but also includes a bottom-up culture, which should support change under the right conditions. Likewise the active, buy-in, and transformational patterns have conflicting factors.

The continuous change pattern is particularly interesting because, if the major implementation challenges can be overcome, the individual and social dynamics are aligned to permit change. The pattern therefore has a very substantial capacity for change.

In complexity science terms, the imposed, reactive, active and buy-in patterns are considered fixed patterns, while the continuous pattern is considered to be in the domain of chaos. Most of the patterns with tension are on the edge of chaos (Kauffman, 1995, 86-92). Because organizations must not be too rigid nor too chaotic in order to be able to respond effectively to a complex environment (Kauffman, 1995, 86), the edge of chaos (E of C) is where the organization functions most effectively and is most adaptable.

In summary, the elements affecting change in organizations can be integrated into factors, which form themselves into patterns. One of the dynamics that keeps existing behaviors in place (with modest changes all the time) is the natural tendency of complex agents to form patterns (Kauffman, 1995).

Based on this understanding, the focus of change agents should not only be on the elements, processes, and factors but also on the whole—the patterns themselves. The patterns are the way the factors integrate to form and maintain enduring behavior. To create fundamental change, sometimes the patterns must change—this task is difficult to achieve through will. Indeed, most strategic change efforts in large organizations fail (Burke, 2002, 1, 121; Seijts, 2006). A change agent needs to consider and to work with the factors and the patterns.

Changes can be successfully implemented and are more likely to endure, based on the level of creativity involved in deriving an innovation (the robustness of the solution), the organization’s capacity to successfully implement changes, and the likelihood that the change will endure within its pattern. These characteristics can be assessed (Glor, 2001b, 2007). In Table 2, the patterns are assessed for their capacity to change and are ranked for the likelihood of change enduring. According to this analysis, changes within the active, imposed, and buy-in patterns have the least likelihood of surviving, while changes within the reactive, necessary, and proactive patterns have a somewhat higher capacity for successful implementation and endurance. Only changes created within the continuous pattern combine high creativity with a capacity to be implemented and endure, but this pattern risks becoming chaotic. Using the three indicators of creativity, implementation, and endurance, the overall likelihood of change is highest within the patterns.
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at the edge of chaos—the proactive, necessary, and transformational patterns. In these patterns, the challenge of implementation is major, but when the challenge is successfully overcome, they can produce substantial change. The transformational pattern changes power, a substantial challenge to endurance.

Table 2. Assessment of Capacity to Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Innovation Pattern</th>
<th>Level of Creativity</th>
<th>Capacity to Implement Changes</th>
<th>Capacity for Change to Endure</th>
<th>Overall Change Capacity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Low-medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imposed</td>
<td>Low-medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy-in</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Necessary</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proactive</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium-low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational</td>
<td>Medium-high</td>
<td>Medium-high</td>
<td>Medium-low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tables 3, 4, 5 in Glor, 2001(b).

The factors of motivation, culture, and challenge have an important role in forming but are also affected by the patterns. Interaction is mutual, not unidirectional. In cybernetics this is known as circular causality (Capra, 1996, 57–59). Once the patterns form, they interact with and affect the factors and each other. Thus local work units and organizations form and maintain patterns, which may reproduce and expand over time or may eventually die out. This forming, maintaining, and changing of organizational patterns is similar to what complexity analysts have observed in other complex systems (Kauffman, 1995; Holland, 1995).

The task of the change agent is therefore complex: to find a possible pathway for change within the existing context of individual factors and patterns, to find ways to influence the organizational patterns if need be, to encourage creativity, to implement changes successfully, and to create change that will endure in its context. Change is easier to implement and more likely to endure if it does not attempt to change organizational patterns. Successful change is not subject to easy, unilateral or uni-dimensional intervention, yet former students who wish to be change moulders must be aware of and discover how to accomplish change within their organizational context.
Implications

The factors identified—motivation, culture, and challenge—are multifaceted and complex; so are the patterns and so are the processes required to implement and institutionalize changes—just like the multidisciplinary fields of public policy, public administration, and public management. Although mature students may already be managers, and most young entrants will not be for some time, both type of public servant can be aided by these insights. Control is not within the grasp of either change agent, whose role is typically one of molding a change, not of imposing it.

The idea that the dynamics within organizations form patterns that matter emerges from the concepts of complexity theory. A complex approach to the study of organizations (Poole, Ven, Dooley, and Holmes, 2000; Goldstein, 1994; van Tonder, 2004b; Dooley, 2004) is now more than 10 years old. In workshops teaching pattern-based approaches, I found that professionals and public administrators newly initiated to these concepts could distinguish the factors in environments with which they were familiar (Glor, 2001b). Some participants, to their surprise, reported later that they were able to effectively implement change strategies built within factors and patterns analyses.

This is some, but still limited, evidence that effective change strategies can grow within an integrated understanding of context, using this model. The approach is, however, intuitively correct—change agents must pay careful attention to the organizational environment. The approach has other advantages as well.

An understanding of the framework of patterns is useful to change “molders” because it can help (1) a public servant retain a balanced (although not necessarily a neutral) perspective, (2) make explicit what is often implicit in the workplace, (3) reveal the need to build knowledge and support networks in order to function effectively in government, and (4) public servants understand where they should focus their energies if they are to create successful change.

First, a pattern-based framework can contribute to a balanced perspective related to adaptation. An idealistic person working in government can take two possible paths: one of cynicism, focusing on the ways in which government does not meet his/her expectations, or one of wonder that it accomplishes what it does, considering the hurdles it must overcome to do so and the delicacies of working within pre-existing patterns. Many of these hurdles are in the domains of individual motivation, culture, and challenges, and include interests, power, and influence. Learning to accept the “punctuated equilibrium” nature of change in many governments, with small changes punctuated by more substantial ones, often driven by crises or ideology, is hard but it need not be completely discouraging. It is essential to understand the pattern, however, and to think about the other factors that can go with it. While organizations tell themselves and new-hires that they are engaging new employees in order to secure staff during a time of change, for example, maintaining the belief that a period will come when
management will be seeking new ideas can help new public servants keep things in perspective and adapt to the government environment. This perspective is not just a palliative, it is probably true. Because government functions as a patterned unity, it cannot be changing everywhere all the time. It can allow small amounts of exploration but not a great deal everywhere all the time. How to understand the positive functions of the patterns can be learned and can be taught.

Second, the framework has the capacity to help public servants comprehend some of the features that are implicit in the government environment. This is one of the most difficult capacities to develop and is easiest to perceive when the employee is new to the organization. The implicit includes, for example, what is perceived to be given and what is thought to be malleable and is a function, among other things, of ideology, power, culture, and employees’ education and background. It is a melange of values, ideas, experience, and power, of what is considered acceptable and what is not. It is an important component of what is meant by “how we do things here”; that is, of organizational culture. Teachers would do their students a service if they sensitized them to the implicit factors at work in the workplace.

Third, the framework helps recognition of the value of building networks. Among the important functions for public servants, building networks can protect employees from being overwhelmed by the pattern-related messages that predominate within the organization or can help them understand the patterns better by offering an alternate source of information and other perspectives. It is thus important not to belong only to networks of peers who share beliefs, but to belong, as well, to ones that do not. Networks also help public servants increase or validate their knowledge, keep up to date, learn about thinking in the forefront of change or that is becoming accepted, and identify directions this thinking is moving. When an opportunity for change arises, a networking public servant will have ideas to offer and legitimate proponents to reference. Networks likewise help public servants maintain support and knowledge of employment alternatives for when the going gets tough–this is a form of individual power and can help maintain motivation. Networks also support the first two elements of maintaining a balanced perspective and making explicit the implicit.

Fourth, the framework has a capacity to help employees focus their energies, set priorities, and keep motivated and interested at a stage of their careers when they may not be doing the most interesting work they will ever do nor have the most power they will ever have. If they can use this period to become effective public servants who understand how “the system works” both explicitly and implicitly, and to develop skills in communicating, promoting, and implementing innovations and change, they will have a good future in the public service. Without this understanding and these skills, they may remain frustrated and become the public servants they could not understand when they started work with government.
If the picture painted here of the difficulty of creating change within government is not totally appealing for an independent, free-thinking, committed, and well-educated potential employee, she or he would do well to consider the alternatives. In many countries, government is the biggest and most important employer; it is where many jobs, much money, and many important tasks are located. It has jobs through which a contribution to the public good can be made. Some parts of the nonprofit sector have fewer restrictions, but the ability to access resources beyond one’s own personal time and energy is also usually more limited. The private sector can have a certain kind of freedom, but it also has its own culture and restrictions—the profit motive, an ideology, rules, and less opportunity to be of public service. The working world has more restrictions than post-secondary institutions, but it also has rewards in accomplishment, contribution, and values served. All places of employment have restrictions and challenges. In all of them, as well, the capacity to function within the environment is essential to influence and a successful career. Recognizing how the organization works, what its patterns are, how to stay within them, and when one is stepping outside them can be key to success. Learning how to step outside them by choice, when necessary, while reducing the challenges and stresses for supervisors, co-workers, and clients when doing so is also important.

**Teaching the Role of Change Molders**

The recognition that organizations are complex environments takes some pressure off change agents. By understanding that the causes of change are uncertain and that the impact will also be uncertain, the change agent becomes one among many actors affecting the environment. Intervening in organizations then becomes a little like bowling—throw the ball, wait and watch what happens—or gardening—make the modifications and watch the plants grow. The results may or may not be as planned and predicted. As long as movement is in the right direction, there is hope. At the same time, other unexpected factors may intervene in positive or negative ways. When an issue reaches the tipping point, others will begin to engage and may want to take over. The change agent’s job may be complete at this point. If she or he wants to continue to be involved, she or he may need to change roles.

Professors should teach organizational moulders that one of their most important roles is to create connections. According to Kauffman’s (1995) modeling of complex systems, change spreads at a consistent rate and then suddenly reaches a tipping or inflection point and accelerates into much faster growth. This is the shift a change agent wants to facilitate. When it happens, it can be palpable. Like good times in the economic cycle, it does not last for long. A classroom exercise that can be used to address this issue is outlined next.

In the class, students should discuss whether they have ever experienced the tipping point. Those who have should be encouraged to describe the elements that came together, in their opinion, to create that experience. They should be
offered the opportunity to discuss it with some of the others who were involved, and to speak to the class about it again a few days later. Next, they should be encouraged to describe their thinking process and that of other actors. The classroom process should encourage the implicit to become explicit and should be carefully nurtured. The professor, as well, should attempt to identify and describe such an event from personal experience.

Classroom Exercise
1. Each participant tries to try to identify and describe a tipping point within his/her experience.
2. Students discuss with other participants and describe to classroom:
   a. Thinking processes and actions
   b. Whether and how the implicit became explicit
3. Describe the role of the change agent before and after the tipping point.
4. Did the change endure? What allowed changes to endure? Did the tipping point play a role in endurance?
5. What questions should the change molder ask?

From my own experience, the tipping point is a striking, unique, and highly energizing experience. At the tipping point, others assume responsibility for the change, and it becomes theirs. New agents may become involved and seek control. The change agent may become much less important and feel pushed aside.

Following the presentation of these descriptions, students should be encouraged to discuss the role of the change agent before and after the tipping point has been achieved. Finally, consider the following paragraph, applying a complex systems approach to some of the public Canadian health care system problems:

Most critically, complicated questions would be transformed into complex ones. The complicated question “What are the structures we need to make the health care system sustainable?” becomes the complex question “How do we build on current structures and relationships to stabilize and enhance Medicare?” The question “Can we afford increasing care and treatment for an aging population?” is best understood as “How can we provide care and treatment that makes everyone feel that the system will be there should their family need it?” The question “What do we have to give up to support the most effective and advanced technology (or drugs)?” would better be asked as “How can we help health care institutions and professionals enhance the quality of services and innovation in technology and drugs?” and, finally, “How much should Canadians pay for their health care?” might become “How can Medicare contribute even more to the Canadian identity?” (Glouberman and Zimmerman, 2002)
CONCLUSION

The framework offered provides insight into two main themes. One is about how the public service can and cannot serve personal motivation, how personal motivation interacts with the organizational culture, what is explicit and implicit, and how challenges can be met in order to serve the public and its needs better. It is about balance, listening, and fine tuning. The second theme is about what the individual wants out of a career and what risks s/he is willing to take and for how long.

The factors at work in government—in fact, any workplace—are not isolated from each other; rather, they interact. At the same time, they do not influence an organization equally strongly all the time. A soon-to-be graduated student would benefit from having an opportunity to think about and discuss the public service context. Leaving new entrants to adapt without an understanding of organizational patterns is not a better alternative. Teachers can help students understand themselves, their environment, and how to get things done. They should encourage an integrated look at the workplace, which can be aided by the framework of patterns identified. They should help students understand that some ideas are explicit and others implicit, thus supporting a balanced perspective. They should also encourage students to maintain independent sources of support and to create knowledge through varied networks. This may help them identify how to set priorities.

A more conscious approach to public service, and a realistic one, is intended. The dominant ideology and power structure is initially given for the individual public servant. Usually, it grows out of the past and reflects the past. Young public servants will help to create the future, but probably not as fast as they would like to do it. At the same time, each individual has an impact on those around her, on the organizational culture and on the responses to challenges and opportunities. Individuals will tend to adapt themselves to the culture over time, or they will be pushed out if they do not do so. At the same time, public servants with a vision and ideas for improving government will need to be able to avoid completely immersing themselves in the environment. A conversation about and an attempt to make explicit their understanding of motivation, culture, challenges, and patterns may help them to do so. Individuals can and do make a difference, but they would be aided by having new conversational and thinking tools, and by developing a sense that individuals affect the environment in an organization (Coleman, 1986). Their professors can help them with the tools offered in this paper.

New entrants to government and students who are already public servants who have changed their perspectives through education in public affairs may be particularly interested in organizational change. At the same time, new and returning public servants often see where change is needed more clearly than those who are more completely immersed in the organization and its patterns. Public
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servants returning from educational leave may be asked to lead, and new entrants may be asked to participate in change initiatives or may wish to suggest them. Teachers of public affairs should therefore consider these factors in an integrated way, and use the patterns as analytic tools to prepare their students for work in government, and especially for work on change.

NOTES
1. In a top-down culture, executives with power may help the innovation happen, but they are probably only going to be willing to do so if power is not changed. A bottom-up culture will likely create more support for change, but people at the bottom usually have neither much influence nor control over resources. It is thus difficult for them to implement and continue change on their own.
2. The term “punctuated equilibrium” was invented by Eldredge and Gould (1972) as a description of the fossil record, alternative to Darwin’s “gradualism.”

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Program Development Issues in Nonprofit and Civil Society Studies: Learning from One University’s Experience

Max Stephenson Jr.
Virginia Tech

ABSTRACT
This article examines one university’s efforts to institutionalize a graduate nonprofit curriculum. It does so through the lens of situational analysis and with an eye to five key challenges that have dogged the effort—operating in an inauspicious organizational environment, creating an interdisciplinary program in a discipline-rich context, securing a praxis analytical focus and shared pedagogical stance, ensuring a comparative analytical focus, and developing a sustainable balance between student needs and expert claims. These concerns are examined for what might be learned from each that may hold broader significance for nonprofit curriculum design, program development, and implementation. While some of these conditions are unique, what they suggest about the challenges for those seeking institutionalization of nonprofit curricula are not. The essay seeks to suggest how and why that might be so. The paper argues that, regardless of the case-specific factors at play in the present analysis, would-be nonprofit program builders would be wise to be attentive to their operating context, to the nature of existing program curricula and organizational cultures, and to the clear specification of their own curricular aims.

This article analyzes the founding premises and organizational context of the development of the Virginia Tech (VT) School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA) nonprofit and civil society program. In addition to describing the conceptual foundations of the program and the reasons these have been adopted, the essay addresses the curricular and pedagogic challenges associated with its development. Gleaning lessons from one program’s experience can be valuable to others pondering developing such efforts. In particular, all nonprofit instruc-
tional designers can profit from sustained attention to institutional context, the specification of clear curricular goals, and careful management of the balance that must be attained between individual student and faculty interests and the diverse requirements of a broad and interdisciplinary field.

The analysis is organized around five central challenges that program designers have confronted in their efforts to institutionalize a civil society graduate program:

- the inauspicious university organizational context in which the SPIA nonprofit initiative was launched and has proceeded;
- the program’s complex institutional and disciplinary setting, including its availability in more than one geographic location and academic department, and the implications of those realities for its capacity to develop a common culture among its students;
- the curricular and pedagogic challenges of securing praxis-based learning for graduate students, especially doctoral students who aspire to a career in the academy;
- the program’s central aspiration to equip its students, especially its large doctoral cadre, with a comparative perspective, a goal that demands both a strong foundation of knowledge and equally vital analytical capacities; and
- the aim to provide a comprehensive educational curriculum while simultaneously allowing students flexibility to meet individual needs and interests.

Each of these core programmatic challenges is addressed in turn below. Each arguably may be considered a central shaping influence in the program’s evolution. These issues are addressed throughout by means of a first-hand narrative of the evolution of this Virginia Tech curricular initiative.

The Approach

I approached this effort as a participant observer and therefore am not a neutral analyst. My hope is that my engagement in this program-building project from its beginnings has provided insights into why certain choices have been taken and how those decisions have unfolded. Situational analysis served as the frame for attaining an understanding of the evolution of the Virginia Tech nonprofit effort. Following Clarke’s grounded theory approach, this analysis charts the contextual conditions that confronted the initiative, the principal perspectives of the primary decision-makers as these came to be understood (including my own in some cases), and, finally, the positions that program leaders have adopted to address these (Clarke, 2005, xxii). Throughout, this analysis seeks to be attentive to the interaction between the program’s development and its overarching environment; that is, in Clarke’s terms, the situation. In a very real sense, this
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effort is the result of decisions framed by the context in which it grew. Indeed, the challenges crucial to the design and evolution of the initiative neatly track the forms of analysis that Clarke argues are significant. (Clarke, 2005, 19) She suggests that researchers

- embody the situatedness of all knowledge producers as well as accept the simultaneous truths of multiple knowledges;
- use situation as the principal research focus;
- assume complexities of perception and perspective rather than imagine that these may be simplified;
- assert sufficiency of analytics rather than seek formal theory building;
- undertake situational mapping efforts throughout the research process; and
- employ alternate discourses to expand the domains of social life included in grounded theory research (adapted from Clarke, 2005, 19).

In keeping with these aspirations, this analysis is situated in context throughout, to acknowledge the multiple points of view at play in the account, to recognize that more than one of these may likely provide an adequate explanation, and to review multiple sources of evidence as the argument proceeds. This approach also assumes that alternate forms of discourse may illuminate the concerns treated.

**Challenge 1: An Inauspicious Operating Environment**

_Charting the Social and Institutional Context:_

_A Program Born in a Period of Organizational Crisis_

Virginia Tech’s nonprofit curriculum effort began with the launch of a newly reorganized and restructured School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA). The “new” SPIA was placed within a single college, Architecture and Urban Studies, and was organized as a “super-department.” Prior to this reorganization, SPIA had existed for several years as a so-called “soft school” that had spanned three colleges, had only the budget its partners provided, and existed only in so far as those programs agreed to cooperate to further common aims.\(^1\) One might accurately describe this institutional arrangement as the university equivalent of the Articles of Confederation of early U.S. experience. The effort proved just about as successful as its early American confederal analogue. That is, its challenges and limited success convinced many operating within it that it needed a clearer structure and central operating authority and the capacity to succeed as a governing arrangement. What was lacking until 2003 was an opportunity to realize those needed changes.

That opening came with a university-scale restructuring aimed at better positioning Virginia Tech to secure sponsored research in an increasingly re-
source-starved and competitive environment. Indeed, the new SPIA was born of institutional crisis and change. In FY 2003, VT suffered a 15 percent cut in state support. As it struggled to respond to this sudden and massive reduction in aid, the university launched an effort to reorganize its colleges and departments in an attempt to cover existing curricular needs more adequately, reduce administrative obligations, and position itself better for the future. A recreated SPIA was justified as a part of this strategy.

In addition to the rationale for SPIA provided by massive reductions in state support, the university’s president, Charles Steger, had, since his inauguration in 2000, been promoting the idea that the institution should seek to attain a top 30 ranking in National Science Foundation research expenditures and/or membership in the prestigious American Association of Universities by 2010 as a way to galvanize the VT community to look ahead to a larger national research role. SPIA was in part rationalized as a more effective way to create synergies that would result in more sponsored research. Finally, a new graduate school dean arrived in 2003 and also sought to expand Virginia Tech’s post-baccalaureate student enrollment while improving their education experience in order to “foster changes in the ways graduate students are prepared for becoming engaged contributors in modern universities and contributing professionals in their communities” (http://www.grads.vt.edu/news/mansi.html, 2006). The new SPIA had the potential to provide an environment that would recruit more doctoral students to its two Ph.D. programs. Each of these factors contributed to a climate that convinced university leaders that a more academically integrated School of Public and International Affairs was necessary.

As it began operation, SPIA, now overseen by one dean and one director with line authority, consisted of two longstanding and nationally well-regarded programs—Urban Affairs and Planning (UAP) and Public Administration and Policy (CPAP)—and a new unit, Government and International Affairs (GIA). GIA consisted of three faculty transfers from elsewhere in the university, one split appointment with UAP, and six part-time faculty holding appointments in the department of Political Science. The three SPIA programs offered master’s degrees in Urban and Regional Planning (MURP), Public Administration (MPA) and Public and International Affairs (MPIA), respectively. The last was originally a program of Urban Affairs and Planning, but the degree was transferred to GIA when that unit was created. As the new SPIA began, UAP and GIA faculty members actively participated in the College-wide Environmental Design and Planning (EDP) doctoral program and a few of those professors also served on committees in the CPAP doctoral program in Public Administration and Public Affairs. For their part, CPAP faculty were only rarely involved with EDP doctoral students.

In sum, SPIA was the product of an austere operating environment that at once encouraged cost reductions as well as new initiatives to respond to that context.
Its development was not so much sought by SPIA faculty as brought to them as propitious by College of Architecture and Urban Studies and SPIA leaders. The rationale for this new and more robust union was operational efficiency and effectiveness rather than any specific academic foundation, though synergies were thought to be helpful and likely to generate more research dollars—an instrumental and important claim.

The nonprofit initiative emerged as the first SPIA-wide effort following the restructuring. Although it received seed funding from the Provost, that dowry was short term, decreasing incrementally over three years. Although the program mixed research and curricular goals, financial benchmarks were a key performance indicator included in the initial business plan. The bulk of that plan consisted of a specific nonprofit research agenda focused on questions linked to accountability, but the proposal included and promoted the general expansion of the nonprofit curriculum across all three of SPIA’s academic programs. However, while there were a number of explicit output measures for the academic agenda, the only specific outcome measure offered was visibility for Virginia Tech, particularly in the National Capital Region. This goal brought with it a tension between doctoral-level education, which is often invisible on a regional scale, and continuing professional education, which, while more visible, did not necessarily align with SPIA’s historical strengths or the new graduate dean’s vision for the future (Dolan, 2002, 277–292). These performance measures reveal the negotiated nature of the initiative, which had at once to satisfy the scholarly aspirations of the key faculty stakeholders in SPIA and the broader institutional aspirations of the university as a whole.

**Challenge 2: A de facto interdisciplinary program that few faculty at first recognize as such**

*Building on the Past While Searching for an Elusive Core of Support*

Prior to the new SPIA’s creation, most VT social science graduate students interested in nonprofit organizations or civil society were affiliated with UAP and pursued either a concentration in international development planning in the MURP program or the MPIA degree. At the doctoral level, those who pursued doctorates with a civil society emphasis were enrolled in the College of Architecture and Urban Studies Ph.D. in Environmental Design and Planning, and especially its stream in Public and International Affairs. In fact, for many years, Virginia Tech’s social science programs offered a single course directly concerned with nonprofits and only one UAP faculty member had a primary scholarly interest in the nonprofit sector. That began to change in 2000 when another nonprofit-focused faculty member, with interests in nongovernmental organizations and accountability, joined the Urban Affairs and Planning faculty.

By 2003, partly to accommodate these two professors’ interests, UAP nonprofit offerings had expanded from one course to four. The two faculty members rou-
tinely offered these four courses. But this curricular change did not serve professorial interests alone. Since 2000, Urban Affairs had also witnessed growing interest among its students in nonprofit management and the role of nonprofit/nongovernmental organizations in civil society. So, as SPIA was created, there was growing recognition within at least one core SPIA program that this area might be a fruitful one for development and that growth appeared to be consonant with broader trends in public service management education (Mirabella and Wish, 2001, 30–41).

**Challenges in the Quest for Program Identity**

Each of SPIA’s three programs brought specific curricular strengths to the proposed nonprofit and civil society program, thereby lending it the possibility of developing a unique, and potentially powerful, normative and comparative focus. The UAP program brought a strong international development, accountability, and governance focus. GIA brought faculty strengths in international geopolitics and social movements. CPAP brought experts in ethics, organization theory, and network governance. These strengths would come to constitute the primary curricular comparative advantage of the civil society program as it emerged. Students could work with faculty who

- studied the role of NGOs in democratization and development processes;
- contextualized the roles of civil society in broader debates over the purport of economic, political, and social globalization processes;
- examined nonprofit and nongovernmental governance, ethics and leadership;
- explored the role of nonprofit organizations as implementation agents in increasingly complex forms of public governance;
- analyzed the relationships among social movements, nongovernmental organizations and patterns of governance.

Nonetheless, as the new School began, few of these faculty members saw themselves as contributors to a possible new cross-SPIA curriculum. Instead, most professors worried about their existing program’s possible loss of identity and standing (UAP and CPAP) or its perceived inadequate resourcing (GIA) in the new arrangement. Moreover, the faculty members of these programs were only loosely aligned organizationally around a still unspecified set of subject-oriented goals for SPIA, cross-disciplinary or otherwise. They came from several disciplines including planning, geography, political science, economics, public administration, and sociology. While one could argue that these all could contribute strongly to a graduate program in nonprofit studies, the capacity to do so depended on faculty seeing this as possible, prudent, and aligned with their professional interests, and not feeling threatened that it might impair the “core” in-
interests (however defined) of their respective programs (Mirabella and Wish, 2000, 219–229). Faculty also had to be willing to develop and act on a meta-level analytic perspective that saw value in working beyond their own disciplinary boundaries. The natural tendency for faculty engaged with globalization theory would be to focus on those competing theoretical lenses and perspectives, while planning faculty can always focus on environmental design concerns broadly defined and public administration faculty can, similarly, always emphasize the challenges confronting public sector institutions.

To this normal balkanization of faculty disciplinary perspectives and organizational alignments, the complicating factor of geography must be added. All of SPIA’s master’s degree programs were offered at the home campus and in the national capital region. The public administration master’s degree was offered in the Washington, D.C., metro area, and, although newly created, the MURP degree was strongly supported there. In fact, UAP had transferred faculty lines to the metro region believing that its enrollments would grow as a result. The MPIA was also offered “up north,” although with limited full-time faculty support. CPAP offered its doctorate in the university’s D.C. location, and UAP also offered the Ph.D. option via EDP to a limited number of students there.

With distance and alternate locations came tensions over how to teach and what to offer, as well as more subtle differences over what sorts of research make sense and how to marry research and practice, an aim of all of these graduate degrees. SPIA’s leaders had to manage large-scale internal organizational change and do so across disparate geographic locations and in the face of the competing claims of unlike stakeholders. The first would constitute a significant challenge. Both at once suggested another level of concern altogether.

These tasks were significant for SPIA’s leaders and in crafting an identity for the nascent School, but also for how students would identify themselves. Would the students view themselves as uniquely equipped by interdisciplinary inquiry to address complex problems, or would they instead see concerns through more narrow technical and professional lenses? How would location affect the resolution of this concern? These issues confronted the School and any effort to work across its programs to create a nonprofit and civil society program.

The Uneven Path to Institutional Identity: The Role of Policy Entrepreneurship and Institutional Path Dependence

As the new School began operations, two UAP faculty members interested in establishing a nonprofit program within SPIA worked with the School’s new director and the university’s executive vice president and chief operating officer—who was personally and professionally interested in civil society institutions—to take a proposal forward to the provost and request three years of seed funding to undertake research, teaching, and civic engagement in the area of nonprofit organizations and civil society.
The provost funded the nonprofit effort as just the sort of initiative the university should now support in its increasingly entrepreneurial climate, an interdisciplinary effort that held promise for developing a robust educational and outreach program as well as considerable sponsored research. Nonetheless, the Provost’s decision to fund the nonprofit initiative represented one of the few investments the university undertook in the social sciences during an otherwise spartan period. The proposal might not have been funded without the strong support of the university’s top administrative official, its executive vice president and chief operating officer. He had taught a course in public and nonprofit management at the university for several years, and his years of service to a variety of public and nonprofit organizations had impressed upon him the great need for management capacity within the nonprofit sector. He also recognized VT’s opportunity to engage the growing nonprofit sector, especially in the national capital region. Upon his retirement, the chief operating officer became a university senior fellow for resource development at the behest of the Board of Visitors. As a part of the responsibilities of that new role, the university provided him with office space and funding for six graduate assistants as well as two full-time administrative staff. Although the assistantships are available to students throughout SPIA and beyond, the vast majority of the students are affiliated with the nonprofit program, and these posts quickly emerged as a mechanism to recruit excellent students, particularly doctoral students, to Virginia Tech. While in office, the former chief operating officer developed many friends among the university’s prominent alumni, whom he continues to consult in his new role as senior fellow for resource development. His position has been important in raising donor awareness of the nonprofit and civil society program; as a result, friends of the university have sponsored a number of events in support of the effort, including its doctoral symposium series, and continue to be involved in its mission. He has functioned as a classic “fixer” or policy entrepreneur, as policy scholars have labeled this role, throughout the development of the civil society graduate program. He continues to participate actively as a partner in the development of the effort from his new institutional position (Bardach, 1977, 1998).

To gain funding, the nonprofit initiative required a home within SPIA. As matters unfolded, and as a result of the university’s interest in attaining sponsored research funds, the new program’s de facto home became a research institute. Each of the two faculty members involved (the two “original” nonprofit-oriented faculty) led research institutes whose overlapping goals included nonprofit and civil society institutions. One of the two partner institutes that administered the nonprofit initiative, the Institute for Innovative Governance (IIG), was a previously existing institutional shell loosely associated with the “soft” SPIA. The IIG no longer had an active faculty and had few funded research or outreach activities. It had traditionally been housed in the Department of Agricultural Economics (for synergies with extension), and its director was scheduled
to retire in 2004. The IIG was moved to the new SPIA in 2003, and the chair of Urban Affairs and Planning was selected to replace the IIG’s director, following a year of transition. None of the Institute’s existing programs or staff made the institutional transition to SPIA. Instead, the “new” IIG became the fiscal and administrative agent for the School’s nonprofit initiative.

The second partner institute, the Institute for Global Accountabilities, was never formally created in the university’s governance process. After about a year and a half of operating in tandem with the IIG on various proposals and projects, the two faculty members involved decided to merge their efforts into one, the Institute for Governance and Accountabilities (IGA), which would be the lead institutional actor for the development of the nonprofit and civil society program within SPIA and at Virginia Tech.

The merger was accomplished by amending the IIG charter (left over from its association with Agricultural Economics) to incorporate the aims of the Nonprofit Initiative and the Center for Global Accountabilities. The IGA was unusual in that its university charter explicitly gave it responsibility for spearheading the development of SPIA’s nonprofit and civil society program. Its curricular responsibilities, which ultimately rested with the various academic departments, had to be advanced through partnerships and dialogue with faculty in those programs. In due course, the Institute for Policy and Governance (IPG) replaced IGA. The new institute was itself the product of a merger of three existing entities. IPG retains responsibility for shepherding the VT nonprofit and civil society program but now operates as a university-wide research center that also offers research and outreach services to public sector entities. Thus, the School may be said to house the nonprofit program, but the effort is overseen and shepherded by faculty closely aligned with a university research institute affiliated with SPIA.

**Challenge 3: The Praxis Challenge**

*The Certificate Strategy: One Way to Secure Links among Programs and Between Theory and Practice*

In 2002, before the beginning of the nonprofit initiative, the Graduate School placed a master’s degree in nonprofit management on its three-year institutional plan. This status permitted programs to develop such an effort. Despite this standing, by 2003, the directors of IGA and SPIA decided that the nonprofit and civil society curriculum should be developed across all three SPIA programs. This choice reflected the strong existing identities and organizational cultures of two of SPIA’s departments, while also acknowledging that these brought special potential advantages to the nonprofit program curriculum. So, in lieu of seeking to create a stand-alone graduate degree, the IGA’s directors focused on developing a graduate certificate-oriented program. A graduate certificate in nonprofit/nongovernmental management would require fewer new resources and would be more likely to gain support of the faculty in the various SPIA programs. The directors
Program Development Issues in Nonprofit and Civil Society Studies

of the institute began to work closely with faculty across the School to incorporate important elements and concepts that reflected the comparative research and teaching capabilities of that faculty. Institute leaders also began the process of cross-listing nonprofit courses with advanced topics seminars in the public administration (CPAP) curriculum. The first certificate established required 12 credit hours in nonprofit management courses, one required core course, and an additional nine hours of electives. It was designed to fit into the program of study for any of the school’s three master’s or two doctoral degrees. The certificate could also be taken as a stand-alone recognition of graduate-level work, independent of a degree program.

While one required course and three electives might serve as a reasonable introduction, they hardly constituted a comprehensive examination of the nonprofit sector. For that purpose, the Institute turned to the newly published curricular guidelines from the Nonprofit Academic Centers Council. The Institute’s directors began seeking ways to fit a comprehensive curriculum into the plan of study for each of the School’s programs. To accomplish this, nonprofit offerings would need to align with each of the programs to use electives effectively and to introduce civil society content into existing courses. In addition, program leaders took the initiative in developing several new courses in the areas of finance, law, ethics, philanthropy, and civil society to round out the curriculum.

Each of the School’s programs seeks to assist its students in developing the analytical wherewithal to join theory and practice, because each addresses the professional world in some form. This requires a capacity in meta-level cognitive mapping that allows students to analyze practice against the premises of relevant theory. Such cross-walking of theory to practice and vice versa allows students to make sense of the organizational situations and contexts they confront. This order of reasoning is extremely difficult to attain and must be practiced if it is to be maintained by those who must rely on it. Meta-level analytical reasoning demands that students not only understand theory but also develop the capacity to apply it to situations they encounter in the field. This aptitude serves professional masters’ students as they prepare to address daily managerial responsibilities and doctoral candidates whose aim is to produce findings of moment for the professions served by nonprofit sector research.

The challenge these claims suggested for the nonprofit and civil society program was ensuring that the limited curricular exposure that some students obtain to the sector is nonetheless sufficient to ensure at least their awareness of the import of this set of capacities as well as how these may be developed and maintained. For doctoral students, this challenge requires not only the development of discipline-relevant capabilities of analysis but also an additional ability to apply these across realms of inquiry as institutions operate in practice. To maximize the potential for students to witness and to engage in this form of analysis, the program has created a rich mentoring strategy while also emphasizing the develop-
ment among students of peer mentoring networks centered on shared substantive interests.

**Challenge 4: Developing Comparative Analytic Capability**

*Developing High-Order Analytical Reasoning and Socio-Cultural Awareness*

SPIA faculty members offer interested students deep substantive knowledge of national cultures and institutions as disparate as Ukraine, Rwanda, India, and Brazil. Many also offer profound knowledge of U.S. institutions and society. A key difficulty when aspiring to develop in students genuine comparative capability lies in ensuring that such knowledge is integrated across curricular offerings. Accordingly, program nonprofit courses have been developed to encourage faculty to offer comparisons of the United States and other national contexts as an integral part of syllabus design. To succeed, this approach must familiarize students with alternate settings and must allow each to come to understand that many organization-scale issues are common across civil society organizations, irrespective of differences in their cultural context. This challenge demands high-order analytic reasoning of the sort described above and keen awareness of differences in operating contexts and their significance for organizational, cultural, and social practice (Ashcraft, 2002, 101–117). Securing a truly comparative curriculum requires time and painstaking negotiations with faculty responsible for providing nonprofit-related courses. Developing the relationships necessary to permit the honest exchange of perspectives has been the ongoing responsibility of IPG leaders and staff.

**Challenge 5: Securing Curricular Flexibility while Ensuring “Expert” Knowledge**

*How Much Expert Knowledge of What Sort Is Sufficient?*

Virginia Tech nonprofit program faculty daily confront the question of how many courses of what sort to require all students to complete in order to ensure a common base of knowledge (O’Neill, 2005, 6–11). This tension is especially sharp within SPIA’s two doctoral programs. The CPAP Ph.D. in public administration and public affairs has historically required a great deal of coursework of students in specifically delimited areas. These have not traditionally included much emphasis on nonprofit organizations and civil society. By contrast, the School’s EDP Ph.D. program was designed at its inception to serve learner interests and to be as flexible as possible. EDP has always sought to permit its students broad latitude to draw from multiple departments as necessary to secure their curricular aims and interests. One program controls curricula carefully so as to legitimate the domain of knowledge it represents, while the other takes an opposing epistemological stance and assumes the capacity of faculty and students to discern what is necessary to make informed curricular judgments, even when offerings are not of those individuals’ design. Each approach can be legitimate,
as each represents different underlying perspectives concerning the role of expert knowledge and the processes by which it is legitimated. A major and ongoing negotiation for nonprofit program faculty has been navigating this divide across programs for students interested in civil society and nonprofit concerns and issues. Since the gulf in perspectives is great, negotiations are frequently delicate, whether undertaken by student advisory committees or among program leaders.

CONCLUSIONS

The method of study employed here, situational analysis, neatly captures the central and enduring struggles that have typified the nonprofit and civil society program at Virginia Tech. The program has resulted from its leader’s reactions to changing circumstances and opportunities, even as it has been driven by a desire to ensure consistency with Nonprofit Academic Centers Council criteria and its own aspirations for analytical and comparative excellence. The program reflects its leaders’ choices as they have scanned a dynamic and changing context in light of their ongoing aims, which are at least partly the product of serendipity and the consequences of prior choices. Well-positioned policy entrepreneurs have been crucial to the program’s development, but so too has deliberation about possible strengths and intellectual comparative advantage.

Program leaders have quite literally constructed this effort in light of the circumstances posed by social and political demands, as well as the existing epistemological lenses and organizational culture claims of SPIA faculty and programs. In an important and unavoidable sense the program is rooted in the challenges and circumstances its leaders have confronted as it has been constructed. Its architecture is, in strong measure, path dependent. In making choices, program leaders have had to be aware of differences in stakeholder needs occasioned by geographic location and of the imperatives posed the goal of realizing the high-level intellectual development of a broad and diverse student body. The nonprofit program reflects pedagogical aspiration and a series of negotiated meanings over what constitutes appropriate academic inquiry and preparation. These have occurred with a long list of participants in an evolutionary dialogue. Given SPIA’s complex programs, their many aims and the reality that only a supra-level organizational identity may ever be attained for the civil society program, the surprise is not that these challenges and tensions have dogged the program’s development, but that they have been navigated thus far with some measure of success.
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author acknowledges with sincere thanks the research assistance of Courtney Jensen in the preparation of this article.

NOTE

1. These included Arts and Sciences, Agriculture and Life Sciences, Architecture and Urban Studies, and seven different academic entities—Urban Affairs and Planning and Public Administration and Policy (Architecture and Urban Studies), Political Science and International Studies and, at varying times, Geography and Science and Technology Studies (Arts and Sciences), and Agricultural Economics (Agriculture and Life Sciences).

REFERENCES


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Engagement, Scholarship, and Faculty Work: Trends and Implications for Public Affairs Education

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ABSTRACT

Building on the assumption that public administration and public affairs education has a role to play in helping students and communities bridge theory and practice, the author provides an overview of the “civic engagement movement” that is informing how higher education institutions, particularly their faculty, carry out their work. Ernest Boyer’s effort to “reconsider scholarship” is reviewed in light of current practices shaping contemporary public affairs education. The author explores the current trends affecting faculty work load and performance appraisal. Suggestions for further research and dialogue around the issues raised in this article are provided.

Over the last two and a half decades, the early efforts of the now-deceased Ernest Boyer to stimulate the Academy to “reconsider scholarship” have lead many to review how faculty work is understood, valued, and assessed (O’Meara, 2005). Reform efforts around faculty review, tenure, and promotion guidelines along these lines have been fueled, in part, through what some have deemed as a “civic engagement” movement rippling across academia (Marullo, 1996; Kellogg, 1999; Ostrander, 2004; Campus Compact, 2004). This paper reviews the literature and the practices that colleges and universities have undertaken to support and encourage faculty civic engagement and the forms of “engaged scholarship” associated with it. It begins with a look at trends affecting college and university-wide policies and practices, providing a backdrop for a deeper exploration of the ways in which public affairs and public administration programs have woven civic engagement and Boyer’s expanded views of scholarship into their teaching, research, and service expectations for faculty. It notes gaps between expectations and rewards and incentives, and it presents a series of further research questions.
Renewing the Civic Mission of Higher Education

Some 200 years after Thomas Jefferson established the University of Virginia, debates about the role of higher education in addressing the concerns and interests of local citizens and their communities persist. Advocates for the civic mission of higher education have helped to fuel a civic engagement movement, recently punctuated by the Wingspread Declaration Renewing the Civic Mission of the American Research University, a call for university and college faculty, students and administrators to rethink the priorities of higher education. This document, signed by 1,300 university presidents, states, “In celebrating the birth of our democracy we can think of no nobler task than committing ourselves to helping catalyze and lead a national movement to reinvigorate the public purposes of and civic mission of higher education. We believe that now and through the next century, our institutions must be vital agents and architects of a flourishing democracy” (as quoted in Ostrander, 2004, 76).

Reflecting on her study of several prominent universities that are noted as leaders in the civic engagement movement, Susan Ostrander concludes that the forces pushing today’s campuses toward increased civic engagement include “(a) an effort to deal with increasing criticisms of higher education and contradictory views of educational goals; (b) an apparent consensus about the importance of reinvigorated national civic participation and the university’s responsibility in relation to it; (c) a renewed call for relevance of academic knowledge paired with a growing sense among college faculty of isolation from real world questions; (d) ever more critical and pressing public concerns; and (e) more mundane matters such as space and town-gown relations” (2004, 78). Ostrander asserts that “the importance of connecting civic engagement to knowledge creation” is central if university-community engagement is to be normalized, institutionalized, and sustained over time (2004, 84).

An indicator of the extent of the civic engagement movement in higher education can be gauged through the activities of the member organizations of Campus Compact. More than 1,100 colleges and universities are members of this national coalition of college and university presidents that “advances the public purposes of colleges and universities by deepening their ability to improve community life and to educate students for civic and social responsibility…. As [a] national higher education association dedicated solely to campus-based civic engagement, Campus Compact promotes public and community service that develops students’ citizenship skills, helps campuses forge effective community partnerships, and provides resources and training for faculty seeking to integrate civic and community-based learning into the curriculum” (Campus Compact, 2004). Members of Campus Compact have made sustained efforts to train and support faculty and support their development in service learning and other forms of civic engagement. In some cases, seed money from the federal Department for Housing and Urban Development and the Corporation for National and Community
Service has been used to develop community outreach partnership centers and service learning offices designated to support the development of long-term partnerships between higher education and local communities. Substantive applied research or community-based research projects are being officially sanctioned and supported with institutional resources. Town-gown relationships are being addressed proactively with support for faculty and student efforts to meet the needs of local communities.

The rationale for civic engagement in public affairs education

The relationship between public affairs education and the civic mission of higher education has a long and rich history, particularly when public affairs education is understood and appreciated as an integral component of a democratically accountable public service (Denhardt, 2001). Reiterating a sentiment first articulated by Woodrow Wilson some 90 years earlier, Frederick Mosher devoted an entire chapter of his classic text, Democracy and the Public Service (1982), to the place and purpose of public affairs education, writing, “the nature and quality of the public service depend heavily upon the nature and quality of the system of education” (28). Citing the rise of professional disciplines and entire schools devoted to the professional development of public servants, he asserted that “[t]he development of specialization and professionalism in university curricula was accompanied by a growing recognition of broadening social goals of universities in contributing to progress and in solving social problems” (51).

Echoing Mosher’s assertions, and bringing them into the context of contemporary public affairs education, Robert Durant asks, “Can collaborative political science, public administration, and public affairs educational efforts play any role in advancing civic trust, civic capital, and civic engagement in the United States?” (1999, 135). After discussing the need for public affairs educators to build the civic capital of citizens in general, and practicing public administrators in particular, Durant encourages “researchers on bureaucracy to ‘reengage’ the way they think about disseminating what they know,” to encourage and deepen “today’s heavy emphasis on partnering with for-profits, nonprofits, and volunteers, and create awards for curricular innovations in training aspiring public, nonprofit and for-profit managers in civic capital development” (141). Durant’s call, coupled with Mosher’s historical observations, point to the ways in which public affairs education can, and does, serve as the living embodiment of higher education’s civic mission.

The work of realizing the civic mission of higher education, and bridging theory and practice in the process, falls primarily on the shoulders of faculty who possess the capacity to facilitate, lead, or dictate their teaching, research, and service activities. Applied research and experiential education do put added pressures on faculty who struggle to strike a balance between supporting applied outreach activities and attending to more traditional teaching and research agendas:
In the current environment, [public affairs and public administration] faculty who take the time to engage in applied work in the community often do so at their own risk, because the system often rewards faculty engaged in more theoretical research who cultivate national or international reputations. (Barth, 2002, 259–260)

A substantive effort to reform review, tenure, and promotion guidelines has been mounted in recent years, using a framework for reviewing scholarship first laid out by Ernest Boyer. His special report on Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate, published by the Carnegie Foundation in 1990, stimulated a great deal of dialogue among college and university administrative and academic leaders (O’Meara and Rice, 2005). Boyer presented this framework as a means of reflecting on the evolving and expanding nature of faculty work that arises through the active cultivation of civic engagement practices.

BOYER’S SCHOLARSHIP RECONSIDERED

Lamenting what he viewed as the homogenization of the standards for scholarship found on most college and university campuses, Boyer set the tone for Scholarship Reconsidered by stating, “While we speak of pride about the great diversity of American higher education, the reality is that on many campuses standards of scholarship have become increasingly restrictive, and campus priorities frequently more imitative than distinctive” (1990, 2). Boyer claimed that this increasingly restrictive standard of scholarship is skewed toward research leading to the discovery of new knowledge, particularly within the research universities. His research showed that faculty belief in the oft-cited “publish or perish” dictum is still very strong. The number of publications in peer-reviewed journals is still the preeminent criteria by which faculty are judged. Boyer noted, however, that “[t]oday, on campuses across the nation, there is a recognition that the faculty reward system does not match the full range of academic functions and that professors are often caught between competing obligations” (1990, 1).

The traditional composition of faculty work has been along the lines of research, teaching, and service. Within this paradigm, scholarship gets accomplished through research—specifically, through the publishing of research findings. Such publications are generally the bastion of a relatively small group of academics who share common expertise and interests. The composition of these practices in faculty work load plans will vary depending on one’s discipline and type of college or university. Expectations at comprehensive research universities will vary drastically from those at small liberal arts colleges, which will, in turn, vary from those at community colleges.

Recognizing this reality, Boyer asserted that “[w]e proceed with the conviction that if the nation’s higher learning institutions are to meet today’s urgent
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academic and social mandates, their missions must be carefully redefined and the meaning of scholarship creatively reconsidered. ‘Redefining’ (scholarship) means bringing to scholarship a broader meaning, one in which legitimacy is given to the full scope of academic work” (1990, 13). Boyer’s reconsideration of scholarship hinges on a typology of faculty practice that encompasses four areas: discovery, integration, application, and teaching. This new differentiation of scholarship was predicated on an urgent need for “a more inclusive view of what it means to be a scholar—a recognition that knowledge is acquired through research, through synthesis, through practice, and through teaching” (1990, 24).

Scholarship of Discovery

Boyer introduced his new typology by recognizing and valuing the most traditional understanding of scholarship, the scholarship of discovery. Discovery of new knowledge lies at the center of most basic research enterprises. New knowledge creation has been a central mission of higher education institutions, particularly with the importation of more European—especially German—understandings of institutional structure and purpose. “At its best,” Boyer wrote, discovery “contributes not only to the stock of human knowledge but also to the intellectual climate of a college or university…. “ Boyer went on to quote former Princeton University President William Bowen, who said that scholarly research “reflects our pressing, irrepressible need as human beings to confront the unknown and to seek understanding for its own sake. It is tied inextricably to the freedom to think freshly, to see propositions of every kind in every changing light. And it celebrates the special exhilaration that comes from a new idea” (1990, 17).

Certainly, Boyer saw a place for traditional research in the pursuit of new knowledge; however, he remained concerned that the discovery of new knowledge is so dominant, particularly within the modern research university, that it tends to crowd out what he saw as other forms of scholarship.

Scholarship of Integration

Boyer asserted that another crucial facet of faculty scholarship lies in the interpretation of new knowledge, essentially recognizing that new knowledge is not produced in a vacuum. In proposing the scholarship of integration, Boyer wrote, “we underscore the need for scholars who give meaning to isolated facts, putting them in perspective. By integration, we mean making connections across the disciplines, placing the specialties in larger context, illuminating data in a revealing way, often educating nonspecialists too” (1990, 18). He added, “Those engaged in discovery ask, ‘What is to be known, what is yet to be found?’ Those engaged in integration ask, ‘What do the findings mean?’” (19).

Evidence suggests that most faculty do not question the validity of the scholarship of integration. In extensive faculty surveys, the vast majority report favor-
able attitudes toward work that crosses many disciplines. The merits of interdisciplinary scholarship are becoming more widely accepted (Boyer, 1990, 22; Smith and McCann, 2001; Kezar, 2005).

Most social problems addressed within civic engagement activities can only be understood through a multidisciplinary lens (Kezar, 2005). The scholarship of integration calls for the breaking down of ridged disciplinary silos. Of course, the extent to which these silos are being breached is another matter. How faculty respond to pencil and paper surveys can be very different from actual practice.

Scholarship of Application

As Boyer saw it, the scholarship of application is oriented toward the use of scholarly inquiry to address social problems. This form of scholarship calls on one to ask the questions: “How can knowledge be responsibly applied to consequential problems?” and “Can social problems themselves define an agenda for scholarly investigation?” (1990, 21).

The credibility of applied research on college and university campuses undoubtedly varies between campuses and within campuses. Applied research is often seen as the stepchild of research that is pursued in an effort to generate new knowledge. Referring to a perception found in many of the social sciences, Argyris and Schön have observed that

...social scientists are faced with the fundamental choice that hinges on a dilemma of rigor or relevance. If social scientists tilt toward the rigor of normal science that currently dominates departments of social science in American universities, they risk becoming irrelevant to practitioners’ demands for usable knowledge. If they tilt toward the relevance of action research, they risk falling short of prevailing disciplinary standards to rigor (Argyris and Schön, 1989, 612).

Although it should be noted that rigor and relevance do not have to be mutually exclusive (Koliba and Lathrop, 2007), Argyris and Schön’s assumptions carry a great deal of weight within the academy.

In addition to the perception that applied research is seen as somewhat more academically soft, common assertions about the nature of faculty service, particularly a failure to distinguish between obligations to be good corporate citizens and conducting scholarly outreach, persist. Boyer observed, “Colleges and universities have recently rejected service as serious scholarship partly because its meaning is so vague and often disconnected from serious intellectual work.... To be considered scholarship, service activities must be tied directly to one’s special field of knowledge and relate to, and flow directly out of, this professional activity. Such service is serious, demanding work, requiring the rigor—and the
accountability—traditionally associated with research activities” (1990, 22). He went on to say that “[w]hat should be included are activities that relate directly to the intellectual work of the professor and [are] carried out through consultation, technical assistance, policy analysis, program evaluation, and the like” (1990, 36).

A set of applied research approaches and techniques has established a series of best practices and principles designed to ensure the application of rigorous methodology and the development of relevant findings (Table 1). All of these approaches share an action orientation and an appreciation for the fact that the research process and the ultimate products of the research must have some measure of usefulness, purpose, and meaning to practitioners, and not just practitioners in general but the immediate subjects of the research being undertaken. In some instances, like participatory action research, the traditional subjects of the research play an integral role in forming research questions, collecting and analyzing data, and distributing the resultant knowledge to their peers. In other instances, such as organizational action research and utilization-focused evaluation, the researcher plays a prominent role in the collection and analysis of the data but works with the research subject to use the data to inform practice.

**Scholarship of Teaching**

Boyer’s fourth classification of scholarship concerns the art and science of teaching: “Teaching, at its best, means not only transmitting knowledge, but trans-

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forming and extending it as well” (1990, 24). Just as the scholarship of application calls for the blurring of lines between research and service, the scholarship of teaching calls for the blurring of lines between teaching and research. Faculty members’ assessment and documentation of their own teaching practices is receiving increased attention through the growing number of peer-reviewed journals devoted to disciplinary teaching. Since the time of Boyer’s special report, the scholarship of teaching has garnered greater validity through the creation of these journals. As outlets for reflection on good teaching practices and systematic research conducted on these practices, these journals provide forums through which this form of scholarship can be realized.

The scholarship of teaching extends, as well, into professional development opportunities. Although often understated in the faculty review process, faculty attempts to build and refine their capacities as teachers deserve to be recognized. Just as attendance at disciplinary research conferences are standard expectations for most faculty because they provide an opportunity to be educated about the latest discoveries in the field, so too do professional development opportunities expose faculty to new teaching practices. Thus, the scholarship of teaching is as much about understanding the faculty member as a lifelong learner as it is about understanding the faculty member as a master teacher.

As we return our attention to the place and purpose of civic engagement within Boyer’s scholarship framework, it is not a hard leap to see the ways in which faculty civic engagement activities benefit from Boyer’s call to reconsider scholarship. The scholarship of discovery, integration, application, and teaching can all benefit from faculty efforts to engage in meaningful partnerships with community-based organizations. Efforts to discover new knowledge can benefit from the greater accessibility to research informants and sites afforded by partnerships. The social problems encountered in service learning and action-oriented community-based research require faculty support to interpret the meaning behind data and theories. Because civic engagement implies an adherence to an understanding and appreciation of the reciprocal relationships between and among partners, many of the best practices to help guide the scholarship of application can be forged. In addition, faculty development efforts to support civic engagement practices such as service learning often provide an opportunity or an excuse for faculty to talk about their teaching with others.

Faculty Practices in Public Affairs Education

As an academic discipline that focuses on the principles and practices that affect and involve present and future practitioners, public affairs and public administration programs are called upon to bridge theory and practice and to prepare students for a future of doing public service as well as being public servants (Ventriss, 1991; Dunn, 1994; Englehart, 2001; Cunningham and Weschler, 2002; Denhardt and Denhardt, 2003). As McGaw and Weschler noted, “[m]any,
if not most, of the public administration and policy masters’ programs listed by NASPAA experiment with a variety of innovative ways to bridge the theory-practice gap and to provide students with rich learning environments” (1999, 91). Recent literature speaks to these trends; this includes literature on how university-community partnerships lead to applied research projects (Plein, Williams, and Hardwick, 2000; Miller-Millesen and Mould, 2004; de Lancer Julnes, 2006; Rivera and Heady, 2006), the assessment of service learning opportunities (Bushouse and Morrison, 2001; Bernstein, Ohren and Shue, 2003; Reinke, 2003; Dicke, Dowden, and Torres, 2004; Killian, 2004; Baker-Boosamra, Guevara, and Balfour, 2006), accounts of oral history projects (Donald and Tribbey, 2002); the facilitation of reflection on experiences (Koliba, 2004); and the exploration of internships and experiential capstone projects (McGaw and Weschler, 1999; Denhardt, 2001; Cross and Grant, 2006).

In an attempt to gather some evidence on the extent of civic engagement practices in public administration, public policy, and urban affairs master’s degree programs, we reviewed 143 Web sites of master’s programs that have been accredited through the National Association of School of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA). Although we recognize that information posted on a Web site is not an entirely accurate account of actual practice (Carlson and Repman, 2000), we do believe this preliminary research sheds some light on the importance that some accredited programs, at least, place on civic engagement practices.¹

Within our review of these Web sites, we found that 20 percent mentioned service learning as being offered to their students. Internships were by far the most prevalent form of experiential education, with almost 89 percent of accredited programs mentioning them on their Web sites. Our review also found almost 56 percent of accredited programs listing some form of applied research being undertaken by faculty and students, suggesting a wide application of such practices across the field.

In total, fully 97 percent of accredited programs whose Web sites were reviewed mentioned at least one civic engagement practice undertaken by its faculty and students. This preliminary review of the place of civic engagement

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<th>Table 2. NASPAA-Accredited MPA/MPP Programs Citing Civic Engagement Practices on Their Web Sites (n=143)</th>
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practices within the Web sites of NASPAA-accredited institutions suggests that these programs are making a tangible effort to link their programs with civic engagement missions and practices.

**How Acceptable is an Expanded View of Scholarship within Public Affairs and Public Administration Programs?**

The extent to which the practices outlined above translate into the different forms of scholarship that Boyer named are worth considering in greater detail. In reviewing the extent to which a given form of scholarship dominates public affairs programs, we must acknowledge the scholarship of discovery as the dominant mode. The vast majority of top-tier academic journals are devoted to the dissemination of new discoveries. Arguably, this is certainly the case for public affairs and public administration as with any other discipline.

Within the public affairs and public administration literature, the place of integration within public administration continues to be a point of debate (Whicker, Strickland, and Olshfski, 1993; Rodgers and Rodgers, 2000). In their 2000 article in *Public Administration Review*, ”Defining the Boundaries of Public Administration: Undisciplined Mongrels versus Disciplined Purists,” Rodgers and Rodgers make a case that the field of public administration is an inherently interdisciplinary one (2000). Analyzing the publication records of a cohort of assistant professors who started their tenure track in 1990 and were eventually granted tenure, they found that only 37 percent of their publications were in public administration journals. The remaining 63 percent of their publications spanned 24 additional disciplines. Debates over the interdisciplinary nature of public administration will inevitably continue, as we consider the appropriate places within the Academy to situate public administration and policy programs.

It should be clear, however, that practicing public administrators draw upon a variety of disciplines to carry out their craft. The public and social problems that they encounter are often complex, requiring the utilization of knowledge offered through many fields. The fact that public administration scholars originate from and publish in a variety of disciplines, thus, mirrors the reality that practitioners find in the field.

The extent to which *applied scholarship* is valued within public affairs education is a question worth deeper empirical consideration. The 2008 American Society of Public Administration (ASPA) call for proposals lists an ”action research” track for the first time. However, a review of the literature yields only a few explicit accounts of applied or action research within public affairs and public administration journals within the field (Schneider, 1986; Chisholm, 1997; Grizzle and Pettijohn, 2002; Koliba and Lathrop, 2007). Several examples of scholarly accounts of applied research projects involving public sector organizations can be found within interdisciplinary peer-reviewed journals, including the *Journal of Applied Social Research, Human Organization, and Action Research*. The failure of this search
to uncover many explicitly defined applied research projects within the PA literature may not be indicative of a failure of scholars to publish the results of applied research. The results of research studies that are program evaluations or pieces of policy analysis initiated or sponsored by a given client or community partner can be published with their origins as applied research given nary a consideration in the text. Thus, applied research and publishing in peer-reviewed journals are not mutually exclusive activities.

Within public affairs and public administration, the legitimacy of the scholarship of teaching was solidified with the creation of the *Journal of Public Affairs Education (JPAE)* in 1994. Additionally, at least 48 articles that focus on teaching and teaching practices have been published in the *Public Administration Review* since 1983. These trends suggest a growing acceptance of the scholarship of teaching as a viable and necessary form of scholarship in the public administration field.

Noting the growing relevance of civic engagement to teaching, research, and scholarship, Curt Ventriss has asked, “What incentives are there in the university for such outreach activities?” adding, “perhaps it is time for every department of public administration to put in writing what specific goals it has (if any) in outreaching to the community and the means of obtaining (and supporting) these aims” (1995, 149). Ventriss’ assertion brings to light the role that review, tenure, and promotion policies play in guiding faculty work. These guidelines essentially serve as the basis of a faculty member’s performance appraisal, a concept very familiar to public administration scholars and practitioners.

**Research on Faculty Workload**

Although it can be safely stated that a civic engagement movement touches at least the 1,300 Campus Compact universities and colleges across the country and to some degree a large majority of accredited MPA/MPP programs, that is by no means the only trend and factor impacting faculty work. Citing a recent study of the perceptions of Chief Academic Officers (CAOs) O’Meara, Kaufman, and Kuntz (2003) identify several trends influencing the nature of faculty work:

- Scarce resources (funding, assistance and time) to support faculty work.
- Faculty being expected to be entrepreneurs, raising their own funds to support their work.
- Increased expectations for teaching, research, and service.

These factors have led several writers to assert that today’s college and university faculty face increasing burdens, and this leads to their perception of being overloaded (Rice, Sorcinelli, and Austin, 2000). “Significantly, younger faculty believe that the quality of their work is, in fact, diminished by competing obligations,” observes Boyer (1990, 45). Extensive interviews and campus studies have revealed that early-career faculty are facing an overloaded plate and that, in recent
years, “scholarly responsibilities of early career faculty have not only broadened, but also increased” (Rice, Sorcinelli, and Austin, 2000, 16).

Given these results, O’Meara and her associates conclude that, with the growing burden to reduce budgets, faculty are being asked to do more and facing greater opportunities for burnout in the process. They assert that “it will be critical for faculty to navigate change in ways that revitalize as opposed to leaving them tired and unfulfilled” (O’Meara, Kaufman and Kuntz, 2003).

Scarce resources, higher expectations to bring in external funding, and increased expectations to engage in new forms of scholarship that involve various forms of civic engagement have created certain problematic conditions for faculty. This makes it difficult for them to determine exactly what is valued and most important to accomplish for their work to be respected and recognized.

**The State of Reform in Faculty Review, Tenure, and Promotion Guidelines**

Many have argued for the need to reform official university structures, academic reward systems, and policies (Glassick, et al. 1997; O’Meara, 1997; Driscoll and Lynton, 1999; Diamond, 1999; Rice et al., 2000). In practice, these reforms have come in the form of “(a) changing institutional mission and planning documents to acknowledge a broader definition of scholarship; (b) amending promotion and tenure or contract language and criteria; (c) providing opportunities for flexible workload programs; and (d) providing incentive grants” (O’Meara, 2005, 259).

Boyer called for significant reforms in the ways in which faculty work is assessed. This call is premised on the broadening of what is considered valid faculty practice and the individuating of these practices to suit the wider conditions within which faculty find themselves operating (1990, 50). These individualized expectations could be realized through the creation of what he termed “creativity contracts,” “an arrangement by which faculty members define their professional goals for a three to five-year period, possibly shifting from one principal scholarly focus to another” over time (1990, 48).

In reviewing the impact of Boyer’s work within research universities, O’Meara observes that the assessment of scholarship as the number and quality of peer-reviewed journal articles and books still dominates faculty evaluation in these institutions. “At the same time,” O’Meara notes, “doctoral and comprehensive universities (especially those located in urban areas) were involved or becoming more involved in regional or community problem-solving, linking graduate and undergraduate programs to community concerns, while examining how faculty involvement in economic community development fit with established faculty roles and expectations for scholarship (Crosson, 1983; Finnegan, 1993; Aldersley, 1995; Braskamp and Wergin, 1998; Cohen, 1998; Ramaley, 2000)” (O’Meara, 2005, 257).
Despite the dominance of the scholarship of discovery in most institutions, O’Meara did find that approximately two-thirds of the CAOs surveyed said “their institution had changed mission and planning documents, amended faculty evaluation criteria, provided incentive grants, or developed flexible workload programs to encourage and reward a broader definition of scholarship” (2005, 260-261); the other third had not. She grouped these colleges and universities into one of two areas: reform-minded institutions and traditionally-minded institutions.

O’Meara found that the reforms most frequently identified were expanding the definition of scholarship in faculty evaluation policies (76 percent), and providing incentive grants for multiple forms of scholarship (75 percent). Approximately 45 percent of CAOs [from reform-minded institutions] noted that they had expanded the definition of scholarship written into institutional mission and planning documents, and 41 percent reported that their institution had used the expanded definition of scholarship to develop flexible workload programs (in the spirit of Boyer’s ‘creativity contracts’) (2005, 261).

Although the scholarship of discovery still plays a dominant role in most institutions’ assessment schemes, it does appear that Boyer’s call for a reconsideration of what constitutes scholarship is being heeded.

DISCUSSION

Within higher education, as in most any other industry or institution, the formal evaluation of worker performance provides important indicators about what is valued. Formal evaluation is, in essence, a form of quality control:

Other than hiring new faculty members, the principal expression of academic values about faculty work load lies in the promotion and tenure decision. It is here rather than in institutional rhetoric that the faculty seek clues about the value of different aspects of their work. It is here that productivity is most meaningfully defined and evaluated (Fairweather, 2002, 26).

Presidential declarations, objectives stated within a strategic plan or Web site, and even the devotion of institutional dollars to the pursuit of civic engagement activities are only minor expressions of an institution’s support. The structure, format, and criteria that guide the faculty review, tenure, and promotion process informs faculty practices more than any other factor. The Kellogg Commission on
the Future of State and Land Grant Universities stated that “[o]f all the challenges facing the engagement effort, none is more difficult than ensuring accountability for the effort” (1999, 28). Echoing Boyer, Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff (1997) note that “evaluation that uses different standards for research, teaching, and professional service has outlived its day. Academia needs a single standard, but it cannot implement that standard simply by applying to other forms of scholarship the traditional criteria that have usually been used for judging research” (23–24). O’Meara’s research suggests that the pursuit of reforms would not only support greater faculty civic engagement, it also would garner deeper faculty alignment with institutional goals and possibly improve faculty satisfaction (2005).

The systematic appraisal of an individual employee’s performance has become standard practice within the private and public sectors. Students of public affairs and public administration will likely encounter such personnel systems in their workplace. For college and university faculty, performance appraisal systems are implemented within a “loosely coupled system,” (Weick, 1978) in which the unity of command is weaker than more tightly coupled organizations.

Thus, the matter of review, tenure, and promotion reform is one to be addressed at several layers of higher education. In many cases, each individual academic department is allowed to define its own understanding of the nature of peer review, which academic journals count and by how much, what kinds of service are valued, and what a minimum threshold for quality teaching is acceptable. Institution-wide reforms to the review, tenure, and promotion process will thus need to be vetted and interpreted by each academic unit.

For public affairs and public administration programs, the place and purpose of civic engagement within a faculty member’s total performance may be less of a stretch than within other disciplines. The widespread acceptance that public affairs programs need to bridge theory and practice lends even greater credibility to public affairs scholars’ civic engagement activities.

However, to what extent do these givens translate into the review, tenure, and promotion processes and criteria that public affairs scholars encounter? The same trends affecting all higher education faculty—including scarce resources, expectations for faculty entrepreneurship, and increased expectations for teaching, research, and service—are undoubtedly faced by many public affairs scholars.

With 97 percent of NASPAA-accredited programs promoting at least some form of civic engagement on their Web sites, it might be surmised that public affairs scholars suffer from an even greater crowded-plate phenomenon. This question certainly should be pursued through further research.

Although this review of NASPAA members’ Web sites provides a glimpse into the articulated practices of accredited programs, more work must be done to survey program directors and to systematically review the review, tenure, and promotion guidelines that public affairs and public administration programs use. Only then may we be able to gauge with any certainty the extent to which civic
engagement activities are actively supported—or hindered—through the review, tenure, and promotion process.

If we transfer O’Meara’s “traditional-reform” typology from the institutional to the departmental or programmatic level, we are faced with a series of additional questions. The shift from a traditional to a reform minded review, tenure, and promotion process and criteria is, in part, a cultural one. The publish-or-perish norm that privileges the scholarship of discovery over other forms of scholarship is, in all likelihood, the dominant culture of most public affairs and public administration programs. Just how can such a norm coexist with programmatic attempts to link theory and practice through civic engagement?

Several different responses appear possible. As noted earlier, with the advent of JPAE and the acceptance of pedagogically inclined articles by PAR beginning in the early 1980s, legitimate media for the peer review of the scholarship of teaching are beginning to take root. Arguably, public administration journals draw upon a variety of social science disciplines, and thus scholars may find a more open and willing audience to accept efforts encompassing the scholarship of integration. A case has been made that the public affairs and public administration fields are, in practice, integrative in nature (Rodgers and Rodgers, 2000).

It would appear that outlets for the peer review of the scholarship of application within public affairs publications are possible and perhaps even more prevalent than we know. We must critically ask, however, are there ample places to publish scholarly accounts of the applied research practices and their effects on clients and partnering entities? Our search of the literature suggests that public affairs journals have yet to openly embrace applied research as a valid form of scholarship. That said, what begins as applied research may be presented within the literature as more traditional research undertakings. Tracing the origins of the funding for these studies (often noted in the acknowledgement section of an article) will likely reveal that, in many instances, clients and/or practitioner-recipients of research findings are involved.

Yet, other compounding factors that often accompany faculty civic engagement activities and diverse forms of scholarship further complicate matters. Anyone who offers a service learning component to a course or engages in extensive partnership building around an applied research project will note that these activities take up a great deal of time. They require that faculty get out of their offices and classrooms and actively engage other partners. It is no wonder that faculty face an overcrowded plate. Must something give?

If our field is one that is called upon to bridge theory and practice and to prepare students for public service, the questions raised in this article are deeply important. Opportunities to link theory and practices must become more than an option. They must become an imperative if the field of public administration is to continue to serve the needs and interests of current and future public administrators.
Note

1. NASPAA-accredited programs present themselves through their Web sites in a wide variety of ways:
   - Programs with independent Web pages within their university’s Web site. These pages usually have a navigation bar for information within the program’s Web pages.
   - Programs that have their Web pages housed within another program’s Web pages, such as a political science department.
   - Programs have their own Web site, but not offering a navigation bar or many links to additional information about the program.
   - Programs that do not maintain a Web site, but the graduate college provides a place in its Web pages for simple information about program requirements and how to apply.

We found many shades of grey within these categories. Information about civic engagement practices was more likely to be found on programs’ independent Web pages. These Web pages often had links to expanded versions of their mission statements, course syllabi, program handbooks in PDF format, faculty Web pages, in-depth course and program descriptions, and information about outreach and research activities. Because the wealth of information presented, it was easier to simply discern whether the program did or did not have certain civic engagement practices. In many of the other Web site categories, a program may have mentioned a philosophy such as “linking theory and practice.” If the Web site did not provide an opportunity to look at course syllabi or detailed mission statement goals, many of the criteria for civic engagement practices were absent. In the case of programs that only presented themselves via their graduate college’s listings, there was typically little or no information about the program’s philosophy and no links to further information. For this reason, programs that have this type of Web site are at a disadvantage when it comes to communicating their civic engagement practices.

Programs that maintain easily navigable Web pages with multiple links to additional program information were more likely to be identified as having a higher total number of civic engagement practices. Those that maintain Web pages with limited information and navigation possibilities tended to have a lower number of references found.

Criteria for Selecting Community Engagement Phrases

1. Service Learning/Community-based Learning: Any direct reference to the phrase “service learning.” Includes courses and extra-curricular service learning opportunities. Also tallied in this category were references in course plans to student learning opportunities outside the classroom and the traditional university setting. For example, a college may have partnerships with community organizations and their students participate actively in those partnerships or actively with an aspect of the organization, either as part of university coursework or in an extra-curricular fashion.

2. Internships: Any direct reference to the word “internship” as part of a mandatory or optional program for students. Occasionally coupled with the phrase “field experience.”

3. Applied Research/Community-based Research: Any direct reference to the phrase “applied research,” for students and/or faculty. Also tallied in this category: faculty and/or students do research on a community or community organization that is sometimes based from within the community or community organization. Also includes some faculty outreach activities that would include research for academic purposes and for the organization or community studied.

References


Engagement, Scholarship, and Faculty Work: Trends and Implications


Engagement, Scholarship, and Faculty Work: Trends and Implications


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Nonprofit Outreach Services: Using Outreach to Increase Nonprofits’ Capacity and to Provide a Quality Educational Experience for Students

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Christina Bright, Indiana University Southeast
Leon L. Haley, University of Pittsburgh

Abstract
The nonprofit sector is growing at an astounding rate. This growth has created unique needs among nonprofit leaders and organizations. Educational institutions are responding to these needs through nonprofit degree programs and outreach services. However, while a considerable amount of research has focused on nonprofit education programs, a limited amount of research has focused on nonprofit outreach services. This article sought to address this weakness by exploring the history, structure, and impact of the University of Pittsburgh’s Graduate School of Public and International Affairs’ (GSPIA) Nonprofit Clinic in Western Pennsylvania. A unique feature of GSPIA’s Nonprofit Clinic is their use of students and faculty to provide technical assistance to nonprofits. Using this model, nonprofit organizations receive valuable support and students receive valuable educational experiences. This study concluded that GSPIA’s nonprofit outreach program has strong positive benefits and is replicable in other academic institutions.

The Growth of the Nonprofit Sector
In the United States and around the world, the nonprofit sector is growing at an astounding rate. It has added more than one million jobs between 1997 and 2001 to the United States economy alone. According to the Independent Sector, employment growth in the nonprofit sector has significantly outpaced employment growth in the business and government sectors. Some of this growth can be attributed to the beneficial partnerships that have developed between nonprofits.
and organizations in other sectors. For example, nonprofit organizations are partnering with government organizations for the purposes of increasing flexibility and cost-effectiveness in executing government programs. Business organizations are also partnering with nonprofit organizations; some businesses use nonprofits to sell products and services, and subsequently benefit from their tax advantages (Young, 1999).

The rapid growth of the nonprofit sector has increased the demands these organizations face; unfortunately, these demands often exceed the capacities of these organizations. It is our belief that academic institutions can help nonprofit organizations meet these demands through higher education and community service. This article will use the University of Pittsburgh’s Graduate School of Public and International Affairs’ (GSPIA) Nonprofit Clinic as an example of how this can be achieved. To accomplish this goal, this article will begin by exploring the literature on nonprofit education programs and outreach services. Next, the rationale, history, and structure of GSPIA’s outreach model will be explored. After this discussion, this article will highlight the effects of GSPIA’s efforts on nonprofit organizations and students involved in the program. This article will conclude with a discussion of several lessons learned in the past five years of GSPIA’s Nonprofit Clinic existence.

**Nonprofit Education and Outreach: A Literature Review**

The growth of the nonprofit sector has highlighted the need to prepare current and future leaders of nonprofit organizations (Dolan, 2002; Young, 1999). Nonprofit organizations are different from governmental and business organizations on several dimensions, such as their funding sources, use of volunteers, and legal frameworks. Fortunately, educational institutions have noticed the unique differences and needs of nonprofit organizations and have respond to these needs in two major ways.

**Nonprofit Educational Programs**

One strategy educational institutions have used to respond to the needs of nonprofits is educational courses. Nonprofit educational courses range from one course to full degree programs. Interestingly, these courses have dramatically increased over the last decade. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of courses on nonprofit issues increased from 17 to 138 (Mirabella and Wish, 2001). Additionally, several noteworthy characteristics of nonprofit courses are highlighted in existing research. For one, almost 40 percent of these programs were located in Midwestern states (Wish and Mirabella, 1998b). Second, these courses were present in various academic departments, with the most popular choices being in public administration and business departments. Third, although an assortment of nonprofit courses is offered, those courses share some characteristics. For example, nearly 40 percent of the nonprofit management programs offered
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courses that addressed the external environment of nonprofit organizations, such as public policy, marketing, and fundraising. Another 44 percent offered courses that addressed topics such as management skills, human resource management, finance, and accounting (Wish and Mirabella, 1998b).

Nonprofit Outreach Services
A second strategy educational institutions have used to help meet the needs of the nonprofits is outreach services. These outreach services come in various forms, such as internships, technical assistance programs, workshops, conferences, and newsletters. One study revealed that more than half of the universities that offered courses in nonprofit management were also involved in outreach efforts (Wish and Mirabella, 1998a). University-based outreach services have several noteworthy characteristics. For example, research has shown that the most popular home for these outreach efforts was continuing education departments, particularly when no other institutional program focuses on nonprofit education (Mirabella and Renz, 2001). Public administration departments were the next most popular alternative for outreach services. Second, scholars found that baccalaureate-level institutions were the least likely to offer outreach services, while doctoral-level institutions were the most likely to offer such services. Third, although the core mission of universities was not a strong determinant of the nature and makeup of outreach services, these services were largely present in institutions that adopted community or urban missions (Mirabella and Renz, 2001).

Deficiencies of the Literature
The literature on the efforts of educational institutions to respond to the needs of nonprofit sector is informative. However, several weaknesses of this literature deserve consideration. For example, although a large and growing body of research has focused on nonprofit education programs, only a few studies have focused on nonprofit outreach services. Only two published studies found in the literature describe university-based nonprofit outreach services (see Mirabella and Renz, 2001; Wish and Mirabella, 1998a). The second weakness is a lack of in-depth qualitative analyses of university-based outreach services. The existing research on outreach services are quantitative, for the purpose of generalization. There is a need for research that provides a comprehensive examination of outreach programs and services that explores their unique histories, reasons for being, internal structures, and impact on communities. A final weakness of the literature is the treatment of nonprofit management education and outreach services as inherently separate enterprises. Academic institutions can provide a quality education to students and timely support to nonprofit organizations at the same time. Unfortunately, we found no research that provides a clear picture of how this can be accomplished. This article will counter these deficiencies in the literature using a case study of GSPIA’s Nonprofit Clinic.
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The Nonprofit Clinic

After many years of teaching in the nonprofit management program, faculty of GSPIA were not surprised that the problems and challenges facing the nonprofit sector were large. Clearly, among the major challenges was the increasing demand for accountability and performance in nonprofit organizations. As the faculty began to think about how these demands could be met, they were challenged with an important question: How can a school of public affairs with an existing nonprofit management program effectively help produce high-performing nonprofit organizations? This was a theme borrowed from the work of Letts, Ryan, and Grossman (1999). These scholars defined high-performing organizations as those that have the capacity to develop, sustain, and improve the delivery of their mission, and, in so doing, achieve lasting social benefits. In essence, high-performing organizations are capable of making a measurable difference in the lives of those they serve through the programs and services they provide.

Rationale for GSPIA Involvement in Nonprofit Sector

The growing awareness of and need for capacity building in Pittsburgh also influenced GSPIA’s faculty. Capacity building is an approach to strengthening nonprofits so they can better achieve their missions. Most nonprofits—particularly those that are small—lack financial resources, have boards of directors who are too busy, and operate in a hostile environment that is indifferent to the need to improve their performance (Letts, Ryan, and Grossman, 1999). Fortunately, because of the increasing demands of foundations and other funding organizations for measurable performance and impact, a growing number of nonprofit organizations in Pittsburgh were beginning to recognize that success required an investment in organizational capacity building.

Additionally, GSPIA’s faculty was concerned with how to bridge the gap between what students learned in the classroom about nonprofit organizations and the day-to-day concerns facing these organizations. In short, the issue was how to provide students with the opportunity to gain experience in working with nonprofit organizations, around real problems, and how to heighten their appreciation as aspiring managers for the value of capacity building in creating high performing organizations. These goals were particularly important given the evidence that many students enroll in nonprofit programs for personal and skill development reasons (Wilson and Larson, 2002). Largely, the growing local interest in capacity building and service learning were important reasons that provided the rationale for developing a nonprofit outreach program in GSPIA.

History of the Nonprofit Clinic

In light of the concerns and ideas highlighted above, in October 2001 GSPIA created the “Nonprofit Clinic.” The Clinic was developed to provide capacity building to nonprofits through technical support and to provide a valuable learn-
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The idea of a “clinic” first started from a request from the Federal Home Loan Bank of Pittsburgh in 2000. The Bank asked GSPIA to provide capacity building assistance to nonprofit organizations involved in affordable housing and economic development efforts. Although GSPIA accepted the initial contract as stated, several administrators and key faculty believed that it was important to develop a program that offered support to a wider variety of nonprofit organizations. When this expanded vision of the Nonprofit Clinic was discussed with University of Pittsburgh’s central academic administrators, it was favorably received and viewed as compatible with GSPIA’s public service mission; however, the administration did require the Nonprofit Clinic to confine its work to technical and capacity building assistance and to avoid taking advocacy positions on behalf of its clients. It is important to note that many other academic and non-academic entities in the region provided outreach services to nonprofit organizations. According to Kearns (2004), more than 20 public and private capacity-building organizations operated in the Pittsburgh region. However, none of these entities mirrored the GSPIA outreach model’s organizational structure.

Structure of Nonprofit Clinic

The Nonprofit Clinic, as imagined by GSPIA, was organized on models long practiced in other professional disciplines and schools, such as medicine, dentistry, and law. These disciplines have successfully balanced and fulfilled the dual needs of providing students with field training and providing affordable services for indigent and underserved individuals, under faculty supervision. The Nonprofit Clinic mirrors this model by balancing the need to provide a quality education to GSPIA’s students with the need to provide high-quality, affordable support to nonprofit organizations. Consequently, several features of this model are worth highlighting.

First, the Nonprofit Clinic began with identifying the range of competencies and substantive knowledge areas that would enable nonprofit organizations to carry out their missions effectively. Because GSPIA had a nonprofit management program, the courses in this program were used as a guide for structuring the kinds of technical services offered to nonprofit organizations. For example, the GSPIA nonprofit management program offered courses in strategic planning, program evaluation, board development, financial planning, fund development, grant writing, marketing, cash flow analysis, business planning, and organizational development. These courses became the basic service structure for the Nonprofit Clinic. Hence, consistent with existing research (Mirabella and Renz, 2001), the GSPIA outreach program was modeled largely on its nonprofit management educational program.

Second, the services of the Nonprofit Clinic are activated through formal requests from nonprofit organizations. After the Nonprofit Clinic receives these
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requests, the organization is assessed according to the competency areas previously identified by the Clinic. If the Nonprofit Clinic accepts the nonprofit as a client of its services, a regularly offered class is found that will serve as the basis of the support. The client organization is then assigned to faculty and Nonprofit Clinic staff members who are responsible for recruiting three to four students to work as the technical assistance project team. A strong effort is made to ensure that the project teams are interdisciplinary by recruiting students who are enrolled in law, business, or social work degree programs but who are taking GSPIA courses as part of their degree requirements. All projects are undertaken with faculty supervision. Staff members are also available to answer any questions that students may have. Students also have access to telephones, computers, and supplies to complete their projects, and are reimbursed for all expenses incurred for the projects.

Third, the projects normally begin and end in one academic term and involve considerable on-site work with the nonprofit client. Students receive no monetary compensation for their work, but the projects are equivalent to a course. Hence, students are given course credit after the completion of a final technical assistance report. This final report must meet the standards of a high-level professional report and must be equivalent in quality to what a paid consultant would be expected to produce. To ensure quality, all written projects undergo two reviews before they are given to the client organization. The supervising faculty member performs the first review, and the director of the Nonprofit Clinic conducts the second review.

Finally, the Clinic’s staff discussed the appropriateness of charging each nonprofit client a fee for the services it received, but it was assumed that the nonprofits with the most need for their services would have small operating budgets. As a result, the Clinic decided to provide its services without charge or for a nominal monetary donation from the client organization. However, as an increasing number of well-funded organizations began to seek the services of the Nonprofit Clinic, a small fee was developed and based on the client organization’s ability to pay.

The Impact of the Clinic

The legitimacy of GSPIA’s Nonprofit Clinic will ultimately depend on its answers to two questions: How well it has increased the capacity of the nonprofit organizations it has served? How well has it provided a quality education to students involved in the effort? Organizational capacity building and quality education are continual processes, not one-shot infusions. Nonetheless, the effectiveness of GSPIA’s Nonprofit Clinic is an important issue to consider. How well has the Nonprofit Clinic increased the ability of nonprofit organizations to carry out their missions? The nonprofits that are the beneficiaries of capacity building programs should be able to specify the concrete improvements that are the intended outcomes of the work (Wing, 2004). On a similar note, how well has the Non-
profit Clinic’s involvement strengthened the students’ educational experiences? Their involvement in the technical assistance projects should reinforce educational pedagogy, add skills that they might not have, and enhance their practical understanding of what managing nonprofit organizations involves.

**Impact on Nonprofit Organizations**

To assess the Nonprofit Clinic’s impact on the nonprofit organizations, surveys were electronically administered to seven clients that received technical assistance. The surveys collected information about their satisfaction with the quality of the services received, the degree to which they benefitted from the services, the improvements that were made because of the technical support provided, and the degree to which they would use the Nonprofit Clinic’s services in the future. The results of the surveys uncovered several important findings. For example, on a scale of 1 (very unsatisfied) to 5 (highly satisfied), 86 percent of the clients reported that they were moderately or highly satisfied with the quality of the services they received.

Second, 86 percent of the respondents reported that they had benefited from the assistance they received. For example, strategic planning support provided to one nonprofit client resulted in that organization gaining a $50,000 grant. In another instance, the Nonprofit Clinic was asked to help a client that was on the brink of bankruptcy. This client needed to produce a cash flow plan before funding from a foundation would be granted. The Nonprofit Clinic prepared a cash flow plan for the client that subsequently was favorably received by the foundation. Third, 86 percent of the respondents suggested that they had seen significant improvements in their organizations since they received support from the Nonprofit Clinic. For example, clients that received strategic planning and program evaluation assistance cited how these services had helped them focus their attention on the critical issues they were facing and had raised their awareness of the importance of developing measurable outcomes to meet the requirements of potential funding organizations. Lastly, 85 percent of the organizations suggested that they would use the services of the Nonprofit Clinic in the future if a need arises.

**Impact on Students**

In addition to collecting information on the impact of the Nonprofit Clinic’s efforts on nonprofit organizations, the results of students’ learning experiences were measured via a survey administered to 18 students who were involved in technical assistance project teams. The survey collected information on students’ satisfaction with their learning experience, important learning outcomes that were strengthened, the degree to which their involvement met their career goals, and whether they would recommend their learning experience to other students. The findings of the survey were positive. For example, all of the respondents
suggested that they were moderately or highly satisfied with their involvement in technical assistance projects. Second, all the students suggested that their experiences increased their practical experience and their ability to apply classroom concepts to the nonprofit sector and/or raised their interest in nonprofit organizations.

Third, when asked if their experiences helped them achieve their career goals, 88 percent of the students suggested that their involvement was moderately helpful or very helpful. Finally, nearly all the respondents suggested that they would recommend their learning experiences to other students. On a similar note, faculty members involved in directing and supervising technical assistance projects noted that the students involved in these projects were more engaged in their classes and more appreciative of the value of experiential learning. Faculty members also expressed great enjoyment and satisfaction from being involved in improving nonprofit organizations.

LESSONS LEARNED

Although the Nonprofit Clinic has been in business for several years, it is an evolving institutional initiative that will require continual self-improvement. During this time, many important administrative lessons emerged. For example, one lesson was the importance of having a pre-project discussion with the program staff, faculty supervisor, and the potential client organization. This discussion should outline the scope of the project before any formal commitment is made. This will limit any miscommunication on the scope of the technical assistance projects. The technical and capacity building needs of many nonprofits can be numerous; some organizations will need several project interventions over a period of time.

A second lesson learned was the importance of securing the commitment for the project from both the organization’s executive director and board of directors. This is particularly important when the project requires extensive interactions between the project team and organization, such as projects that involve strategic planning and board development. Because the board of directors is a key stakeholder, their involvement will determine the success of outreach efforts. The commitment of the board to engage in technical assistance projects is an expression of their willingness to help their organization maximize success.

The third lesson learned was the need to be clear with students and faculty supervisors about the expectations of projects. Students and faculty involved in projects should have a clear understanding of the time commitment needed. The projects often required students to commit three to five hours per week outside their allotted classroom schedules. Faculty supervisors also must be willing to go beyond contractual obligations and conduct weekly project meetings with students and client organizations during evenings and weekends.

In conclusion, GSPIA’s Nonprofit Clinic is making a difference in the nonprofit sector in Western Pennsylvania. In light of the number of requests for support
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the Nonprofit Clinic has received, there is much capacity building work yet to
done in the region. In about five years, the Nonprofit Clinic has provided support
to more than 60 organizations, and the demand for capacity building continues
to grow. The Nonprofit Clinic’s creators are confident that the outreach service
model GSPIA developed can be reproduced in other academic institutions where
there is a commitment to using students and faculty to strengthen the perfor-
mance of nonprofit organizations.

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A Longitudinal Perspective on MPA Education in the United States

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Abstract
This article provides an overview of the development of master of public administration (MPA) programs in the United States. Specifically, it examines MPA curricula in a longitudinal manner and analyzes the factors that have motivated and facilitated changes in MPA courses and content. Building on a review of relevant literature and documents on the MPA curricula, the article evaluates how well the current course content of MPA programs in the United States prepare graduates to deal with the needs of public service at the managerial level. The article concludes by offering suggestions to MPA program designers about how to build a better MPA programs that will provide graduates with a foundation for continued professional development in changing environments.

The primary objective of a master of public administration (MPA) education is to accommodate the professional needs of public administrators at various levels. In light of the gradual expansion of this professional degree program in the United States during the last century, at best a meager amount of research has been conducted to address the question of how well an MPA education prepares graduates to meet the needs of public service at the managerial level. A review of the literature indicates a continuing controversy over whether public administration as an academic and professional discipline is meeting its stated goal of preparing qualified practitioners for the public sector. The purpose of this study is to revisit this question by examining the curricula of MPA degrees offered in the United States and by tracing the development of MPA curriculum design since the degree’s inception in this country in the 1920s.

In the following sections, a brief review of the existing documents and literature is provided, supplying the background of the MPA degree program’s development in the United States and of guidelines and standards designed to foster
the improvement of public administration graduate education. Then research questions for this study are listed and the research design—sample, data collection, and instrument for data analysis—is detailed. Data analysis is related to curriculum quality as well as curriculum development during the last three decades. Findings of this research are briefly summarized, and finally comments on certain implications of these findings for future MPA curriculum development are presented.

**MPA Education**

*Development of MPA Degree Programs in the United States*

The first public administration programs, dating from the first quarter of the 20th century, were largely based on the scientific management principles expounded by Max Weber, Frederick Taylor, and Henri Fayol, such as apolitical administration, clearly defined administrative procedures, and a focus on productivity (Paul, 1989). In the first half of the 20th century, the number of MPA degree programs experienced slow growth, from two in 1931 to 13 in 1952 (Grode and Holzer, 1975). By then, the addition of the study of political processes emphasized the importance of one of the most significant traditional disciplines on which the study of administration was built—political science—and the addition of the study of organizational behavior reflected a then-emerging discipline of organizational studies. The second half of the 20th century witnessed a rapid expansion of MPA programs, and then the growth of other related master’s degree programs across the country.

Although the MPA is the most common graduate degree in public administration, similar programs evolved to offer flexibility in employment options. For example, master of public policy (MPP), master of public health (MPH), and master of urban affairs (MUA) degrees are offered in various units within universities—departments, schools, and centers of public administration, political science, education, and so on. These programs, together with MBA programs, all offer coursework that could be useful in the public, nonprofit, or private sectors. As a result, graduates of some of these programs may have the edge over MPA graduates for certain jobs in the public sector. In Cherry and Dave’s (1997) survey of graduates of MBA programs at Appalachian State University, 21 percent of the respondents worked in nonbusiness sectors—government, nonprofits, and universities.

These developments all contribute to transition of the MPA degree into a more interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary program that draws upon diverse, yet somehow related, fields ranging from economics, sociology, and psychology to law, social work, and management. As a result of this multidisciplinary evolution, the pedagogy of these different disciplines has heavily influenced MPA education. For example, public administration programs began to adopt the case study approach, emulating their business administration counterparts. Such a va-
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A variety of sources of concepts, theories, and methodologies from different academic fields, according to Hering (1976), actually “provide[s] strength and vitality to the discipline, and…provide[s] a broad-based grounding to government managers who have received public administration training.”

However, the development of the other professional master’s degree programs mentioned above posed great challenges to MPA programs. Facing pressure and competition, graduate public administration programs initiated several waves of curricular revisions during the last several decades. Major changes included offering more quantitative and operations courses, emphasizing practical applications over theory, creating more program concentrations in critical functional areas—like health care and education—that cross the public and private sectors, and increasing the focus on communications, leadership, and managerial or even entrepreneurial skills. The purpose of these curricular revisions was to improve the ability of MPA graduates to compete for job openings in the public, private, or nonprofit sectors.

The development of the MPA curriculum reflects the evolution of MPA education in the United States. Because the MPA’s curricular components are designed to produce professionals capable of intelligent analysis, effective communication, and creative action in public service—consistent with the MPA program mission—it is of critical importance to assess curricular quality and to find ways to improve it.

**NASPAA Guidelines and Standards for MPA Degree Programs**

The National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA), with a goal of establishing accreditation standards for graduate public administration programs and therefore “providing more competently trained managerial personnel for the public service” (NASPAA, 1974), issued its first *Guidelines and Standards for Professional Master’s Degree Programs in Public Affairs/Public Administration (Guidelines)* in 1974. That initiative helped provide criteria for assessing educational programs in public affairs/public administration, including a framework for evaluating the program content (curriculum design) of MPA programs in American universities.

The report of NASPAA’s Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation (2006) contains a section on standards for the MPA program curriculum in which NASPAA prescribes common and additional curriculum components, not specific courses, for professional master’s degree programs in public affairs and administration. In the area of Management of Public Service Organizations, the common curriculum components include human resources, budgeting and financial processes, and information management, technology applications, and policy. In the area of Application of Quantitative and Qualitative Techniques of Analysis, the common curriculum components include policy and program formulation, implementation and evaluation, and decision making and problem solving.
Within an Understanding of the Public Policy and Organizational Environment, the common curriculum components include political and legal institutions and processes, economic and social institutions and processes, and organization and management concepts and behavior. These common curriculum components are all intended to enhance the student’s values, knowledge, and skills for acting ethically and effectively.

The Guidelines explicitly contended, in more detail than recent NASPAA reports, that public administration programs should be designed to provide graduates with professional public management competencies in four basic and broad elements: (1) knowledge, (2) skills, (3) values, and (4) behaviors. The Guidelines also strongly recommended that MPA programs consciously integrate the content of these elements into degree courses in order to produce a balanced educational course of study. Complementing the Guidelines, NASPAA developed an accompanying matrix of a public administration program’s constituent elements, including subject matter areas and program specializations, as displayed in Table 1.

Part I of the matrix calls for the development of public administration students’ competencies in five major subject matter areas: the political-social-economic context of public administration; analytical tools, both quantitative

Table 1. Matrix of Professional Competencies of Graduate Public Affairs/Public Administration Programs and of Public Managers*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part I—Subject Matter Areas</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Political, Social, and Economic Context</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Analytical Tools: Quantitative and Nonquantitative</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Individual/Group/Organizational Dynamics</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Policy Analysis</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Administrative/Management Processes</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part II—Program Specializations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Level of Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Public Function</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*For the content of the matrix, please refer to the NASPAA Guidelines.
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and nonquantitative; individual-group-organizational dynamics; policy analysis; and administrative and management processes. Within each of these subject matter areas are four categories of proficiencies that MPA students are expected to acquire: knowledge, skills, public interest values, and behaviors. The divisions of knowledge encompass a wide range of disciplines that draw on the background of administration-related social and other sciences. Closely associated with these knowledge divisions are different conceptual, analytical, interpersonal, and managerial skills. The education of future public managers in public interest values is also very important, because ethical integrity and appropriate conduct are critical to the quality of public servants, who are supposed to be protectors of the public interest (NASPAA, 1974). Finally, the Guidelines note that all of these three proficiencies—knowledge, skills, and values—that MPA graduates are expected to study and acquire should be reflected in their behavior, which consists of “personal attitudes and values, the ability to interact effectively with other individuals and groups, and the capacity to adjust to diverse situations” (NASPAA, 1974).

The divisions of the matrix, however, should not be viewed separately as classifications for different courses; rather, they are inter-related, and divisions within the same subject matter areas are in fact different aspects of the same knowledge category. The components of the NASPAA matrix were intended to be incorporated into curriculum design as a whole in order to produce a balanced, integrated, and effective curricular content for professional master’s degree students. Therefore, as the Guidelines suggested, MPA programs’ integrity could be measured by applying the schema of the NASPAA matrix, which reflects knowledge, skills, behavior, and values, to the real curriculum content.

Research Questions and Methodology

Research Questions

The primary purpose of this study is to explore the question of whether the current MPA curriculum has evolved to prepare graduates well for the public service. Using the NASPAA matrix explained above to assess MPA curriculum design, this study addresses the following questions: What curricular components are contained in professional master’s degree programs in public administration? How good is the match between MPA curricular content and the NASPAA matrix? Have any significant changes in MPA curricular content occurred during the past three decades (compared to Hering’s 1976 study)? If so, what are the characteristics of the changes? What factors motivated and shaped those changes? And what are likely to be the future trends in MPA curriculum development?

Sample and Data Collection

The population of interest for this study is all master of public administration degree programs currently being operated in the United States. The population accessible to this study consists of all MPA programs (1) that are housed in aca-
academic units (colleges, schools, departments, programs, centers, institutes) within institutions of higher education that have NASPAA institutional membership and (2) whose program information is included in the NASPAA-searchable database. The sampling frame was obtained from the NASPAA Web site by searching the membership institutions database with a combination of location (“all states”), degrees (“MPA”), specializations (“all tracks”), and NASPAA accredited (“all”). The search yielded a total of 195 MPA programs. A simple random sampling was used for inclusion in the study. This resulted in a tentative sample size of 50 MPA programs that were listed in the NASPAA membership institutions database as of May 3, 2006. Forty-six of those institutions had Web sites that provided valid information; the remaining four had either been removed (and we were unable to locate new sites) or they contained incorrect information. Therefore, the final sample size was 46.

Of the 195 MPA programs in the NASPAA database, 129 (66%) are accredited by NASPAA; 66 (34%) are not. Among the 50 programs randomly selected, 35 (70%) are NASPAA accredited; 15 (30%) are not. Similarly, 70% (32) of the 46 in the final sample group are NASPAA-accredited programs; 30% are not. This study sample, about one quarter of the original population group (46 out of 195), can be considered representative of the population of interest, and the analysis of the data generated by this sample is generalizable.

Instrument for Data Analysis

Data for this study, comprised of the program information for the sample MPA programs, were obtained from the program Web sites listed in the NASPAA database. The materials used for data analysis included the stated objectives of the program, degree requirements, curriculum information, course descriptions, course requirements (required and elective), internship requirements, and so on. All the documents were comprehensively reviewed by comparing the descriptions of the course-related information of the MPA programs with the conceptual categories of the NASPAA matrix, an approach similar to that adopted by Hering (1976).

We used the schema of the NASPAA matrix to classify courses identified from the program information. Although the “curriculum components” have displaced the matrix, for the purposes of longitudinal analysis we used the Guidelines categorization in which the matrix defined 20 subject matter areas:

A. Political-Social-Economic Context of Public Administration—
knowledge of
(1) cultural and social mores and patterns;
(2) political values and processes;
(3) governmental institutions, powers, and relationships;
(4) economic systems, incentives, and controls; and
(5) environmental factors and resource availabilities.
B. Analytical Tools—Quantitative and Non-Quantitative—knowledge of
(1) quantitative decision methodology—e.g., research design, accounting parametric and nonparametric statistics, linear programming, modeling;
(2) electronic data processing and information systems;
(3) systems and procedures analysis, and behavioral science methodology—e.g., research design, organization surveys, work measurement;
(4) legal processes and controls.
C. Individual-Group-Organization Dynamics—knowledge of
(1) individual and group behavior—e.g., individual motivation, group motivation, dynamics of groups, modes of leadership;
(2) organization structure, process, and dynamics—e.g., models, authority, development, strategies, decision making;
(3) communications theory and process; and
(4) professionalism and public service—e.g., evolution of public services, roles and standards of professions, characteristics of bureaucracies.
D. Policy Analysis—knowledge of
(1) application of analytical and administrative tools to solution of public problems;
(2) processes by which policy is formulated, implemented, and evaluated.
E. Administrative and Management Processes—knowledge of
(1) administrative planning and organizational design;
(2) management systems and processes including leadership, decision making, direction, and organization development and change;
(3) personnel administration including staffing, training, and collective bargaining;
(4) finance and budgeting;
(5) program evaluation and control.

All subject area headings were assigned alphanumeric designators; for example, A3 represents courses providing knowledge of governmental institutions, powers, and relationship, and E4 represents courses offering knowledge of public finance and budgeting.

In addition to these categories identified by the NASPAA matrix, another 17 special categories were empirically developed as a review of the various program materials was done. Some of these categories were specialized program areas or concentrations, and the others, encountered as part of MPA programs, seemed to fit neither the NASPAA matrix nor the special programs concept. Each category was assigned a numeric designator as indicated below:
The first category, including courses such as Profession of Public Administration, Perspectives on Public Administration, and Introduction to Public Administration, was encountered as an emerging area that more and more MPA programs now emphasize as part of their curricula. As an introduction to public administration as a field of study, this area provides an overview of the fundamental theories and practical applications of public administration, including topics on historical development of the discipline and current issues of administration in government. The next eight categories, from 22 to 29, are specialized program areas. Of the remaining eight categories, from 30 through 37, some are courses that have emerged in recent years as new topics in public administration—for instance, IT Management (36) and E-government (38)—and some are courses that do not seem to fit the NASPAA matrix, such as Urban Affairs/Issues (31) and Urban and Regional Planning (32). (Please refer to the Appendix for a list of course titles in each category.)

**Data Analysis—A Comparative Analysis of MPA Curriculum Design**

After we reviewed all relevant documents obtained from the 46 MPA programs’ Web sites, the data from our analytical reading of program materials were encoded on a spreadsheet to facilitate manual sorting. Table 2 contains a compilation of these data by the alphanumeric categories explained above for all MPA programs. The number and percentage of programs having a given category in their curricula are displayed in the table. Also shown are the number of total...
courses in each category and the mean number of courses per program (intensity of courses in every category). A comparative analysis is provided in the following sections on the MPA curriculum content and any changes during the last 30 years.

### Table 2. Analysis of 46 MPA Programs’ Curricular Content

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category Description</th>
<th>Category Designator</th>
<th>Number of programs having category</th>
<th>Percentage of programs having category</th>
<th>Total number of courses in category</th>
<th>Mean number of courses/program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural and Social Patterns</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Values and Processes</td>
<td>A2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov. Institutions and Relationship</td>
<td>A3</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Systems and Controls</td>
<td>A4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Factors</td>
<td>A5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative Methodology</td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-data Processing and Info. System</td>
<td>B2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural Analysis and Methodology</td>
<td>B3</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Process and Controls</td>
<td>B4</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual and Group Behavior</td>
<td>C1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization Structure and Dynamics</td>
<td>C2</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications Theory and Process</td>
<td>C3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism and Public Service</td>
<td>C4</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application of Analytical Tools</td>
<td>D1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Process</td>
<td>D2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin. Planning and Org. Design</td>
<td>E1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Systems and Processes</td>
<td>E2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel Administration</td>
<td>E3</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Analysis of NASPAA-Matrix Categories

It is evident from Figure 1 that, of the 20 categories of the NASPAA matrix, Finance and Budgeting (E4) is the most visible—all MPA programs studied are offering at least one course in this field to their students. This category also has

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category description</th>
<th>Category designator</th>
<th>Number of programs having category</th>
<th>Percentage of programs having category</th>
<th>Total number of courses in category</th>
<th>Mean number of courses/program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finance and Budgeting</td>
<td>E4</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Evaluation and Control</td>
<td>E5</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to PA</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State/Local Gov. Administration</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Welfare Administration</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparative/International PA</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police and Criminal Justice Admin.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Administration</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Administration</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health Administration</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeland Security Administration</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonprofit Management</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Affairs/Issues</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban and Regional Planning</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Affairs</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Govt. Information Systems</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Writing</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT Management</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public-Private Partnership</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the greatest mean number of courses offered in each program (1.6 per program). This finding is not surprising, given the importance that public administration academicians and practitioners have long ascribed to financial management. In NASPAA's (2006) newly updated and released General Information and Standards for Professional Master's Degree Programs (hereafter referred to as NASPAA's General Information), budgeting and financial processes remain one of the eight common curriculum components that NASPAA considers to be the core knowledge that MPA programs are to impart to their students.

Some surveys indicate that professional managers working in the public sector judged budgeting and finance skills to be the most useful management skills (Grizzle, 1985). As early as 1976, budgeting and finance was already one of the most visible categories in MPA programs (Hering, 1976); 89% of programs at that time were offering courses on budgeting or/and finance. As shown here, that percentage increased, indicating that this type of knowledge continues to be a very significant element in the MPA curriculum.

Another category that is highly visible across the board is Quantitative Decision Methodology (B1). Currently 96% of programs offer courses in this category, compared to a relatively low 49% 30 years ago. This contrast reflects a more methodologically oriented public administration research development, as courses such as Research Design and Quantitative Methods appear in more curricula.

Figure 1. A Comparison of MPA Curricular Contents (NASPAA-Matrix Categories) Between 1976 and 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>1976</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Patterns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Values</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov Institutions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eco System</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment Factors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quant Methodology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-data &amp; Info System</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedural Analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Processes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Org Structure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical Tools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admin. Planning &amp; Design</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR Administration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance &amp; Budgeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NASPAA Matrix Categories

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Other categories that MPA programs also heavily stress include Personnel Administration (E3) (91% of programs are offering courses in this category); Policy Formulation, Implementation, and Evaluation (D2) and Management Systems and Process (E2) (both are taught in 87% of all programs studied); and Organization Structure, Process, and Dynamics (C2) (courses in 80% of all programs cover this category). This phenomenon is consistent with NASPAA’s General Information provision that human resources management of public service organizations, policy and program formulation, implementation and evaluation, and organization and management concepts and behavior should be common or core curriculum components. In fact, graduate public administration programs have traditionally emphasized E3, E2, and C2; these areas were very visible in MPA curricula three decades ago when, respectively, 79%, 84%, and 59% of programs were delivering these categories of knowledge. And the past three decades saw a smooth and steady growth of programs offering specific courses in these areas. It is worth noting, however, that there was a dramatic increase in programs (from 19% 30 years ago to 87% now) offering courses on policy processes, including policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation. This drastic expansion of policy-related courses in MPA curricula may have been triggered by a burgeoning policy science during the last several decades.

Categories that are being covered in the MPA curriculum of at least half of the total programs examined include Professionalism and Public Service (C4, with 72%, compared to 64% in 1976); Systems and Procedural Analysis, and Behavioral Science Methodology (B3, with 70%, from 42% in 1976); Legal Process and Controls (B4, with 70%, compared to a formerly low level of 16%); Government Institutions, Powers, and Relationships (A3, 67%; 96% in 1976); Program Evaluation and Control (E5, 63%; 5% in 1976); and Individual and Group Behavior (C1, 57%; 46% in 1976). All these disciplines, except A3, experienced a growth in visibility in MPA curricula, with the most significant increase occurring in E5, which can be explained by a sustained trend of public service professionalization in which public issues are more likely to be dealt with within specialized divisions, usually operationalized as various public programs. The decrease of the A3 type of knowledge in MPA curricula was probably the result of a newly developed course—Introduction to Public Administration—that will be discussed later in this study.

Another category that enjoyed rigorous growth across the board is Legal Processes and Controls (B4). It was noticed throughout the review of program catalogues that a majority of programs have been offering Administrative Law, which falls precisely into this category (B4). As the validity of government agencies’ actions depends on compliance with administrative law, a study of administrative law that focuses on the activities of government agencies at federal, state, and local levels can help strengthen graduates’ objectivity and rationality in the conduct of public affairs. Generally, these courses emphasize principles and pro-
cedures derived in large part from federal and state administrative procedure acts (APAs) and constitutions.

Two types of knowledge that are being delivered in about half of the sample MPA programs. Currently, 48% of programs are offering courses about Data Processing and Information Systems (B2), a slight increase from 39% three decades ago in Hering’s study. Administrative Planning and Organization Design (E1) also experienced a moderate increase in presence in MPA programs from 31% 30 years ago to a current level of 46%.

However, another two types of knowledge identified by the NASPAA Matrix are largely neglected as part of the graduate public administration program curriculum. Only 22% of the 46 programs studied are offering courses pertaining to the knowledge of Application of Analytical and Administrative Tools to Solution of Public Problems (D1), compared to 77% 30 years ago. The probable cause of such a large difference is that many programs have set up courses dealing with applying analytical and administrative knowledge to solving specific real-world problems facing public managers. This partially contributed to the growing number of courses delivering E5 as discussed above. And a mere 26% of programs are providing courses on Cultural and Social Mores and Patterns (A1), a situation that seems to be stable over the past three decades; the percentage was 25% in Hering’s 1976 study.

Courses are also quite lacking in the following knowledge areas: Political Values and Process (A2, 35%); Communications Theory and Process (C3, 35%); Economic Systems, Incentive, and Controls (A4, 37%); and Environmental Factors (A5, 37%). However, compared to the situation 30 years ago, the visibility of all four categories in MPA curricula have improved from 10% to 25% since 1976.

Analysis of Non-Matrix Categories

When examining the 17 non-matrix categories that were empirically developed during our document reviews, it is obvious to see a contrast in popularity from the NASPAA matrix categories discussed above. Most non-NASPAA matrix categories, displayed in Figure 2, find their courses scattered over less than one-third of the total programs studied. For example, courses categorized as Public Health and Health Service Administration (28) are only being offered in nine programs, a mere 20% of the total number.

The only type of knowledge that is significantly visible across all programs’ curricula is Nonprofit Management (30). Nearly two-thirds (63%) of the programs examined are incorporating this type of knowledge in their curricula. But back in 1976, not a single program was offering courses on nonprofit management. It is widely recognized that the nonprofit sector has experienced phenomenal growth and achieved great success in producing measurable public services. Researchers, degree-granting programs, and students have never been more interested in nonprofit careers. From 1990 to 1997, the number of graduate manage-
ment programs with a nonprofit concentration grew from 17 to 76, and “roughly two-fifths of the nonprofit concentrations were in schools of public policy and public administration” (Light, 2000). Now, with pressure for nonprofit organizations to improve their performance, coupled with recurrent tides of reform targeting making nonprofits more effective, efficient, and accountable, education on nonprofit management is expected to be even more urgent and critical. As Light suggested, graduate programs in the United States still need to work hard to ensure better delivery of skills needed by future generations of nonprofit leaders.

Besides nonprofit management, four other types of knowledge are being taught by at least one-third of the total programs. Grant Writing and Fund Raising (35) is recognized as part of the MPA curriculum by 20 programs (43%). Although a small number of grant writing courses are specified as pertaining to fund raising administration in the nonprofit sector, most of them are designed for government agencies, or both government and nonprofits. Hering did not identify any special category that involved such courses 30 years ago. Knowledge about resource availability for the public sector might have been contained in A5, but funding acquisition does not fit perfectly into this category. These courses are designed for participants to think and plan critically and strategically in order to develop financial resources for public organizations, with particular attention to practical grant writing processes and skills.
Introduction to Public Administration (21) is included in the courses offered by 18 programs (39%). As with category 35, category 21, vaguely overlapping the entire subject matter area A of the NASPAA matrix, did not appear in Hering’s analysis. This type of knowledge is a general introduction to the discipline of public administration, with topics including the historical development of public administration, conflicting public values, current issues and problems in the fields, career planning for public service, and major sources of information for professional research. Such courses can help MPA students establish a better theoretical foundation.

At the same time, State and Local Government Administration (22) was identified in 18 programs (39%), a similar presence as compared to 30 years ago (34%). Some of the programs that set up such courses state in their syllabi that the course will focus on the specific state where in which the university is located.

Comparative and International Administration (24) appears in the curriculum of 35% (16) of programs, quite a decline from the 53% that Hering found in his 1976 study, mirroring a reduced interest in public administration in non-American contexts. At least in graduate public administration education, more emphasis has been placed on domestic issues. It is one of the very few categories that have reduced their presence in MPA curricula in the past 30 years.

Internship as Part of the MPA Curriculum

One major way of acquiring managerial behavior is through direct experience in situational contexts. It is therefore recommended that MPA programs consciously incorporate methods like experiential learning into their behavioral training. The internship is one of the widely adopted methods of providing students the opportunity to apply concepts and skills associated with their MPA curriculum. In the 2006 report of NASPAA’s Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation, the section on standards for professional master’s degree programs requires that MPA programs should make available “a carefully planned internship experience” and to strongly encourage students “who lack a significant professional work background” to “take advantage of it.” Figure 3 shows that as many as 30 MPA programs, comprising 65% of the study sample, do have an internship requirement for their students who have no or little administrative experience in the public sector.

Another six programs, in their descriptions of degree requirements, strongly urge students lacking significant work experience in public sector organizations to apply for intern positions with government, nonprofit, and international agencies so that they will be better exposed to professional organizations where they will have the opportunity to develop and improve their behavioral proficiencies. However, there is no clear indication of an internship requirement or recommendation in the curriculum information of the remaining 10 programs.
Suggestions for Future MPA Curriculum Development

The practice of public administration draws on a variety of resources, including appropriate values, useful concepts, and relevant experience (Weimer, 2003). How to effectively incorporate all these elements into the MPA curriculum is an important issue that must be addressed by graduate public administration education designers and implementers. By reviewing the development of the discipline of public administration and analyzing the curriculum content of 46 master’s programs in public administration in the United States, this study demonstrates an evolutionary development of the MPA program, which prescribes that MPA education content is experiencing incremental changes that are in accord with the change in the profession of public administration as well as the development of public administration as an academic field. This research finds that many programs do include a set of basic “inner core” requirements as defined by NASPAA, including courses in public administration, administrative and organizational theory, public finance, government budgeting, research design or quantitative methods, personnel administration or human resource management, public policy analysis or policy making, and management system. While a prevalence of technically oriented courses are extraordinarily visible, however, we feel there is room for improvement in terms of expanding the scope of knowledge in such areas as communication and conflict management in public settings. Based on the results of this research, several suggestions are made for prospective MPA curricular revisions and development.

First, future curriculum designers should incorporate skills in communication at interpersonal, inter-agency, and intra-agency levels more predominantly. Pub-
lic administrators need more than just technical tools to do their jobs. They must be able to act interorganizationally and as part of the larger political context. Courses having a direct focus on the development of negotiation skills and team building should be offered in more programs and in a more intensive way to help strengthen public managers’ communicative and coordinative capabilities. At the same time, curricula should include more courses delivering knowledge on the application of analytical tools to solve real-world public problems in order to help graduates become competent in areas like public dispute management and conflict resolution.

Second, given a rapidly spreading information network together with its ever growing social, organizational, and political impacts, MPA educators should recognize the importance of setting up more courses discussing theory and applications of information systems and management in the public sector. With the appearance of more high-tech applications in government administration, graduate public administration programs must emphasize more topics such as database management, e-government applications, geographic information systems, and Internet technologies.

Third, in future curriculum revisions, designers should consider new trends in the profession of public administration. For example, in recent years the U.S. government has turned more of the responsibility for delivering publicly financed services over to other sectors (both for-profit and not-for-profit), yet the pervasive government-business and government-nonprofit partnerships have attracted surprisingly little attention from the academic field; only four programs in our sample offer courses on government contracting, privatization, and public-private partnerships. Confronting a fast-changing world of governance and administration, MPA programs need to make curricular changes in a timely manner so that they can impart state-of-the-art knowledge to their students.

And finally, curricula of MPA programs should enhance the presence of international and comparative public administration knowledge. It is important to investigate why some societies have addressed public challenges such as social welfare and economic management more effectively than others, to compare institutional structures and policy processes in different countries in order to help improve global development in terms of environment protection, economic development, democratic growth, and so on, and to explore the prospects for international cooperation to achieve these stated global goals.

Notes
1. For content of the matrix, please refer to the NASPAA Guidelines.
2. See http://www.naspaa.org/students/graduate/schsearch.asp for a roster of NASPAA institutional members.
3. The random sampling was generated by Excel, a method introduced in Trochim (2001, 50-51).
4. Some modifications were made here in this subject area. First, the original fourth kind of knowledge, behavioral science methodology—sociometric surveys, value analysis, leadership assessment, etc.—
A Longitudinal Perspective on MPA Education in the United States

was combined with the third type of knowledge because there was no corresponding course found to fit neatly into this category when the researcher was reviewing the program information; and these two types of knowledge are usually incorporated into a single course. Second, research design was categorized into both the first and third kinds of knowledge in this subject area. For example, if there is a research design or research methods course in a MPA program's curriculum, it is regarded as meeting both requirements simultaneously.

5. Two changes were made in this subject area. “Strategies for optimization and selection of alternatives” were deleted from this area because it was empirically found that this knowledge is usually incorporated into the second type of knowledge in this category, and they are often included in the same course, such as Public Policy Analysis. The last type of knowledge—“distinctive attributes of policy relative to specific functional areas”—was also deleted, because usually these courses are affiliated with the program concentrations such as health policy and do not represent a general and overall emphasis on these specific topics.

6. In fact, it is also the most visible of all 37 categories, NASPAA matrix and non-matrix.

REFERENCES


Pope, Justin. 2002. “‘Why MBA?’ Article Irks Schools.” *The Star-Ledger*, Tuesday, Aug. 27, 32.


**APPENDIX**

**Examples of Course Title(s) for Each Knowledge Category**

A1: Environments of Public Service, Human Needs and Social Service  
A2: Politics and Bureaucracy, Public Administration and the Political Process  
A3: American Political Institutions, Intergovernmental Relations  
A4: Political Economy, Public Affairs’ Economics  
A5: Economic Development in the Public Sector, Public Economics and Finance  

B1: Public Administration Methods, Research Design, Statistical Analysis, Quantitative Methods in Public Administration  
B2: Public Information Management, Managing Information in the Public Sector  
B3: Research Methods, Survey Research and Design, Qualitative Methods  
B4: Administrative Law  
C1: Executive Leadership, Individual and Group Behavior in Organizations  
C2: Public Organization Theory  
C3: Managing Interpersonal Relations, Communication Strategy, Communication in Public Settings  
C4: Ethics and Morality in Public Service, Public Service  
D1: Cost-Benefit Analysis, Managing Public Disputes  
D2: Public Policy Analysis, Public Policy Making Process  
E1: Administrative Planning, Local Government Planning, Public Planning  
E2: Public Organizational Change and Development, Public Management  
E3: Human Resources Management, Public Personnel Problems and Issues, Diversity Issues in Public Management  

*continued*
Appendix, continued

E4: Public Budgeting, Public Financial Administration, Public Funds Management
E5: Program Evaluation, Performance Measurement
21: Introduction to Public Administration, Issues of American Public Administration
22: State and Local Government Administration, Municipal Management
23: Social Welfare Administration, Human Service Administration
24: Comparative Public Administration, International Administration
25: Criminal Justice Administration, Police Administration;
26: Educational Administration
27: Environmental Administration, Environmental Law and Administration
28: Health Systems Administration, Health Services Management;
29: Homeland Security Administration
30: Nonprofit Management, Managing the Not-for-Profit Sector
31: Contemporary Urban Issues, Urban Management
32: Urban Planning, Regional Planning
33: Public Affairs, Introduction to Public Affairs
34: Geographic Information Systems, GIS and Public Policy
35: Grant Writing and Fund Raising, Proposal Writing and Grant Administration
36: Managing IT in Public Organizations, Information Technology and Public Policy
37: Public-Private Partnership, Government Contracting
38: E-Government

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The Role of the University as a Mediating Institution in Neighborhood Council-City Agency Collaboration

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Abstract

In a representative democracy, citizens depend on their public representatives and administrators to act on their behalf. However, city agencies often fail to respond to the needs of the people, who feel alienated from city hall because of the gap between expectations and reality, and this gap leads to a lack of trust between citizen groups and city administrators. Citizen participation in governance, especially in the form of neighborhood councils, is suggested as one solution to overcome this declining trust, because neighborhood councils can be an effective vehicle to collaborate with city agencies.

The historical development of the public administration ethos, as well as the teaching of public administration in academic institutions, focuses too much on creating a technical bureaucracy that inhibits action research involving citizen groups. Yet universities have an important role to play as mediating institutions and boundary spanners in getting citizen groups and city agencies together in collaborative exercises.

The Collaborative Learning Project at the School of Policy Planning and Development (SPPD) at the University of Southern California (USC) has developed a model for a consensus-based process that city departments and neighborhoods can use to arrive at agreements about how they will collaborate to improve the
delivery of city services. The university research team played a mediating role and facilitated a collaborative exercise that determined how the city agencies would deliver their services in specific neighborhood council areas of Los Angeles.

In a representative democracy, citizens depend on their public representatives and government administrators to act on their behalf. However, there is an inherent tension in this relationship, especially at local levels, as citizens feel disaffected and alienated from city hall because of the gap between expectations and reality. There is lack of trust between citizen groups and city administrators and failing confidence among citizens about city agencies’ ability to respond to the needs of the people. Citizen participation in governance is suggested as one solution to overcome this declining trust. As a tool of citizen participation, neighborhood councils have been posited as a good mechanism for involving residents/citizens in city decision making (Scavo, 1993).

This paper deals with developing citizen-city administration partnerships that work, and describes the role of applied research that involve academic institutions in creating solutions by increasing trust, reducing power imbalances, and increasing information access. The paper also discusses the teaching of public administration in academic institutions and argues that the dominant philosophy of public administration inhibits action research involving citizen groups. Yet universities have an important role to play as mediating institutions and boundary spanners in getting citizen groups and city agencies together in collaborative planning exercises. We conclude by presenting our model of collaborative planning and discussing the role the USC SPPD research team played in the action research project.

**Neighborhood Councils**

The role of the public administrator in initiating and encouraging citizen-government collaboration is only one of many forms of citizen involvement in public administration. Other forms include public hearings, reports and other forms of information disseminated to citizens, and citizen advisory boards. Drawing from the work of Donald P. Moynihan (2003), the variety of approaches to citizen participation can be distinguished in terms of two separate dimensions: (1) “narrow” and “broad” representativeness, or how many citizens are involved (a handful or a large, diverse group), and (2) level of citizen input (pseudo, partial, or full). This typology allows for an improved understanding of how public officials view the role of citizen involvement in public decisions and how seriously they should take their participation.

In the 1990s many American cities implemented participatory initiatives based on collaborative planning. Programs like Neighborhoods First of Austin, Neighborhood Strategic Planning in Milwaukee, and Philadelphia’s Pennsylvania Neighborhood Transformation Program are examples of involving citizens in col-
laborative planning (Elwood, 2002). Neighborhood organizations were involved in urban planning, revitalization efforts, problem-solving, and city service delivery.

An important participatory mechanism implemented in a large number of U.S. cities like New York, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Columbus, and Seattle is a system of neighborhood councils. The city of Los Angeles adopted a system of neighborhood councils in 1999 to "promote more citizen participation in government and make government more responsive to local needs" (Los Angeles City Charter, Section 900). It was hoped that neighborhood councils would enable citizens to participate and represent their interests in activities and services delivered by city agencies including urban planning, sanitation, street maintenance, water and power, and parks and recreation.

The Collaborative Learning Project

The Collaborative Learning Project is part of the Neighborhood Participation Project at the Civic Engagement Initiative of the School of Policy Planning and Development at the University of Southern California. As part of the Collaborative Learning Project’s action research, we have developed a model of collaboration that includes a series of Learning and Design Forum workshops pairing city agencies with neighborhood councils in different areas of the city. The experience has been positive and has resulted in a significant innovation: the collaborative production of a new model for delivering services within the neighborhood council area. The results of the Learning and Design Forum workshops so far have been two written agreements between neighborhood councils and city agencies for how city services will be delivered in the neighborhood council area. The Learning and Design Forums also marked a major departure in administrative behavior within the city: not only did the city departments participate constructively in the workshop sessions, but in one case the department appeared in a high-profile public ceremony to sign the agreements forged from the Learning and Design Forums. This occurred despite objections from within the department that such a move would open the department to demands for similar treatment from every neighborhood council.

Public Administration Tradition and Reform

Historically, the development of public administration as an academic subject has not stressed the importance of citizen participation in urban governance. In the late 1800s, a move away from corrupt and machine-dominated city government called for divorcing administration from politics; this new perspective became an inherent part of the Progressive Reform Movement in public administration, and a politics-administration dichotomy became the dominant normative model throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Administration as separate from politics isolated the administrators from the people, and the con-
cepts of scientific management and Weberian bureaucracy further strengthened this isolation. Administrators were supposed to be trained professionals who were technically qualified, and public administration was geared toward efficiency and productivity (DeLeon and DeLeon, 2002). Hierarchy, control, and specific job responsibilities with little or no provision of discretion became the norm. Vigoda argues that this generation of public administration “treated citizens as subjects, where leaders and administrators held absolute power and control over the people” (2002, 532).

Two major attempts at reform have shaped the practice of public administration in the latter part of the twentieth century. Public administration academicians and theorists at a 1968 meeting at the Minnowbrook Conference Center in New York advocated a significant step away from the technical bureaucracy perspective on public administration. At this conference, the seeds of the New Public Administration were sown as public administration scholars called for more citizen participation in government and proposed for the first time that administrators had a right as well as a responsibility to be proactive (DeLeon and DeLeon, 2002).

The second variation of public administration in the early 1990s only served to reinforce the technical bureaucratic orientation. Introduced under the leadership of Vice President Al Gore as his National Performance Review Project, citizens were treated as customers as the concept of administration was presented as Putting Administration First (Gore, 1993). This customer-service provider approach to citizen-administration relationship used “reinventing government” as the catch phrase. Privatization, downsizing, customer satisfaction, decentralization, and flexibility were topics of academic and practitioner meetings. The short-term success of this inherently scientific management approach further strengthened the technical bureaucracy.

Despite these efforts at reform, especially the call for more public participation in government at the Minnowbrook Conference in 1968, the focus on efficiency based on the Man of Reason model of public administration has persisted in practice as well as theory. DeLeon and DeLeon (2002) argue that not much attention has been paid to citizen participation after the discussion of reforms. Vigoda (2002) says that, paradoxically, government and public administration under the new public management actually inhibits the willingness of administrators to collaborate, because citizen-driven solutions could be inefficient and thus contrary to the public interest.

Professional Schools of Public Administration: Diverse Traditions

Given the stress on the technical nature of bureaucracy in theoretical and practitioner forums during almost all of the twentieth century, it is no wonder that the academic institutions followed a similar approach in their training of administrative professionals. The curriculum of the schools of public administration
focused on equipping future administrators with the technical and organizational skills necessary to make them efficient managers. Speaking at the dedication ceremony celebrating the 50th anniversary of Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government, the School’s President, Derek Bok, said that the need of public service was producing public professionals on a par with private sector professionals. He called this the missing link, and the Kennedy School was described more like a business school. The university publication produced to commemorate the occasion states that the Kennedy School curriculum stressed “analytical skills (in economics, statistics and operations research); institutional sense (about organizations, politics and feasibility); ethical sensitivity (appreciating the values affected by a problem); and a substantive sense.” The case study of real-life situations was the main method of teaching. This primacy of the technical education of public managers dominated the curriculum of most American schools of public administration.

In addition to increasing the technical competency of administrators, schools of public administration have also tried to train administrators who could understand and advise in the formulation of public policy. The Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University, the first school to offer a graduate program in public administration, states that their MPA program curriculum “ensures that all graduates understand the political, economic, and social context of public administration” in order to “gain experience in applying qualitative and quantitative analysis to public policy issues.” The School of Public and International Affairs at the University of Georgia states that the purpose of its MPA degree is to educate students for administrative and managerial careers in government. Its highly ranked concentrations are in public management, budgeting and finance, and a new concentration in public policy. The Richard and Rhoda Goldman School of Public Policy, founded at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1969, prepares students for careers including policy analysis, program evaluation, and management and planning. The Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University serves interests in both domestic public policy and international affairs, and emphasizes experiential, policy-oriented research and learning in its graduate program. None of these schools, ranked in the top 10 for public affairs, states an expressed focus on citizenship or citizen participation.

In the recent past, however, public administration schools have referred to the public interest and citizenship as part of their teaching objective. At Harvard University, the Saguaro Seminars on Civic Engagement are an ongoing initiative at the Kennedy School of Government. The public administration majors in the School of Public and Environmental Affairs (SPEA) programs at Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis touch all aspects of being a citizen. Action research relating to citizenship and democracy are a major focus at the SPEA. Yet facilitating citizen participation in governance appears not to constitute a major part of the curriculum in most schools of public administration.
The School of Policy Planning and Development (SPPD) at the University of Southern California (USC) was founded with an orientation to civic needs in an engaged way as the USC School of Citizenship and Public Administration. However, as at other schools of public administration, the citizenship emphasis gave way to the demand for technical competence. Though the curricula in all five graduate programs at the school “join theory with practice and emphasize experiential and professional learning” there is no real training in the curriculum for students to work with citizens or opportunities for experiential learning. A return to the original stress on community and linking theory and practice is now reflected in the vision of the newly created Civic Engagement Initiative (CEI), formed within SPPD to “create more just and livable communities, to nurture a new generation of scholars to continue innovative research in the field, and to build community partnerships for improving the quality and effectiveness of civic engagement in Southern California, the nation, and around the world.” The CEI includes scholars and researchers not only from the SPPD but also from other schools of the university.

However, a recent study confirmed the continued emphasis of universities on imparting cognitive knowledge and found little evidence that public administration course goals had directed attention to developing skills in administrators so that they would be comfortable working with citizens (Schachter and Aliaga, 2003).

THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY AS A MEDIATING INSTITUTION

Beyond developing a curriculum that would be relevant to the research and practice of public administration, some academic institutions have creatively sought out roles that establish the direct investment of institutional resources to assist surrounding communities. The central understanding of these experiments is that academic institutions can play a critical role by providing a forum and guidance for civic parties to deliberate in a collaborative exercise. When communities experience power imbalances and/or information asymmetry, mediating institutions can improve trust in part by ensuring the trustworthiness of participants or by leveling the playing field (McCullum, Pelletier, Barr, and Wilkins, 2002). Denhardt and Denhardt (2000) argue for mediating institutions if the citizens are to be able to effectively participate in governance. While King and Stivers (1998) suggest that government should play this important role, we believe that the government should engage an external mediating institution like a research university.

Empirical research has established the effectiveness of mediating institutions. The Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF), founded by Saul Alinsky, has played the role of a mediating institution in San Antonio, where the city pitted one poor neighborhood against another and made secret deals with each of them. The IAF developed an institution called Communities Organized for Public Service
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(COPS) to afford an opportunity for the neighborhoods to “negotiate and deliberate with one another based on a larger framework of shared values, vision, and a commitment to agitation for change,” away from city government (Cortes, Jr., 1997). Today, civic groups like Habitat for Humanity work as mediating institutions to engage the community and the government in addressing the housing problems of low-income communities (Bell and Carens, 2004). Some universities have encouraged their students to get involved in this effort as part of service learning (Hazen, Cavanagh, and Bossman, 2004; Wittmer, 2004).

In this context, there is an important role for schools of public administration to play as effective mediating institutions bringing together city agencies and neighborhoods in collaborative planning projects. The emergence of the concept provides a great opportunity for students, practitioners, educators, and researchers to involve themselves in city agency program improvement through community and city agency collaborations that move away from the traditional positivistic research techniques and toward more participatory enquiry methods such as action research and ethnography (Weil, 1996; Tapp, 2003). Action research techniques and the role of universities as mediating institutions are quite complementary. Arguments are being made in favor of action research efforts by academic institutions in collaboration with civic-minded organizations like the National Forum on Higher Education and Public Good (Dedric, 2004). Robert Bruininks (2004) suggests that there is a “need to implement a systemic institutional commitment that links the promise of research and education to the needs of communities.”

Reflecting the recent citizen orientation, a few researchers in some schools have been actively engaging the community. Participatory action researchers like Ken Reardon from the University of Illinois (Champaign-Urbana) found that neighborhood groups and individual citizens were able to find creative and innovative solutions to planning problems in poor neighborhoods, while others claimed that the important thing was for city planners to give up some power and control and to create a forum for the common public to display their creativity (Sandercock, 2004). The University of Massachusetts at Lowell has an active action research program aimed at involving the faculty and students to improve collaboration between trade associations, firm owners, local chambers of commerce, community-based agencies and organizations, labor unions, and state and local economic development agencies (Forrant and Silka, 1999). The Ohio State University’s Civic Life Institute organized more than 150 deliberative forums to reduce the conflict after the 2002 riots in Cincinnati.

Given the guiding philosophy of the SPPD at USC, and the normative changes that are taking place in academic research, we believe that the Collaborative Learning Project is an example of a mediating institution, bringing neighborhood councils and city agencies in Los Angeles together in collaborative ventures.
Trust and Power in Collaboration

Ide and Yarn (2003) argue that collaboration and cooperation between city agencies and neighborhood organizations produce outcomes with a greater benefit than if the city agencies operate on their own. However, for collaborative efforts to succeed, the power equation that favors administrators has to be resolved. This power imbalance reflects decision-making in which citizen groups are taken for granted or are instructed or directed by administrators (Ide and Yarn, 2003).

In the work of Daniel Yankelovich (1991, 9), it is this power imbalance that informs a “Culture of Technical Control” that undermines the capacity “to reach agreement between the public and experts on the serious problems that beset the society.” Hutchinson and Vidal (2004) argue that, in situations of unequal power, the development of social capital that is so important for effective participation in collaboration is inhibited.

This imbalance in decision-making capacity between public administrators and citizens culminates in an alienated public that loses its trust in public institutions and in the administrators that design and implement policies on their behalf. Participants in a collaboration exercise who perceive a power imbalance could become more cynical and distrustful, because they may not see any particular advantage to them in their participation. Research has also shown that factors such as a lack of trust among stakeholders and power distortions may hinder effective collaboration (McCullum, Pelletier, Barr, and Wilkins, 2002).

For collaboration between citizens and administrators to be possible in the first place, trust between the two groups is necessary because “trust reinforces trustworthiness” (Ide and Yarn, 2003). On the other hand, collaborative planning and joint problem solving can balance inequality in the power structure by building trusting relationships. Similarly, civic engagement of citizens can initiate a cycle of trust-collaboration-trust, where engagement with a city agency leads to trust, trust in a city agency encourages further engagement with the agency, and that leads to further trust (Hutchinson and Vidal, 2004).

The New Public Service view proposed by Denhardt and Denhardt (2000) reverses the technical bureaucracy position and argues that it is the responsibility of the government to not only help and create a “community” among citizens but also to “focus on building relationships of trust and collaboration with and among citizens.” Government administrators should strive to build relationships of trust and collaboration with citizens and citizen groups, they argue, because government agencies are more likely to be successful if they adopt collaborative processes and leadership based on respect for all people. Vigoda (2002) suggests that public trust can be gained by bringing the citizen closer to the administrator so that administrator responsiveness to the citizen is founded in collaboration. Administrators have to adopt an entrepreneurial brand of functioning that should include initiating partnerships between administrators and citizens, and such collaborative initiatives should be encouraged (Vigoda, 2002).
The work we present here demonstrates a further extension of citizen engagement to what some have referred to as co-production: the conjoint responsibility of lay citizens and professional government agents for the delivery of public services (Sharp 1980). The approach outlined here is best understood as a form of mutual adjustment in which the interaction among citizens and governmental officials leads to a mutually agreed-upon service delivery (Tang, 1999; Arentsen, Bressers, and O’Toole, Jr., 2000). This is consistent with Lindblom’s (1959) argument that public decision making is incremental, a series of mutual adjustments. Small group decision making literature that focuses on the need for quality and acceptability of decisions has supported this approach (Thomas, 1990). Trust in this context becomes personal; it is associated with a partnership that is cultivated in the joint effort to make decisions that affect those who deliver and those who receive the service. Trust, then, does not merely depend on public officials and their stewardship (Kass, 1990) but is developed by working directly with public officials in the determination of service delivery. Trust is engendered through participation rather than through officials seeking approval after service decisions are made and implemented.

Our model for enhancing civic capacity and trust and equalizing power through the university as a mediating institution could lead to effective collaboration between citizen organizations and city agencies (see Figure 1).

OUR MODEL OF COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

The Collaborative Learning Project action research proposed to investigate how Los Angeles City administrative agencies support and include the newly established system of neighborhood councils in the production and delivery of city services. This project was funded by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The purposes of the study were to

- identify and report on the administrative barriers to effective service delivery to neighborhoods and to offer recommendations to support further efforts at bureaucratic reform;
- convene a series of collaborative learning and design forums that bring selected city administrators and neighborhood council leadership together to develop new structures, terms, and practices for partnering in the production of city services;
- assist participating city administrators and neighborhoods councils in developing an actionable work plan to address a local issue using the new collaborative processes and practices developed during the learning and design forums; and
- establish working relationships between participating councils and administrators in which citizens and administrators are involved in ongoing communication and collaborative decision making toward shared goals.
The research project started with independent meetings with neighborhood councils identified according to certain organizational and demographic criteria. After evaluating neighborhood councils, in the first phase a group of four contiguous neighborhood councils from the Southeast San Fernando Valley was identified. The research team held three meetings with the representatives of these neighborhood councils who, after internal deliberations, determined that they would like to partner with the Los Angeles City Department of Public Works (DPW). In the second phase, one neighborhood council in the San Pedro area chose to collaborate with the Department of Cultural Affairs (CAD). In the third phase, four neighborhood councils spread across Los Angeles City chose the Department of Transportation for collaboration.

As a precursor to participating in the collaborative planning exercise, both groups were asked to make a baseline assessment that included identifying the underlying assumptions, values, and constraints held by each side. The assessment was expected to identify attitudinal and structural obstacles to the develop-
ment and maintenance of co-productive relationships. In addition, the assessment was intended to tease out underlying assumptions and values held by bureaucrats and grassroots leaders about the delivery of services, including the stereotypes that each party holds of the other.

The core element of our collaboration process was the Learning and Design Forum sessions, held at the USC campus on three Saturdays spread over three months, with homework between each of the meetings. The neutral territory of the meeting acted as one factor offsetting the existing power imbalance. During the first session, the neighborhood councils and the city agencies presented their assessments. These presentations were used as the starting point of discussion during the first Learning and Design forum session and opened up avenues for honest and frank information sharing and communication. Another important activity of the Learning and Design forum sessions was role reversal, which enabled the neighborhood council to have a better appreciation of the problems and constraints the city agency faced and the city agency to understand the expectations and aspirations of neighborhood councils. Multiple small mixed teams comprising members of both groups were formed and worked together addressing the issues to be resolved. These interactions over time built trust between the two groups and also led to the breaking down of communication barriers. As one member said, “now we are speaking the same language.” The model of collaboration is shown in Figure 2 on the following page.

Through the sessions, the small groups focused on designing co-productive partnerships for service delivery at each step, from problem identification, to the development of solutions, through implementation, and on creating a work plan that identified the steps each party was to take. At the end of the three sessions, in both cases, the teams created an actionable work plan that outlined the service delivery issue to be resolved. In the case of the four Southeast Valley Neighborhood Councils and the DPW, this plan, in the form of a written agreement, was formally signed in a public ceremony. The agreement was also approved by the boards of the four neighborhood councils as well as the DPW. A draft agreement between the Central San Pedro Neighborhood Council and the Cultural Affairs Department has also been prepared. The four other neighborhood councils and the Department of Transportation also finalized an agreement that is in the final approval stage.

Mediating Role of USC

The Collaborative Learning Project at the University of Southern California has played a critical role in the collaboration process. When complex issues and multiple interests are involved, consensus-building becomes an objective through which reasonable decisions can be reached. Access to information and the neutralization of asymmetries of power are important prerequisites in a collaborative planning process in which participants are free to discursively deliberate in order to arrive at a decision (Innes, 1995).
Deliberation then becomes the primary vehicle for the collaborative planning processes, with the university as a mediator in creating the conditions for such a dialogue. In the collaborative planning process in particular, individual and institutional capacity building in a complex environment must proceed through dialogic problem-solving. A primary benefit arising from university-community partnership is the integration of institutions and community stakeholders into a mutually accountable, iterative and sustainable communication (Baum, 2000).

The Learning and Design Forum sessions suggest that the university can play important agenda setting and process roles as well. By defining the substance

Figure 2. Model of Neighborhood Council (NC)—City Agency (CA) Collaborative Planning Process

- NC identified
- CA identified
- NC identifies core team
- NC appoints facilitator
- NC identifies core issue
- CA approached with invitation to participate
- CA agrees to explore participation
- CA identifies core team
- CA appoints facilitator
- CA team approved
- CA team prepares understanding of NC systems/experiences
- NC and CA teams participate in the three Learning and Design forums
- NC and CA prepare an agreement
- NC and CA boards approve agreement
- NC and CA sign agreement
- Agreement implemented
of the sessions and then continually reshaping the dialogue, the research team acts as a facilitator to minimize frictions and neutralize power disparities. This agenda-setting role establishes the university research team as a neutral facilitator within a larger structured process for deliberation. The research team’s process role structures the sessions as the framework for information exchange and communication. This is critical to establishing an accessible and nonthreatening forum. The selection of the neighborhood councils and the creation of a neutral venue for deliberation, for example, are critical foundational elements that the Collaborative Learning Project has brought to the collaboration process.

Information exchange has also been identified as an important element that defines the university-community partnership (Rubin, 1998). Information is crucial in realizing the persuasive “good reasons” that ultimately create options, develop criteria for choices, and provide a basis for decisions that can take participants beyond individual parochial interests (Innes, 1996). Because action research emphasizes process toward a desired outcome, analysis plays an important role in the university-community partnership. In the Collaborative Learning Project, observations by research team members, as well as post-session feedback and subsequent interviews with the participants, credit the Project a role in securing the desired outcome.

We believe that, in the Collaborative Learning Project collaboration process, the university research team has played the following critical roles:

**Organizational Role**
- Responsible for volunteer participation (as opposed to directed/coerced/legal/official participation), which results in
  - breaking down of official/personal barriers
  - less inhibited sharing of information
  - free and open discussions
  - candid discussion about what is possible and what is not
- Criteria-based selection of neighborhood councils possible (as opposed to the squeaky-wheel-gets-the-grease approach)
- Neighborhood council-based selection of city agency and problem possible

**Agenda Setting Role**
- An honest broker
  - dispassionate about the agenda
  - no personal stake
  - no preconceptions about solutions or answers
- Concrete problems can be addressed (as opposed to abstract planning)
- Short- and long-term problems can be addressed
- Can deal with a small number of neighborhood councils (and not get rushed into large numbers, which could lead to failure)
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Collaboration Process Role
- Equalizer of power
- Builder of trust
- Conduit for information sharing
- A boundary spanner
- A link to building bridging social capital
- Builder of credibility to the process
- Provides expertise (theoretical and academic knowledge, expert facilitator)

Outcome Roles
- University has time available, can wait for results
- No pressure to show success unlike city/government agencies
- Dissemination in academic and practitioner forum possible
- Can work with small successes leading to
  - confidence building
  - credibility enhancement
  - buy-in process by various stakeholders
  - stepping stones to larger issues

Limitations
Research by universities in the area of civic engagement has many limitations, and there are some problems in engaging in action research with public problems and communities. It is argued that, although problems of civic engagement and disengagement are discussed in the classroom, academics do not often play a role in trying to find solutions to the problem (Checkoway, 2001). It is also suggested that academics and faculty are ill-equipped to don public roles. There is also criticism that academic research is usually based on theory and research is conducted for the sake of research or to advance personal or departmental agendas (Checkoway, 2001). Faculty members and students of public administration may also not have practical knowledge about how government actually works. Research universities can also be viewed as elitist, and community groups find it difficult to gain access to them. In addition, faculty rewards like tenure and promotion are not linked to civic or citizen engagement research. Public scholarship invariably involves nonacademics and is sometimes considered nonacademic (Cooley, 2004). Finally, the expansion or replication of successful pilot projects requires time and money. Action research is very expensive and needs the continued support of funding agencies if research has to be continuous to support implementation over time. University boards expect individual colleges and schools to be financially self-sufficient and to be efficiently managed. Schools are then caught in this contradiction of maintaining financial efficiency and at the same time serving the community (Mathews, 2004).
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Clavel and Deppe (1999) suggest that there is a need for academic institutions (with time and person power), city agencies (with organization experience and capacities), and community groups (with a knowledge of needs and the will to solve problems) to get together and create administrative innovations. Vigoda (2002) says that academia can provide the theoretical and conceptual groundings of collaboration. Action research by universities can also confirm the benefits of collaborations between citizen groups and government agencies. Dissemination of successful research in the public realm legitimizes collaboration and partnerships between citizen groups and administrators, increases the likelihood of acceptance by citizens and administrators, encourages other citizen groups to attempt such cooperative efforts, and in the long run could lead to changes in administrative culture (Vigoda, 2002).

In the fields of engineering and technology, the links between academia and industry have been quite strong, not only in America but also in other parts of the world (Schmoch, 1999; Collins and Wakoh, 2000). In the past, the A & M universities of America were the crucial link between the lab and the land. California’s innovations in fruit and commercial crop development can be traced to the research labs and extension services at the University of California system. This crucial link seems to be missing in the area of civic engagement and deliberative democracy. Though founded on missions of citizenship and civic service, universities have abandoned their founding commitments and their focus has moved from “service to science” (Checkoway, 2001). However, of late, there has been an increasing effort in academia to involve students and faculty in the public and community dimensions of education (Checkoway, 2001). Academic institutions and schools of public administration-related fields are increasingly engaged in action research involving concepts like civic engagement and public work (Mathews, 2004). Recent initiatives at the School of Policy Planning and Development, University of Southern California, like the Civic Engagement Initiative, reflect the focus on community experiential learning and linking theory and practice that is more consistent with the original name of one of the schools that gave rise to the current one—the USC School of Citizenship and Public Administration.

The Collaborative Learning Project, an action research project connecting neighborhood councils and city agencies in Los Angeles, has achieved some exciting results in getting neighborhood councils and city agencies together to resolve community problems. Though the sample size is small and the implementation of the agreements is in the initial stage, the model looks promising for replication. We are encouraged by the Learning and Design Forum model, which uses a facilitator who leads the city agency and neighborhood council team members towards collaboration and agreements. The memorandum of understanding and collaborative process with the Department of Public Works (DPW) allowed for
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the exploration of infrastructure needs specific to the four Southeast Valley neighborhood councils, and the Bureau of Street Services of the DPW used lessons learned to implement a citywide process of distributing Infrastructure Assessment Reports to every council. The Department of Water and Power, when faced with serious objections from neighborhood councils over a proposed rate hike, adopted a similar collaboration process. This resulted in a citywide level agreement between the Department of Water and Power and neighborhood councils over future rate hikes. We are hopeful for the further replication and adaptation of the Learning and Design Forum collaboration process by other departments as well as other neighborhood and community organizations.

Notes
1. The Learning and Design Forum process was developed as part of an action research project funded by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. The full report is the Connecting Neighborhood Councils and City Agencies Phase I Report, prepared by the Collaborative Learning Project research team at the Neighborhood Participation Project, School of Policy Planning and Development, University of Southern California, September 30, 2004.
3. Ibid.
4. See http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/deans/programs/a_pa.asp
5. See http://www.uga.edu/spia/home/
6. See http://ist-socrates.berkeley.edu/~gspp/
7. See http://www.wws.princeton.edu
8. The Saguaro Seminar: Civic Engagement in America is an ongoing initiative of Professor Robert D. Putnam at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. The project focuses on expanding what we know about our levels of trust and community engagement and on developing strategies and efforts to increase this engagement. Details at http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/saguaro/
9. See http://www.indiana.edu/~speaweb/
10. See http://www.usc.edu/schools/sppd/html
11. See http://www.uga.edu/spia/home/

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Creating an Accelerated Joint BA-MPA Degree Program for Adult Learners

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Abstract
The increase in the number of adult learners in higher education has been dramatic in recent years. However, traditional MPA programs have done little to attract and accommodate these nontraditional students. This article discusses a collaborative effort between a school for professional studies offering B.A. degrees for adult learners and a department of public policy studies offering a traditional MPA degree to create an accelerated BA-MPA degree. The accelerated degree program was designed to address the need for the undergraduate program to expand its program offerings to include graduate degrees in order to tap an unfilled market. The graduate program wanted to address the need to bolster its enrollment and to increase the diversity of its student body. The article discusses several factors that have contributed to the early success of the accelerated BA-MPA program, including institutional merger, leadership support, market need, internal support, adult student support mechanisms, streamlined application process, and program liaisons. The effort to create a new program and implement it has not been without challenges, however. Chief among these have been cultural and programmatic differences between the collaborating department and the school, including traditional versus nontraditional student populations, undergraduate versus graduate education, a business versus public and nonprofit orientation, and a quarter versus semester format.

Program Background
The profile of students in higher education is changing with an increase in nontraditional students. Some of the current and future trends include more females, part-time students, students attending two-year institutions, first-generation students, working adults and students with one or more dependents (Choy, 2002). A 1999–2000 survey found that approximately 73 percent of all postsecondary
undergraduates are “nontraditional” (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). In particular, approximately 30 percent of undergraduates are working adults, 24 years of age or older (Berker and Horn, 2003). Therefore, it is important that institutions of higher education understand diverse student needs in order to attract, retain, and educate such students (Richardson and King, 1998).

Adult learners currently constitute an under-tapped market for the majority of public administration programs, particularly at the undergraduate level (Loutzenhiser and Orman, 2005). Furthermore, there is a dearth of research on whether graduates of nontraditional undergraduate programs later go on to enroll in MPA programs, suggesting that the numbers who do so are probably small. The increase in the number of nontraditional students provides an opportunity for public administration programs to reach a larger and more diverse population of students (Loutzenhiser and Orman, 2005). The literature repeatedly has called for public administration programs to meet the need of workforce diversity and appreciation in the public sector (Rice, 2004; Selden and Selden, 2001; Soni, 2000; White, 2004). Proactively seeking and supporting nontraditional students is one mechanism for sustaining a multicultural MPA program and, thereby, educating a diverse labor pool for public and private institutions (Rice, 2004).

In the summer of 2004, the School for Professional Studies (SPS) and the Department of Public Policy Studies at Saint Louis University began discussions about how to meet the needs of the SPS adult students who were interested in graduate education and the needs of the Public Policy department to increase the size and diversity of the MPA program. SPS provides undergraduate programs to working adults in an accelerated evening format, while the Department of Public Policy provides graduate education in a relatively standard, i.e., semester, format. As a result of these collaborative efforts, a joint BA-MPA program for working adults in the St. Louis metropolitan area was developed and rolled out in the spring of 2005.

This paper describes a model for the development of joint bachelor’s-master’s degree programs, addresses the benefits and challenges of offering a joint program between traditional MPA and nontraditional (adult learner) departments and the administrative and advising hurdles to such programs, and offers suggestions for overcoming potential barriers to the development and approval of joint programs within the university system. Currently, only a relatively small proportion of universities offer a joint undergraduate-to-graduate degree program in public administration. Furthermore, an even smaller number of public administration programs partner with schools of adult education. While a joint degree program is not necessarily a novel idea, the application to public administration and adult education is relatively new. The process described in this article is therefore applicable to institutions with an adult education program and a graduate public administration program. It also offers a cost-effective way of increasing the number and diversity of students in both programs.
BACKGROUND OF THE SCHOOL FOR PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

Saint Louis University’s School for Professional Studies offers academic and professional programs for working adults in the St. Louis metropolitan area. As an adult-centered program, SPS supports diversity, encourages the philosophy of lifelong learning, and emphasizes workplace application, career enhancement, personal growth, ethical decision making, and leadership skills.

SPS is structured to meet the needs of working adult students. Classes are offered in an accelerated format (five terms a year) in the evenings, on Saturdays, and online. In-house advising and marketing staff focus specifically on serving adult students in a streamlined and convenient manner. Furthermore, full-time faculty directors and adjunct instructors work together to provide a rigorous academic curriculum that fits with the educational requirements of the adult learner. Specifically, faculty receive development in using teaching methods geared toward adult learners, methods referred to as andragogy (Knowles, 1988; Merriam and Caffarella, 1999). Such methods include the use of experiential learning, open classroom discourse, peer learning, and strong application of theory and research to the students’ personal and professional lives.

SPS currently offers four undergraduate degree programs (Computer Science Technology, with computer science, information systems and informatics tracks; Criminal Justice; Organizational Studies; and Education) and 10 minors/certificates (Communication, Industrial Psychology, Computer Science Technology-Computer Science, Information Systems and Informatics tracks, Criminal Justice Organization, Hospitality and Food Service Management, Contract Management, Organizational Leadership, and Real Estate and Community Development). As of May 2005, students may now enroll in the BA-MPA program.

BACKGROUND OF THE PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM

The MPA program officially opened in 1977, and was structured according to National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) guidelines. The MPA program was joined with a Ph.D. in public policy analysis to form a separate, independent department. (Since then, two other master’s programs have been created, the master’s in urban affairs and the master’s in urban planning and real estate development.) During the 1990s, four events occurred of significance for the MPA program. First, the degree program received NASPAA accreditation in 1992 and was reaccredited in 1999. Second, the department was the recipient of more than $8 million in research grants from the United States Department of Justice, the United States Department of Education, and a variety of regional, state, and local public and private entities. Third, in 1998, the Department became a part of the newly established College of Public Service (COPS). The former chairman of the Department of Public Policy Studies is the dean of the College of Public Service. The fourth event was the creation of the master of urban planning and real estate development program in 1998.
Creating an Accelerated Joint BA-MPA Degree Program for Adult Learners

The MPA program is, in terms of its enrollment, the second largest program in the Department of Public Policy Studies next to the Ph.D. in public policy. However, owing largely to market forces that are discussed below, there has been little or no growth in its student numbers over the past several years. And even more problematic from the standpoint of the MPA program director and the department chair has been the program’s inability to attract and retain qualified minority students. Minority students constitute a relatively small percentage of the total number of graduates of the program over the past decade, despite the fact that St. Louis’s population is more than 50 percent African-American. The chief reason for the relative lack of African-Americans and other minorities in the MPA program is the steep cost of tuition compared to that of the university’s closest competitor.

Program Need

The adult and continuing education market is growing with the addition of programs and schools within public, private, and for-profit institutions. In order to remain competitive with area programs for working adults, SPS needs to expand program offerings to attract students with varying career interests. Although SPS students have expressed an interest in graduate programs, SPS does not currently offer any graduate degree and does not have the capacity to offer such programs in-house. A 2004 survey of 342 SPS students revealed that 77 percent of the respondents were interested in attending graduate school. Of those interested, 47 percent indicated that they wanted to pursue a graduate program immediately following completion of their bachelor’s, and 31 percent wanted to pursue a graduate program within six months of completion. Furthermore, 58 percent of the 342 respondents thought that SPS should consider offering a program in nonprofit management.

The Public Policy department desires to increase the size and diversity of the MPA program. Currently, the program most often attracts young students, i.e., in their early twenties, with relatively homogenous socio-economic backgrounds. These students tend to matriculate straight from high school to undergraduate to the MPA program with little work experience. Hence, a partnership with SPS seemed like a way to meet the needs of the MPA program as well as the need, in general, for public administration to attract adult and diverse students. In comparison to the Public Policy department, the SPS program has a diverse student body, including a high percentage of minority, female, and first-generation college students (see Table 1). Furthermore, its students are heterogeneous in terms of life and work experience. By attracting SPS students, the MPA program hopes to not only increase enrollment numbers but also enrich the experience of all of the students through varied backgrounds, perspectives, and applied knowledge.

This last point warrants some further elaboration, because it drives much of the Department of Public Policy’s thinking about the joint degree program’s design.
and, to a large extent, shapes the department’s expectations for student outcomes. From the beginning, the issue of increasing enrollment, while of practical importance, was secondary to attracting a pool of qualified minority students. Two theoretical perspectives help to inform the department’s thinking about the benefit of greater diversity in the MPA program. The first is the “diversity model” (Cox, 1993; Gentile, 1994; Jamieson and O’Mara, 1991; Loden and Rosener, 1991; Sims and Dennehy, 1993; Soni, 2000; Thomas, 1991) and the second is cultural competency (Cross, Bazron, Dennis, and Isaacs, 1989; Isaacs and Benjamin, 1991). The diversity model takes as its starting point the desirability, not mere inevitability, of a multicultural organization. In other words, it goes beyond the perspective that, as a result of current social trends, diversity is an unavoidable-

Table 1. Profile of Students in the School for Professional Studies and Public Policy Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>SPS</th>
<th>Public Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single with children</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married with children</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>32%*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Generation**</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuing Generation</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Reflects either full-time student or graduate assistant status.
** First-generation—neither parent has completed a college degree.
able fact of organizational life to advocate that “diversity is a desirable goal in itself” (Soni, 2000, 395). The cultural competency model complements this normative viewpoint on diversity. Cultural competence is a concept borrowed from education and social work research on adapting to diversity, particularly in public schools and social service organizations. The following definition of cultural competence can be found on the Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice (CECP) Web site (King, Sims and Osher, no date, para. 7, http://cecp.air.org/cultural/default.htm):

Cultural competence is defined as a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency, or among professionals and enables that system, agency, or those professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations (Cross et al., 1989; Isacs and Benjamin, 1991). Operationally defined, cultural competence is the integration and transformation of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, practices, and attitudes used in appropriate cultural settings to increase the quality of services; thereby producing better outcomes (Davis, 1997; referring to health outcomes).

The accelerated BA-MPA program embraces the diversity model as a value and seeks to incorporate cultural competency as one of its core competencies. The program is structured to offer SPS students the opportunity to receive a quality master’s education in a NASPAA-accredited program along with traditional MPA students. Thus, traditional and nontraditional students will interact with each other in class and work together as teams on course projects. Further, one of the built-in expectations of the program (indeed of the MPA program generally) is proficiency in the area of cultural competency.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Overview

The BA-MPA program is composed of selected courses from existing SPS and MPA required core and elective courses. At the bachelor’s level, SPS students earn a B.A. in the existing Organizational Studies (OS) or Criminal Justice Organization (CJO) program with the opportunity to earn a minor in public administration. The PA minor consists of five core courses from the MPA and SPS programs (see Table 2). Two SPS courses satisfy required research methods and organization theory courses in the MPA curriculum, and one, “Leadership Theory and Practice” counts as an elective. In their junior year, students must petition through the graduate school to take the two graduate-level courses (PPSI 503 “Issues in Public Administration” and PPSI 512 “Introduction to Public Budgeting”) as part of their undergraduate work. This process requires approval signatures from
the student’s SPS advisor, the MPA program director, and the graduate school’s associate dean. In this way, SPS students complete their undergraduate degree, i.e., a bachelor’s in organizational studies or criminal justice with a minor in public administration. At this point, students who meet the requirements are highly encouraged to continue in the master’s program. However, some students may opt to only complete the bachelor’s and not continue on to a master’s.

Students who are interested in pursuing the full master’s program apply to the MPA program by the second semester of their senior year. The application is similar to the traditional MPA application; it requires the application form, three letters of recommendation (preferably from faculty), undergraduate transcripts, a professional goal statement, and a resume. In contrast to the traditional MPA application process, students in the BA-MPA program do not have to submit GRE scores. Waiving the GRE is an important component of the program and makes it particularly appealing to the adult learner. In the past, SPS students have expressed concerns about the GRE and their reluctance to take it. For many of the nontraditional students, it has been years since they took a standardized test, which leads to test anxiety and, subsequently, procrastination and resistance to take the GRE. In some cases, this has prevented them from applying to and entering master’s programs. Furthermore, research indicates that the GRE may be a barrier to nontraditional female students, in particular, who want to attend

Table 2. Curriculum Outline of the Accelerated BA-MPA Degree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School for Professional Studies</th>
<th>Department of Public Policy Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Core Courses</strong></td>
<td>Remaining Core Courses for MPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Organizational Studies major or Criminal Justice Organization major</em></td>
<td>PPSI 515 Economics of the Public Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration minor</td>
<td>PPSI 541 Administrative Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSTD 410 Concepts and Theories of Leadership* (counts as an elective)</td>
<td><strong>MPA Elective courses</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSTD 480 Organizational Theory and Practice* (core)</td>
<td>(Such as: criminal justice policy, finance, public sector accounting, organizational psychology, and risk management)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSTD 490 Social Science Research Methods* (core)</td>
<td><strong>Internship/in-service project</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPSI 503 Issues in Public Administration (core)</td>
<td>Total: 24 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPSI 512 Introduction to Public Sector Budgeting (core)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Electives</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total: 121 credits</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Current course in SPS program.
Creating an Accelerated Joint BA-MPA Degree Program for Adult Learners

graduate school, and that there may be alternative methods to assessing graduate school readiness (Tisue and Whitaker, 1999).

When discussions between the Public Policy Studies Department and SPS started, it was felt at the outset that Public Policy Studies’ GRE requirement, which is actually a requirement of the graduate school, would serve as a possible barrier to SPS students’ interest and participation in the accelerated degree program. In recent years, there have been efforts at the university level to reassess the usefulness of the GRE for graduate programs. Within the department, the results of the GRE are viewed as one more piece of information along with the personal goal essay, letters of recommendation, and the official college transcripts, all of which helps the admissions committee decide on applicants to the MPA program. Furthermore, in the experience of the admissions committee, the GRE has been viewed as less important than the undergraduate grade point average and letters of recommendation in predicting future success in the MPA program. It was on this basis that the Public Policy Department decided to forego the GRE for the accelerated degree program.

Those students who are accepted enter the MPA program with advanced standing to complete the remaining 24 graduate hours. The current curriculum and degree program requirements are the same, but the programs and classes are packaged in such a manner that the students are able to complete the BA-MPA in an accelerated timeframe. Students graduate with a master of arts in public administration from the graduate school. Figure 1 provides a curriculum flowchart depicting how a typical student matriculates through the BA-MPA program. The BA-MPA accelerated degree program matches in quality and consistency the traditional MPA degree. The following is a list of the required core courses in the MPA program (18 credits):

- PPS 501 or RMET 520—Research Methods
- PPS 503—Issues in American Public Administration
- PPS 512—Introduction to Public Sector Budgeting
- PPS 515—Economics of the Public Sector
- PPS 540—Organizational Theory and Behavior
- PPS 541—Administrative Law

Typically, a full-time MPA student will complete these six courses within the first two semesters of their starting the degree program.

The following is a list of the required PA courses in the accelerated degree program (15 credits):

- OSTD—480 Organizational Theory and Practice (transfers as PPS 540)
- PST—490 Social Science Research Methods (transfers in as PPS 501)
- PPS—503 Issues in Public Administration
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PPS—512 Introduction to Public Sector Budgeting
OSTD—410 Concepts and Theories of Leadership (transfers as elective)

The above five courses match up with courses in the graduate degree program as follows:

OSTD 480 with PPS 540
PST 490 with either PPS 501 or RMET 520
PPS 503 and PPS 512 are the same as in the MPA core
OSTD 410 fulfills an elective requirement

SPS students must take these five courses in their “senior” year. Thus, the students receive both undergraduate and graduate credit for the above five courses, i.e., these credits count toward fulfilling the total credit requirements

Figure 1. Curriculum Flowchart for Completion of the Bachelor’s and Master’s Degree*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1—B.A.</th>
<th>Year 2—B.A.</th>
<th>Year 3—B.A.</th>
<th>Year 4—B.A.</th>
<th>Year 5—MPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPS General Studies Core (30 credit hours)</td>
<td>SPS General Studies Core (27 credit hours)</td>
<td>Coursework in OS or CJO major (21 credit hours)</td>
<td>Coursework in OS or CJO major (21 credit hours)</td>
<td>Completion of elective courses in MPA (21 credit hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coursework in OS or CJO major (3 credit hours)</td>
<td>Undergrad. courses toward PA minor: PSTD 490*** OSTD 410*** OSTD 480***</td>
<td>9 credit hours for the year</td>
<td>Coursework in OS or CJO major (3 credit hours)</td>
<td>MPA internship or in-service project (3 credit hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate courses in PA minor: PPSI 503 PPSI 512</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(6 credit hours for the year)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This is the potential flowchart of coursework for a student entering the program who has no transfer credit and who is completing two courses per term (five terms per academic year). The B.A. in OS or CJO with a minor in PA requires 121 credit hours. The MPA requires 39 credit hours, including the completion of an internship or in-service project.

*** Courses already required in the OS or CJO major coursework at SPS that transfer into the MPA program.
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of both degree programs. The graduate school permits MPA students to take up to six credit hours in 400-level undergraduate sources. Thus, the only difference between the accelerated degree and the traditional MPA degree program is that accelerated degree candidates will take one more 400-level undergraduate course, which in this case is OSTD 410, than their counterparts in the nonaccelerated program. As pointed out previously, once the accelerated degree students finish their last year and successfully petition the Graduate School for admission, then they continue and take exactly the same graduate-level courses as do the traditional MPA students.

Both programs are therefore exactly comparable in consistency and quality and meet the same NASPAA accreditation standards. Furthermore, all of the OSTD 400-level courses fulfill the NASPAA requirements for substantive content.

In the student’s senior year, he or she applies to the graduate school for admission into the MPA program. As previously mentioned, the application package includes the application form, three letters of recommendation (preferably from

Informal support for the program was received from NASPAA, which asked the program liaisons to present it at the 2005 annual NASPAA conference. An official NASPAA accreditation visit will occur in spring 2008.

Student Entrance Qualifications/Requirements

Students are admitted to the BA-MPA accelerated program according to the standard SPS admission procedures and requirements. The admission requirements are as follows:

- Age: 22 years or older.
- Work experience: at least 3 years or the equivalent.
- Education: high school diploma or composite GED score of at least 225.
- Interview: successful completion of a pre-admission interview with an academic advisor in which all informal transcripts are reviewed.
- A minimum transfer cumulative grade point average of 2.0.

Once admitted to SPS, students complete their undergraduate degree (in this case, an OS or CJO major with the PA minor) in an accelerated format that includes five nine-week terms with classes online, in the evenings, and on Saturdays. Students must maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.0 in the major, minor, and master’s level coursework in order to register for the public administration courses and advance in the BA-MPA accelerated program. Students petition the graduate school in their junior year to take two graduate-level courses. According to the current MPA standards, no course in the minor is accepted toward the MPA if the student receives a letter grade below “B.” Students can complete the two graduate-level courses in the SPS accelerated format in the spring terms or in the MPA traditional semester format in the fall.
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faculty), undergraduate transcripts, a professional goal statement, and a resume (the GRE is waived). Furthermore, admission is contingent on the student maintaining a 3.0 in the major, minor, and master’s coursework.

The accelerated BA-MPA program is only available to SPS students who complete their BA through SPS and continue straight into the MPA program after graduation. The program is designed so that SPS students receive the foundation necessary in their undergraduate program to succeed in the graduate-level courses and subsequent MPA program. As a result of this preparation and the close partnership between SPS and Public Policy, students may apply to the MPA program under the streamlined application process. The assumption is that applicants who do not complete their BA through SPS do not have the same foundation; hence, they must apply through the graduate school according to the traditional requirements.

Program Goals

The BA-MPA joint degree program integrates theory, research, and application in the areas of social science, statistics and research methods, ethics, administrative law, and management. The learning outcome goals for the BA-MPA program include the current learning goals for each of the programs. Students are expected to meet the same standards as current MPA students, including the capstone and portfolio requirements. The following learning outcome goals are applicable to the SPS minor in public administration:

1. Intellectual Abilities
   a. Differentiate and evaluate various components of the public, nonprofit, and private sectors in terms of the interrelationships and responsibilities of each.
   b. Develop effective problem solving and critical thinking skills applicable in research and analysis of public administration in professional contexts.

2. Personal Development
   a. Understand the reasons for and nature of ethical decision-making in public and nonprofit administration.

3. Professional Development
   a. Acquire skills in the administration and management of public and nonprofit programs.
   b. Acquire a basic understanding of social and behavioral science theories and their application to solving contemporary challenges in public administration.
   c. Acquire basic administrative, research methodology and statistics knowledge, skills, and experience needed to improve professional performance in current occupations or to facilitate entry into new occupations related to these disciplines.

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d. Acquire a basic, integrated understanding of the theory and practices of leadership and management in public and nonprofit organizations.

e. Acquire a basic understanding of cultural competence and the basic skills necessary for working with diverse people in a variety of settings.

4. Social Action

a. Develop a commitment to community service and social justice through participation in service-learning activities with public, voluntary, for-profit, and/or not-for-profit organizations.

Assessment of Learning Outcomes

The assessment procedures that are currently used in SPS and Public Policy are applicable to the BA-MPA program. In SPS, the assessment plan includes embedded procedures in each of the courses as well as a capstone electronic portfolio. The portfolio includes a compilation of projects that the student completed in his or her degree program and a personal reflection on his or her educational experiences and future goals. Once in the MPA program, students must do an internship with a public sector or nonprofit organization, which is evaluated at the end. MPA students do either a capstone project or take comprehensive examinations, which are used to assess their grasp of fundamental public administration concepts. The MPA program is moving toward requiring a portfolio, similar to that required by SPS, and hopes to have it on the ground by 2008. In addition to these existing procedures, the BA-MPA program will be assessed on a yearly basis using student focus groups. The overall results of the first focus group is included in this paper in the section on “Implementation and Evaluation.”

Benefits of Joint-Degree Program

A summary of the benefits of the program are as follows:

1. It meets a need in SPS by expanding program offerings, particularly in the area of graduate education and the not-for-profit sector. Currently, 51 students are enrolled in the BA-MPA program in SPS, and five students have already applied to the MPA program.

2. The program allows SPS to act as a direct feeder into the MPA program, thereby increasing student numbers as desired. Prior to the addition of the program, not a single SPS student had applied to the MPA program.

3. The MPA is applicable in a variety of public and not-for-profit settings;

4. Students in the organizational studies or criminal justice organization programs in the School for Professional Studies have preparation for study in public administration;
5. The St. Louis metropolitan area is home to many public and not for profit organizations whose employees desire advanced degrees, many of whom offer at least partial tuition benefits to their employees. Hence, the program will attract a market of students to SPS and to the MPA program that had not been previously accessible.

6. The joint degree utilizes existing SPS and COPS resources by including current course offerings from both the existing programs;

7. Students pursuing a SPS major have another professional emphasis from which to select, thereby expanding their career/employment opportunities; and

8. The program targets a new market of students and supports diversity efforts in the MPA program.

**Program Implementation and Evaluation**

**Student Perceptions and Feedback**

Although it is early in the implementation phase to assess the program’s success, initial feedback from students has indicated a positive response to the program and has provided ideas for improvement. A focus group was conducted with the first five students in the program (all of whom have completed the two graduate-level courses, PPSI 503 and PPSI 512, and three of whom have applied and have been accepted into the MPA program). The program will continue to be monitored and evaluated on an annual basis through written and focus group data.

The key findings from the focus group were as follows. Students in the organizational studies and criminal justice bachelor programs indicated that they felt well-prepared for the graduate-level courses that they have taken thus far. There seems to be a strong connection between the bachelor’s and master’s curriculum with mutual cross-over of theory and research. The PPSI 512 budgeting course has posed the greatest challenge for the students, who suggested that the PPSI 503 course act as a prerequisite for PPSI 512 in order to better prepare them for budgeting issues. They also suggested that Excel be reviewed at the beginning at PPSI 512. As a result of this feedback, the instructor for PPSI-512 will work closely with the chair of Public Policy to enhance the course content and pedagogy.

Students indicated that they were most attracted to the program because of its accelerated nature and the waiving of the GRE. In fact, all of them agreed that they would not have pursued an MPA degree if not for the BA-MPA joint program. At this point, students did not anticipate any problems with transitioning from the bachelor’s to master’s program. They were somewhat ambivalent about their career plans once the MPA was complete, but seemed interested in pursuing leadership positions in the public and nonprofit sectors. In response, the program administrators have better defined career options for the students.

The focus group also revealed communication of the degree requirements and logistics as the area in most need of improvement. Initially, there was confusion.
about how the two programs were bridged, which courses double counted, and how application to the graduate program worked. Those students who had attended the BA-MPA information session felt the most well-informed. Students suggested that communication could be improved by holding more information sessions; better educating SPS advisors on the program; and developing a detailed program handout for students. These findings resulted in the development of an informational handout that is now mailed to all new students who are admitted to the accelerated BA-MPA program. Furthermore, information sessions will be held on an annual basis.

**Program Success Factors**

A number of factors have contributed to the approval of the BA-MPA degree proposal and to the early success of the program’s implementation. The major factors include the merger of COPS and SPS; leadership support; market need; internal support; adult student support mechanisms; streamlined application process; and program liaisons. Administratively, the merger of COPS and SPS is an advantage, because both units now report to the same dean instead of being located in separate divisions of the university. This resulted in fewer bureaucratic hurdles to clear for approval of the program.

Next, leadership support is critical to the ultimate success of the program. It is crucial that the deans, chairpersons, and program directors show unwavering support throughout the process of approval and implementation. This is especially true in the area of resources. In our case, no new resources were required in the beginning. However, over time as the program grows, it will be necessary for the program leadership to aggressively make the case for additional university resources to keep up with the expected demand.

A more effective argument can be made when there is a clear-cut and sizable market for a joint-degree program. Administration responds more positively when data on demand and the market are available. In this case, the SPS program liaison was able to make an effective argument for a new program by citing results from student surveys and focus groups.

Establishing internal support and oversight for the program is key to long-term success. The decision to move forward with the joint degree program was reached after a series of discussions between SPS and Public Policy. These conversations, which occurred early and often, were important in building a consensus about what the program would look like, and they allowed the participants to get to know their counterparts and each other’s programs better. Furthermore, the Organizational Studies director and MPA program director took on the roles of program liaisons. Contributing to the success of the program is the ability of the program liaisons to work together to administer the joint degree program over the long term. The inability of either party to work with his or her programmatic counterpart would not bode well for the future life of the joint degree.
Mechanisms to support adult students should be in place before a plan to create a joint degree program can be developed. The success of any degree program designed for adult learners depends on the capacity to work with the special issues and needs of this particular population. SPS already had those mechanisms in place, including advising, marketing, scheduling, and faculty development to support adult learners.

Finally, the streamlined MPA application and admissions process (i.e., waived GRE and completion of five of the required courses before admission to the MPA program) and the accelerated nature of the program are attractive to adult learners. Further, students can complete both a bachelor’s and a master’s degree in as few as five years. In addition, by completing five courses at the SPS tuition rate, students save a substantial amount of money on their graduate education. (The 2006-2007 SPS tuition rate is $495 per credit hour vs. the graduate school rate of $800. Given that the five courses double count for both degrees, the students end up saving approximately $12,000 in the graduate school tuition.) In the focus group and during student advisement, students indicated that they would

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Undergrad Track</th>
<th>MPA Credit Hours Undergrad</th>
<th>MPA Credit Hours Grad</th>
<th>MPA Credit Hours Undergrad</th>
<th>No. of MPA Courses Undergrad</th>
<th>Undergrad Courses</th>
<th>Core or Elective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York University</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Core</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VA Commonwealth University</td>
<td>Political Science</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Core</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Washington University</td>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Core</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rutgers, Camden</td>
<td>Political Science</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Core</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Colorado</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Core</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Island University, CW Post</td>
<td>Public Admin.</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Core</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Louis University</td>
<td>Organiza. Studies or Criminal Justice</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4 core</td>
<td>1 elective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
not have applied to the MPA program if the accelerated program did not exist. The most attractive features were the savings in time and money as well as the streamlined application process.

**PROGRAM CHALLENGES**

A number of challenges were encountered while developing and implementing the program, challenges that are likely applicable to other institutions pursuing similar intra-university partnerships. To begin, a lot of time was spent initially on simply understanding each of the programs. Culturally and programmatically, there are a number of differences between SPS and Public Policy Studies. We have identified several in the article; some of the major differences include traditional MPA versus nontraditional, i.e., adult learner, student populations; undergraduate versus graduate education; a business versus public and nonprofit orientation; and a quarter versus semester format. Although it was tedious and, at times, frustrating to weed through the differences, it resulted in a program that both units could strongly support and facilitated program implementation in the long-term.

Bachelor's to master's programs are fairly new to Saint Louis University, and this particular program model was unique. This brought with it a host of challenges to overcome as the BA-MPA program proposal went through the necessary approval process. In the beginning stages, there was skepticism about the academic rigor of such a program, which led to initial opposition from the Board of Graduate Studies. The concerns included allowing undergraduates to take graduate level courses, double-counting courses toward a bachelor's and a master's, and transferring undergraduate courses into the master's program. It was necessary to communicate to Board members that these were already being done at SLU or other institutions. (Table 3 shows a comparison of a sample of similar programs at various institutions.) A compromise was reached, and the program was slightly revised to its current form to better reflect graduate school policy, including the requirement that at least 24 credit hours be taken in the graduate program. Furthermore, providing an assessment of student outcomes at the MPA level helped to dispel concerns that undergraduate education was not sufficiently rigorous. Overcoming these obstacles has opened the door for similar partnerships at SLU in the future.

Implementation of the program has also brought with it some anticipated and unanticipated hurdles. We have found that clearly communicating the logistics and requirements of the program to advisors and students is difficult. To overcome this, a program information session was held, and specific handouts were developed for advisors and students. Students also must complete a petition to take graduate classes as an undergraduate student. Initially, this process was cumbersome, requiring five signatures from three units, but it has since been streamlined to expedite approval. Moreover, challenges in scheduling courses and
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Hiring faculty have required strong collaboration between the SPS and public policy liaisons.

At this time, we do not find evidence indicating that accelerated degree students are treated differently than their peers, either by faculty or other students. Although it is early in the implementation of the accelerated degree program, we fully expect that the nontraditional students will blend easily into the culture of the MPA program. The reasons for our optimism are their previous experience as Saint Louis University undergraduates, their psychological maturity stemming from their age and richness of experiential backgrounds, and their record of academic success in SPS. Based on anecdotal evidence, these students bring to the classroom a wealth of relevant workforce experience, which has helped spur discussion on such topics as human resource management, street-level bureaucracy, and budgeting.

Lessons Learned

The following are a summary of key lessons learned that could be applied to other institutions who are interested in similar partnership programs:

• Garner the support of leadership from involved units at the start including deans, directors, chairs, etc.
• Compile market data on prospective and current student interest to be used to support the program’s financial viability.
• Assign program liaisons from both units to oversee the development, implementation, and evaluation of the program.
• Develop clear and concise mechanisms to communicate with students, staff, and faculty and administration about the program, such as a kick-off orientation, information brochure for students, guidelines for advisors, etc.
• Make sure that staff and faculty understand the perspective of nontraditional students for advising, marketing, class scheduling, and pedagogical purposes.
• Streamline the application process so that it serves the students and the program well.

Conclusion

Overall, the BA-MPA program has been a success and has set a precedent for future programs. Not only has it resulted in a program that meets the needs of both units, but also has provided students with a unique educational opportunity that would not have been available to them otherwise. From an administrative perspective, it required few additional resources, yet increased enrollment numbers in SPS and the Department of Public Policy. Additionally, the program has opened up interdisciplinary collaboration between the university departments, faculty, and students. Although the program has experienced natural growing
pains, these have been minimal and have resulted in continued program improvement. The program will act as model for the development and implementation bachelor’s to master’s programs within Saint Louis University and, possibly, for outside academic institutions.

REFERENCES


Creating an Accelerated Joint BA-MPA Degree Program for Adult Learners

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Waiving the MPA Entrance Exam: Impact on Performance

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ABSTRACT
For decades, graduate schools around the country have used various graduate entrance exams as one of the key factors in determining graduate school admission. Although many people would argue that these scores are good predictors of graduate student matriculation, the evidence is not conclusive. Hence, the purpose of this study is to assess the impact of waiving the graduate admission exam on graduate student performance in the MPA program at the University of Memphis, summer semester 2001 through spring semester 2004. We examine performance using three measures: overall MPA grade point average, substantive contributions in core classes, and writing skills. Using data collected from student files (1995–2004), we determined that the grade point average of students who received the waiver did not significantly differ from non-waiver students. On one of the two faculty judgment measures—writing skills—chi-square analysis indicated that non-waiver students performed better than waiver students, but the differences lost significance in the full regression analysis. Overall, the implementation of an entrance exam waiver did not adversely affect program quality while positively enhancing program marketing and recruitment efforts, as measured by an increase in the number of MPA applicants.

For many years, high-level performance on a graduate entrance exam (GRE, GMAT, or MAT) has been used as one of the key criteria in determining graduate school admission. Although many people would argue that these scores are good
predictors of graduate student matriculation, the evidence is not conclusive. The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of waiving the graduate admission exam on graduate student performance in the MPA program at the University of Memphis from summer semester 2001 through spring semester 2004. Data were collected from the files of MPA students who graduated from 1995 through 2004. We examine performance using three measures and test three null hypotheses around those measures. The null hypotheses are

1. Students who receive a graduate entrance exam waiver will not have a higher grade point average (GPA) in the MPA program.
2. Students who receive a graduate entrance exam waiver will not have higher rates of participation in core classes.
3. Students who receive a graduate entrance exam waiver will not have better writing skills.

Literature Review

There has been long-term general agreement among academics that one of the most difficult problems confronting graduate academic programs is the development of effective admission procedures (Brink, 1939, reprinted in 1999, 5–17). Ideally, screening procedures are developed to ensure that admissions procedures successfully screen out mediocre students and those inadequately prepared to undertake graduate work. To admit such students can be argued to be unfair to the student and to society (Brink, 1999, 5–17).

Criteria commonly employed in the admissions process include undergraduate scholarship record, generally measured by GPA; the institution from which the student received his/her baccalaureate degree; personal interviews (Brink, 1999, 519–520); standardized test scores such as the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) or the Graduate Management Admissions Test (GMAT) (Cushing and McGarvey, 2004; King, Bruce, and Gilligan, 1993); statement of purpose; letters of recommendation; and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), where appropriate (King, Bruce, and Gilligan, 1993). A body of contradictory research on the efficacy of these diverse measures for predicting success in graduate school programs has been developed. In addition to many quantitative studies, qualitative studies have noted that

Occasionally, students of exceptional ability make only mediocre undergraduate records because of poor health, lack of interest, insufficient time for study, or other reasons. On the other hand, students of inferior ability sometimes succeed in making good records through sheer perseverance. Moreover, little is known concerning the effect of varying time intervals between undergraduate and graduate work upon the predictive value of scholastic records (Brink, 1999, 522).
Regardless of the admissions criteria, certain expectations exist for graduate coursework. No matter what the field of study, graduate education shares common expectations for mastery of the knowledge, modes of thought, and techniques of intellectual inquiry appropriate to the particular field of study. So how should a graduate program in public administration decide which applicants to admit? Are undergraduate grades most important? Should students with low scores on the GRE be considered? How important is work experience in the public sector? What about the location of their undergraduate work?

At least one criterion seems to have been tested and found wanting. As early as 1935, the reliability of institutional ratings—where a student completed undergraduate work—was seriously questioned as a predictor for success in graduate work (Edwards, 1935). Undergraduate GPA, another common criterion for predicting success in graduate programs, receives a more mixed review. Measurement error has been cited as a serious flaw in the use of grades as an admit/no admit sole decision factor in admission to graduate programs (Humphries, 1968; Warren, 1971; Werts, Linn, and Joreskog, 1978). Grade inflation is identified as one possible source of this discrepancy, which then reduces the utility of GPA as a predictor for graduate school program success (Smith, 1992). However, undergraduate GPA was identified as the most important graduate program success predictor criterion by almost 40 percent of the program representatives surveyed by Bowman, Chen, Tinkersley, and Hilliard (1993); GRE scores were considered most important by approximately 35% of the Bowman et al. survey respondents, while almost 20% of those respondents favored letters of recommendation. And, although 40% of program officials believed that undergraduate GPA predicts graduate success, fully 45% view undergraduate GPA as the most important admission criterion. Of further interest, 54% of MPA program directors rely exclusively on one or two of the credential criteria (generally GPA or GRE) and ignore the others. When only one criterion is considered, GPA is the most frequently used (Bowman et al., 1993).

So, a significant number of MPA graduate program admission decisions are determined by a very small number of indicators. The undergraduate GPA has champions for its employment as the most important predictor of success and determinant for admission. However, a substantial number of MPA program admissions officials use GRE scores to determine which individuals will be admitted to their programs. But are GRE scores better measures of student potential for graduate success? The research is far from conclusive.

After examining a wide range of liberal arts and sciences graduate programs, Dwight Smith (1992) found that GRE subject tests seemed to replicate general academic ability. His findings were similar to results reported earlier by Horton for the GRE Biology Subject Test (1959, 810). However, Smith also found that these tests were not sensitive to the breadth of student learning (Smith, 1992,
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In a review of National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) accreditation studies, James Bowman concluded that

- The GRE is probably not a powerful predictor of success since it delivers an average accuracy or percentage of perfect prediction of 11.9 percent for first year graduate school grades (citing Milner, et al., 1984); but,
- It does ...compare favorably with other factors such as grades and letters of recommendation (which are also weak indicators) in predicting academic success (1988, 867).

Matthew Cushing and Mary McGarvey argue that the usefulness of the GRE or the GMAT has never been firmly established and that these entrance exams have surprisingly little predictive content (2004, 319). Little correlation was found between GRE scores and graduate GPAs in economics (Hansen, 1971), and GRE scores were of limited use in predicting performance in psychology (Sternberg and Williams, 1997). A 1998 study by the GRE Board of Education Testing Services discovered only small correlations between general GRE scores and first-year graduate GPA. This finding supports earlier validity studies in other disciplines that had been conducted by the Educational Testing Service. These early studies find minor association between GRE scores and graduate program success; however, the results of such studies were "rather inconclusive" (Reports of APSA Committees, 1969). Studies indicate that GRE scores explain only 6% to 16% of the variance in first-year GPA (Ji, 1998; Morrison and Morrison, 1995; Goldberg and Alliger, 1992). One study conducted on 62 MPA students found a lower predictive validity for GRE scores when compared to grades in a first-term analytic methods class (Oldfield and Hutchinson, 1996).

Specifically, the verbal portion of the GRE does not seem to present barriers to midcareer test takers, but the quantitative part can put these individuals at a disadvantage unless they have had the opportunity to maintain their mathematics skills following their baccalaureate (Clark, 1984; Hartle et al., 1983). Consequently, most students, particularly those in midcareer, see the GRE as an admissions obstacle (Baird, 1987, 375). In contrast, foreign students often do well on the quantitative section but fall below U.S. students in their verbal scores (Wilson, 1984). Additionally, while the Department of Government at Harvard uses GRE scores as a screening tool in their graduate program admissions process, they suggest caution in this endeavor. As King, Bruce, and Gilligan (1993) observe, GRE reported scores have several sources of error. The standard error of measurement for each of the analytical, verbal, and quantitative GRE scores has been determined to be about 40 (ETS). Thus, "the chances are about 95% that the (unobserved) “true score” ranges from 80 points below to 80 points above the reported score. In order to be reasonably confident that their true scores differ,
then, two students must have observed scores that differ by at least 112 points” (King, Bruce, and Gilligan, 1993, 774).

At least in part because of these standard errors, the Educational Testing Service (ETS) recommends not using their standardized scores as the sole criterion for admission (King, Bruce, and Gilligan, 1993, 774).

Moreover, fresh concerns have arisen as the new GRE is delivered to test takers via computer. In a controlled experiment of test takers who were in their final year of undergraduate study, Goldberg and Pedulla (2002) found that there is a direct positive relationship between new GRE (computer-delivered test) scores and the test taker’s level of computer familiarity, i.e., the higher the level of computer familiarity, the higher the GRE scores. Further, test takers in the Goldberg and Pedulla experiment who received the GRE exam in a paper and pencil format outperformed participants who received the exam in the computerized edition. This finding is of special concern for MPA programs whose applicants are often midcareer, nontraditional individuals including women and minorities and others who may have substantially less computer sophistication than traditional undergraduate students (Boodoo, 1998). Research by Gallagher (1997) seems to confirm this concern. In research conducted at 17 institutions of higher learning across the country, the impact of computer-delivered GREs was found to have an impact on women and minorities that was twice the size of that found for the same population of students using the paper and pencil GRE quantitative measures. And Benoit’s (1999) study concluded that “a hard-working inner city student still has a smaller chance of performing well on admission (e.g., GRE) and employment ‘tests’ than does a more privileged student” (399).

Although the GMAT has been found to be a good predictor of success in master of business administration (MBA) programs, neither the GMAT nor the GRE was determined to be an effective predictor of success in Ph.D. programs (Zwick, 1993). However, Barth and Arnold (1999) find hope that artificial intelligence (AI) can improve the use of standardized aptitude tests such as the computer-adaptive GRE for admission to public administration graduate schools.

AI systems could allow for what is in effect a personal interview with test takers, walking individuals through case scenarios, placing individuals under various time and other stressors, or using other techniques that may allow test takers with different values, backgrounds, or abilities to come through…it is possible that a nontraditional but experienced student who does not test well on traditional cognitive tests might perform quite well on a test that requires one to respond to a complex case scenario under pressure (345).

Alas, such AI enhanced tests do not yet exist. Graduate schools of public administration (and other disciplines) must make admissions decisions based on the
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best available information. Above all, the guidelines articulated by Brink in 1939 still hold true:

1. Each graduate school must determine the objectives of its program;
2. Each graduate school must then analyze those objectives to determine the prerequisites that prospective students should possess;
3. Each graduate school should then select or develop techniques appropriate for the study of each applicant for admission; and
4. Each graduate school should encourage only those to pursue graduate work for whom there is reasonable probability for success (Brink, 1939 reprinted in 1999, 523).

Implementation of this process has led the Division of Public and Nonprofit Administration in the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Memphis to waive the requirement of graduate entrance exam scores for specific categories of midcareer applicants who have demonstrated management experience in the public or nonprofit sector. At the same time, the program remains committed to assessing the outcome of this policy decision on program quality.

Brief History of the MPA Program and the Waiver

The graduate entrance exam waiver was rooted in the faculty’s collective experience of instructing a predominately part-time, in-service student population. The average student was female, completed her undergraduate degree three or more years prior to admission, worked for a local government or nonprofit organization, and was approximately 30 years of age. The University of Memphis is an urban, state institution and manifests one of the highest minority enrollment levels of any Carnegie Level 1 institution. The University of Memphis MPA program student body was very diverse in race as well, thereby increasing faculty sensitivity to GRE research indicating attenuated predictive validity levels for women (Luthy, 1997), minorities (Ji, 1998; Freedle and Kostin, 1997; Hughey, 1995), and older students (House, 1998; Luthy, 1997; Matthews and Martin, 1992; House, 1989).

The pre-waiver admissions criteria consisted of GRE or GMAT score, undergraduate GPA, a review of the applicant’s professional experience, and an optional admissions interview. Faculty deemed a rigid formulaic admissions assessment inappropriate, given the lower predictive validities of the GRE exam with an adult student population. From conversations with prospective applicants, standardized test anxiety was a major impediment for a significant cohort of adult learners. Many otherwise qualified students possessed a phobic-like fear of the GRE exam, thereby deterring the student from applying. Research indicates that test anxiety is high for the paper and pencil and computerized GRE administrations (Powers, 2001).
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The admissions decision was a product of a global assessment of the candidate’s portfolio by the program’s admissions committee, consisting of the MPA coordinator and one other faculty member. A major dilemma in the admission process was assessing the credentials of an experienced and successful in-service student with a weak undergraduate GPA and/or low entrance exam scores. For example, a female candidate with a 2.2 GPA, a GRE of 850 and 10 years of progressively responsible managerial work experience would be summarily rejected by a mechanical admissions procedure. Success in workplace appeared to make a convincing argument that the applicant’s undergraduate GPA was unrepresentative of the student’s current ability level, given social and personality maturation, higher intrinsic achievement motivation, and work-related human capital investments. In addition to the challenges of assessing in-service applicants and the potential test validity issues, the admissions committee believed that MPA enrollments had been declining because of the booming economy, reduced student interest in public service careers, and lack of local awareness of the MPA degree.

Development of the GRE Waiver

Based upon these concerns, the MPA coordinator, in consultation with senior colleagues, proposed an entrance exam waiver policy during the 2000–2001 academic year. Students possessing three or more years of progressively responsible professional work experience could present an entrance exam waiver application. The application process consisted of a signed form explaining the rationale and details of the waiver process (see Figure 1), a resume, relevant job accomplishment and duty documentation (which could include information such as job descriptions, certifications, awards) and an optional interview. Acceptable work experience included tenure in a management, a profession such as law, social work, or medicine, or an analytical position such as a budget analyst or management analyst. In most cases, the conferral of a waiver could be determined by the resume review. If there were ambiguities about job duties, the graduate coordinator requested additional documentation and conducted an interview. The graduate coordinator reviewed the information and informed the student of the decision. If the petition was approved, the student was instructed to register for a core course taught by a tenured or tenure-track, full-time faculty member. The preferred courses were either Research Methods or Administrative Theory, because they both emphasized the foundational analytical reasoning and communication competencies essential to program success.

Faculty discussion over the merits of the waiver policy centered on four issues: 1) influence on student quality, 2) relation to program mission, 3) conformance to NASPAA standards, and 4) enrollment effects. The formal graduate entrance exam, for all of its weaknesses, was the only standardized assessment of academic abilities, or student quality. Would the waiver serve as a back-door admissions policy for weaker students, given the natural propensity of faculty to grant stu-
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Students “the benefit of the doubt” in the screening classes and thereby avoid assigning failing grades (in this case a “B-” or lower)? Admitting unqualified students imposes higher instructional costs for faculty and the overall student body. This concern was partially allayed by the faculty’s generally favorable experience with adult students. The second issue relates to the university and program’s mission emphasizing urban outreach to improve the quality of the region’s public and nonprofit workforce. An MPA degree increases employee professionalism, thereby enhancing management and service delivery effectiveness. The imposition of a rigid admissions process impedes the development of the region’s human capital resources.

Significant faculty concerns existed about the congruence of the entrance exam waiver policy with NASPAA accreditation admissions standards. The faculty clearly wanted to avoid either the reality or the appearance of an open enrollment policy, given the general negative program effects and our impending reaccreditation self-study and site visit. We therefore committed to ongoing monitoring of the entrance exam waiver process to ensure that quality standards were not eroded. The final issue centered on program enrollments, given a decrease in the number of MPA students to 31 in the 2000–2001 academic year. Considering

Figure 1. Road Map to the Graduate Admission Exam Waiver
the austere fiscal climate, all university programs were under pressure to increase program size.

The waiver process was the topic of several faculty meetings in the spring of 2001. During this time, we were also approached by a federal agency interested in creating a part-time cohort of 10–15 students for the MPA degree. The intention was to receive permission for full funding for the program from their headquarters office as part of the agency’s effort to more fully develop mid-career federal employees. These students were older adults and were reported to be anxious about taking the computerized GRE test. Although the faculty viewed this as an opportunity to further market the degree program, concerns about quality continued to be debated.

In addition to the waiver paths mentioned above, undergraduate students also have the opportunity to receive an entrance exam waiver. A traditional student who receives a bachelor’s degree from the University of Memphis with an American Nonprofit Management Certificate, along with an overall GPA of 3.0 and a GPA of 3.5 in nonprofit management courses, can also request a waiver. Although there is no requirement that this category of applicant have prior full-time work experience in order to receive the waiver, students receiving the nonprofit certificate are required to be actively involved in the operations and activities of their student organization and to complete an internship in an approved nonprofit agency (to date, no student has received an entrance exam waiver under this category).

After minor revisions to enhance policy clarity and consistency, the entrance exam waiver was implemented during the summer 2001 semester. Students interested in applying for the waiver were informed orally and on the application form that the conferral of an entrance exam waiver did not constitute a formal offer of admission, and that, even if a passing grade was earned on the waiver course, admission was contingent on a complete review of the student’s applicant portfolio, hence not guaranteed.

Clearly the entrance exam waiver was a marketing success, and subsequent application and enrollment data validated the waiver’s utility (see Table 1). Applications increased significantly from the 1999–2000 to the 2003–2004 academic years, primarily by student referrals and word-of-mouth recruiting. This growth rate has been sustained ever since.

The waiver process did incur additional administrative overhead. Students had to first apply to the Graduate School as a nondegree student and submit an entrance exam waiver form, which was reviewed by the graduate coordinator. If approved, the student was then advised by the graduate coordinator about the designated class to be taken. Upon completion of the class, students had to resubmit an application to the Graduate School and the graduate coordinator had to track grades in the designated classes. The admissions committee then reviewed the full admissions portfolio, including class performance.
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The program earned full NASPAA reaccreditation with no concerns over the entrance exam waiver admissions policy. In conclusion, the entrance exam waiver policy successfully reduced admissions barriers for older students, increased applications, and increased enrollments. The empirical question is the waiver’s impact on program quality outcomes and is addressed in the next section.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The data for the analysis were gathered from the files of students who graduated from the MPA program at the University of Memphis during the spring 1993 semester to the spring 2004 semester. A total of 143 MPA students graduated during this period. In order to test the three hypotheses, we first use chi-square analysis to determine if there are statistically significant differences between the observed frequencies and the expected frequencies in contingency tables. Next, we use three pooled time series regression models to determine the level of significance of each independent variable on our three dependent variables. Specifically, we want to determine if the waiver variable is a significant indicator of performance. The three dependent variables examined are GPA in core courses, substantive contribution in class score, and writing skills score. Each of the independent variables used in each of the models is listed below. In some cases, we also use the dependent variables as an independent variables and vice versa. Hence, each model is modified as needed. The model incorporates the key moderator variables linked in the literature to variance in GRE scores.

Table 1. Waiver Applicants 1999–2004

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year*</th>
<th>Total Applied</th>
<th>Non-waiver Accepted</th>
<th>Waiver Accepted</th>
<th>Total Accepted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999–2000</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000–2001</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001–2002</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21**</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002–2003</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003–2004</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The academic year is from the summer semester through the end of the following spring semester and represents the program’s admission cycle. Data on total applications received from the University of Memphis, Office of Institutional Research. The other data is from internal application tracking reports. Waiver students are counted upon formally receiving the waiver, not when they began taking graduate MPA courses.

** In 2001–2002, of the 23 waiver-accepted students, 11 were from the federal agency cohort discussed earlier in the paper. At the time of admittance, this part-time cohort had an average of 12.8 years of public service professional experience (ranging from 3–26 years) and had an average age of 43 years.
The OLS regression models used the following variables:

\[ y = b_0 + b_1 x_1 + b_2 x_2 + b_3 x_3 + b_4 x_4 + b_5 x_5 + b_6 x_6 + b_7 x_7 + b_8 x_8 + e \]

where

Model 1: \( Y = \) Overall MPA GPA\(^3\)
Model 2: \( Y = \) Substantive Contributions in Courses Score\(^4\)
Model 3: \( Y = \) Writing Skills Score\(^5\)

**Demographic Variables**

\( x_1 = \) Age\(^6\)
\( x_2 = \) Gender\(^7\)
\( x_3 = \) Race\(^8\)

**Education Variables**

\( x_4 = \) Undergraduate GPA\(^9\)
\( x_5 = \) Type of Undergraduate Institution\(^10\)
\( x_6 = \) GRE Score\(^11\)
\( x_7 = \) Professional Experience\(^12\)
\( x_8 = \) Waiver\(^13\)

The model provides a robust statistical foundation to test the proposed hypotheses as described in the following section.

**Findings**

Table 2 provides general information about the students who matriculated during the spring 1993 to spring 2004 period. The table shows that the waiver students and the nonwaiver students are very comparable overall. However, several things are noteworthy. First, the vast majority of male and female waiver students are African American compared to the non-waiver students who are predominantly white. Second, waiver students are older (approximately four years) and have more than years of professional experience. Last, both undergraduate and graduate GPAs are slightly higher for non-waiver students in each category.

Table 3 shows the findings for the chi-square analysis of waiver status and MPA GPA. The table shows that there is no statistical significance between the two variables. Hence, we accept the null hypothesis that students who receive a graduate admission exam waiver will not have a higher GPA in the MPA program.

*Hypothesis 1: Students who receive a graduate entrance exam waiver will not have a higher GPA in the MPA program.*
Waiving the MPA Entrance Exam: Impact on Performance

Table 2. General MPA Student Information (Spring 1993–Spring 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variables</th>
<th>Waiver Students</th>
<th>Non-Waiver Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent Black*</td>
<td>88.0%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent White*</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Age</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>38.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Av. Years Professional Experience</td>
<td>7.63</td>
<td>8.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Averages</th>
<th>Waiver Students</th>
<th>Non-Waiver Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Av. Undergraduate GPA</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>2.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Av. MPA GPA</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>3.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Av. GRE Score</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Av. MAT</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Av. Semesters to Complete MPA</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% with P.S. or P.A. B.A.</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Public School B.A.</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The data are based on column percents.

Table 3. Chi Square Analysis of MPA GPA and Waiver Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MPA GPA</th>
<th>No Waiver</th>
<th>Waiver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;3.4</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4-3.59</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6-3.8</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;3.8</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N= 143</td>
<td>(116)</td>
<td>(27)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pearson Chi-Square Value = 1.368  Significance .731

* When the dependent variable, MPA GPA, is left as a ratio variable the coefficient is significant at the .05 level of analysis.
Table 4 addresses the relationship between waiver status and student class contributions. The chi-square value is significant and, therefore, we reject hypothesis 2, which indicates that students who receive an admission waiver will not have higher rates of participation in core classes. The contingency table reflects a value of 14.143 at a .01 level of significance.

Hypothesis 2: Students who receive a graduate entrance exam waiver will not have higher rates of participation in core classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substantive Contributions</th>
<th>No Waiver</th>
<th>Waiver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;81</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81-85</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86-89</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-94</td>
<td>43.6%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;94</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N= 137</td>
<td>(110)</td>
<td>(27)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pearson Chi-Square Value = 12.432 Significance .014

When the dependent variable, substantive contribution, is left as a ratio variable the coefficient is significant at the .00 level of analysis.

The last chi-square table examines waiver status by the writing skills score. The model does achieve statistical significance and as a result we can reject the null hypothesis that students who receive an admission waiver will not have better writing skills. The chi-square value is 16.487 and is significant at the .00 level of analysis.

Hypothesis 3: Students who receive a graduate entrance waiver will not have better writing skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Skills</th>
<th>No Waiver</th>
<th>Waiver</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;81</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81-85</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86-89</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90-94</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;94</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N= 137</td>
<td>(110)</td>
<td>(27)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pearson Chi-Square Value = 13.320 Significance .010

When the dependent variable, writing skills, is left as a ratio variable the coefficient is significant at the same level of analysis (.01).
The last two tables are the regression models explaining each of the dependent variables. Specifically, we determine whether the waiver variable is a significant predictor of performance using our three dependent variables. Table 6 shows that the waiver variable is not statistically significant. However, type of undergraduate university, substantive contributions in core classes and the writing skills variable are good predictors of overall MPA GPA. The F value is significant and the coefficient is 10.030, and the R square is .458.

Table 7 reports the regression model for the substantive contribution variable as well as the writing skills variables. The table shows that the waiver variable is not significant in either of the two models. However, race and gender are significant in both models. Type of undergraduate university, GRE score and the substantive contribution variables are significant in the writing skills model. Years of professional experience and the writing skills variable are significant in the substantive contribution model. The F value is significant in both models.

Table 6. Overall MPA GPA Regression Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Standard Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographic Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.004</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.059</td>
<td>.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>.086</td>
<td>.088*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate GPA</td>
<td>.167</td>
<td>.046***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrance Exam Score</td>
<td>1.124</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Undergraduate Institution</td>
<td>-0.45</td>
<td>.053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub. Cont. in MPA Core Courses</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>.006***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Skills in Core Courses</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.004***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experience Variables</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of Professional Experience</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiver</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>.632</td>
<td>.564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>8.830***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R-square</td>
<td>.432</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N= 103</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table reports unstandardized coefficients with the standard errors in parenthesis.

*** Significant at the .01 level. ** Significant at the .05 level. * Significant at the .10 level.
Discussion

Our examination of the data for the last 10 plus years indicates that the waiver students who have matriculated at the University of Memphis are not statistically different from non-waiver students when three important variables are examined. We show that waiver students did not have significantly higher MPA GPAs when compared to non-waiver students. Further, the chi-square analysis shows that non-waiver students are likely to have higher substantive contribution and writing skills than waiver students. When the waiver variable was placed in the three regression models, it was not found to be statistically significant. However, the race variable was the most consistent predictor of performance. That is, there is a strong correlation between race and MPA GPA. We also found that substantive contributions and writing skills to be important in overall MPA GPA.

Table 7. Substantive Contributions Regression Model and Writing Skills Regression Model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Variables</th>
<th>Substantive Contributions Model</th>
<th>Writing Skills Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Coefficient: -.057, Standard Error: .055</td>
<td>Coefficient: -.062, Standard Error: .091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Coefficient: -1.824, Standard Error: .792**</td>
<td>Coefficient: -3.273, Standard Error: 1.319***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Variables</th>
<th>Substantive Contributions in MPA Core Courses</th>
<th>Writing Skills in Core Courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate GPA</td>
<td>Coefficient: .083, Standard Error: .759</td>
<td>Coefficient: 1.295, Standard Error: 1.263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrance Exam Score</td>
<td>Coefficient: .000, Standard Error: .002</td>
<td>Coefficient: .009, Standard Error: .003***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantive Contributions in MPA Core Courses</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>Coefficient: .686, Standard Error: .157***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Skills in Core Courses</td>
<td>Coefficient: .245, Standard Error: .056***</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience Variables</th>
<th>Substantive Contributions in MPA Core Courses</th>
<th>Writing Skills in Core Courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years of Professional Experience</td>
<td>Coefficient: .157, Standard Error: .081*</td>
<td>Coefficient: .145, Standard Error: .137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiver</td>
<td>Coefficient: .403, Standard Error: 1.978</td>
<td>Coefficient: .190, Standard Error: .373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>Coefficient: 71.939***, Standard Error: 16.682</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Coefficient: 7.598***, Standard Error: 11.277***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R-Square</td>
<td>Coefficient: .366, Standard Error: .473</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table reports unstandardized coefficients with the standard errors in parenthesis.

*** Sig. at the .01 level. ** Sig. at the .05 level. * Sig. at the .10 level.
Waiving the MPA Entrance Exam: Impact on Performance

This analysis clearly demonstrates that entrance exam waiver students did not manifest significantly lower educational performance outcomes than their traditionally admitted colleagues. A major concern of the faculty was the development of a “back-door” admissions policy that would significantly reduce the overall quality of the program and create a bifurcated student body. This clearly did not occur and thereby validated the faculty’s supposition that entrance exam scores manifested limited predictive validity towards experienced, in-service adult students.

The provision of an entrance exam waiver enhanced program marketing and recruitment efforts, and increased the availability of a graduate education to a significant cohort of working adults that manifested elevated probabilities for test bias including African-Americans and women. At the same time, the significant increase in the number of applications and the increased administrative burden caused by the waiver process subsequently caused the program to limit the waiver to actually reduce the number of applications. In Fall Semester 2004, the program refined the waiver process by increasing the experience length to 6 years of public service experience and removed the core class contingency requirement, but required a personal interview. We will be tracking the effect of this new waiver process regarding both recruitment and quality.

Conclusions

The intent of the admission exam waiver at the University of Memphis was not only a marketing tool but also a mechanism to improve the number of students matriculating in our program by bringing in students who had practical experience in the public and nonprofit sectors. The most important finding is that public service experience does trump graduate admissions exams to some extent. Future research is needed to validate these findings in other settings and to investigate further the relationship between demographic characteristics such as race and age with graduate school performance.

For programs that are considering adopting an entrance exam waiver, our experience provides several important lessons and guidelines. First, program faculty should carefully deliberate on the waiver qualifications and requirements and clearly link them to the program’s mission. The key decision criteria include the requisite years of experience, the desired occupational categories (professional, technical, analytical) and the degree of managerial experience. Longer work experience and tighter definitions of applicable experience requirements screen out more students, but safeguard the integrity of the waiver process. If an admissions contingency approach is taken, another key factor is to assign highly effective full-time faculty members to teach the waiver courses to ensure a valid screening process.

Programs also need to consider the potential for creating a sense of “implied contract.” Subsequent experience with the entrance exam waiver process found
Waiving the MPA Entrance Exam: Impact on Performance

that in no instance was a student denied admission upon earning a “B” or better on the waiver course. The absence of a waiver admissions rejection reflects the existence of an “implied” psychological contract based on an equity rationale. If the student passes the course, it is difficult to rebut the assumption that the student possesses the capability to complete the remainder of the program. This reflects a conflict between merit standards to maximize student quality and a service provision model in which all eligible “consumers” can purchase the service. The entrance exam waiver creates implied contracts in the minds of students irrespective of the written or verbal communication to the contrary. Hence programs considering the contingency approach to the entrance exam waiver need to consider this issue carefully and select faculty committed to quality teaching, high academic standards, and the willingness to assign failing grades when warranted.

Programs will also need to carefully manage the increased administrative overhead when designing the admissions process. Program scheduling can also become an issue if core classes are not offered on a year round basis which delays decisions on the waivers. This can negatively affect students since they generally are not eligible for financial aid given their non-degree status.

None of these limitations deterred students from pursuing the waiver. The implementation of this type of new policy presents the opportunity to actively market the MPA program using a variety of media methods to increase awareness and interest. The entrance exam waiver policy was promoted largely by word of mouth recruiting, but a more systematic process may generate wider interest from targeted market segments and could potentially improve the applicant pool.

Finally, the entrance exam waiver can promote key NASPAA program diversity goals if the proper quality control standards are implemented. The entrance exam waiver was consistent with the University of Memphis MPA program’s mission to enhance the region’s management capacity and raise the overall quality of human capital in public and nonprofit organizations.

Notes
1. Given the small number of waiver students in our study, we conducted an ARIMA analysis and found that the MPA waiver variable was not a significant predictor for all three dependent variables.
2. The mean score and standard deviation (respectively) for the variables are: MPA GPA in core classes is 3.607, .2755; Substantive Contribution score is 89.96, 4.613; and Writing Skills score is 86.76, 7.639. The variables were significantly correlated at the .01 level of analysis.
3. MPA GPA is coded as the numeric grade based on a 4.0 scale.
4. Each student was given a quality of substantive contribution by three faculty members who taught core MPA courses during the period. The three scores, ranging from 0-100, were averaged and the mean score was used in the analysis. The scores were checked for internal validity.
5. Faculty who taught the students in Administrative Theory and Public Management Leadership rated the students writing skills. We chose these two courses because one is taught at the beginning of matriculation and one at the end. Further, writing is a crucial portion of each class. Students were given a score ranging 0-100. The numerical scores were checked for internal validity.
6. Age is coded as the numeric age at graduation.
Waiving the MPA Entrance Exam: Impact on Performance

7. Gender is coded as male = 0, female = 1.
8. There was one Indian student who matriculated in the program during this period. We removed them from the analysis.
9. We converted one student’s undergraduate GPA from a 3.0 scale to a 4.0 scale.
10. Type of undergraduate institution is coded as public (0) or private (1).
11. We accept GRE, MAT, and GMAT scores in our program. As a result, we converted 34 MAT scores to GRE equivalents using a conversion table created at the University of South Florida by Dr. Thomas Porter in Evaluation and Testing (http://usfweb2.usf.edu/ugrads/eandt/matsvsgre.htm).
12. We counted the number of years that the students worked in the public or nonprofit sector at the date of their admittance to the MPA program.
13. The waiver variable is a dummy variable. Students who received the waiver were coded as 1 and those who did not receive the waiver were coded as 0.

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Waiving the MPA Entrance Exam: Impact on Performance


Hughley, Aaron W. 1995. “Observed Differences in Graduate Record Examination Scores and Mean Undergraduate Grade Point Averages by Gender and Race among Students Admitted to a Master’s Degree Program in College Student Affairs.” Psychological Reports, 77(3):1315–1321.


Waiving the MPA Entrance Exam: Impact on Performance

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Appendix A
The University of Memphis
School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy
Division of Public and Nonprofit Administration

MPA Entrance Examination Waiver Form

Waiver Policy: The University of Memphis requires the submission of a standardized entrance exam score as part of the student's admission package. The MPA program recognized that scores on standardized tests are frequently unrepresentative of the experience adult learner’s academic ability and performance. The MPA program therefore offers qualified students an option of substituting a MPA core curriculum course in lieu of the standardized entrance exam. The student can select from the following courses: PADM 7600 Seminar in Administrative Theory, PADM 7602 Public Budgeting, or PADM 7605 Human Resources Administration, which are offered during the fall and spring semesters. The student must complete the course with an earned “A” or “B” grade for the waiver to go into effect.

Students who possess three or more years of full-time equivalent professional work experience are eligible for a waiver. The student requesting a waiver should submit the standardized test waiver form, a detailed resume, and other supporting documents (e.g., job description and other work products that document duties and accomplishments) to the Coordinator of Graduate Studies. Professional work experience is defined as the performance of managerial, administrative, or analytical job duties characterized by significant responsibility for program management, service delivery, personnel management, and/or the application of analytical decision tools and techniques to management problems and issues.

Student admission to the program is based upon his or her course performance and the other standard admissions criteria including the graduate application, a resume detailing professional experience, two letters of reference, a personal statement, and an undergraduate degree program transcript. Student who meet the requirement for a waiver are not guaranteed admission and the student should consider carefully the appropriateness of a waiver given the strength of the applicant’s overall portfolio.

Waiver Process: If the student chooses to formally apply for a waiver, he or she must submit this form with the other required admission materials (application, up-to-date resume, transcript(s), two letters of reference, and a student personal statement). The Coordinator of Graduate Studies reviews the complete admissions package and notifies the candidate within 10 business days of the acceptance or rejection of the waiver request. The Coordinator of Graduate Studies may consult with other faculty on the student’s waiver application. Waivers are granted during the fall and spring semesters only. The conferral of a waiver neither requires nor implies a favorable admission decision.
**Applicant’s Request for Admissions Test Waiver**

Applicant’s Name: ___________________ Date: ___________________

Resume Submitted: _____ Other Documentation: __________________________

Briefly Describe Your Qualifying Professional Work Experience:

Applicant’s Signature: ____________________________________

Decision: _____ Accept _____ Reject

Rationale:

Coordinator of Graduate Studies Signature: _______________________________
Community-based Quality of Life Indicators: A Service-Learning Exercise in a Graduate Statistics Class

Daniel Lowery
Calumet College of St. Joseph

Abstract
The article describes the application of a service-learning strategy to a graduate statistics course. Employing a framework drawn from an emerging service-learning canon, the author examines course design and implementation and identifies key outcomes and concludes that service-learning can contribute in a significant way to the contribution statistics courses can make to MPA programs.

Statistics courses are rarely popular in graduate public administration programs. Few students enter MPA programs with strong backgrounds in quantitative analysis. Some even question the relevance of statistics to their professional work. As a result, those who teach statistics are often challenged to go beyond the formal presentation of various methods and analytic tools. They may be asked to defend the utility of the various univariate, bivariate, and multivariate techniques that make up a statistics curriculum. This, in turn, can lead to a search for innovative strategies through which to teach statistics.

Reflecting this view, Jody Fitzpatrick (2000) has argued for a dramatic rethinking of the strategies used in teaching statistics in MPA curricula. In place of the technique-by-technique method typically employed, she recommends a hands-on approach that can better prepare students to initiate and use research in addressing public management and public policy concerns. More specifically, Fitzpatrick promotes the extensive reading of research and recommends that we assist students in becoming better “consumers of research.”

Like Fitzpatrick, faculty members in the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University Northwest were looking, in 2002, for a way to make the study of statistics more meaningful to students. Service-learning, rather than the more extensive reading of research, was used to accomplish this purpose.
In the following pages, the rationale for this strategy is presented, the nature of the service-learning activity is described, and key outcomes are identified. A brief introduction to service-learning will be presented, with a summary of the meager literature pertaining to its use in statistics classes. This will be followed, in turn, by a description of the service-learning initiative and an evaluation of its utility as a pedagogical strategy.

**Service-Learning and Statistics Classes**

The Alliance for Service-Learning in Education Reform has defined service-learning as “a method of teaching through which students apply newly acquired academic skills and knowledge to address real-life needs in their own communities” (Payne, 2000). This pedagogy is uniquely responsive to several emerging views in higher education, including the concept of civic engagement, which Thomas Ehrlich (2000), Robert Bringle (1999), Barbara Jacoby (1996) and their colleagues have promoted so effectively in recent years; Ernest Boyer’s reframing of the academic project as the fourfold scholarship of discovery, integration, application, and teaching (1991); Donald Schön’s reflection on the “messiness” of professional work (1983); and the ongoing development of action research. Individual projects also draw on more particular theories of learning and development, including cognitive development theory, learning styles models of various kinds, identity development theory (McEwen, 1996), and constructivist theory (Payne, 2000).

At the level of technique, service-learning encompasses several approaches. Kerrissa Heffernan (2001), for instance, draws a distinction between certain initial or preliminary techniques (pure service-learning, discipline-based service-learning, and problem-based service-learning) and three more advanced techniques (community-based action research, service internships, and capstone courses).

Although these approaches may differ in important ways, it is generally agreed that service-learning strategies of various kinds embody—or should embody—certain key attributes. The value of reciprocity, for instance, should guide every step in the service-learning process (Jacoby, 1996; Heffernan, 2001). Further, service-learning activities should include certain steps. Duckenfield and Swanson (1992) recommend a four-step process: preparation, action, reflection, and celebration. The National Association of Partners in Education (1994) lists seven distinct activities: a formal needs assessment; the identification of required resources; a full specification of goals and objectives; program or project design; the recruitment of participants; organization and training; and monitoring and evaluation. And Cesie Scheuerman (1996) recommends a six-step process: the development of community sites; assisting the student or organization in choosing a site; the formulation of a commitment to the community site; preparation; reflection; and evaluation. Of these several steps, reflection is viewed by many as a
defining characteristic of service-learning. Various reflective techniques have been developed over time. Heffernan, for instance, recommends the use of exit cards, thought papers, examination questions, class updates, oral reports, and project outputs of various kinds (2001, 37).

Although the literature on service learning is growing (Grantmaker Forum on Community and National Service, 2000), few applications involving statistics classes have been published to date. Two notable exceptions pertain to undergraduate classes: a description of a service-learning project employed in an undergraduate statistics course at the University of Minnesota-Morris (Anderson and Sungur, 1999) and an account of several service-learning activities incorporated into undergraduate statistics courses at Lafayette College (Root and Thorme, 2001).

The Service-Learning Activity

Developing and implementing a service-learning activity in a graduate statistics class can be a daunting task. The course in question had traditionally addressed univariate and bivariate statistics, so great deal of material had to be covered. Further, although many of the students in the program already work in the public sector or in nonprofit organizations, they tend to lack strong quantitative skills; indeed, some express considerable anxiety about the two statistics courses they are required to take. This prompted concerns about the development of additional content for classes that are already quite full.

Nevertheless, the desire to develop a more relevant statistics course was compelling. Further, I had come to the conclusion that the conventional presentation of three or four bivariate techniques over a period of several weeks can obscure concepts common to all such techniques—the need to specify the level of measurement, testing for statistical significance, and assessing the strength and sometimes the direction of associations. In most such courses, students master what they can pertaining to a single technique, are tested on it, and then move on quickly to the next technique. Too often, they seem to offload any learning that may have occurred about techniques previously introduced; in effect, they fail to fully transfer learning that may have already occurred. A condensed treatment of several bivariate statistical techniques would provide an opportunity to test this hypothesis in an informal manner.

Employing the four-step process recommended by Duckenfield and Swanson (1992)—preparation, action, reflection, and celebration—we proceeded as follows.

Preparation

The preparation phase included five key elements: a critical assessment of our statistics curriculum; the identification of an appropriate service-learning project; the design of the service-learning project; and the identification of an appropriate set of community partners.
We began with an assessment of the program’s two-course statistics sequence. The two faculty members who teach statistics agreed to maintain the basic two-course design that had long been in place. Further, the initial course would continue to address univariate and bivariate statistics, and the second course would continue to address multivariate statistical techniques. A focus on the critical assessment of data in the first course would be maintained as well. As a supplemental text, The Data Game: Controversies in Social Science Statistics (1999) by Mark H. Maier, served us well; we would continue to use it. We further determined that a service-learning activity in which local data would be developed and analyzed would serve several purposes: first, it would demonstrate the challenges that researchers and analysts face in gathering and presenting data; second, it would provide points of comparison to the national data addressed in the Maier text; and third, it would engender an appreciation for the role that uncertainty and value judgments play in administrative decision making and in the development of public policy. Finally, we agreed that our second course should focus more explicitly on the creation of databases and that it should include an introduction to at least one qualitative research technique.

With this framework in place, we determined that the need expressed by a regional leadership group—the Northwest Indiana Quality of Life Council—to update its three-county quality of life indicators report might meet our project requirements. The Council had released its first indicators report in 2000. Like a number of other organizations across the county, the Quality of Life Council had drawn data from various policy domains into a single document for use by a broad range of decision-makers. By one estimation, more than 200 communities in the United States have now developed community-based indicators of one kind or another (Oregon Progress Board, 1999; Besleme and Mullin, 1997).

Like some other reports, the Quality of Life Council’s 2000 indicators report had been grounded on the concept of “sustainability” (President’s Commission on Sustainable Development, 1996; International Council for Local Economic Initiatives, 1996; Strong, 1995, 19; Besleme and Mullin, 1997). Other indicators reports draw on other theoretical bases, including the federal government’s Healthy People initiative (Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, 2001) and the well-being of children and families (Minnesota Milestones, 1998; Murphey, 1999).

Depending on their theoretical grounding and the community’s needs, different reports include different kinds of data. Various combinations of the 11 domestic policy topics included in the Calvert-Henderson quality of life report (Henderson, 2000) are typically employed in the case of sustainability-based initiatives: education; employment; energy; the environment; health; human rights; income; infrastructure; public safety; recreation; and shelter. As is noted above, the indicator categories used in some states and regions focus more explicitly on the needs of children and families. In Vermont, for instance, indicators are orga-
Community-based Quality of Life Indicators: A Service-Learning Exercise

nized around 20 broad aspirations: families, youth, and individuals are engaged in and contribute to their community’s decisions and activities; pregnant women and newborns thrive; infants and children thrive; children are ready for school; children succeed in school; children live in stable, supported families; youth choose healthy behaviors; youth successfully transition to adulthood; elders and people with disabilities live with dignity and independence in settings they prefer; and families and individuals live in safe and supportive communities (Murphy, 1999). United Way of America’s indicators are organized into six broad categories: economic and financial well-being; education; health; voluntarism, charity, and civic engagement; safety; and the natural environment (United Way of America, 2000). And the indicators adopted in Marathon County, Wisconsin, focus on living a healthy life, life at school, life at work, life at leisure, life in our natural environment, living together (civics; public safety; diversity), and life at home (children and families; housing) (Community Planning Council of Marathon County, 1999).

In order to focus community attention, indicators reports tend to include relatively few measures of performance. The Quality of Life Council’s 2000 indicators report encompassed 45 sets of data organized into 12 broad categories: demographic profile; economic prosperity; environmental quality; transportation; educational excellence; human services; public safety; health; housing; recreation and tourism; the arts; and governance (Northwest Indiana Quality of Life Council, 2000). Although the 2000 report had been well-received, it was widely believed that too few points of comparison (e.g., historical data, goals or targets, or comparative data from other communities or regions) had been provided. Additionally, the report did not include public policy recommendations or action steps designed to guide decision-making.

By the fall of 2002, the Quality of Life Council had determined that its indicators report needed to be updated. Data from the 2000 U.S. Census would soon come online, and there was a general sense that the Council should capitalize on the success of the 2000 report. More specifically, key members of the Council argued that the time was right to include explicit public policy recommendations in a revised report, given the organization’s newly acquired visibility in the community. Together, these developments seemed to present an ideal opportunity for a service-learning project.

A “discipline-based” service-learning strategy was adopted (Heffernan, 2001, 3). Students were challenged to establish a presence in the community throughout the semester and to reflect on their experiences on an ongoing basis. More specifically, teams of students developed partnerships with various community organizations holding stakeholder interests of various kinds in the topic domains to which they were assigned (demographics, economic development, income and poverty, education, the environment, healthcare, transportation, housing, public safety, the arts and recreation, philanthropy, and civic engagement). Given the
complexity of these many topic domains, we determined that a discipline-based strategy would increase our chances of producing a useful work product. Intact teams focusing intensively on a single issue would provide the best opportunity to address the assigned topic domains in some depth.

Before the class began, I identified and met with one or more stakeholder groups or organizations associated with each topic domain, including a United Way affiliate, the metropolitan planning organization responsible for regional transportation planning, a regional arts association, a committee established by the metropolitan planning organization to oversee environmental planning in the three-county region, and other key entities. In several instances, formal partnerships were created using memoranda of understanding. In other cases, an informal advisory relationship was established. Because the instructor serves as the part-time executive director of the Quality of Life Council, pursuing these several relationships did not prove difficult. This last step in the preparation process would have been a great deal more challenging if the instructor had not had a history of engagement in the community.

Two other factors contributed to the development and delivery of the course as well. The three-county region that provided a focus for the project is geographically small enough and sufficiently self-contained to facilitate the ready identification of key stakeholders. It would likely prove more difficult to undertake a project of this kind in a large metropolitan area in which the number of interested parties would be substantially greater and more diverse in nature and in which the leadership structure was more complex.

Finally, many of the students in our graduate program are adults who live in the region and already serve in professional, supervisory, or managerial positions of one kind or another. As a result, they tend to bring a great deal of knowledge to projects. Many are also quite comfortable interacting with leaders in the community. A similar project conducted with younger or less experienced students would undoubtedly prove more challenging.

Action

The class syllabus clearly spelled out the requirements of the service-learning project, which would account for 40 percent of the students’ grades. The 34 students in the class were organized early in the semester into 11 teams. Assignments were made to ensure a viable mix of experience and skill sets. In-class time was devoted to the development of team-specific contracts or ground rules that would all team members would eventually signed. Each team was also introduced to a representative from its partner organization. Finally, students were provided with copies of the indicators report that had been developed in 2000.

The service-learning project was developed over the course of the entire semester. The class was scheduled to meet once each week for three hours. Approximately two-thirds of each class period was devoted to content traditionally
associated with statistics courses. One-third was devoted to the service-learning project. Teams were thus provided with the opportunity to meet during class. In most instances, they met outside of class as well.

The content traditionally associated with the course was divided into three distinct parts. Univariate statistics were addressed during the first third of the semester. Through the middle portion of the semester, discussions pertaining to various public policy domains were conducted using the Data Game text. Four bivariate statistical techniques (i.e., chi-square, comparisons of two means, ANOVA, and bivariate regression) were introduced in the last third of the course. The expedited treatment of the bivariate techniques was aided by the use of a seven-page supplemental guide that included definitions of key terms and worksheets that detailed the levels of measurement, the test of statistical significance, and the measure(s) of association pertinent to each of the four bivariate techniques. Although a standard text was used, students were encouraged to master the supplemental guide and the problems assigned in class in order to reinforce the common attributes shared by these techniques. Again, this approach was designed to overcome the considerable offloading of learning that typically occurs when moving from one statistical technique to another over the course of a full semester. (In fact, this proved to be the most challenging aspect of this initiative. An alternative approach was subsequently devised and is described below.)

The third of each class period devoted to the service-learning project was also used to integrate the project and course content with the statistical techniques. Through the first third of the course, the students’ experiences were used to highlight challenges faced in developing and interpreting univariate data. In the middle portion of the semester, local data were compared to national data. The need to critically assess data was emphasized; the Maier text proved very helpful with this effort. Challenges involving the gathering and use of national data were easily recognized when the students analyzed local and regional data. In the final third of the class, students were directed to develop hypotheses that could be tested using the data gathered by the several project teams. (Case-specific bivariate analyses could not be conducted, however. The data were drawn from many different sources; little of this case-specific data was, in fact, secured. Nevertheless, this activity was viewed as a critical bridge to the kinds of analyses that students would be challenged to conduct in their second statistics course.)

The data gathered in the service-learning project were limited for the most part to public data available on-line or in published reports and studies of various kinds. On-line data derived from the 2000 Census, K-12 education data maintained by the Indiana Department of Education, and environmental data available from the Environmental Protection Agency and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management proved particularly helpful. So, too, did a number of local and regional reports and studies pertaining to public transportation, incidents of racial intimidation, and other topics. In some cases, little local or
regional data was available. With respect to epidemiological data, for instance, the case was made for additional research, and a recommendation to this effect was included in the final report.

The extent of interactions involving team members and their community partners varied somewhat. Each team was expected to meet with representatives from their respective partners for four distinct purposes: to engage in discussions that would help team members better understand local and regional issues pertinent to the public policy domain to which they were assigned; to request guidance on specific data sources; to secure help in winnowing down the number of data sets gathered over the course of the semester; and to invite a critical assessment of any recommendations to be included in their project reports. All of the teams succeeded in meeting these minimal expectations. Some, including, most notably, the team assigned to the environmental policy domain, met with representatives of their partner organizations on several occasions and worked very closely with them in developing their indicators and recommendations.

Reflection

The students had four opportunities for reflection over the course of the semester: team discussions with the instructor during working sessions built into several class periods; feedback on several drafts of each team’s final report; oral reports each team provided to class members and to representatives of the community partners who were invited to the final class period; and an essay question included on the final examination.

The instructor also benefited from several opportunities for reflection, including ongoing feedback received from the several teams that were established, occasional feedback received from our community partners, the team reports on which a substantial portion of the students’ grades would be based, responses to an essay question on the final examination, and class evaluations completed by students at the end of the semester. The drafting of this article and a presentation at an academic conference also provided opportunities for reflection.

Celebration

The final step of the process recommended by Duckenfield and Swanson (1992) is celebration. In fact, the students did well in all of their assignments. Given the heavy weight assigned to the service-learning project, the high grades assigned at the close of the semester can appropriately be viewed as a cause for celebration.

A revised indicators report was released to great fanfare at a well-attended meeting of the Quality of Life Council in June 2003. The 98-page report included 185 graphs and charts organized into 11 policy domains. It also included a number of public policy recommendations that have been well received in the community. (A full copy of the report is available at www.nwiqlc.org.) The report was released as a draft, and further community comment was solicited. More
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than 50 comments, reviews, and recommendations were received, and a substantial revision of the draft was completed with the assistance of a former student, whose services were made available for this purpose by the local workforce planning agency. Some editing was required to ensure a consistent work product. Key portions of the students’ work, including chapters pertaining to economic development, the environment, and public safety, required few substantial changes.

The students’ contributions to the report were fully acknowledged in the introduction and their names were cited. Moreover, the region’s two leading newspapers published front-page stories about the report and followed up with positive editorials within days of its release. The revised indicators report is now being used to supplement the Data Game text in introductory statistics classes conducted in the MPA program. Here again, the students’ contributions are routinely acknowledged. All in all, the considerable fanfare generated by the report and its ongoing usefulness should be viewed as twin causes for celebration among the students and the community partners who participated in the project.

Assessment

Kerrissa Heffernan (2001) suggests that four questions be asked and answered in assessing a service-learning project. First, does the service component meet a public need or serve as a public good? In this instance, the answer is clearly yes. A number of organizations, including three United Way organizations, two community foundations, a newly created Local Government Academy, and a three-county council of governments have incorporated elements of the report into their various planning processes. On several occasions, the policy recommendations included in the report have been cited in editorials in the region’s leading newspapers. The Quality of Life Council’s agenda is now based on priorities articulated in the report. The presidents and chancellors of Northwest Indiana’s six universities and colleges sponsor the Council and rotate its chairmanship on an annual basis; they have adopted the recommendations advanced in the indicators report as a shared public policy agenda. Finally, Leadership Northwest Indiana, a nonprofit organization that promotes the development of emerging leaders in two counties, has revised its curriculum to bring it into line with the Council’s indicators report.

More specifically, in response to a recommendation pointing to the need for a comprehensive epidemiological study, the region’s three United Way organizations secured a grant to underwrite a project of this kind. Moreover, substantial funding has been secured to address priorities identified in the study. Two community foundations in Lake County allocated $50,000 in support of a dramatic expansion in the Parents-as-Teachers program in response to another recommendation. The final report also endorsed enhanced funding for Lake’s County Regional Transportation Authority. In 2005, legislation to that effect was passed in the Indiana General Assembly.
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The case, however, should not be overstated. Cause-and-effect relationships can be difficult to establish in situations of this kind; progress on each of these several fronts has been promoted in recent years by a number of decision-makers who are active on the region’s public policy stage. Nevertheless, it is clear that the Council’s indicators report has had a positive impact in Northwest Indiana. A valuable contribution has been made to ongoing discussions on a broad range of issues.

Second, does the course provide a mechanism that encourages and enables students to link their service experience to course content and to reflect on why the service is important? As is noted above, a considerable amount of class time was devoted to the integration of traditional course content and local and regional policy issues. It would be difficult to underestimate the value engendered by these discussions on shared and topic-specific challenges the project teams faced. Moreover, the instructor had ample opportunity to reinforce the connection between the students’ work and the needs of the community.

That said, the students were clearly challenged by the project. They were asked to make judgments about issues of real concern (the kind data to be gathered, the relative import of the data sets, their meaning, and the kinds of recommendations suggested). The class quickly recognized that their efforts could have real consequences, a not altogether comfortable realization. They understood that the service learning project represented more than an academic exercise or thought experiment. The in-class discussions that took place over the course of the semester reflected a growing appreciation for the importance of data and the need to approach its use in a responsible manner.

Further, feedback received from the participating students in the formal evaluations conducted at the close of the semester indicated that the learning objectives associated with the service-learning project were achieved. Eighty-four percent of the students reported that “group projects were helpful to understanding and comprehending the material”; and 94 percent reported that tests and other graded activities fairly reflected the subject matter of the class.” In all, 94 percent of the students concluded that “the course fulfilled the objectives described in the syllabus.” Reflections included in responses to the question posed on the final examination were equally positive. A typical response reads, “There are two lessons that I learned about gathering and interpreting data from the indicators project. First, a lot of work goes on behind the scene.... Finding a source can be a problem; summarizing the data can be difficult; and choosing a means for explaining the data to the public can be problematic. Second, it takes a lot of time to gather the information and find sources that have the information. It is not a quick and easy process.” Several opportunities to reflect on the project were afforded to the participating students, and the feedback received suggests that critical connections between the service learning project and our course objectives were made.

Heffernan’s third question addresses the value of reciprocity: Is everyone in the process—students, the instructor, the community partner served, and the com-
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Community as a whole—afforded the opportunity to benefit both as a teacher and a learner? The foregoing discussion suggests that students, the instructor, and the Quality of Life Council benefited from the project. It is less clear that our community partners profited, except perhaps through their ongoing participation in the efforts of the Quality of Life Council. Several of our partners remained intimately involved in their respective projects through the entire semester. Others were less helpful, and our efforts to produce an indicators report actually contributed to the surfacing of a latent conflict within one of our partner organizations. In hindsight, we should have employed a more formal mechanism for securing feedback from our community partners.

Finally, is the final work product presented to the community, and is the community afforded the opportunity for dialogue? As is noted above, the final report was released to the public as a draft and substantial comments were received as a result. A revised report was released in 2004.

That being said, Heffernan’s use of the term “dialogue” can be problematic. It can evoke different meanings for different scholars. The class did not participate in a deep level of introspection with community partners on the impact of policy decisions on individual life chances or the personal experience of meaning. Nevertheless, all of the participating students interacted with leaders in the community on several occasions. Some engaged in a significant way in deliberations involving complex issues and local and regional controversies of various kinds. It would be more appropriate, perhaps, to conclude that the community “was afforded the opportunity for ‘engagement,’” a notable achievement in its own right.

Next Steps

Although the service learning project and the course as a whole were judged to be successful, two adjustments were made when the class was next conducted during the fall 2003 semester. Most importantly, the presentation order of the content was changed. Although learning did not appear to suffer as a result of the rapid-fire coverage of several bivariate techniques, deferring this material to the last third of the semester provided little opportunity to reinforce lessons. Additionally, it added a great deal of stress to the end of the semester when students were attempting to bring their service-learning projects to a conclusion while struggling, at the same time, to master the most complex material presented over the course of the semester.

The new order of presentation provides for the material pertaining to univariate and bivariate statistics to be introduced prior to the midterm examination. This material is then reinforced with quizzes and several assignments through the second half of the semester. Class time in the second half of the semester, however, is devoted for the most part to the Data Game text, which is now supplemented by the indicators report. The final examination includes a substantial reprise of the kinds of univariate and bivariate statistical problems included in the midterm ex-
amination. Our preliminary assessment of this alternative approach suggests that the stress levels some students experienced in the fall 2002 semester were significantly reduced and that the opportunity to reinforce learning acquired through the first half of the semester resulted in a higher level of content mastery.

The second change involves the nature of the service-learning assignment. The Quality of Life Council will not need another substantial revision of its indicators report for several years. In the fall 2003 semester, we elected instead to establish partnerships with several nonprofit and civic organizations that had expressed the need to develop survey instruments of one kind or another. A supplemental text pertaining to survey techniques was identified and incorporated into the class. The procedure developed in the fall 2002 semester was essentially retained, however. Teams were assigned to work with community partners in developing a work product they could then use to secure data from a target audience. The final work product, in this instance, included a survey instrument and a detailed memorandum describing the instrument, the research design that should be used in administering the survey, and the analytic techniques that should be employed. Again, our assessment of this project suggests that the positive outcomes achieved through the indicators initiative can be realized through a variety of service-learning projects.

Like Jody Fitzpatrick (2000) and others, we believe that MPA statistics courses can and should be conducted in a manner that is more meaningful to students. Whereas Fitzpatrick recommends the assignment of readings of various kinds, we focused on the role that service learning projects can play in pursuing this goal. Although service learning is rarely employed in statistics courses, this analysis suggests that it can, in fact, contribute in a significant way to the achievement of critical learning objectives. Like the extensive reading of statistical reports and analyses, service learning may thus represent an alternative to the more conventional pedagogies now employed in statistics courses offered in MPA programs.

**Note**

1. The Quality of Life Council was created in September 1997 following two years of discussion and planning. The Council includes approximately 100 leaders from the business community, local and state government, academia, the environmental community, the religious community, and labor. Individual members of the Council are selected based on their organizational or institutional affiliation and their demonstrated leadership in the community. The presidents and chancellors of the six institutions of higher learning in Northwest Indiana serve as the Council’s sponsors and serve as chairpersons on a rotating basis. I serve as the part-time executive director of the organization.

The Quality of Life Council focuses on agenda setting. Over the course of several years, it has addressed a broad set of public policy concerns in its quarterly meeting, including public transportation, the challenge of substance abuse, affordable housing, sprawl and land use planning, K-12 education, governmental ethics, and economic development. The Council also publishes two newsletters and produces a monthly cable television show. Although it has limited its focus to agenda setting, the Council has contributed in a significant way to the creation of several organizations that have pursued the Council’s policy recommendations. This includes the Northwest
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Indiana Local Government Academy, which is housed at Indiana University Northwest; a Regional Transportation Authority; the Northwest Indiana Race Relations Council; and the Northwest Initiative, a public-private partnership that is focused on economic development. It has also spurred existing organizations, including the region’s council of governments, to address issues of concern to the Council.

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Organizational Leadership and the Challenges in Teaching It

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Abstract
Although the subject of administrative leadership is not new, the teaching of it in clearly defined classes has been uncommon until the last 10 to 15 years. Now, classes on administrative leadership are beginning to proliferate. This exploratory study looks at the characteristics of these classes to provide a profile of the types of classes offered and potential ideas for those launching such classes.

The academic field of organizational leadership studies is actually more than 100 years old (Bass, 1990), yet it was not until the 1990s that the field showed signs of substantial maturation. One indication of the field’s development was the variety of fundamentally different approaches used to analyze and explain this complex subject, such as transactional leadership (largely management-oriented theories such as situational, contingency, managerial grid, path-goal, LMX, normative-decision, etc.), transformational leadership (including charismatic), and distributed leadership (e.g., substitutes theory, self-leadership, Superleadership). These theoretical approaches were complemented by policy-oriented and community-based leadership models with names such as collaborative leadership, facilitative leadership, catalytic leadership, and grassroots leadership (see, for example, Heifetz, 1994; Chrislip and Larson, 1994; Svara, 1994; Luke, 1998; Henton, Melville, and Walesh, 1997). Another indication that the field was coming of age by the 1990s was an increase in attempts to integrate the various major schools of leadership (Bass and Avolio, 1990; Chemers, 1997; Hunt, 1996; Yukl, 1999).

Management classes have appeared in public administration-affairs curricula since the Training School for Public Service was established in 1911; it was later transferred to Syracuse and became the Maxwell School (Henry, 2003). True
organizational leadership classes, except for rare cases or short modules in classes devoted to other subjects, did not emerge until the 1990s. That is to say, classes that extensively focused on the teaching of mainstream theories of leadership (e.g., path-goal theory), as well as some of the competencies that leaders typically use (e.g., problem solving, team building, or strategic planning) were uncommon. Of course, leadership as a teaching subject is related, but not identical, to areas that long have been in public administration-affairs curricula: organization theory (e.g., design and process, group dynamics), ethics (e.g., philosophical foundations of leaders doing the right thing), and especially management (either narrowly focused on motivating/developing followers or more broadly focused on numerous technical operational issues such as operations planning, budgeting, HRM, etc.).

Classes with extensive treatments of the study and practice of leadership are also a relatively new phenomenon in business curricula. One of the first books used was Stogdill’s *Handbook of Leadership* (1974). The first widely-used textbook was Gary Yukl’s *Leadership in Organizations* (1981). Although leadership classes are now relatively common in business curricula, they are not nearly as common in public administration programs. Indeed, the earliest cases of classes using the nomenclature “leadership” in their titles in public affairs programs generally focused on political governance or policy analysis rather than on organizational leadership.

This study seeks to examine the status of the teaching of organizational leadership, using the mainstream perspective. The article will begin with the scope of study and methodology used to gather and analyze data. Six questions frame the discussion. First, what are instructors who teach organizational leadership trying to achieve? Second, do such instructors tend to use a unitary or eclectic theoretical framework in their classes? Third, what textbooks and materials do instructors most commonly use? Fourth, what instructional methods are used, and which ones do faculty teaching leadership classes find work particularly well? Fifth, what are the challenges in teaching classes on organizational leadership? And finally, do those teaching organizational leadership classes find that gaps exist in the literature or teaching materials?

**Scope of Study and Methodology Used**

Although we made a strong attempt to collect and analyze a representative sample, it is not a scientific sample. To survey a manageable number of courses teaching organizational leadership in public administration and affairs programs, the initial review was first limited to those identified in the most recent *U.S. News and World Report* (2004) listing. This listing includes 104 schools of public administration that tend to be—on average—larger and more likely to be free-standing. It is assumed that such programs would be likely to have a significantly
higher incidence of organizational leadership classes because of the opportunity for a greater array of classes in their curricula.

The operational definition of an organizational leadership class was that at least 50 percent of the curriculum focused on topics relatively identifiable as a theory or topic in the mainstream organizational literature. A number of classes reviewed were excluded because their dominant focus was organizational theory and behavior, public management, ethics, policy analysis, political governance, or a review of the entire field of public administration. For example, it is relatively typical in introductory textbooks and textbooks on organization theory to include a chapter on leadership; nonetheless these classes were excluded as not meeting the “critical mass” requirement. There were a handful of leadership classes that were excluded because they were almost exclusively about political leadership. A handful of classes that were nearly evenly divided into leadership and ethics, or leadership and organizational theory, were included.

First, the Web sites of all 104 programs were reviewed to identify leadership classes. Titles and course descriptions were analyzed for a preliminary assessment of the appropriateness of the classes for the study. Next, all 104 programs were contacted by mail. For programs that appeared to have appropriate classes, we asked the chair or director to pass a survey on to the person teaching the specified class(es). In the case of programs that appeared not to have an appropriate class, the letter indicated that we were unable to identify a specific class and asked for verification or correction. Of the 104 programs in the population examined, 43 fit our criteria. Of those programs, we were able to get either a completed survey form, a syllabus, or both, in 30 cases.

In nearly all cases these classes were electives. A handful of classes that qualified as exceptions under the guidelines were found at the University of Minnesota (midcareer master’s program), the University of North Carolina, the Bush School at Texas A & M, and Florida International University.

Because the study is from the experts in the field and the quality of comments and insights was very high, quotations are used extensively in this article. To provide some anonymity, we name institutional affiliations rather than the respondent. Because of the relatively small size of the sample, we have not generally provided percentages but have indicated whether trends were strong or moderate, as well as indicated sentiments that were less commonly expressed (but nonetheless interesting observations).

**What Are Instructors Who Teach Organizational Leadership Trying to Achieve?**

What are the typical course goals or desired learning outcomes? The preponderance of all syllabi indicated four major goals, although some only attempted to deal with three.
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A nearly universal goal was to understand the major theories and research in organizational leadership. This was done primarily through textbooks, readings, and lecture. Some typical statements include the following: “Students will become very well informed in leadership theory and research, with a knowledge of all prominent theories of leadership and their current status in the field, and a knowledge of related research methods and results” (University of Georgia); or learn about leadership through “the scientific standpoint” (ASU); or “to increase your literacy of the study of leadership” (Naval Postgraduate School). However, it was striking that most instructors did not want to teach classes primarily devoted to theory, as might be more common in organizational theory or ethics courses.

A second goal was to understand leaders’ roles, especially their ethical responsibilities in public organizations and society. Indeed, it was rare for a class not to emphasize ethics and responsibility very prominently; nearly half of the syllabi treated leadership and ethics essentially as equal topics in one fashion or another. Some typical comments are “think critically about the moral responsibilities and ethical dilemmas facing today’s leaders” (Georgetown); “understand how policy entrepreneurs develop and manage ideas for achieving the common good” (University of Minnesota); “understand the ‘five principles fundamental to leadership: respect, service, justice, honesty, and community’” (FSU); “think systematically about some of the ‘big questions’ concerning public leadership and administration in political systems that make public policies through democratic institutions” (Texas A & M); “generalizations will be drawn [by students] about how professions shape ethical leadership practices today within both the public and non-profit sectors” (University of Colorado–Denver); “to ask you to think about where leadership goes wrong” (Naval Postgraduate School).

A third, nearly universal goal was to develop students’ practical knowledge, skills, and abilities through class discussions and especially through a wide variety of activities. Some typical comments on syllabi were “appreciate the complexity of leadership skills” (Purdue); “[t]he art of leadership focuses on the creative and artistic way in which leaders utilize concepts of time, space, and energy in their ‘performance’ and on such elements of leadership development as concentration, improvisation, aesthetics, expression and communication, discipline and practice” (ASU); “being able to critique leadership and other theories and models—what makes sense and would work for them” (Georgia State).

A final goal that was very common but not quite as universal as the others was to help students define and refine their personal leadership style. What framework might work for students and how they could increase their self-reflection and personal enlightenment were key elements in this goal. Methods here differed from those used in other goals; in classes in which personal leadership improvement was emphasized students tended to be required to either keep journals, participate in leadership assessment exercises, and/or take psychological assessments such as MBTI or values profiles. Typical comments for this goal were, “understand
your current strengths and weaknesses as a leader and as a follower, and then develop your own personal approach to the practice of leadership” (University of Texas–Austin); “conduct a leadership self-assessment that will provide you with an action plan to implement in your job or work-life” (Virginia Commonwealth); “distinguish between public and private sector leadership” (California State Long Beach). At American University and the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill, a strong emphasis is placed on learning how to learn with “statements of learning.”

Some instructors did express goals for additional outcomes. For example, many instructors have a special interest or topic that they wanted to be sure to emphasize. At the University of Georgia, students must “learn about leadership development programs.” When Michael Dukakis teaches at Northeastern, he admonishes that “administrators need the political skills necessary to deal with the political and institutional environment” (which is also an emphasis at Harvard). “Building a learning community” is a desired learning objective at the University of Minnesota; better communication skills through presentations and writing is common at many; at FIU, decision making is a special focus. In a number of cases there was a special focus on organizational change as a critical executive competency; at the University of Texas–Austin an additional class is devoted to the subject.

DO INSTRUCTORS USE A UNITARY OR ECLECTIC THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK IN THEIR CLASSES?

Another interesting question has to do with whether or not an instructor uses one dominant model of leadership or purposely exposes students to many models. The virtue of a single model is focus and depth; students can examine the specific competencies required by a model and practice them extensively. The virtue of an eclectic approach is that it more accurately reflects the field of study, and different models tend to provide a more sophisticated understanding of this complex subject.

The majority of instructors used an eclectic approach, as witnessed by the use of generalist texts, such as Northouse or Yukl, which self-consciously introduce all major models, and/or a large array of eclectic readings. Many instructors asserted that exposure to multiple models was a key element of their strategy.

A small minority used only a single model in the class. A few appeared to rely nearly exclusively on a transformational model, because the main text was Kouzes and Posner. A couple of classes focused heavily on leaders’ roles and responsibilities; they were as much classes about ethics as leadership. Such classes tended to rely heavily on servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) or stewardship (Terry, 1995). In a few cases, the classes honed in on a specific style of leadership, such as facilitative leadership (e.g., Crislip and Larson) or adaptive leadership (e.g., Heifetz). In at least one case, a program was able to have both a generalist leadership class and a leadership class focusing on change management (University of Texas).
Generalizing for clarity, true leadership classes (as opposed to classes primarily focused on management or organization theory) tend to downplay transactional approaches and instead emphasize transformational approaches. Trait theory often has a more prominent role than it does in the literature, because instructors find it a useful tool in teaching students self-knowledge. Contingency approaches predominate, but some universalist approaches creep back in through normative assertions about either the public interest or the ideal traits of public sector leaders.

**What materials do instructors use to achieve their desired learning outcomes?**

In the small sample of 30 classes, only three books were used as a primary text in three or more classes. The most popular was Northouse’s *Leadership Theory and Practice* (2001). This book is organized by theoretical schools of thought and is simple enough for undergraduates, yet substantial enough to be a good graduate-level primer as well. It was also occasionally used as a supplementary text. Kouzes and Posner’s *The Leadership Challenge: How to Get Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations* (1987) was the second most popular textbook. It emphasizes five commitments (Challenging the Process, Inspiring a Shared Vision, Enabling Others to Act, Modeling the Way, and Encouraging the Heart) that are then elaborated into 30 competencies (practices). It is essentially an applied transformational model emphasizing the traditional people-oriented and organizationally oriented skills. John W. Gardner’s eminently readable *On Leadership* (1990) provides an excellent example of the wisdom-based, rather than the theory-based, approach. Approximately one-half of the respondents used at least one of these texts.

Many books were used as primary or secondary texts by just a few instructors. They included Bolman and Deal (*Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership*), Covey (*The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*), Johnson (*Meeting the Ethical Challenge of Leadership: Casting Light or Shadow*), Riccucci (*Unsung Heroes: Federal Executives Making a Difference*), and Wren (*The Leaders’ Companion: Insights on Leadership Through the Ages*). Although a number of instructors used articles or course packs, the array of materials was remarkably nonduplicative. In sum, the use of materials was far more distinctive for its variety than its reliance on a small cluster of texts/materials.

**What Methods Are Commonly Used and Which Ones Work Particularly Well?**

Traditional methods—readings, types of lecture, papers, tests, and participation—were the mainstay of classes, as one would expect. However, less commonly used methods—such as case analysis, films, exercises and activities, survey feedback instruments, journals, and individual conferences—were also common.

As discussed above, most classes relied on two or three books and/or a course pack of articles. In addition to traditional instructor lectures, a number of
instructors indicated the use of guest lectures. American University, with its proximity to the nation’s capital, was an exceptional example; it is able to entice nationally famous speakers. Many instructors found ways to have students present class material, ranging from assigning the weekly topics, to using groups to introduce the materials, to requiring students to do the wrap-up for each class (University of Minnesota). As would be expected, the range of papers required was wide and nearly universal. Numerous instructors assigned traditional term papers or a series of short papers, case analysis papers, book reports, annotated bibliographies, and various types of reaction papers. Particularly interesting were action-based projects reflecting “live” data that the students themselves must organize using the theoretical constructs provided by the class (e.g., field studies, personal cases, analytic “biographies,” analysis of a student’s current theory of leadership, or a policy memorandum to a named public manager). Few classes had both a traditional final and midterm (frequently substituting a paper for the final), and a few had no test at all. Participation was always strongly encouraged and relatively heavily weighted, especially in activity-focused classes. The most prominent case was a course at Arizona State, in which the instructor stated that the bulk “of your grade will be based on the quality of your participation in the class (including the first short paper), and especially your demonstrated growth in leadership.”

The use of case analysis was quite common across the classes examined. Several instructors made a creative use of in-class films as “shared cases.” One instructor (University of Colorado–Denver) also had the students maintain a film journal in which they would analyze the leadership elements in a wide array of films. A number of the instructors who had been teaching a leadership class for a while and who strongly believe in the adage “the mediocre teacher tells, the good teacher explains, and the superior teacher demonstrates,” had built up a variety of class exercises and activities. Some instructors used role plays and short simulations (with one instructor videotaping the interaction), and many used some sort of 360-degree leadership assessments (sometimes substituting classmates for subordinates and peers) as well as personality profiles and values assessments. At least three instructors had students keep a leadership journal, and generally required the ability to observe the entire document but only reviewing a few entries that the writer selected. One dedicated instructor (who had the students go through a substantial battery of activities and assessments) required individual conferences to help students integrate the experiences on a personal level (University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill).

A starkly different picture emerges, however, when instructors are asked about the most successful elements. Traditional methods take the back seat to the nontraditional methods. As expected, one would not expect tests and readings to be selected as highlights in classes. Papers tend to be mentioned when they are related to written team projects and personal reflection. Lecture formats were
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mentioned when the students’ presentation contribution was the focus of the comment. Only participation (class discussion) is frequently mentioned among the traditional methods. Of course, it must also be remembered that the traditional methods emphasize basic coverage of materials and accountability, whereas the nontraditional methods emphasize personal and in-depth opportunities for learning.

Case analysis was the most mentioned method, followed closely by class discussions. Activities and roles plays were next followed by group projects. Journals were not frequently mentioned, but were always mentioned by those who used them. Somewhat surprisingly, personal assessment activities were not prominent among the most successful methods mentioned.

What Are the Challenges in Teaching Leadership?

Three major challenges emerged with nearly equal consistency. The first was the challenge of connecting and linking theory and practice. When asked to identify challenges, typical comments included the difficulty of linking theory and practical professional experiences and of converting theory to practice. One instructor discussed the challenge of “developing a full appreciation for the knowledge and skills necessary at the personal, interpersonal, and group levels that will enhance individual and organizational effectiveness” (Texas A & M). The instructor at FIU asserted that it was critical to give “students the leadership mechanics. We shouldn’t be teaching students about leadership theory as much as giving them the tools to be leaders.”

Another commonly mentioned challenge was that current leadership lacks an overarching theory and tends to be niche oriented. As one instructor said, the challenge was “the general inconclusiveness of the leadership literature and the underdevelopment of the topic in public administration” (University of Georgia). Agreeing, an instructor at Iowa State noted that there was so much literature yet most of it was directed at the private sector. Another instructor echoed this, complaining about the “lack of leadership texts on public sector leadership” (San Francisco State). One instructor commented on the difficulty of “relating leadership to other organizational theories” (Georgia State), while another at Texas A & M aptly noted the challenge of “simultaneously urging skepticism of models that claim to provide ‘the right way to lead’ and careful attention to useful insights that such models can provide.”

The third commonly mentioned challenge was the lack of a sufficient number of case studies that assist in the bridging of theory and practice. Although some cases existed, they often did not provide good vehicles for illustrating the various leadership theories under study. Several mentioned the particular challenge of finding cases that pertained to either a global context or that emphasized diversity.

Some other challenges included “materials with international perspective lacking” (Syracuse); “have students seriously consider perspectives other than their
own” (George Washington); and, similarly, “trying to get students to envision other models and methods for leading” (California State Long Beach). Several instructors mentioned the popularity of the classes becoming a problem, because larger class sizes hampered ideal instruction, and several mentioned the heterogeneity of the students “from 19 years old to 50 who are veteran executives” (University of Missouri–St. Louis). One instructor mentioned the challenge of essentially trying to cover two topics simultaneously, which seemed implicit in a number of cases in which either ethics or organizational behavior were expected to be a substantial part of the syllabus as well.

Are There Gaps in the Literature?

There were relatively different perceptions about the gaps in the literature. Several people were content with the state of the literature for teaching their courses. Most, however, had some observations about areas that they would like to see strengthened. One group was interested in more material with a practical and applied perspective, e.g., “mainly integration of theory and practice” (Georgia State). This tied in with several who felt there needed to be more “cases on middle level bureaucrats and ordinary citizens” (Georgetown) and “more practitioners to write cases” (Rutgers Newark).

A number of instructors commented on particular gaps in the public administration leadership literature. Some complained about the lack of an overarching framework: “too much concentration on mini-theories of internal organizational leadership. Not enough PA scholarship on political leadership and societal leadership” (University of Georgia). Two instructors at Texas A & M had similar comments about the “need for more theoretically grounded research necessary for establishing leadership studies as a recognized academic subfield relevant for schools of public and international affairs.” Several commentators also wanted a clearer “presentation on the differences between public and private organizational leadership. There is plenty on the similarities” (University of Maryland–College Park). Finally, a few instructors complained about the need for “non-U.S. cases” (Syracuse) and more “attention to leadership by and among people and organizations that come from communities of color, that bridge diverse communities, and that come from outside the U.S.” (University of Minnesota).

Conclusion

A summary of the general findings can be found on the following page. Many areas of the teaching of organizational leadership demonstrated relatively strong trends or high consistency: learning objectives, the use of an “eclectic” approach, the particular effectiveness of nontraditional methods as well as robust class discussions, and the major challenges in teaching organizational leadership. In other areas less consensus was exhibited; in particular, the use of textbooks/articles and the identification of the gaps in the literature.
Summary of Major Findings

- Only 41% of those reviewed (n=104) had classes on organizational leadership and it is likely that the percentage would be lower when including smaller programs less represented in the surveyed sample. Only a handful of programs integrated organizational leadership classes in the core of their program.
- There was a high degree of consistency among desired learning objectives. The four major objectives were:
  - To understand the major theories and research in organizational leadership,
  - To understand leaders' roles, especially their ethical responsibilities in public organizations and society,
  - To develop practical knowledge, skills, and abilities of students,
  - To help students define and refine their personal leadership style.
- Although a few instructors used a single model or emphasized one theoretical framework strongly such as transformational leadership, the overwhelming majority of instructors provided a wide array of theories or an eclectic approach.
- There is great heterogeneity in the use of books and articles. Only half the respondents shared one of the top three textbooks in common.
- There seemed to be more use of nontraditional methods—e.g., case analysis, films, in-class exercises and activities, survey feedback instruments, and journals—than is common for many classes. Furthermore, there was a strong tendency to identify these methods as the most successful or effective. Case analysis and class discussions were singled out more frequently than other methods as most effective.
- The three major challenges in teaching organizational leadership classes were:
  - connecting and linking theory and practice,
  - the lack of an overarching theory or framework, and
  - the lack of a sufficient number of case studies.
- There was less agreement on the gaps in the literature. A few did not feel that significant gaps existed. Most had one or two specific concerns including some who wanted more applied or practical materials, some who wanted better macro-theory, some who wanted better distinctions among the types of leadership exhibited in the different sectors, some who wanted more empirically testable public administration theories, and some who wanted more case studies.

Overall the authors were extremely impressed with the dedication, creativity, and rigor of the syllabi examined, as well as the insights expressed in the surveys. Indeed, not one respondent complained about having to teach the class while many said it was their favorite class to teach. Because of the enormous literature and variety of theoretical perspectives, the syllabi were very different despite a high consistency among class goals. Leadership may be a fun class to teach, but its complexity and breadth does not make it an easy one. Instructors must make tough decisions about what theoretical aspects to emphasize, how to get students to personally relate to the material, and what specific concrete skills to focus on (if any).
Finally, it seems the field has a wonderful opportunity to expand and improve in this area. Students in public administration programs are more likely to have organizational leadership positions, and therefore professional programs should think seriously about how they groom their leaders. Classes in organizational leadership not only ensure that students are broadly exposed to the theoretical foundations of the field (more than the single chapter in an introductory or organizational behavior textbook) but also that they become self-conscious about their personal development as leaders. More programs should consider placing leadership in the curriculum, not only as an elective, but in the core. Classes with a strong leadership focus can be at the beginning of the program, a part of a sequence of classes starting with organizational behavior and building organizational leadership on that foundation, or a capstone experience.

**References**


Montgomery (Monty) Van Wart is a professor and chair at the University of California State University—San Bernardino. Van Wart’s seven books include *The Dynamics of Leadership: Theory and Practice* (M.E. Sharpe, 2005). His research areas...
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Using Cases to Teach Financial Management Skills in MPA Programs

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Abstract

Prior research has called for an increase and more rigorous use of the case method in public administration education. However, the pedagogical literature contains very little on how cases are being used in master of public administration (MPA) programs to teach financial management skills. This article presents major lessons learned from using the case method within the context of active learning to teach an elective on advanced budgeting and financial analysis in the MPA program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, including the willingness of instructors to write or modify cases to ensure that data analysis is an essential part of the management dilemma. Its purpose is to encourage more instructors to use the case method of instruction and to write local government budgeting and financial management cases.

The teaching profession of public affairs education generally agrees that financial management skills are fundamental for students who are pursuing a graduate degree in public administration. As stated in the accreditation guidelines of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration, the common curriculum must enhance the student’s values, knowledge, and skills in the processes of public budgeting and finance. Graduate programs in public administration, however, possess autonomy on what financial management skills to teach and on how to teach them.

We do know from curriculum surveys that certain financial management skills receive more instructional coverage than others (Rivenbark, 2001). For example, cost-benefit analysis, performance measurement, and revenue forecasting tend to receive extensive coverage as compared to benchmarking, financial condition analysis, and cost accounting. We also know that the expansion of public policy training in the area of public management has increased the use of case teach-
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ing in public administration education, building on the notion that cases help students take ownership of knowledge and learn how to apply it (Robyn, 1998). What we don’t know is how cases are being used in the classroom for developing financial management skills among master of public administration (MPA) students.

I teach the core course in public budgeting and financial management for the MPA program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, relying primarily on the pedagogical format of lecture and discussion to convey information on budget development, implementation, and evaluation. When our students petitioned the MPA director during summer 2004 for an elective on advanced budgeting and financial analysis in local government, I agreed to teach the course using the case method of instruction.

I made this decision because cases allow me to distinguish the elective course from the core course simply on the pedagogical format; cases allow me to focus on skill development rather than conveying cognitive knowledge, which is the purpose of the case method; and cases are readily available from sources like the Electronic Hallway administered by the Evans School of Public Affairs at the University of Washington, the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, and the International City/County Management Association.

This article presents the major lessons learned from using the case method within the context of active learning to teach my elective course, with the goal of encouraging more instructors to write and use cases involving local government budgeting and financial management. It also responds to the limited amount of information in the pedagogical literature on how cases are being used in the classroom to develop financial management skills among MPA students. I begin with a brief overview of the case method and with how I structured the course to create an active learning environment and to overcome one of the shortcomings of the case method—the limited amount of emphasis placed on theory. I then present the major lessons learned, including the willingness of instructors to write and modify cases for teaching financial management skills in local government.

CASE METHOD

To convey information to MPA students, instructors commonly use the pedagogical format of lecture and discussion, which often includes subject matters of taxation policy, budgeting techniques, and capital planning for courses on public budgeting and financial management. Exams, research papers, and applied projects are then used to ensure that students comprehend the fundamental themes of the course.

Lecture and discussion are efficient teaching methods for presenting the major scholars of the field, the theories and principles that have evolved over time, and the current techniques used in the applied setting. The case method, however, is preferred to lecture and discussion for certain graduate courses. This is especially
true when the teaching goal is skill development rather than the transmission of facts (Gilmore and Schall, 1996).

The pedagogical literature contains slightly different definitions of cases. In the simplest terms, a case is an account of circumstances in which a public official must make a decision (Winston, 2000). Good cases always contain a problem, requiring students to analyze ambiguous policy and managerial situations, make recommendations to solve the problem, and defend their recommendations with formal presentations, with writing assignments, and during classroom discussions (Borins, 1990). Good cases designed to build financial management skills also contain an analytical component, requiring students to analyze and draw conclusions from financial data to support their recommendations.

Robyn (1998) called for an increase in and more rigorous use of the case method in public administration education, suggesting that cases help fill an important gap in the education of students training for public service. As she concluded, cases make clear just how complicated the working environment is. But while she promoted the case method for developing skills through generalizations, active participation, and repetition, she also acknowledged that cases can decrease the student’s exposure to theoretical concepts and can displace field projects for first-hand experience in public administration.

Course Structure

I teach advanced budgeting and financial analysis in local government as a half-semester course, which is based on approximately eight weeks. Half-semester courses are very popular with our MPA students, giving them more course variety and more specialization in selected areas. I do not require an applied project for first-hand field experience, given the short period. I do, however, conduct lectures on topics related to the case studies during the half-semester to specifically overcome the criticism that cases are an inefficient teaching method for providing a systematic, abstract treatment of theoretical concepts and principles (Robyn, 1998; Windsor and Greanias, 1983).

Table 1 contains the case cycle that I created for introducing and managing cases during the half-semester course on advanced budgeting and financial analysis in local government. The cycle is repeated four times, responding to the number of required cases for the course. My case cycle deviates, however, from a passive learning environment in which an instructor introduces a financial management skill, presents and explains examples of its use, and requires students to apply it with a case or an exercise. This form of learning is focused more on the mechanics of the skill rather than on the skill’s application to an ambiguous situation.

The case cycle shown in Table 1 is designed to create an active learning environment in order to promote and reward creative thinking among students. Students are introduced to the case during class one of the cycle, which includes the critical problem and the case objectives. For example, I wrote a case to address...
the financial management skills of interpreting financial statements, measuring fiscal strength with ratio analysis, and identifying financing strategies for capital projects. The management dilemma involves the use of fund balance for financing an immediate project in the downtown area of the city of High Point, North Carolina, as promoted by the mayor. However, the ratio of fund balance as a percentage of expenditures was below the fund balance policy of 20 percent, which was administratively adopted rather than adopted by resolution.

The case objectives require students to analyze the current financial condition of the City of High Point using its fiscal-year-ended financial statements and the 10-point test developed from the Government Finance Officers Association’s financial indicators database (Brown, 1993); to explore why certain ratios rank in the below-average quartile; and to address the possibility of using tax increment financing for downtown revitalization. Students are not limited to the case objectives when analyzing the various components of the case and are encouraged to discover other approaches and techniques, thus emulating an actual working environment.

Classes two and three of the cycle are used to lecture on selected financial management skills and on theoretical and practical concepts related to the case. For example, pay-as-you-go financing, intergenerational equity, bond rating factors, and quadrants of the balanced scorecard are covered in conjunction with the case involving the city of High Point. Another important aspect of classes two and three is giving students the opportunity to engage in brainstorming activities on possible approaches and techniques to analyze the case. My role as an instructor is to facilitate the conversation, to promote an active learning, and to provide ongoing technical support; for example, responding to questions on interpreting financial statements and on the mechanics of tax increment financing.

Table 1. Case Cycle for Course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class 1</td>
<td>Introduce case</td>
<td>Present the critical problem faced by the public official and the objectives of the case.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 2</td>
<td>Lecture and technical support</td>
<td>Lecture on financial management skills and related case topics and provide ongoing technical support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 3</td>
<td>Lecture and technical support</td>
<td>Lecture on financial management skills and related case topics and provide ongoing technical support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class 4</td>
<td>Discuss case</td>
<td>Discuss how students analyzed the problem, including their recommendations for a solution.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Class four of the cycle is an open discussion in which students present the approaches and techniques they used to analyze the case, the findings of their analyses, and the recommendations they identified for solution. The case objectives are used to guide the discussion, concluding with the critical problem of the case. Students are required to turn in, at the end of class four, a two-page written memorandum that contains the management dilemma, the methodology and results of the analysis, and the recommendations based on interpreting the results. The memorandum is concluded with a section on next steps, which requires students to discuss how the recommendations will be implemented. Each student’s grade is based on the four written assignments and their class participation, with creativity playing a major role in the grading process.

LESSONS LEARNED

The observations presented in this section are based on course evaluations, on specific conversations with individual students, and on my own reflections from teaching a case-based course from an active learning approach. I offer four lessons learned for consideration by MPA instructors who are considering the case method as a pedagogical approach for developing financial management skills among MPA students.

The first lesson learned, which is the most critical when using the case approach to teach financial management skills in local government, is the willingness to write or modify cases. One of the first hurdles an instructor will face is finding cases in the subject area of local government budgeting and financial management that contain a strong financial analysis component. The cases that are available focus primarily on policy or management decisions rather than decisions that must be supported with financial analysis. In other words, students are not necessarily required to analyze the financial data in order to diagnose the circumstances of the central problem. Instructors must be willing to write new cases or modify existing ones to ensure that data analysis is fundamental to the management dilemma.

Table 2 contains the four cases I require in advanced budgeting and financial analysis, including the specific financial management skills I introduce and whether I wrote or modified the case. The case on developing the tax base is from Managing Local Government Finance: Cases in Decision Making (Banovetz, 1996) and represents an excellent example of how I modified an existing case. The case involves expanding the tax base through annexation. It also contains four years of financial statements and cost-benefit information. However, the case as originally written does not require any form of analysis in order to address the decision problems.

Therefore, I modified the case so that students must analyze the financial data before making recommendations concerning the decision problems. First, they must disaggregate the revenues and expenditures in the financial statements by...
fund (general, special revenue, and enterprise). Second, they must determine if the municipality has a sufficient balance in the general fund to cash flow the annexation based on the cost-benefit analysis. Third, they must analyze the overall impact of the annexation using net present value. What makes this case so interesting is that the mayor supports a cost-benefit analysis that is different than the one supported by the city manager. Of course the financial results reveal contradictory outcomes that students must address in their recommendations, while navigating the current political environment.

The second lesson learned is the dual role of instruction, which requires an instructor to move constantly between case leader and case participant. The understanding of this lesson learned is absolutely critical for creating an active learning environment. As case leader, the instructor must present and explain the case to the students, provide lectures and technical support, and facilitate class discussions to ensure that students remain within the boundaries of the case. As a case participant, an instructor must engage in the conversation by offering recommendations and by allowing students to critique them. Moreover, instructors must defend their recommendations as case participant and not as case leader, which prevents the learning environment from becoming passive.

Cases are designed to be ambiguous, requiring students to think through policy and management dilemmas to which there is no one right answer. When instructors defend their recommendations from their leadership role rather than their participant role, students invariably assume that there is a correct answer, and their viewpoints become slanted toward the instructor’s solution to the problem. If this occurs, creativity is stymied, because students begin to think about the case from the instructor’s approach rather than creating their own roadmaps for solution. Another concern that should not be overlooked when the instructor is participating in the case is body language. When offering your opinions or

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Financial Management Skills</th>
<th>Wrote/Modified</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seven letters</td>
<td>Leadership; hierarch; communication; and performance budgeting.</td>
<td>Modified (Electronic Hallway)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downtown revitalization</td>
<td>Interpreting financial statements; financial condition analysis; and debt management.</td>
<td>Wrote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dilemma of fleet maintenance</td>
<td>Performance measurement; benchmarking; cost accounting; and position requests.</td>
<td>Wrote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing the tax base</td>
<td>Forecasting benefits and costs; net present value; and cash flow analysis.</td>
<td>Modified (Banovetz, 1996)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
receiving feedback on them, instructors should not allow their body language to take on the leadership role, which may communicate to students that you are not open to constructive criticism. A common way to alleviate this problem is to sit rather than stand when you are a case participant. The goal is to create a learning environment that encourages full class participation.

The third lesson learned is the development of professional writing, which responds to the premise that one of the most important skills that graduates can take to their jobs is the ability to write clearly and persuasively (Musso, Biller, and Myrtle, 2000). When I decided to teach this course, the primary focus was on expanding financial management skills among our MPA students. Since that time, I have a dual focus for the course: expanding the financial management and professional writing skills of our MPA students.

The utility of financial management case studies is the systematic process of thinking through scenarios by analyzing and interpreting data, which improves with repetition. The process continues, however, with documenting your findings and recommendations in writing, which also improves with repetition. Because students are not allowed to exceed the two-page memorandum requirement for each case, the focus is on expressing clear and important ideas in a limited amount of space. Based on course evaluations, the written assignments are an extremely important part of the course. As anecdotal evidence, I received an email from a former student who was offered a job (as a performance auditor) in a major metropolitan city. The job interview included a case and written assignment for the job finalists. My former student noted that the written assignments required in my elective were extremely instrumental in securing the job offer.

The fourth lesson learned is the importance of lecture and discussion. Creating a case cycle like the one presented in Table 1, which includes the pedagogical format of lecture and discussion for classes two and three, increases the richness of the course. Based on the course evaluations and on specific conversations with students, lectures clearly strengthen the effectiveness of the course by exposing students to new concepts in budgeting and financial management. The lectures also allow me to place each case within a theoretical and practical context of public administration.

The importance of lecture and discussion goes beyond the positive feedback from students and my ability to present new information. Each new class of students has its own identity, with its own range of professional experience and problem-solving skills, for example. Classes two and three give me the flexibility to change my lectures based on the needs of individual classes. For example, one class was extremely strong in using software packages to manage and analyze data. However, the class’s overall experience in local government was minimal. Therefore, I altered my lectures and spent more time on the various aspects of local government administration. This tactic also decreases the number of one-on-one meetings with students that would otherwise occur without this flexibility.
CONCLUSION

Using the case method to teach advanced budgeting and financial analysis in local government is very rewarding to me as an instructor in the MPA program. It required me to develop a new set of teaching skills, which is beneficial for teaching MPA students and for teaching public officials in the numerous training seminars offered by the Institute of Government (Harney and Krauskopf, 2003). It also required me to start building a collection of cases that specifically addresses the development of financial management skills in local government. And most importantly, I consistently receive excellent student feedback on course evaluations.

This article presents the lessons learned—willingness to write or modify cases, dual role of instruction, development of professional writing, and importance of lecture and discussion—from teaching advanced budgeting and financial analysis in local government with the case method. It also responds to the bifurcation in the pedagogical literature—which focuses either on what financial management skills receive instructional coverage (Rivenbark, 2001; Grizzle, 1985) or on using cases in general (Robyn, 1998; Borins, 1990). The teaching methodology presented in this article represents a modest step toward addressing how cases are actually being used in the classroom to teach financial management skills.

I encourage MPA instructors to embrace the case method for developing MPA students’ financial management skills and to write local government budgeting and financial management cases that require data analysis and interpretation, responding to the amount of emphasis being placed on data-driven decision making in public organizations. The pedagogical format of lecture and discussion will always play a role in MPA programs, given the importance of exposing students to an extensive body of knowledge in a limited amount of time (semester). The case methodology—especially when used in the context of active learning—represents an excellent pedagogical format that can expand the richness of MPA programs by increasing the analytical rigor in courses specifically designed for skill development.

NOTES

2. The MPA program is housed in the School of Government at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The School of Government also is home to the Institute of Government, which provides training, advisory, and research services to state and local government officials.
3. “Advanced” is used in the course title to denote that students are required to analyze ambiguous situations with no right answer, which is different from the core budgeting and financial management course that is primarily designed to convey knowledge. It also conveys that budgeting and financial management techniques are presented and discussed in much more detail as compared to the core course.

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4. Some cases involve the analysis and interpretation of performance and financial data. However, our MPA program offers an elective that specifically addresses performance management—Productivity Improvement in Local Government.

5. An unsystematic review of online syllabi revealed that cases are used in budgeting and financial management courses for MPA programs. However, they are often used as exercises to expand on certain material rather than used as the foundation for the course.

6. The 10-point test reveals that four ratios rank in the below-average quartile, including direct long-term debt per capita. This ratio places concern on issuing tax increment bonds for downtown revitalization. It also sets the stage for a discussion on defining direct debt for a municipality.

7. The amount of information provided on selected financial management skills is governed by what students have been exposed to in other courses. The burden of applying these skills is placed primarily on the students, which promotes active learning.

8. My students also enjoy using the basic tools in spreadsheet packages like Excel to analyze financial data; these tools are commonly used in local government for evaluation projects.

REFERENCES


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