Conversing about the MPA: An ASPA Report and a NASPAA Response


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Information for Contributors

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Welcome to the second issue of the *Journal of Public Affairs Education (JPAE)* to be edited at Arizona State University’s (ASU’s) School of Public Affairs. This issue begins with an important discourse for our fields. More than a year ago, Harvey White, then president of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA), requested that a task force consider the quality of the Master of Public Administration (MPA) — the core degree for the field of Public Administration. An illustrious team put together a report, which appears here (this report also appeared in a serialized form in *PA Times*). Among other things, the task force argues that (1) the core of the MPA has been lost in a welter of “MPA-related” degrees, (2) the U.S. Constitution must be the core of MPA education, and, most provocatively, (3) perhaps ASPA should create a process parallel to the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) accreditation process.

Also printed here is a response by NASPAA’s current vice president, Jeffrey Raffel. His response discusses the MPA-standards-revision process that NASPAA has engaged in for the last three years. He argues that the U.S. Constitution should be integral but that PA also should embrace MPAs in non-US countries, he reaffirms NASPAA’s mission-based approach to accreditation (which allows for degrees other than the MPA), and he invites ASPA to join NASPAA’s process by helping to define key MPA competencies and their measurement.

The ideas behind this interchange are already stirring debate. I attended a session at the 2009 ASPA conference in Florida where Nicholas Henry presented the task force report, with Harvey White, other taskforce members, and members of ASPA’s Section on Public Administration Education serving as discussants. NASPAA Executive Director Laurel McFarland attended this session, as did many others, and debate was lively. To my surprise, much of the conversation focused on divisions between Public Administration and related fields, such as Public Policy. The opinion I expressed at the meeting was that the important division — at least in the U.S. context — occurs due to the elevation of the private sector above the public and nonprofit sectors, and that it is important for our related fields to hang together, lest we hang separately.

If you haven’t had a chance to consider the issues raised about the excellence of the MPA and what direction it should take in the future—whether back to its historic core, forward to embrace extra-U.S. contexts and extra-PA fields, or something else—reading these articles is a great way to catch up on this crucial conversation for Public Administration and related fields.

The next two articles in this issue of *JPAE* — though not written specifically to do so — also address issues related to those emphasized in the task force report and the Raffel response. In particular, C. F. Abel argues that PA must have a signature pedagogy. As does the task force report, Abel focuses on the realities of work as a public administrator. He combines this concept with learning theory in order to argue that our signature pedagogy must be rich and
complex, and must incorporate technology, visual stimulation, immersion, and humor. Eric Austin also considers learning theory and key realities of the public administrator’s environment in his argument that technology-based distance education does not suffice to teach central skills of human interaction and non-verbal communication. While not opposed to computer-based courses, his analysis implies that, in our fields, students should not be able to take entire degree programs online.

The rest of the articles in this issue discuss less-central, but still important, facets of education in the fields of public administration, public policy, public affairs, and nonprofit management. While the trunk of our academic tree is crucial, we also want to keep the branches healthy, and these articles help with that task.

William Klay and Steven Maxwell point out that 21 million people work for government in the U.S. alone. Many of these people, especially at the street level, will not earn master's degrees of any sort. Community colleges could help meet the need for mass education in PA, but Klay and Maxwell report the results of their survey: at this point, community colleges barely scratch the surface. The authors go on to discuss the implications of this finding.

Walter Wymer and Sandra Mottner, both professors of marketing, also perform a survey of programs. Theirs examines the marketing content of programs offering degrees and certificates in Nonprofit Administration, and also assesses the program directors’ understandings of the many elements of marketing. They find an increase in the number of marketing courses and components taught in Nonprofit programs, but find an incomplete understanding of marketing's domain, especially among program directors with a background in PA.

Lin Ye, Jian Sun and Xiaochuan Wu point out that, between 1990 and 2000, China spent more than $13 million per year to train its own civil servants in highly developed countries. Increasingly, our programs host civil-service teams from outside the U.S. Based on their own successful program, Ye, Sun, and Wu discuss elements that can improve such programs. They especially recommend careful integration with the local governmental community.

Mark Rosentraub and David Swindell offer a community-based case that can help improve the teaching of economic development and economic impact analysis. They provide information from actual “dueling reports” on the benefits of a new stadium for the Dallas Cowboys, and show how boosters may incorrectly distinguish between new expenditures and expenditures that would occur anyway. Along the way, they define related terms with different meanings, and encourage our degree programs to do better in teaching our own students how to do — and how to explain — these types of analyses.

The last two articles also discuss better was of teaching specific types of courses. In the last article, N. Alexander Aguado urges use of the community itself as a classroom. He argues that even beginner-level research methods can be taught better if students are engaged in collecting original data from local government sources. Monica Cain, on the other hand, addresses herself to the problem of
teaching a broad, yet specialized, policy area (her article is on health policy, but environmental policy, science and technology policy, etc. also meet these criteria) to students from a variety of different backgrounds. Her solution is to start with an “economics boot camp” that teaches a basic foundation and undergirds the rest of the course.

Whether focusing on broad issues of the MPA’s core and its relationship to degrees such as the MPP, or on finer elements of our education enterprise, this issue continues JPAE’s tradition of providing articles of use and interest. As with the first issue of 2009, most of these articles were accepted by former editor Mario Rivera and his managing editor Nicholas Giannatasio. I extend continuing thanks to them, and to all those who give their passion and labor to improve education in our fields.

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Abstract

Understanding Excellence in Public Administration, the report of the Task Force on Educating for Excellence in the Master of Public Administration Degree of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA), has been received both well and controversially. Practitioners have responded warmly and positively to its serialization in PA Times. Most academics like it, although some have reservations, as they expressed during well-attended panels devoted to the report, which were held during the national conferences of NASPAA in 2008 and ASPA in 2009. Some of the report’s recommended actions, such as those that touch on accreditation, honest advertising, programmatic clarity, and core curricula, have spurred some debate. It is worth noting, therefore, that the Task Force members, though just five in number, are broadly representative of pertinent intellectual currents. The report
reveals strands of thinking that are held by constitutionalists and communalists; by technocrats and philosophers; by management scientists and political scientists; by public administrationists and public policy analysts; by those who push the hard-nosed techniques of the New Public Management and those who favor the soft-schnozzed values of the New Public Administration.

This report is a first step. It is up to the professionals and professors, who are ‘public administration,’ to take the next steps.

NOTE: In the interests of wide dissemination, a version of this report was also serialized in PA Times (Henry, Goodsell, Lynn, Stivers, & Wamsley, May 2008, pp. 15, 21; June 2009, pp. 21, 23; July 2008, p. 21).

Understanding Excellence in Public Administration

In the October, 2007, issue of PA Times, Harvey White, president of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA), pointed to “several disturbing developments … pushing public administration towards academic obfuscation” and “an increasing propensity to subvert MPA [Master of Public Administration degree] programs to prepare students for almost everything except careers in public administration. This trend suggests dreadful consequences for our profession” (White, 2007, p. 16).

President White asked the Task Force to reflect on the issue of how ASPA can best support excellence in programs for the profession of public administration. This charge, as the members of the Task Force interpreted it, required us to consider sources of the problem identified by President White, as they have developed over recent decades, in order to specify our view of the challenge to public administration education at this juncture, and to offer our understanding of “excellence” as the catalyst for a broad conversation, within the profession, regarding future education for public service careers.

Briefly summarized, we see the source of the problem as twofold. First, there is a proliferation of degree programs whose very richness and diversity of purpose and substance has tended to obscure the uniqueness of public administration as a career commitment and intellectual enterprise. The problem is that the development of a complex array of degrees and curricula (approximately 260 programs) has blurred the core mission of public administration, the MPA, and the values that ground it.

Second, public administration faculties and the university administrators to whom they report — especially those educated in academic disciplines — too
often fail to recognize that their mission is to provide professional education for public service, not to provide education and socialization in an academic discipline. Professional education is inherently multidisciplinary and involves both didactic and experiential instruction toward the goal of preparing graduates to practice their profession. The field of public administration is thus more akin to the nature of law, business, medicine, urban planning, social work, or public health than it is to a traditional academic discipline. For many mid-career students who already have academic and professional degrees, the MPA becomes a supplementary or supervening degree. Thus, for pre-career or mid-career students, the MPA and its values of public service provide a professional and intellectual center of gravity for the practice of public administration, which we believe must be revivified as the first step in advancing excellence in both the education and practice of public administration.

The Issues

In the nearly 100 years since professional training in public administration began, several degree programs have sprung up, in addition to the original master’s degree in public administration. (For a brief history of these developments, see Appendix A.) These include the master of public policy (MPP), master of management, and the master of public affairs (MPAff). The reasons for this profusion are intellectual, institutional, and driven in part by universities and programs searching for market niches. Taken as a whole, these overlapping, related — but different — degrees are an agglomeration of different paradigms, biases, foci, perspectives, and favored theories and methodologies.

Another possible factor contributing to the blurred distinctiveness of public administration and the MPA degree also may be a significant change in the broader public definition of governance. Forty years ago, governance was largely what government officials did to carry forward legislated mandates. Appointed and career government officials were, for the most part, the persons directly involved in governance. This is still the case today, but there is wide agreement that these people are not the only ones involved in the governance process. Extensive privatization and the practice of contracting out once-governmental programs and functions to nonprofit organizations and private corporations has raised awareness that governance in many instances has become a delegated, shared, collaborative enterprise that often crosses some or all sectors. This is so much the case that texts and journal articles sometimes equate governance with outsourcing and network collaboration, while the core values of governing, such as representativeness, responsiveness, and responsibility, are marginalized in favor of significant but — depending on circumstances — less-important managerial concerns that include producing deliverables on time and under budget.
The proliferation of sites and contexts of governance has not eliminated the differences between government, nonprofits, and private contractors. Rather, it has made governing much more complex and raised a host of issues at the interface between the three sectors. For purposes of this report, the most important fact is that changes have worked to diminish both the understanding and appreciation of a public administration career’s unique importance as the grounding for public service — regardless of the sector where that service is performed.

The resulting diversity can be construed positively. It can be argued that it enriches academic discourse and attracts good scholars. It offers students more choices, provides faculty with opportunities to pursue particular intellectual paths, and gives institutions distinctive ways to attract and retain graduate students. Employers, particularly those in metropolitan areas where there are a variety of needs, may benefit because they can more readily find persons with specialized skills or knowledge.

Despite these plausible advantages, however, the proliferation of both action-settings and degree programs has produced confusion about the differences among them, and obscured what we believe to be the core mission and values of academic public administration and the specific focus of the MPA as a professional degree.

To understand the depth of confusion about the MPA and “MPA-related degrees,” one needs only to examine Wikipedia’s articles on degrees in public administration, public policy, and public affairs. The National Association of Public Administration and Affairs (NASPAA) features links to these articles on its home page. The descriptions acknowledge some differences between the MPA — which tilts toward “operationalization” and “implementation” — and the MPP; and the “similar” Master of Public Affairs, which leans toward “policy analysis” and “design.” But the descriptions go on to emphasize how these degrees have “blended and converged.” According to the Wikipedia articles, “the typical core curricula” for both the MPA and the MPP begins with courses in microeconomics, public finance, research methods, and statistics; these four courses are listed in precisely the same order in the separate articles about each degree. Core courses for both degrees also include policy analysis, ethics, public management, geographic information systems, and program evaluation. (Wikipedia, 2007a, b, n.p.)

This tendency to coalesce the public administration and public policy degrees only reflects the general confusion that has come to surround the MPA and related degrees. Not only are the curricula of MPA and “MPA-related degrees” quite different, but the richness of “MPA-related degrees” is not directly translatable to, nor simply a matter of insertion into, a professional public administration curriculum — at least not without thoughtful planning.

MPA programs are meant to be unique, and should be. They must
consciously and deliberately prepare students for highly challenging careers in the administration of government agencies, and in nonprofit or philanthropic entities serving the public good. This does not mean that someone with an MPP or MPAff cannot be a competent public administrator or that someone with an MPA cannot be a competent policy analyst or be knowledgeable concerning international affairs or administration. It does mean, however, that the curricula for the degrees should be different or distinct enough to maximize the job-effectiveness of the degree-recipient’s chosen career path. The wide variation that exists among the different degree programs can serve this purpose rationally and beneficially only if the distinctiveness of the MPA, and indeed that of each of the related degrees, is made clear.

Unfortunately, this is not presently the case. NASPAA’s accreditation process and the U.S. News & World Report rating systems (the problems of which would entail a lengthy analysis) tend to cluster and synthesize assessments of sometimes profoundly different programs, making it more difficult for any one degree-type to maintain a distinctive profile. Perhaps the most significant source of incoherence and overlap derives from the efforts of institutions to recruit and retain students. In doing so, institutions have understandably couched the descriptions of their programs in the most encompassing terms possible, rather than specifying what they can best equip students to do. For example, one institution informs prospective students that they “will be prepared to work in positions of influence at the interface of business, government, and nonprofit organizations.” This may indeed be the case, depending on the structure and length of the degree program, the quality of the faculty, and the status of the university, but it is a claim that should not be made lightly.

A lesser but contributing source of incoherence and overlap may lie in the quite natural tendency of program faculty to mold their courses to their research interests. This is not necessarily detrimental, and indeed can be beneficial, if it does not displace the important elements of a professional curriculum. But faculty are often as unclear about the differences in the MPA-related degrees as is everyone else, and an overemphasis on their own interests in such circumstances can contribute to incoherence, and result in students not receiving knowledge that is important to their chosen career paths.

In light of these factors and trends, the Task Force believes that the first step in enhancing excellence in public administration education and the distinctiveness of the MPA degree is to reassert and re-clarify its mission and values. Although the three degrees we are considering have some shared attributes, we believe the MPA is, and ought to be, distinctly different from those in the realms of policy, management, and public affairs. To make such an analysis we turn therefore to what we believe should be the core of public administration.
THE CORE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The role of a public administrator may be one of the most difficult and challenging in contemporary America, a country with a political culture noted for its ambivalence toward “unelected bureaucrats.” Despite this ambivalence, the public will cannot be given effect without a competent and honest public administration. Paul Appleby succinctly expressed this fact of life for a modern democratized republic:

Public administration is policy-making. But it is not autonomous, exclusive, or isolated policy-making. It is policy-making on a field where mighty forces contend, forces engendered in and by the society. It is policy-making subject to still other and various policy-makers. Public administration is one of a number of basic political processes by which this people achieves and controls governance (Appleby, 1949, p. 170).

Thus, the core mission of those offering the MPA degree must be to develop the capacity of graduates to exercise delegated public authority wisely, effectively, and lawfully.

In fulfillment of this mission, the Task Force believes that MPA education should accomplish two goals: First, transmittal of a full awareness of the broad issues of constitutionalism, politics, and democratic theory that are innately embedded in the practice of public administration in a republic such as ours; and second, transmittal of the essential professional, or “craft” knowledge of the field, along with experiential exposure of students to the world of practice, by means of non-classroom projects, internships, case studies, practitioner involvement in teaching, etc.

As to the first objective, the anchor of American public administration, regardless of the level of government, is the United States Constitution, along with the constitutions of the 50 states. Public administrators take an oath to uphold those constitutions. The profession’s central commitment must be to give specific and principled meaning to the oath of office, and what it means to be accountable to that oath. Public administrators are thus required to follow constitutional, statutory, and administrative law, plus court decisions and orders. Within this framework, the defining practice of governance is the interpretation and exercise of public authority. Those so charged should exercise their powers as astutely and knowledgeably as they can, with a conscious commitment to serving the public interest. This may be done in governmental or nongovernmental institutions, but the distinctiveness of career public service is that it is centered in administrative agencies. The curriculum for the MPA degree should be one that introduces or reinforces students’ understanding of their constitutionally delegated authority, and their career commitments to such agencies.
In the United States, public administrators (with the exception of those in council-manager governments) operate within the constitutional separation of powers. In the American system of government, these powers are shared, and distributed among the branches. This means that the domain of administration, though usually situated in the executive branch, is directed, not by the chief executive alone, but also by legislatures and courts. This often places the administrative agency in the position of being responsible to multiple masters, prior statutes, and still-valid rulings. This situation can place on the shoulders of a public administrator the heavy responsibility of acting amidst conflicting pressures, while seeking to satisfy the long-term interests of a lawful society. The MPA degree should prepare a person for assuming such responsibility.

Although public-regarding decisions and judgments are often made outside the realm of a public agency, the distinctiveness of career public service should not be obscured by that fact. The institution at the heart of governance is, and should be, the administrative agency — one whose leaders and employees invest their careers in meeting communal, national, and global needs of the public. The duty to meet these needs requires that career public administrators exercise guidance and stewardship over activities delegated to other entities, in order to ensure that the terms of the public trust are fulfilled, and that activities inside and outside the public agency are consonant with the constitutional principles of individual rights, due process of law, equal protection, and the separation of powers.

Public Administration Education

The paradigms, theories, and general scholarship of this field must be comparable to that of any academic field, but they must meet a second challenge — to be appropriately framed and taught in ways that create and sustain a good, professional public administration program. Professional education must take the student from the abstract to the concrete, and from the concrete to the abstract, in order to become relevant. Indeed, it should foster reflexivity, the quality that enables the graduate to engage in praxis, i.e., to interrelate theory and practice — moving from one to the other, and back again. Another way to think of reflexivity and praxis is to think of it as the development of practical wisdom.

More concretely, a good public administration education program must provide the skills that practitioners need to work in and to lead complex organizations in political environments. It also must support effective and ethical administrative conduct, and stimulate graduates to think reflectively and reflexively of their responsibilities under the constitutions of the United States and their home states or jurisdictions, as well as those regarding their own potential contributions to the public interest within a pluralistic, democratic republic.

The most fundamental thrust of public administration education is to
promote and nourish among all those who participate in its programs a commitment to their core mission and values. It should be noted that values like constitutionalism, service, and the public interest are worth very little if they are simply rote definitions. They must be critically reflected upon and debated by students in order for them as practitioners to make wise judgments in any situation. Public administration education must offer students opportunities to enhance their reflective, critical, and reflexive capacities, and to share and debate their views with one another and their faculty, through discussion and reflection on classic and contemporary writings and case studies, as well as on current issues. Students should have the opportunity to develop an understanding of the political and economic context in which governance is practiced, and of public administration’s place in society. They should engage in extended reflection on the ethical dimensions of governance. This extended and in-depth consideration of core values, the context and dynamics of governance generally, and of public administration specifically, is the foundation upon which students should build the development of specific technical skills.

Because public administration teachers first and foremost are academicians and come from a variety of disciplines (though perhaps more frequently political science), they may have had little occasion to consider the differences between an academic master’s degree and a professional master’s degree such as the MPA (or MBA, MD, JD, MPP, or MPAff). The difference is significant, but is all too often forgotten or never understood. Because of the MPA’s professional nature since its 1911 origin in the training school of the New York Bureau of Municipal Research, it has included a significant experiential and practical dimension. Public administration education should balance scholarly learning with a hands-on approach, recognizing that the MPA degree prepares people to achieve excellence in practice. To conserve that thrust, the case studies, internships, classroom exercises, and collaborative projects with existing agencies not only deepen students’ experiences, but also hone their abilities to learn from practice.

Excellent education in public administration must tread a path that balances practical applications with consideration of theoretical issues, of philosophy, of history, and of applied social science and statistics. It also must meet, not only the needs of new pre-career students, but also those of mid-career managers, who entered public service prepared for a specialized occupation or profession — e.g., that of a lawyer, economist, or engineer — but found themselves administering. Students fresh from their undergraduate days are keen to learn the how of things — how to budget, how to diagnose organizational problems, and how to track management information. Students who may be educated or trained in other occupations, but who seek an MPA in mid-career, are weathered in the hows of administration and instead are more interested in the whys of things. They
appreciate the chance to step back from putting out the latest agency fire and instead think about why things happen the way they do — and what a life devoted to public service means for each of them. Excellent MPA programs must serve both kinds of needs and aspirations.

As a practical matter, we note that, in analyzing 46 of the top 50 Master of Public Administration programs identified by *U.S. News & World Report* in 2006, the leading core courses were “organizational concepts and institutions” and “policy evaluation” (both courses were required by 87 percent of all programs), “budgeting and finance” (85 percent), “public administration” (74 percent), “ethics and leadership” (59 percent), and “politics and legal institutions” (52 percent) (Koven, Goetz, & Brennan, 2008).

We do not want to wander into the thicket of contention that surrounds the concept of the “top 50 MPA programs,” but we do think it significant that these courses are found to this extent in those schools. (We also find it troublesome that these courses are *not* found in many of these schools.) The larger point to be made is that, regardless of the curricula of the so-called “top-50” schools, there are roughly 260 public administration or public administration-related degree programs. We believe that NASPAA and ASPA should undertake steps to assure that some mix of these courses is present in all MPA core curricula — especially courses that deal with the special constitutional nature of public-sector administration and organization, and public-sector ethics. We also believe it is essential that a required introductory course should include the place of public administration in society (in the study cited above, “public administration” and “politics and legal institutions” could fulfill this role), and that courses covering constitutional and communal values, plus the nature of public interest, are fundamental to a quality MPA curriculum. Other courses that we think should be in an MPA program worthy of its name are public human resources management, information resources and management, intergovernmental/intersectoral relations, and leadership.

The challenge before us is less one of prescribing the particular technical contents of an MPA program than it is one of resurrecting the core values that lie at the heart of public service. In the spirit of that challenge, our first recommendation is that NASPAA, ASPA, and other entities responsible for curricula in public administration and related master’s programs take specific steps to foster a dialogue on the issues raised in our report, in order for everyone in the profession to be able to reconnect with its core mission and values. More often than not, the reconnection can, and should, come about through debate and discussion. The most fundamental value-commitments of our profession are to ideals such as constitutionalism and the public interest, which require reflection and interpretation in particular contexts and circumstances. Thus,
it is fitting that what we are calling for, at its most basic level, is a great public conversation within the profession, and with its MPA-related academic programs — a conversation to engage its members in a process that simultaneously generates a reconsideration and renewal of our respective identities.

There are also action steps that we believe can and should be set in motion immediately, and we have conveyed such recommendations to ASPA President Harvey White in Appendix B.

REFERENCES


Appendix A. The History and Decline of the Master of Public Administration Degree

Our present welter of MPA and MPA-related degrees has its roots in the early 20th century.

The Master of Public Administration.

The very first professional education in public administration was not offered by universities. It was started in 1911 by the New York Bureau of Municipal Research’s training school. The inclusion of public administration in political science curricula was fragmentary until the American Political Science Association formed a committee on practical training for public service in 1912, and persuaded the mayor of New York, in 1914, to call the first national conference on universities and public-service training.

The training school was launched under Bureau auspices only after spokesmen for leading universities like Yale and Columbia had rejected the idea of a public-service training program as too practical. It is thus worth noting that public administration has its own practical roots, and its emphasis on experiential learning stems from its origins in the New York Bureau of Municipal Research. (The Bureau was later moved to Syracuse University, where it became a training program under university auspices and eventually became the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Administration.)

As noted, public administration eventually found a home within universities, often in land-grant universities as a bureau of public administration, and later within political science departments. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, political science went through what was known as “the behavioral revolution,” a decided shift towards positivism, empiricism, and quantification. Because public administration was involved in the preparation of professionals, it was difficult for the field to follow in lock-step with political science toward a social-science orientation. It came to be regarded by political science with an attitude somewhere between dubious tolerance and outright scorn. It was common to hear political scientists refer to public administration as “mere training” or “manhole-cover counting.” Often they routinely re-conceptualized it as “the politics of bureaucracy.”

Enrichment and Confusion.

During the 1960s, several coinciding developments were both enriching and confusing. One was the emergence of the “New Public Administration,” a distinctly normative interpretation of the field that was viewed in a wide variety of ways. While this movement created considerable interest and discussion within the field, it did little to resolve the considerable confusion over the various degrees.
Another was the Lyndon Johnson Administration’s “Great Society” programs, which increased governmental demand for administrators and policy analysts. A number of universities responded to this need by creating separate programs or schools of public policy — taking care to avoid the term “public administration,” lest they inherit some of the negativity that had been attached to it by political science.

Ideas that emerged in the 1990s also had an important impact on the MPA degree. Osborne and Gaebler’s book *Reinventing Government* (1992) was widely read, and stimulated the Clinton Administration’s administrative reform program as a response to Republicans who charged that its policies were just another manifestation of the Democrats’ tax-and-spend approach to government. This development was both reflected and paralleled in academia by the emergence and practice of the “New Public Management” movement, which took organizational economics and a variety of management techniques from the private sector, and applied them to government. The movement also had international resonance in Canada, Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand — areas, where extensive social-welfare programs enacted after World War II were now viewed as too costly and too bureaucratic.

Thus, public administration is a multi-disciplinary, multi-paradigmatic field of study, research, and professional education that has been pulled — indeed torn — in several different directions. Taken as a whole, it is a rich mosaic of paradigmatic commitments, widely varying epistemological orientations, and equally varied attitudes toward educating future practitioners of a nascent profession. But, for our purposes here, the most significant factor is the increased confusion that has developed over different degrees, and its negative impact on the MPA degree.

Whether this disaggregated richness can be a solid basis for public administration is a huge question. But one thing is certain: It cannot do so without serious and thoughtful planning that addresses the confusion over degrees, and arrests the further denigration and decline of the reputation of the MPA.

The Master of Management.

Yet another development in this field was the growth of organizational sociology, which can be traced to the translation of Max Weber into English. This resulted in an enduring addition of organization theory courses to MPA and MPP programs, and in the emergence of Master of Management degrees. These programs are premised, in varying levels of intensity, on the idea that management is generic. This means that the sector, culture, institution, mission — whatever — are of little consequence to efficient and effective administration, and that “a body of knowledge [operations research, statistics, economics,
accounting, and organization theory are often cited] exists that is common to the fields of administration” (Kraemer & Perry, 1980, p. 91).

Most of the major schools of management (for instance, those at Cornell, Northwestern, Stanford, Yale, and the University of California campuses at Irvine, Los Angeles, and Riverside) are not accredited by NASPAA. The number of public administration programs that are housed within schools of business (a category that includes at least some schools of management, e.g., Willamette University) has fallen over the years, declining from 17 percent in 1973 to eight percent currently, even though many of these schools offer conventional MPA degrees, in addition to management or business degrees (National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration, 2005; 1986, p. xix).

The Master of Public Affairs.

Another feature of the early 1960s was the formation of schools of public and international affairs, which sought to be both comprehensive and international, and aimed to encompass diverse subjects of urban development, economic and social development, and comparative administration. In these institutional “stews,” public administration’s position in America was sometimes greatly diminished. The overall effect of these events further isolated and diminished public administration as an academic field, and further blurred the distinctions between the MPA, the MPP, and the MPAff degrees.

The Master of Public Affairs degree is offered at eight campuses accredited by NASPAA, and accounted for eight percent of all degrees awarded by NASPAA institutions in 2005 (NASPAA, 2005). Indiana University and the University of Texas dominate this category. Five Indiana University campuses offer the degree. The curriculum seems to blend both a public policy and a management orientation, as suggested by the degree’s five core courses: Public Management, Statistical Analysis for Effective Decision Making, Public Management Economics, Law and Public Affairs, and a capstone course. The University of Texas at Austin tilts a bit more towards management, and requires three core courses in Public Financial Management, Applied Microeconomics for Policy Analysis, and Introduction to Quantitative Analysis. The University of Texas at Dallas and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, by contrast, offer a more standard Master of Public Administration curriculum. Aside from having an unusually diverse degree program, graduate education in public affairs is not easily described.

The Master of Public Policy.

Among the “MPA-related degrees” that emerged during the late 20th century, the Master of Public Policy is most prominent. The field of public policy was
birthed in political science departments, perhaps in an effort to fill the void left by public administration programs that were departing to their own schools and departments. The first papers (four of them) on public policy were presented in 1967 at the annual conference of the American Political Science Association, and, by 1970, public policy had its own section at the conference. In 1971, the Policy Studies Organization was founded as the first public policy association, and, by the end of the decade, it boasted 1,100 members — with almost seven out of 10 being political scientists (Hansen, 1983, pp. 218, 219, 239).

Analyzing 18 of the top MPP programs identified by *U.S. News & World Report* showed that they largely eschewed core courses in human resources management, information technology, and organization theory, and instead favored policy evaluation, microeconomics, and decision-making. These three subjects accounted for 60 percent or more of the typical MPP core curriculum. The other major distinction of MPP programs is that they offer an array of specialized and optional courses on the substance of particular policies, such as the environment, energy, or justice, and they also provide more specialization tracks than MPA programs do (Koven, Goetz, & Brennan, 2008, pp. 21, 7).

Apart from these distinctions, however, MPP curricula at the top schools are akin to their MPA counterparts. The second tier of core MPP courses includes budgeting and finance, public administration, and politics and legal institutions. Each of these courses accounts for 50 percent of the typical MPP curriculum (Koven, Goetz, & Brennan, 2008, p. 21).

The top MPA programs are about four times more likely to be accredited by NASPAA (80 percent of the top MPA programs are accredited) than are the top MPP programs (22 percent) (Koven, Goetz, & Brennan, 2008, p. 7). We cannot, and should not, know whether these MPP programs sought accreditation and failed to receive it, or simply did not seek any accreditation. Given the high quality of the universities in which these programs are found, however, the latter seems likely. This apparent disinterest among public-policy schools in attaining NASPAA accreditation may reflect a corresponding disinterest in being identified with public administration.
APPENDIX B. RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS

The members of the Task Force believe that, in addition to a much-needed conversation about the differences that should exist between the various degrees related to public administration, there also are action steps that the President of ASPA may wish to set in motion immediately. We wanted these to be transmitted initially to President White alone, rather than being a part of the public conversation.

1. In addition to appropriate course content of a skill- or technique-based nature, the MPA degree should incorporate required coursework that stresses the constitutional and legal foundations of public administration, and raises awareness about the need for public administrators to interpret their delegated authority so it is in keeping with the separation of and overlapping of powers found in the U.S. and state constitutions.

2. Master’s programs, under prompting and guidance from NASPAA, should be clearly labeled, described, and advertised in all publications and advertisements. It is misleading and is also a disservice to students, graduates, employers, and the public interest to do otherwise. ASPA should also follow such a standard for advertisements appearing in the PA Times.

3. Content emphases in MPA specialty tracks should not displace needed core courses for government service. They should be labeled as relevant or acceptable electives, not as requirements, and should be so treated in students’ program plans and by NASPAA in the accreditation process.

4. The public administration professoriate should be urged to include experiential learning in its courses, and be cautioned not to overload courses with personal research interests. This recommendation is not meant to criticize the lecture-discussion method of instruction, but instead is intended to underline the need for faculty to bring the “real world” into the MPA classroom as much as possible in required courses, and to use their own research as it is pertinent, or as it reinforces learning the course requirements.

5. The American Society for Public Administration should utilize this report to take the lead in calling for a field-wide discussion among major national organizations concerned with public administration and public administrators. The aim would be to have the field’s principal associations issue a joint statement on how best to achieve the level of excellence in MPA education to which this report aspires.
6. While NASPAA rather than ASPA conducts accreditation for the MPA, if NASPAA feels it cannot or will not participate in this discussion — or change its accreditation requirements — then ASPA should consider a means of providing recognition for programs that meet its requirements in MPA program structure, perhaps by publishing a list of approved programs. Clearly, this is not the most desirable course of action, and should be considered only if NASPAA cannot or will not help in this endeavor.

7. Because of the term limitation on the ASPA presidency, the sitting president might wish to consider opening discussions on this report and its recommendations with current candidates for the presidency. Clearly, the needed changes will require an effort that exceeds more than one presidential term.

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He is perhaps best known academically for his part in developing the “Refounding” school of thought in public administration theory. He directed Congressionally mandated studies of military manpower policy for President Carter’s Presidential Re-organization Project and the National Academy of Public Administration’s 1993 study of emergency management, and its 1997 study of the National Guard’s role in emergency preparedness and response. Wamsley was elected to the National Academy of Public Administration in 1998.
Looking Forward: A Response to the ASPA Task Force Report on Educating for Excellence in the MPA

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Abstract

The authors of the ASPA report, “Understanding Excellence in Public Administration,” have contributed to a dialogue on the future of the MPA degree. They have raised issues about the distinctiveness of the MPA degree in the context of the many degree programs offered by NASPAA schools and programs, the core values of the MPA, the professional goals of MPA programs, and the nature of the positions MPA graduates will fill in the future. In this response, the ASPA report is analyzed on three levels: concerns about the past role of MPA degrees and what their future role could be, a philosophical discussion of the role and mission of the MPA degree, and a call to action for ASPA. Within the range of MPA, public policy, public affairs, and other degree programs, for three years the NASPAA accreditation standards revision process has been shaping action on many of the issues raised in the ASPA report, and has developed a set of standards to meet the needs of the next decade. The NASPAA Standards 2009 process looks forward by indicating that the distinctiveness of programs in public affairs, public administration, and public policy lie in their missions, governance, and curriculum. The process demonstrably emphasizes public values; reaffirms mission-based accreditation to ensure a wide range of approaches to preparing students for professional public service; defines competencies that students in the field should master, given changes in the public sector environment; and requires programs to measure the achievement of these competencies.

The authors of the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) report, “Understanding Excellence in Public Administration,” have contributed to a dialogue on the future of the Master’s of Public Administration (MPA) degree. They have raised issues about the distinctiveness of the MPA degree in the context of the many degree programs offered by National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) schools and programs, the core values of the MPA, the professional goals of MPA programs, and the nature of
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the positions MPA graduates will fill in the future. The foundation of NASPAA is the professional master’s degree, and the MPA is the dominant NASPAA master’s program. For example, responses to a spring 2008 NASPAA survey showed 81 percent of principal representatives reporting that their institutions offer an MPA degree, which represents 62 percent of the degree candidates at these institutions (NASPAA, 2009). Within the range of public administration, public policy, public affairs, and other degree programs, the NASPAA accreditation standards revision process was designed to shape action on many of the issues raised in the ASPA report, and it has developed a set of standards to meet the needs of the next decade.

The NASPAA Standards 2009 process looks forward by indicating that the distinctiveness of programs in public affairs, public administration, and public policy lie in their missions, governance, and curricula, each of which should demonstrably emphasize public values; in the reaffirmation of mission-based accreditation to ensure a wide range of approaches to preparing students for the public service; in defining competencies that students in the field should master, given changes in the public sector environment; and in requiring programs to measure the achievement of these competencies.

I will use my unique vantage point to respond to the ASPA report: I have served as chair of the NASPAA Standards 2009 Steering Committee, which was initiated in Spring 2006 to oversee the NASPAA standards renewal process; I served for two years as chair of the Commission on Peer Review and Accreditation (COPRA), NASPAA’s accreditation commission; I served six years as director of an MPA Program co-offered by a political science department and an urban affairs and public policy school; and I also served for two years as president of Delaware’s ASPA chapter. While this response is my own, I do need to thank the scores of individuals who have participated in the standards process, and who have helped to shape my understanding of the issues discussed in the ASPA report and my responses to them. The latest proposed NASPAA accreditation standards, related documents, and presentations are available on the NASPAA Standards 2009 Web page at http://naspaa.org/accreditation/standard2009/main.asp.

I view the ASPA report on three levels: a lament about the ‘good ole days’ of MPA degrees, a philosophical discussion of the role of the MPA degree, and a call to action for ASPA. I will comment on each.

Looking Forward

The report clearly laments the days when MPA programs dominated the preparation of U.S. students for careers in local, state, and Federal governments. The authors note (1) that today there are a proliferation of degrees, including — most notably — programs in public policy analysis; (2) that MPA graduates do not necessarily enter careers in government, but
may instead work in the nonprofit sector; and (3) that the environment they face involves not just government but governance — which moves beyond the direct provision of government to the more complex world of third-party government, networks, and collaborations among various nonprofit, private, and public organizations. I would add even more changes in the public administration environment to the ASPA report analysis. Many U.S. programs host a high percentage of non-U.S. students (Apaza & McFarland, 2008) and, thanks to the work of Paul Light (1999) and others, we recognize that many MPA graduates will not have a single career working in government, but rather a series of careers that span all three sectors.

At times, the authors of the report seem ambivalent about these changes in the scope of the MPA degree. While quoting Harvey White's charge to them, which included his concern about MPA programs preparing “students for almost everything except careers in public administration,” they reference the broader phrase “careers in public service” on their first page, and “professional education for public service” later in the report. While virtually everyone in our field is hoping that President Barack Obama will lead the nation toward a renewed commitment to public service and government, who among us would expect that in the next decade the internationalization of public administration; the accession of governance over government; and job variety would be replaced by a reassertion of long-term, U.S.-government-based careers for all of our graduates?

The proposed NASPAA standards are based on changes in the world of public administration and public affairs that appear inexorable, and I therefore argue that we need to look forward, not backward, as we discuss the significant points raised in the remainder of the ASPA report. Society would be better served by moving beyond a traditional MPA to one that is framed to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

**Mission of the MPA**

The report’s authors see two sources of problems with the state of MPA education: first, “a proliferation of degree programs” that tend to “obscure the richness of public administration as a career commitment and intellectual enterprise,” and second, a failure to recognize the mission of providing “professional education for public service, not to provide education and socialization in an academic discipline.” The second point, and its accompanying recommendation, is relatively easy to accept. “Public administration education must offer students opportunities to enhance their reflective, critical, and reflexive capacities, and to share and debate views with one another and their faculty, through discussion and reflection on classic and contemporary writings, and case studies as well as current issues.”

In my view, the authors have described an ongoing problem that has been addressed by the current NASPAA standards. Indeed, my own program changed
its governance structure and curriculum in the 1980s, in part to meet the challenge of moving from a disciplinary-based degree to a professional platform. While this issue is not unique to programs in political science departments, in my experience it is the major venue where this problem arises. The proposed NASPAA standards, as appropriate for a professional degree, are built on the knowledge of employers as well as academics. The proposed standards have been developed with much employer input, including active membership on the Standards Steering Committee by the chief administrative and financial officer of the Governmental Accountability Office and other practitioners; several surveys conducted with local and Federal managers, plus students in the field; a presentation by a private-sector practitioner with an MPA who leads a major governmental contracting company at an initial retreat; and reviews of the literature that describe changes in the public sector. The proposed standards, which focus on competencies and their measurement, will continue to push programs (and faculties) toward professionalization, as the authors propose. I salute the authors for challenging their colleagues to address this issue.

The first issue noted by the authors — that the proliferation of degree programs is obscuring the public administration degree’s mission — is critical, but needs to be subdivided. The field of professional public-service education includes many alternative-degree programs, ranging from MPAs to public affairs, public policy, health policy and management, and even planning and urban affairs degrees. One could view this as a positive — students are offered a wide variety of alternatives, and the diversity of programs leads to innovation and responsiveness for both student and employer needs. Alternatively, the great variety of degree programs works against defining and marketing the broader field, which can confuse potential students and employers about the “brand,” and make it more difficult to communicate the meaning and distinctiveness of the field. The problem this poses for professional public service education is obvious when we compare our degrees to the MBA or the JD, both of which bring to mind clear images, at least to those outside these fields. This is certainly an issue for consideration by NASPAA, the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM), ASPA, the Nonprofit Academic Centers Council (NACC), the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA), and the Urban Affairs Association. Indeed, the list of relevant organizations itself suggests the magnitude of the problem. This is a concern going back many decades. The mission of MPA programs falls within this larger question of professional degree programs in public service education, and it is this question that deserves our immediate attention.

The true mission of MPA programs within the context of professional public-service degree programs requires more thought and attention, but NASPAA has encouraged a dialogue for three years on the issue. In March, 2006, NASPAA began what is now called “NASPAA Standards 2009: Defining Quality in Public
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Affairs Education,” when then-NASPAA President Dan Mazmanian appointed a committee to lead the process of reconsidering accreditation standards, now the NASPAA Standards 2009 Steering Committee. The core of the committee met with the NASPAA Executive Council in a retreat at the University of Arizona in Tucson to discuss “The Future of the Public Sector.” John Bryson led the group in a strategic planning effort to better understand the changes taking place in our field, and the implications for professional public-service education. By October, 2006, at the NASPAA conference in Minneapolis, the Steering Committee was fully formed and the process was well underway. The 2006 conference theme was “The Future of the Public Service,” and the committee offered two panel sessions on “Visions of the Public Sector.” In Seattle, the October, 2007, NASPAA Conference theme was “Embracing the Certainty of Uncertainty: Creating the Future of Public Affairs Education,” and the NASPAA Standards 2009 Steering Committee held a plenary session to report on its work and discuss the principles it planned to use for building new standards.

A most significant question was raised at our very first Steering Committee meeting: What makes public administration and related programs unique from programs in other fields such as business, health management, and planning? In my role as chair of the Steering Committee, my most dramatic and frequent request has been to “show how our degree is unique.”

Our quest for a new set of standards began with establishing a set of principles that were discussed at the October, 2007, NASPAA conference. These principles included one aimed at showing the uniqueness of our degree programs:

Public Service Mission: The mission of every program should include having a positive impact on public service and public policy, in a way that is demonstrable to prospective students, peers, and external audiences (NASPAA, 2007, n.p.).

In addition, Principle #8, Competencies for Public Service Education, included the requirement that programs “ensure students will be capable of acting ethically and effectively in pursuit of the public interest” (ibid.). These principles were discussed in a session on March 25, 2007, at the ASPA Conference, and have been shared with all NASPAA members. The ASPA session presented the background to the NASPAA Standards 2009 effort, the results of surveys and other input up to that date, and a call for input from ASPA members. The principles were posted on the NASPAA Web site a few days later.1

In September, 2007, Steve Maser, chair of NASPAA’s Standards Committee, which is responsible for drafting new standards; Laurel McFarland, NASPAA’s Executive Director and former Academic Director; and I provided the rationale for the uniqueness of NASPAA accreditation, which would form the basis of the new standards. We outlined the essence of “Public Service Values, Mission-
Based Accreditation” and stated, “We cannot and should not ignore that public administration and public policy programs, whatever the differences among them, share a distinctive mission: promoting values in community governance such as accountability, responsibility, justice, transparency, and improving welfare” (Raffel, Maser, & McFarland, 2007, p. 2).

In February, 2009, the proposed standards included a requirement that, to be eligible for accreditation, programs needed to emphasize “public values,” or as fully stated, “The mission, governance, and curriculum of eligible programs shall demonstrably emphasize public values” (NASPAA, 2008a, p. 2). In the new glossary for the proposed Standards, public values are defined as:

Public Values: (includes but not limited to) responsiveness and accountability; transparency and ethical behavior; civic virtue and social equity; fiscal and environmental sustainability; delimited legal governance and participatory processes; due process, respect for human rights and diversity” (NASPAA, 2008b, pp. 27-28).

The proposed standards require that programs “incorporate public values into decisions.” Thus, as called for in the ASPA report, the Standards Steering Committee and Standards Committee have recognized the need to incorporate the basic values of our field, including topics noted in the ASPA report — such as “the special constitutional nature of public sector administration and organization and public sector ethics,” as well as “the core values that lie at the heart of public service … [and] the public interest” — to show the uniqueness of our profession, and to require that programs develop their educational programs accordingly. NASPAA has not only engaged the issue here, it also has developed a specific means of addressing it.2

What about the uniqueness of MPA programs in the context of multiple types of public affairs programs? That is, to quote the report, “these overlapping, related — but different — degrees are an agglomeration of different paradigms, biases, foci, perspectives, and favored theories and methodologies.” NASPAA adopted mission-based accreditation in the 1990s to reflect the different programs that address different demands in the pool of students seeking professional public-service degrees, and this will be continued in the proposed standards. The first principle in the September, 2007, document, “Transforming Education for Public Service Provisional Guiding Principles,” states the following: “Mission-Based Accreditation: To recognize the great variety of programs, missions, constituencies, and processes among NASPAA programs educating public affairs leaders, mission-based accreditation should be maintained.” The proposed standards therefore remain mission-based.

The ASPA report argues, “NASPAA’s accreditation process and the U.S. News & World Report’s rating systems … tend to cluster and synthesize assessments of
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sometimes profoundly different programs, making it difficult for any one degree-type to maintain a distinctive profile.” Its authors also view marketing pressures as a reason for homogenization. Any accreditation process could move programs to homogeneity, but the process is and will remain mission-based for two reasons. First, history has shown that giving programs the flexibility to innovate is good for the programs, good for students, and good for the profession. Second, programs should practice what they teach. Having a clear mission and managing to it is implicit, if not explicit, in the ASPA report’s call, and is a requisite of good administration.

Thus, a question within the overall mission-based context of NASPAA accreditation: should MPA programs per se have a specialized mission and character? The ASPA report authors are in favor of such distinctiveness, and offer a means to reach it. They state, “Thus, the core mission of those offering the MPA degree must be to develop the capacity of graduates to exercise delegated public authority wisely, effectively, and lawfully.” This is an excellent contribution, consistent with the tone and intent of the commitment to “public values” that is required in the proposed NASPAA standards. However, the authors go on to limit this to the U.S., using terms such as “in a republic such as ours,” and “anchor of American public administration.” If MPA programs target primarily those who serve or who will serve in U.S. governmental administrative functions that are “centered in administrative agencies,” then they should focus on the topics noted in the report, such as U.S. constitutionalism and the separation of powers.

In my view, the authors of the report are too narrowly focused on U.S. government service and programs. Limiting the missions of accredited MPA programs to such efforts would greatly limit the market for and the utility of the MPA degree. Indeed, this would be a long way from education for “public service”; rather, in this respect, the report proposes education for American government. The world seeks leadership in public administration education, and NASPAA has the experience and wisdom to lead. The world also has far more democracies — constitutional or otherwise — today than it had when the MPA was the only credible degree for students of public administration. And, even within the U.S., less than half of the respondents to a recent survey of students in NASPAA programs — two-thirds of whom were in MPA programs — reported that their ideal career after obtaining their degrees would be in American local, state, or Federal governments. A slight majority sought careers in nonprofits, international governments or NGOs, the private sector, or planned to seek a further degree (NASPAA, 2008). But, I fully accept that this is a significant question for ASPA to consider, given that it is the American Society for Public Administration, and most of its members presumably work in government.

Regardless of ASPA’s opinion on the appropriate mission for MPA degrees, it could play a significant and constructive role in accreditation reform. The
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proposed NASPAA standards will require programs to measure the achievement of mission-based competencies by students/graduates of MPA programs. Can ASPA assist in defining such specific competencies, how they can be achieved, and how they can be measured? NASPAA is now working with ICMA on a similar task at the local-government level, and it would be most positive for ASPA members to add their expertise in ongoing efforts to define competencies and measure learning outcomes.

ASPA actions

The authors make seven explicit action recommendations, two of which warrant responses beyond my comments above. The report recommends that “master’s programs, under prompting and guidance from NASPAA, should be clearly labeled, described and advertised in all publications and advertisements …” This is the so-called “Truth in Advertising” standard, which has been reflected by NASPAA standards for many years, and has been reasserted in the proposed standards. In my experience on COPRA, identifying each program’s advertised claims and matching them with its delivery has been a central part of the review process.

I admit to being greatly concerned with the authors’ recommendation #6 as stated: “While NASPAA rather than ASPA conducts accreditation for the MPA, if NASPAA feels it cannot or will not participate in this discussion — or change its accreditation requirements — then ASPA should consider a means of providing recognition for programs that meet its requirements in MPA program structure, perhaps by publishing a list of approved programs. Clearly, this is not the most desirable course of action, and should be considered only if NASPAA cannot or will not help in this endeavor.”

I have a simple response: Yes we can and Yes we have! As I noted above, for several years we have been asking for discussion on basic questions of accreditation, foundation principles, and proposed standards through focus groups, conference sessions, webinars, and Web postings. The NASPAA Standards 2009 Steering Committee has held meetings on standards across the nation, including (as noted above), an ASPA session at the March, 2007, national conference, and 14 focus groups held in cities ranging from Boston to San Francisco, on April 16-17, 2008. For more than two years, NASPAA has proposed changes in accreditation standards that will maintain mission-based accreditation and specifically recognize public values and public service as the heart of the process. This leaves a most significant (but difficult!) task for ASPA: helping to define relevant competencies within the mission of MPA programs and the measurement of success. It is entirely unnecessary, and would be a mistake for ASPA to duplicate NASPAA’s accreditation efforts by generating a list of approved programs. And, as my comments suggest, it is too late for ASPA “to take the lead for a field-wide discussion,” but very timely for it to lead a
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discussion on what the core competencies in MPA programs are, and to define what student-learning outcome measures could operationalize them.

Path ahead

ASPA and NASPAA members need to be aware of the timeline for standards review. Specifically, webinars on the proposed standards were held in March, 2009. We hoped these inspired discussion in program faculty meetings about the proposed standards. The deadline for submitting changes and suggestions to the proposed standards is May 15, 2009. The final proposed standards will be submitted by June 30, 2009, and formal amendments to those standards are due by September 15, 2009. The vote on the new standards will take place in October, 2009, at the NASPAA meetings in Crystal City, VA. Of course, the process will not end there, as the implementation of the new standards will require further work to define program missions, student competencies, and measures of student learning.

The proposed NASPAA standards will accentuate the unique commitment to public service that our diverse set of master's programs has developed. It will position NASPAA schools, in the increasingly crowded landscape of professional graduate programs, as distinctive institutions committed to public policy and administration. The proposed standards address the future — the future needs of government and governance, the future job market, our future society — and position our schools, our graduates, and our profession for the 21st century.

References


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**Footnotes**

1 Interestingly, APPAM focused its June 15-17, 2006, Park City, Utah conference on “Charting the Next 20 Years of Public Policy and Management Education.”

2 I need to note that we have not focused on “constitutionalism” per se, as the ASPA report suggests. Because NASPAA recognizes that many students in our programs are not from the U.S. (Apaza & McFarland, 2008), and because one of our principles is to allow for non-U.S. programs to attain accreditation, we have attempted to include as public values some specific concepts that incorporate the core notions of constitutionalism (e.g., due process, shared powers, rule of laws), without requiring accreditation programs to be located in nations with constitutions like ours.

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Toward a Signature Pedagogy for Public Administration

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Abstract

Every profession rests upon a particular body of text, thought, and practice. This corpus is taught, in all esteemed professions, by way of a signature pedagogy. Many conclude that, because the practitioners and academics of our profession must bridge theory and practice, and because the singular characteristic of our profession is that people make decisions and act under conditions of greater uncertainty than those enjoyed by other professions, Public Administration does not admit to such a pedagogy. This paper argues that these difficulties are opportunities, rather than obstacles, toward devising such a pedagogy, and that our students can learn how to (1) thrive on chaos, (2) make rapid decisions based on incomplete and biased information, (3) resolve novel situations even as apprehensive parties clamor to secure their interests, (4) collaborate with a team of fellow bureaucrats as they identify, share, and (5) master a situation that is filtered through a fog of quasi-accurate information. Students also can learn how to navigate the situation by identifying patterns for problem-solving, and employing sophisticated representations to develop and communicate their ideas, while grappling with important political, environmental, and social interests — by way of a pedagogy that is at once immersive and uncertain, yet directive and retentive. Suggestions are made about how to manage such a pedagogy, based on the research of behaviorists, cognitivists, and affectivists.

Toward a Signature Pedagogy for Public Administration

Every profession rests itself upon a particular body of text, thought, and practice. This habit is given impetus by the popular notion that division of labor is a good and productive thing. And so, the academics and practitioners of various professions divide off only those texts, thoughts, and practices that reason and experience would suggest as useful for the work they are pursuing. For the same reason, they also are divided into as many classes as others believe are necessary to accomplish different sorts of work.

Now, we must always be on guard against the notion that these divisions are natural, practical, or proven. Given the human situation, they are only more or
less useful. The same may be said of the ways that the texts, the thinking, and the practices are both taught and learned. Because professions are divided up, and because academics and practitioners divide up everything we think we know, they create “signature pedagogies” (Shulman, 2005, p. 52), or modes of teaching that are distinctive to a profession, and pervasive across its curriculum. Clinical rounds in a medical school, or case study in the field of law are good examples.

These pedagogies have developed over time as very useful ways to accomplish three things. First, they teach apprentices how to think in the manner of whatever they are hoping to become — like a doctor, or a lawyer. The idea here seems to be that if to think is to differ, then different professions require different forms of thought. Second, they are useful ways of demonstrating how to perform in lawyer-like or physician-like ways. Educated people with prodigious capacities of mind often evince a distinct difficulty in deciding. So, the acolytes of any profession must be instructed at some point on exactly how to make up their minds, and where the lines should be drawn between theory and practice, and the relevant and irrelevant, when it comes to decision-making. Finally, although most people mean well, it is an unfortunate truth that the road to Hell is paved with good intentions. So, it follows that all signature pedagogies must school future practitioners in the ethics of their chosen professions.

Of course, there are recognized imperfections in these signature pedagogies. If it is true that to think is to differ, then, if everyone is thinking alike, it also means that someone isn’t thinking. This problem arises naturally, because whenever we agree to think a certain way, we automatically screen out other ways of thinking. So, the phrase “think outside the box” is codicil to all signature pedagogies, though perhaps honored more in breach than in practice. Similarly, when modeled on signature pedagogies, professional practice tends toward ritual. Imitating professional models — what we say, how we present ourselves, our choice of words, and the presentation of both our workspace and our materials — too often crowds out substance. In this sense, signature pedagogies set off echoes, in the form of ritualized procedures that fail to do justice to both our clients and our charges (Abel & Herzog, 2007).

Finally, once inoculated with a set of professional ethics, it almost seems possible to be professional with a cold heart. Too often, when we do something we are ashamed of, we take refuge in the thought that it is our duty. Ethics, like art, consists of drawing the line somewhere, but that line must fit the picture being drawn, in order to call forth the corresponding virtuous response. We cannot simply follow the rules. For example the “Golden Rule” — to “do unto others as we would have others do unto us” — fails to note that other’s tastes may differ from ours. For most professions, these problems are considered collateral damage. But we must remember that government bureaucracies enjoy the nearest thing to immortality that exists on Earth. So, in our profession, the damage could mount up considerably. To avoid this, we should develop
our own signature pedagogy — one that provides a succession of eye-openers, each involving a way out of these previously accepted imperfections, and each addressing the singular nature of Public Administration.

**The Singular Nature Of Public Administration**

Before we can contemplate the means of repairing these imperfections, we must take note of exactly how singular Public Administration is among other professions. This singularity, as it turns out, not only conditions our pedagogy, but also points to mechanisms for repairing these imperfections that are accepted in other professional methods of instruction. To put it briefly, the profession’s distinct nature arises from the not-especially-popular fact that Public Administration is, at bottom, a political endeavor. Government is actually experienced by real people. It is based on the interpretations of laws, executive orders, and judicial decisions that are both made and put into practice by public administrators. This is an obvious verity. So, it is no secret — in the circles where public administrators foregather — that the interpretation of any given legislative, executive, or judicial charge requires administrators to identify and prioritize the social values that are at stake, and to make some very hard choices when those values come into conflict. In short, public administrators fashion policy and make value choices. And, in the process, they set the precedents and implicitly compose the rationales for government intervention and practice (Yates, 1981) that ultimately must produce for the general public an intersubjective experience of good governance (Abel & Sementelli, 2003).

This complex set of responsibilities is unique among the professions. No other profession requires its practitioners to engage in both political and social-scientific endeavors, and then — regardless of the fruits of those endeavors — to correctly assemble and properly operate political, economic, and social-service institutions in accurate, efficient, and fair ways that honestly can be said to improve governance (Abel & Sementelli, 2003). Typically, to accomplish all of this, Public Administration must operate regularly at that point where agreements break down, and where rival normative principles demand opposing conclusions on what one should do when faced with a similar situation. Because all of these demands enjoy strong proponents in positions of formal, informal, legal, and situational power, to whom the administrator — unlike the doctor — must answer, the consistent use of any definitive course of action is most often precluded, regardless of any obvious advantage that it may boast. This is reflected, of course, in administrative law, which has a governing principle that no formulaic due process may be employed in making administrative decisions. Instead, the controlling issues are whether the administrative behavior in question was within the agency’s statutory authority, and whether the decision itself was arbitrary or capricious (Heckler v. Campbell, 1983).

Public Administration is unique in that it involves, more than any other
profession, the manipulation of ideologies, materials, and technologies by both the clumsy and the expert — manipulations that may be both enabling and resistant. Execution of each administrative decision, for example, is subject to a wide array of agents who function in opposing contexts of trust and distrust, cooperation and conflict, competition and cooperation, and the more-or-less accurate exchange of ideas and information — whether it is face-to-face, or facilitated by communications media. Finally, public administering is unique because the quality of its high realm of concepts and theories must struggle against the inertia of tradition, against the regularity sought by those who labor in the trenches of each bureaucracy, and against the skepticism that meets any discourse of innovation.

The Problems For Pedagogy

All of this complexity, conflict, resistance, and indeterminacy leads many practitioners and scholars of Public Administration to view their profession as a field rather than a discipline — one that encompasses a vast and heterogeneous range of paradigms, “schools of thought,” theories, narratives and “guiding ideas.” As a consequence, some argue that Public Administration lacks any single, common set of practices, purposes, values, and behaviors upon which its scholars and practitioners can settle to teach, and that “theory” in Public Administration should therefore be about developing and elaborating a “framework” that sorts out, compartmentalizes, makes ready, or “integrates relevant knowledge from whatever origin” that might be of use to practitioners and scholars (Rutgers, 1998, p. 554). In fact, many of these scholars go so far as to suggest that the development of a unified body of theory in Public Administration is “prohibited” (Raadschelders, 1999, p. 298), or that such a body of theory is undesirable, because it unnecessarily and undesirably confines both practice and scholarship (Rutgers, 1998). Hence, the confusion that results from encompassing many different and sometimes-competing definitions of the proper subject matter and knowledge base for Public Administration curricula can lead many to conclude either that Public Administration suffers from an inherited “identity crisis” (Marini, 1971; Box, 1992; White, Adams, & Forrester, 1996), or that this confusion constitutes the actual distinctive, defining characteristic of “Public Administration” (Rutgers, 1998).

If all of this were true, Public Administration could not be taught. But, since we observe around us whole departments — even whole schools and institutes — busy with the business of teaching, there must be something to the argument that Public Administration is in fact a discipline that was developed to systematically work out and professionally apply the ways and means of good governance (Abel & Sementelli, 2003). These observations suggest that “good governance” has less to do with conformance to normative standards, than it does with a consensus attitude toward governmental
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institutions and actors that is worked out by the citizenry, through a continued dialogue on the competing attitudes, values, and beliefs about the job that their government is doing. Hence, “good governance” is merely a matter of inter-subjective agreement on how to characterize the experience one has of governmental institutions and actors. This inter-subjective experience, though fluid and cognitively less certain than a positivist ontology might anticipate, is nevertheless ontologically constituted and therefore the subject of a “first order” theory (Gunnel, 1997), upon which we may found our practice and our pedagogy (Abel & Sementelli, 2003).

Taking the inter-subjective experience of good governance as its subject matter secures an ontological status to empirical theory in Public Administration, and also provides an ontological grounding for normative theory. It is thus the standard that administrative theory and practice may hold up, in order to judge institutional structure, process, practice, and outcomes. It is the touchstone or reference point for the qualitatively different types of inquiries that must be made on how the inter-subjective experience of good governance is secured and maintained.

As good governance is determined inter-subjectively, Public Administration must focus on society’s institutions and networks — the locations of inter-subjective exchange where “multiple social actors” negotiate and implement policy; deliver and receive social goods and services (Lynn, 1999, p. 4); negotiate issues of representation, political control, and institutional legitimacy; and establish the means and ends of government (Peters & Pierre, 1998). And, it must locate both theoretical and practical endeavors at the intersection points of institutions and networks, where subjectivities (personal attitudes, values and beliefs) meet, where the personal meets the social and institutional, and where the “local” (parochial) meets the broader society. Inter-subjective experience is formed, deformed, and reformed at these junctures.

Overall, then, administrative theory and practice must incorporate the evolution of the inter-subjective experience of good governance, and concern itself with all loci of interrelationships that could affect such an experience (e.g., organizational, financial, and programmatic structures; administrative rules, practices, and procedures; institutionalized norms, statutes, and policy mandates; the shared attitudes, values, beliefs, interests, and desires of those it affects both broadly and locally; and the shifting networks of interpersonal relationships within society). Since its founding as a field at the turn of the 19th century, Public Administration has in fact defined a distinct disciplinary matrix for itself that now encompasses this subject matter (Abel & Sementelli, 2003). However, because said subject matter requires it to accommodate qualitatively different objects within its study and practice (e.g., statutes and inter-subjective experiences, finances, and beliefs), Public Administration must avail itself of qualitatively different methodologies — ones that have developed over time.
as effective tools for describing and explaining these fundamentally different entities, their particular dynamics, and their peculiar effects.

Consequently, Public Administration and its pedagogy must proceed methodologically by developing a synergy among institutional, behavioral, and hermeneutic approaches. It is insufficient for Public Administration to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of each, and to employ each “where most appropriate,” because its subject matter occurs at precisely the point where institutional structure, process, and power intersect with meaning, values, and behavior. Hence, by independently employing these methodologies, or using them in only traditional ways, it renders them less useful than the act of recognizing that, while they were logically and culturally constructed for certain purposes, methodologies can be used in different ways and hence reconstructed — to some extent — to serve other purposes.

In addition to the qualitatively different objects within its study and practice, Public Administration and its pedagogy must contend with the fluidity of inter-subjective experience. This has two implications for theory, practice, and pedagogy. First, practitioners, theorists, and teachers should “relax all preconceptions as to how the subject matter might behave,” and “permit themselves to be instructed by the subject-matter,” as revealed by the synergy among institutional, behavioral, and hermeneutic methodologies (Wilber & Harrison, 1978, p. 75). They must, in other words, “allow the subject matter to impress upon them its norms and to instill within them its categories” (Wilber & Harrison, 1978, p. 75). Only after doing this should the theorist and the teacher “draw back to become objective and struggle to formulate a patterned explanation of the behavior that they have come to experience” (Wiseman & Rozansky, 1991, p. 713). Only then should the practitioner act. Second, scholars, teachers, and practitioners must remain cognizant of the fact that their understandings and actions are only provisionally and contextually valid. Hence, theory must capture, and practice and pedagogy must reflect, the dynamic synergy of behavior, meaning, values, and institutional factors that affect both the flux and evolution of inter-subjective experience and institutional change.

But, in order to systematically study the dynamic evolution of inter-subjective experience, administrative scholars and teachers must synergize methods of traditional social science, institutionalism, and hermeneutics. To make sense of what otherwise could be a confusing cacophony, practitioners and teachers need a theoretical framework. The problem is that, by simply employing a methodology or a theoretical framework (no matter how carefully chosen), scholars and practitioners introduce certain preconceptions and value-priorities into their endeavors, which pre-pattern and bias experiences, explanations, and practices. To counter this inevitable bias, Public Administration’s methodology, theory, and practice must be synergistic among institutional, behavioral, and hermeneutic approaches, and also be inherently self-critical.
So, we in fact have something to teach. But in light of everything said here, it seems a daunting task. Therefore, those who would give it all up in an identity crisis or suggest that teaching any theory is prohibited, cannot be taken too seriously to task. Nonetheless, they are wrong. It can be done.

**How It Can All Be Taught: Foundational Considerations**

If all those with an opinion on the best pedagogy were laid end-to-end, they would never reach a conclusion. Still, there is a fairly broad consensus that professors should no longer proceed as though students do not exist, and that something should occur in the classroom other than pontification and note-taking. The profession of Public Administration is unique, and so must its pedagogy be. But it is not enough to be unique, attentive to students, and less than apodictic in presentation. The pedagogy must also be effective. So, attention must be given to what sorts of techniques and approaches to learning have proven effective across the board. On that point, there is far less consensus than there is opinion. And, because the best of these opinions are grounded in research, we must take them one by one, until we understand tolerably well what might be said both for and against them, as well as which of their prescriptions will be the most useful for teaching Public Administration.

**Behaviorists**

Behaviorists stress the significance of learning “by producing changes in [one’s] environment.” More importantly, they call to our attention the consequent realization that these changes may be manipulated — in creative ways and on a proper schedule — in order to convince the inexperienced to learn certain things that others have learned by trial and error (Skinner, 1954). In fact, it appears that even “extremely complex performances” might be learned “through successive stages, the contingencies of reinforcement being changed progressively” (Skinner, 1954, p. 87). As applied to education, the most useful ideas in behaviorist theory suggest that learning might be maximized through smiles, nods, verbal encouragement, and immediate and consistent praise. Teaching errors include aversive control (contradiction, failing grades), lagging or infrequent reinforcement, and the failure to develop a skillful program that enables students to move simply and easily through “a series of progressive approximations” toward an understanding of more and more complex subject matters (Skinner, 1954, pp. 93-96). The properly sequenced remedy to these errors is to change the educational environment, first by changing the material to be learned, and then by manipulating a schedule of rewards.

Toward changing the material, it was noted early on that people will “play for hours with mechanical toys … puzzles, [and] in short, with almost anything that feeds back significant changes in the environment and is reasonably free of aversive properties.” So, it was concluded, the “sheer control of nature [that]
is itself reinforcing,” and mechanical devices that provide the opportunity to manipulate the environment were thought to be necessary to the classroom (Skinner, 1954, p. 93). Today, given the avid attention afforded to video games, online role-playing, and Internet surfing, it seems that control of the environment is in itself reinforcing, whether that environment is real or virtual. So, introducing simulations and virtual realities to the classroom might be expected to elicit the same avid response as Skinner’s game-players.

Toward manipulating the schedule of rewards, it was noted early on that, as a professor’s presentation became more and more abstruse, the students became more and more suspicious that the subject being promoted was in reality simply useless; students would direct their attention elsewhere. So, a behaviorist struck upon the insight that competence in any field is generally accomplished by dividing the teaching process “into a very large number of very small steps,” with each step being accompanied by some form of reinforcement upon its accomplishment” (Skinner, 1954, p. 94). When applied to education, this suggests that short, to-the-point readings, programmed texts, and computer-assisted, sequenced learning that provides immediate feedback and enables students to work at their own paces, will render the most satisfying results.

COGNITIVISTS

More complementary than contrary to behaviorists — though they set themselves up as opposing them — are the cognitivists. Their singular insight is that, because students are never so attracted to anything so much as they are to their own ideas, we might as well start with those ideas when trying to educate them. The foundation of this thinking is an array of observations by both pragmatists (Dewey, 1938) and developmental psychologists (Piaget, 1932, 1970), to the effect that people actively construct a personal interpretation, a “schema,” of what they are trying to learn through a self-regulated process of auditory, visual, and tactile interaction with their socio-cultural environments — as mediated, of course, by language and other culturally specific symbol-systems (Bruner, 1991; Jonassen, 1991). Once a schema is developed, it may be “tuned” or encouraged to evolve through tutoring, and controlled encounters with examples, analogies, tasks, and concept usage (Shuell, 1986). Learning, then, is a much more internal event for cognitivists than it is for behaviorists. It involves “higher order” mental activities such as perception, problem-solving, reasoning, and concept-formation, and it occurs by way of the interaction between new information and whatever specifically relevant ideas, concepts, and understandings the student already possesses (Ausubel, 1968).

As applied to the classroom, asking students to explain their current understanding of and previous experiences with concepts, ideas, or events can enable a teacher to hone learning more closely to the students’ internalized
understanding, which should achieve greater effectiveness and save valuable
time (Ausubel, 1968). More importantly, multimedia environments stimulate
students to construct meaningful schema by “selecting words and selecting
images from the presented material, organizing words and organizing images into
coherent mental representations, and integrating the resulting verbal and visual
representations with one another” (Mayer, 1997, p. 4). Once a schema is present
and understood by the teacher, it may be tuned or encouraged to evolve through
opportunities to “learn by watching the behavior of others and observing what
consequences it produces,” (Atkinson, Atkinson, Smith, Bem & Hilgard, 1990),
and by “bringing analytical, critical and synthetic thinking processes into the
open, where students can observe, enact, and practice them with help from the
teacher” (Brown, Collins & Duguid, 1989, p. 4). Because learning is understood
as a chain of stimulus-response connections, the complex patterns of behavior
can be learned by role-modeling (Strauss, 1996), and learning can be enhanced
by providing relevant visual experiences along with verbal information (Paivao,
1971, 1986; Anderson & Bower, 1973). Further, conceptual growth can be
stimulated by the negotiation of meaning among a group of students, and
changes in understandings and perceptions can be facilitated by the sharing of
multiple perspectives.

**Affectivists**

Affectivists are people who are enamored of the idea that educating is not so
much about conditioning people to proper behaviors, or building upon the
student’s received understandings, as it is about replacing empty minds with
open ones. Toward this end, they seek the ways and means of insuring “an
increasing internalization of positive attitudes toward the content or subject
matter,” as this motivates students to “learn and to use what is learned after
leaving the classroom” (Kearney, 1994, p. 81).

Toward these ends, research indicates that, as the relaxed interaction of
teacher and students increases, affective learning also increases (Chory &
McCroskey, 1999). One way of increasing interaction with a non-aversive
approach is to leaven the lesson with humor (Glenn, 2002; Berk, 1996).
Humor can create a positive emotional and social environment, lower defenses,
and help focus attention on the information being presented (Glenn, 2002).
The pedagogical use of humor and laughter has been shown to reduce anxiety,
decrease stress, enhance self-esteem, and increase self-motivation (Berk, 1996).
Additionally, humor can serve as a bridge between educators and students by
demonstrating a shared understanding and a common psychological bond.
It can initiate and sustain student interest in “divergent thinking,” a mode of
critical thinking wherein many unique, creative responses to a single question
or problem are generated (Ziv, 1983, 1988; Dodge, & Rossett, 1982); and it
can enhance learning (Korobkin, 1989).
Adapting Theories To Public Administration

If we are to take learning theory seriously, a pedagogy appropriate to the uniqueness of Public Administration as a profession must incarnate the dynamic synergy among behavior, meaning, values, and institutional factors as they affect the flux and evolution of inter-subjective experience and institutional change, as well as the behavioral, cognitive, and affective factors that facilitate learning. How can all of this be accomplished?

Briefly, it can all be taught by means of a pedagogy that is at once immersive and uncertain, yet directive and sustaining. As described above, I claim that the singular characteristic of our profession is that people make decisions and act under conditions of greater uncertainty than those enjoyed by other professions. Students must learn how to thrive on chaos, to make rapid decisions based on incomplete and biased information, to resolve novel situations as apprehensive parties clamor to secure their interests, and to collaborate with a team of fellow bureaucrats as they identify, share, and master a situation that is filtered through fog of quasi-accurate information (Peters, 1997). Then, administrators are required to navigate the situation, to identify patterns for problem-solving, and to use sophisticated representations to develop and communicate their ideas. To accomplish this, they must grapple with important political, environmental, and social issues that can only be understood through the integration and visualization of multidimensional data. This, in turn, often requires a sufficient grasp of relevant social and natural sciences, engineering, and statistics. At this point, success depends largely upon their abilities to envision and manipulate abstract information (Gordin & Pea, 1995), to build generic and executable mental models (Larkin, 1983); and to include in those models invisible factors and abstractions of competing ideologies, incompatible “life worlds,” sub-cultural predilections, and the political calculations of themselves and others. Unfortunately, the real-life metaphors upon which to build these mental models may not exist, or may suffer from significant limitations, making it difficult for students to envision or communicate abstract phenomena (Frederiksen & White, 2002). Additionally, administrators’ personal experiences, values, attitudes, and beliefs, the interests of the agencies for which they work, and the various conflicts and cultures within these agencies can introduce more confounding factors — ones that distort or contradict the very situations they need to master.

So, the uncertainty that emerges as a necessity of the profession must now become a virtue of the pedagogy. It also must serve as a socializing model for handling the conditions of practice. Unfortunately, substantial research shows that this sort of visualization is difficult for most people (West, 1991). Thus, techniques that can help students recognize patterns; reason qualitatively and quantitatively about social, political, and economic processes; think divergently; translate among frames of reference, ideologies, cultures, attitudes, values, and beliefs; and envision dynamic models for action that incorporate at least the
bulk of these factors are important. So, we must devise ways that use the unique capabilities of advanced information technologies to develop learning experiences that help students master these crucial skills, as they also learn to master core curricular content.

Toward these ends, many educators note the efficacy of humor, as well as immersion, in helping students think divergently and understand world views and experiences other than their own (Madden, 2002). Immersion facilitates multiple frames of reference and supports multi-sensory interaction, by enabling students to manipulate and experience phenomena in new ways. So immersion and humor together can, “(1) provide the experiential referents students lack, (2) enable them to perceive factors and relationships that might otherwise be invisible, and (3) support opportunities to challenge and refine their mental models” (Salzman, Dede, Loftin, Bowen & Sprague, 1997). The problem is that students immersed in conflicting world views, attitudes, values, and beliefs must expend considerable intellectual energy to keep from completely losing their ways and passing out from frustration or exhaustion. Luckily, serious studies of this problem indicate that visual presentations are mentally less demanding than printed text with comparable content (Saettler, 1990). And, if students are alerted to the import and relevance of the conflicting information, the effort that they are willing to invest increases significantly.

So, to leverage the features of humor, visual stimulation, and immersion, and in order to elicit creative uncertainty, PowerPoint presentations that employ diverse media on each slide, enhanced by music, stimulating art, captivating stories that are true to life, and humorous or otherwise appealing audio and video clips, are most effective. Concepts and principles should be stressed over information, and they should be presented by way of Web sites that relate to the slides, and employ hypertext connections to add tone, dimension, and immediately relevant information as they broaden the students’ abilities to develop higher-level, multi-tasking, cognitive skills. Under these conditions, where the class could go at any moment depends to an important degree on where they are in their personal development, and on the values, attitudes, and beliefs that they bring to class. The teacher must not only prepare meticulously, but also be ready to challenge these attitudes, values, and beliefs at every turn, regardless of his or her own predilections.

To provide direction and control in this process, Web sites should be developed to suggest the multiple analytical templates that experience has proven are helpful to students in gaining control over a large amount of diverse stimulation. The templates should be interactive, hypermedia-enhanced, and they should stress methods of deconstructive analysis, as well as inductive and deductive techniques. “Hypermedia” expands hypertext (where the word or media is a link that can be navigated to explore the concept or principle behind it) to include audio-visual as well as written media. Hypermedia also is non-linear in nature,
and reflects more genuinely the thinking that may be expected of administrators, taking students in many directions from a touchstone concept, basic principle, or analytical template.

Inductive and deductive experiences are also necessary. They enable students to distinguish the cogent from the fallacious. But deconstructive experiences offer them much more. Deconstruction throws into sharp relief both the purport of differing values and the consequences of discordant beliefs. “Deconstruction is … an openness to the other” (Derrida, 1976, p. 124), and a challenge to any claim of unequivocal domination by one discourse over another (Johnson, 1980). So, deconstruction augments precisely the sort of learning that is so important to students of public administration, by deepening meaning, explicating apparently conflicting values, and elucidating opposing beliefs. The openness offered by deconstruction stems from the observation that whenever particular interests construct and participate in a discourse, they communicate certain things over and above, aside from, or even as quite the opposite of, what they suppose. There is something important to be gathered from the gaps, contradictions, and ambiguities of any discourse, as well as from constructing a counter-discourse that inverts the meanings of key terms. And this is an enticing thing to do, because concepts, principles, and the discourses that employ them can be fully understood — at least to the Western mind — primarily in relation to their opposites.

Media clips, music, art, and hypermedia most often serve to engage. But the attendant uncertainty may stimulate either engagement or retreat. So students must feel safe to challenge and try out ideas, to promote values, and to defend beliefs that they perhaps have never questioned or cannot clearly articulate on the spot. To encourage engagement, then, their values, attitudes and beliefs, as well as their challenges and struggles, must be acknowledged and confirmed — again regardless of the teacher’s predilections, and regardless of the student’s sophistication. Helpful in this regard are all of the non-aversive tactics suggested by Behaviorists and Cognitivists. These include confirmation; modeling by helping students state their positions and thoughts in their most convincing form; and adding bits of information, examples, and counter-examples from news or history that support or modify a student’s point. Theoretically, scheduling responses also can increase engagement, and is helpful for teaching difficult material. One proven approach, for example, involves asking a series of questions in rapid succession, each of which is simple and easily answered with a high probability of accuracy, followed immediately by confirmation or praise. Studies indicate that following such a pattern will increase the likelihood of students mastering difficult material or tasks that are presented immediately after such an exercise (Story & Horner, 1988). To keep the entire class engaged, another helpful approach is to follow the presentation of material with a problem-solving exercise that requires the application of the previous material to
a salient news event or to student discussions (Shields & Gredler, 2003).

To build the habit of engagement, interactive media that simultaneously present qualitative and quantitative representations are useful for helping students bridge the gap between experience and abstraction. The material should be culturally and politically relevant to all aspects of their lives, because research indicates that educational experiences are solidified through the consumption of popular culture and technology (Hebdige, 1979; Willis, 1990).

CONCLUSION

One thing is clear from the literature — signature pedagogies make a difference. They prefigure the cultures of professional work and provide early socialization into the practices and values of a field. The way we teach will shape how our professionals behave, and in a society so dependent on the quality of its professionals, that is no small matter. So, although a signature pedagogy is only one component of what is needed to enable high-quality administration, it is essential.

Because the practitioners and academics of our profession must bridge theory and practice, and because the singular characteristic of our profession is that its people make decisions and act under conditions of greater uncertainty than those enjoyed by other professions, our students must learn how to thrive on chaos; to make rapid decisions based on incomplete and biased information; to resolve novel situations as apprehensive parties clamor to secure their interests; and to collaborate with a team of fellow bureaucrats as they identify, share, and master a situation that is filtered through a fog of quasi-accurate information. They also must learn to navigate the situation by identifying patterns for problem solving, and employing sophisticated representations to develop and communicate their ideas, while grappling with important political, environmental, and social interests.

Success depends to a large extent upon developing students’ abilities to envision and manipulate abstract information; to build generic and executable mental models; and to include in those models invisible factors and abstractions such as competing ideologies, incompatible “life worlds,” sub-cultural predilections, and their own and others’ political calculations. The structure of signature pedagogies must involve complex performances of questions, conjectures, observations, analyses, interpretations, hypotheses, forms of evidence, individual inspirations, and collective deliberation. To reiterate, this structure is effectively accomplished through a paradoxical pedagogy that is at once immersive and uncertain, yet directive and retentive.

REFERENCES


Toward a Signature Pedagogy for Public Administration


Limits to Technology-Based Distance Education in MPA Curricula

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ABSTRACT
The growing capabilities of distance-education technologies, combined with potential cost and efficiency benefits, and the possibility to extend opportunities for higher education to wider, sometimes-isolated audiences, is creating a predictable move to offer increasing numbers of graduate public administration courses and even complete degrees, through various technological means. While these trends offer new and exciting opportunities to (1) reach students who in earlier times would not be able to engage in graduate education, and (2) further extend the professionalism of public administrators, there are philosophical and empirical reasons to consider the possible limits of technology-based, distance-education practices. This article argues that contemporary governance requires administrators with competence in social and group processes that are best when developed in a live format.

INTRODUCTION

In 1997, Peterson’s Guide to Four-Year Colleges (1996) reported that, since 1994, there was a 700 percent increase in the use of Internet technology for distance education. According to Making the Grade (Allen & Seaman, 2006), 89 percent of public, higher-education institutions offered some form of distance education and, although 90 percent of those institutions used some form of passive or asynchronous Internet technology, just slightly more than 50 percent used two-way audio/visual technologies. By 2004, 79 percent of doctoral institutions that offered face-to-face undergraduate courses also offered graduate courses online (Allen & Seaman, 2006). There is every indication that the use of distance-education technologies, particularly online applications, will continue to expand. Moreover, nearly all of the technology now available is undergoing continuous improvement and innovation, which promises to make educational opportunities available to previously isolated segments of the population.

At the same time, the environment that administrators work in poses new and increasing challenges. Many scholars and practitioners (see the section below for an overview of this literature) suggest that today’s administrators will require a
different range of skills than in the past. Much of the thinking and writing on PA education to date presumes the utility of extending the use of distance-education technologies, particularly at the graduate level, and has focused most of its attention either on technical questions such as course structure and technology utilization, or on administrative questions of resource allocation, impacts on core faculty lines and intellectual property rights (Rahm, Reed, & Rydl, 1999; Mingus, 1999; Ebon, 1999; Leip, 1999; Hutchinson, 1999; Goodsell & Armstrong, 2001). Other research (Scheer, 2001; Carey, 2001) suggests that there is no significant difference between face-to-face and online-learning outcomes. While such results are neither conclusive nor uncontested (Brown & Liedholm, 2002; Carey, 2001), the majority of work in this area appears to presume, or at least accept, the inevitable continuation of current trends. It therefore focuses on resolving instrumental questions of how to maximize the effectiveness of the usual tools, rather than examining the prior normative question of whether these tools ought to be used in the first place.

This article focuses on the appropriateness of using technology in various educational settings in the first place. That is, given the needs of the public administration field, can technology-based distance education sufficiently meet the needs of MPA students for acquiring a particular set of competencies necessary to work effectively in a contemporary environment? A further question is: What are the limitations of distance-education technology in supporting the development of competencies necessary for public administrators to be effective in current and future environments? This paper explores the potential limitations of distance education, (1) by using educational, psychoanalytic and public-administration theories as a means of framing and examining the educational experiences required for contemporary public administrators to be effective, and (2) by assessing the pedagogical educational strategies for acquiring those experiences. In doing so, I am not suggesting that distance education be abandoned for public administration education. Rather, we should explore the outcomes of public administration education more extensively, and recognize that “skills acquisition” is one of many metaphors that describe the nature and outcome of education. The post-traditional characteristics/needs of contemporary public administration require a reconceptualization of these competencies, so that they include and move beyond the standard instrumental tools of administration and management.

Moreover, when distance technologies are used, we must recognize the consequences of their use, and craft strategies that maximize our effectiveness in working with MPA students in that environment. I also hope that, by exploring the limitations of the technology, it is possible to highlight the attributes of MPA education that can be improved, regardless of setting. Finally, my greatest aspiration for this work is simply to encourage a more intentional and reflexive discourse about the aims and consequences of embracing technology-mediated, distance education in PA.
Technology Trends For Distance Learning

Before addressing the pedagogic and administrative theory issues associated with distance-learning technology, it is useful briefly to frame the range of technologies being considered here. The past 15 years show significant growth in the breadth of technologies applied to distance-learning applications. Peterson's Guide to Distance Learning Programs 2004 (2003) recognizes a wide range of distance-education technologies that include print, audio, video, two-way interactive video or television, pre-recorded video, and Internet-based approaches. Initially, there was little consistency in implementing a specific type of information technology for distance-learning in higher education. Institutions of higher education experimented with any number of applications, such as voice mail, audio-conferencing, proprietary client-server and Web-based online courses, satellite and broadcast television, plus a variety of digital video technologies — primarily Digital Subscriber Line (DSL), Integrated Services Distribution Network (ISDN), and Asynchronous Transfer Mode (ATM)-based systems. Zemsky and Massy (2004) and Kirkup and Kirkwood (2005) note that, while the initial excitement surrounding e-learning promised fundamental and revolutionary changes in pedagogy, for the most part digital tools have been used in a gradual way to simplify the tasks and maximize the efficiencies of course delivery. Although potential changes to the educational approach have yet to be realized, prior questions of what those fundamental changes are, and whether they are desirable, have yet to be clearly settled. Educational technology, like other areas of information technology, continues to develop and change rapidly, and the following description is not intended to be exhaustive. It instead provides a rough sketch of these tools and their functionality, as a means of assessing how well they can meet the needs of graduate-level, public administration education.

Despite the widespread interest in delivering online courses, until quite recently television was the most widely used distribution mechanism. In the United States, the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS, 2003) estimated that in 1995 it had enrolled more than 370,000 students nationwide. By 2003, nearly 6 million students had participated in courses offered through roughly 600 colleges and universities (PBS, 2003). By all accounts, television likely will remain an important and growing conduit for distance-education programs.

In addition to the use of traditional broadcast television, some institutions have used satellite down-linking as a means of distributing unidirectional information to one or many receiver sites. Given the reduced cost and improved functionality of other technologies, the use of satellite distribution methods appears to be declining.

Some technological consolidation appears to be taking place beyond the use of broadcast and satellite television as delivery mechanisms. Online, many institutions have migrated from the use of in-house applications or commercially
available business-oriented groupware packages toward Web-based, course-
management software designed specifically for educational applications. These
include WebCT and Blackboard (which have merged into a single company),
and open-source packages such as Moodle. Other applications, such as WebEX
(desktop software that allows real-time audio and limited video interaction) and
portal technologies that were developed primarily for business and commercial
use, are being adapted to meet the needs of users in educational settings.

Distance-education technology can be loosely broken into two categories,
depending on the way that the interaction is supported. Synchronous technology
supports real-time interaction between users, while asynchronous technology
allows interaction, but not in an instantaneous or immediate form. The packages
described thus far provide a structured environment that primarily supports
asynchronous course delivery (with the exception of WebEX, which enables
synchronous interaction). The software enables instructors to post course
content in a wide range of file types, provide feedback to students, and engage in
discussion through e-mail and other electronic tools.

Another technology that appears to have broad application and promise is
interactive video or television (ITV). In most cases, ITV applications encompass
several forms of transmission. One is the use of ISDN technology to transmit
digital video and audio signals between two or more sites, over existing, copper-
wire telephone lines. Other ITV systems utilize ATM technologies to transmit
“packets” of data over high-speed, shared or dedicated networks, between two
or more sites. The latter technology has the advantage of greater speed and
bandwidth, but is more expensive to develop and not as widely available at the
time of this writing.

The technologies also impact course format and, more importantly, the
possible interaction within the course environment. It is important to examine
briefly the capacities of these technologies for supporting various learning
processes. The core technology of both traditional television broadcasts and
satellite television distribution does not easily support synchronous interaction.
As a result, some institutions have endeavored to create interactive opportunities
by installing toll-free phone lines that enable students to submit questions and
comments to instructors.

The use of course-management applications, such as WebCT and
Blackboard, largely support static, asynchronous interaction among class
members. That is, the information presented through the software is largely
stable, and changes only when a user (either the instructor or occasionally a
student) posts information that gets “pushed” to other users who then access
that information. Moreover, these applications are not designed to actively
support real-time or synchronous interactions. The discussion and/or chat-
room capacities of the tools support some interaction, but synchronous
discourse is awkward within the application.
Asynchronous technologies include broadcast TV, traditional Hyper-Text Markup Language (HTML) Web applications, portal technologies and, to a large extent, Web-based applications such as WebCT/Blackboard. Broadcast TV in a pre-recorded format is likely to allow little, if any, interaction between student and teacher, or among fellow students. Traditional HTML Web pages serve as an effective means of making information available for student use, but not in real-time. Web-based, education-support applications enable greater multidirectional interaction that includes both students and faculty, though the immediacy of that interaction is not the applications’ primary function. Portal technology offers more opportunity for fluidity, because it allows users to customize Web-page content, but it does not support real-time interaction between actors, within a course.

Other technologies, such as ITV, and Web applications such as WebX, enable synchronous interaction between class members. While this opportunity for interaction extends pedagogic possibilities, the technologies continue to experience important limitations. For example, ITV, whether transmitted via copper wire or on high-speed networks, frequently encounters audio- and video-quality problems. One such limitation results from bandwidth constraints, particularly for those systems using ISDN connections, or where there is a high level of competition among users for available bandwidth. Another limitation is the conversational delay caused by transitions from one speaker to another, both within and across sites. This means that, as a discussion moves from one person to another, the current technology is frequently not fluid enough or fast enough to follow rapid changes of speakers and sites in real time. Similar limitations exist with applications such as WebEX, although they are compounded to some degree, because the only video broadcast is from the instructor’s site, and the instructor has control of all audio participation. While this reduces the technology requirements for students and makes the application more user-friendly and accessible to a larger population, it also limits the fluidity of the interaction, and truncates the amount of information typically available in a live discussion or conversational setting.

Several issues emerge from this brief assessment of trends, tools, and current technological capacities. First, as with all areas of technological development, there is a wide range of tools that instructors can draw on to support education, whether or not it is in a distance setting. Second, available technology is continuing to develop and improve in both functionality and capacity. This includes what it can accomplish, as well as how smoothly and easily it can be accomplished. As technology development continues, some of the current limitations may be mitigated or resolved. Despite ongoing development, a critical question remains: Can current or emerging technology, in principle, support the types of educational experiences necessary for administrators to be effective in the current governance environment? A closer examination of public administration and educational theory is required to answer this question.
Changing Environments and Roles

The importance of public administration education and the acquisition of new knowledge has long been a part of the discipline’s literature (Wilson, 1887). In recent years, much attention has been given to the nature of public administration in a late-modern or postmodern world. An interesting theme in this heterodox collection of work describes shifts in the role and stance that public administrators might take, relative to their work and to their publics.

As early as the mid-1970s, some began to describe a change in the social environment that was so substantial that it required a rethinking of the nature of public administration as a discipline (Caldwell, 1975). During this time, the cynicism and outright hostility toward bureaucrats had grown to unprecedented levels. In response to what may be fundamentally different sociopolitical conditions — in addition to the criticisms faced by public administrators — a growing chorus of voices has called for public administration practice to move away from the classical and behavioral models.

At the heart of much of this work are varied perspectives claiming that the institutions of public administration are central to democracy. Some emphasize the impacts and processes for improving citizens’ contributions (Stivers, 1990; Frederickson, 1982; King, Feltey, & Susel, 1998). A further theme emerging from this body of literature focuses on the unique contexts and particular characteristics of specific settings and instances (Box, 1998; Marschall, 2004; Sutton & Kemp, 2006). Interestingly, although much of the work that coincides with these themes orbits the issues of community development, participation, and the like, it also applies to more “technical” spheres within the discipline, such as policy analysis, budgeting and program evaluation (deLeon, 1992; Beckett & King, 2002; O’Sullivan & D’Agostino, 2002). The general tendency in much of this writing is an anti-hierarchical and anti-foundational orientation. In other words, there is a widely spread claim that knowledge is contextually constructed, and that it is not the exclusive province of those residing at the top of organizational hierarchies (McSwite, 1997).

The common relevant issue associated with PA education, which emerges from these and similar works, is that, to be effective in the current culture and climate, public administrators need to develop new approaches, because the sole use of narrow technical or substantive expertise — while still necessary — is insufficient. In addition to applying technical skills, administrators must be able to effectively engage with citizens, and facilitate public discourse under conditions that not only are characterized by dissent, but that also may appear incommensurable, or present the possibility of outright, physical conflict. Such an environment requires the ability to create conditions of contact, and doing so appears to require more than the “tool bag” provided by a purely technical MPA education.

Working more intentionally with implicit and explicit ontology and the
epistemology levels of the field, much of the so-called postmodern or post-structuralist public administration theory literature indicates that different political and administrative processes are more necessary in today’s sociopolitical climate than has been the case historically. Fox and Miller’s (1995) work richly describes the character of the sociopolitical climate, and presents a model of discourse that they believe is more effective under current conditions. The model is anti-foundational, and requires administrators to abandon any type of one-best-way approach. It also presents a form of discourse that would potentially demand a far different set of skills than seen in past decades. Farmer (1995) draws on a wide range of postmodern theory to propose a repositioning of administrators that also enables them to oppose the negative outcomes of life in a world dominated by administrative apparatus and process. The notion of anti-administration, its opposition to fascist processes and meta-narratives, plus its preference for diversity, poses another challenge to the classical model of the “expert” administrator.

Similarly, O.C. McSwite’s (1997) discourse analysis and Thomas Catlaw’s (2005, 2006) genealogy of the ontology of representation, as well as his illumination of the legitimacy problem, make this an even more forceful case. McSwite’s (1997) analysis of the evolution and structure of the legitimacy discourse — from the American Founding to the contemporary period of cynicism toward government — points out that the legitimacy problem is constructed in a particular ontology. While this ontology begins to emerge in the Founding debates, and ultimately is embodied in the Constitution, a later and particularly illustrative instance of this ontology is revealed in the Friedrich-Finer debates that frame the recurring “discretion versus accountability” dispute. McSwite (1997) points out that, beyond their superficial debate, Friedrich and Finer at the ontological level share a functionalist (Burrell & Morgan, 1986) ontology that is grounded in a particular sort of consciousness. Retention of this form of consciousness and its ontological commitments renders the legitimacy issue irresolvable. The constitution of this ontology in American political and social discourse is, however, contested at various historical moments, which exposes the possibility of an alternate ontology that renders the legitimacy question moot.

In grossly simplified form, Catlaw (2005) argues that, from the time of Greek political thought until today, the logic of political authority requires some form of categorical exclusion. For the Greeks, this is philosophically embodied in the distinction between zoë (bare life) and bios (political life), along with a corresponding line of reasoning in which the necessities of bare life or physical survival are viewed as being beyond or outside the consideration of political discourse. The exclusion from political life and discourse encompassed both the issues associated with ensuring and maintaining physical life and those who were responsible for it —namely women, slaves, and their portions of zoë. The logic
of exclusion remains throughout the development of modern political systems, though it is obscured and convoluted by the concept of popular sovereignty. The difficulty in the United States, both theoretically and increasingly in practice since the Founding, is that exclusion has been brought into the system. In other words, unity is implied by the notion of a sovereign People from whom political authority is drawn. Despite the impossibility of this unity in an increasingly pluralist political community, the system remained functional via the structural limits on power that were built into the Constitution, and which recognized the inevitability of divisions within the People.

The conclusion is that, if representative democracy functions as a sociopolitical process of creating reality, it will work as long as there is a shared ontology. Under conditions of extensive pluralism, and when growing inclusively, that shared ontology is increasingly disputed. One effect has been to obscure or erode the distinction between zoë and bios in a popular, lived experience. In American political culture, this is expressed as a breakdown of the boundary between public and private life. Simply put, the private is increasingly seen as public, and what originally was part of the private sphere becomes the province of government action. This trajectory sheds new light on the legitimacy question, because it reveals an interpretation wherein questions of legitimacy are derived from the perception that the government is increasingly encroaching on the private sphere. This interpretation suggests that such encroachment is a necessary consequence of the collapse of structural exclusion. Stated differently, the discontent and anxiety associated with the postmodern condition is a paradox of authority (Catlaw, 2006). As the logic of liberalism has expanded, and as more traditionally excluded categories of the population are given access to governance processes, this positive opening of society has simultaneously undermined traditional forms of authority that once provided it with social order and comprehensibility.

Given the collapse of a stable, constitutive symbolic — the collection of elements such as language, law and culture that render human experience stable and sensible — one promising option is to adopt the Lacanian discourse of the analyst. It could serve as a potential response to this interpretation of the legitimacy crisis, and the corresponding sociopolitical experience (McSwite, 1997; Catlaw, 2006). Social process, consistent with the characteristics of Lacan’s discourse of the analyst, responds to discordant social conditions by repositioning administrative actors so that they might find new ways of bringing about satisfaction and enjoyment, while recognizing the lack of a solid ontological foundation. What is needed is a new understanding of the grounds for and the function of authority (Catlaw, 2006) — i.e., one that is not grounded in an existing ontology or in creating a new universalizing ontology, but one that is based on an understanding of the requirements of social processes and dynamics, in a world of multiple and contending ontologies.
This is possible in at least two different ways. First, Catlaw (2006), drawing on Hannah Arendt’s work, posits the need to create a space for appearing. Such a public space becomes the scene where reality is cultivated, and where that reality gathers strength and unity (not a permanent, foundational sort of unity, but rather, a crafted unity). The second attribute is experienced through the logic of subtraction or, as McSwite (2003) describes it, refusal. As opposed to a “take my ball and go home” sort of refusal, subtraction is the refusal to grant deference to traditional understandings or forms of authority, while remaining fully engaged. It recognizes that authority is a structural necessity, but refuses to allow that authority to rise to a level that is representative of the symbolic. Such a move, which admittedly is neither easy nor simple, requires a rigorous, collaborative relationship.

The next move is to work on the concept of midwifery (Stivers, 1993; Catlaw, 2006). In this case, the role of the midwife represents the facilitation or bringing forth of new possibilities, by means of an embodied and embodying action. Similarly, Caldwell (1975), seeing the substantial cultural and social changes that face postmodern society, calls for the role of public administration to shift from that of a doctor — or the position of expertise and foundational knowledge — to that of a cultural midwife. Socially, or culturally, the role of the midwife is to bring forth the truth of the void or the lack. The midwife delivers the truth that ultimately there is no answer, no strategy, and no policy except the one that emerges through social process (in the public space noted above). The midwife — also the analyst in Lacanian terms — becomes the void that is recognized and dealt with via the social process. It is critical that this function of society take place in a highly contact-ful form of relationship that is comprised of the richest possible human experience. With less contact or a less thick human experience in discourse — especially one embodying the discourse of the analyst — participants are driven by the failing symbolic, and therefore more likely to fall back into objectified interaction.

The emerging conclusion from this line of reasoning is that if administrators are going to facilitate the emergence of a stable symbolic that makes collective action possible, they must move beyond a collection of technical skills and expertise, be able to effectively engage with citizens, and they must facilitate public discourse in a richly pluralist context, without ontological agreement. Moreover, they must be able to do so in conditions that are very likely to be highly contentious and incommensurable, and that also raise the possibility of physical or political conflict. This environment requires the ability to create genuine contact that develops into a functional symbolic, and it seems increasingly clear that this process requires more than the body of technical expertise that is provided by purely instrumental MPA education. The question that now remains to be answered is whether or not technology-based distance education is sufficient for developing such skills.
Post-traditional Public Administration Education

When I was in the ninth grade, my civics teacher was widely regarded by my peers as perhaps the most demanding (read: terrifying) teacher in our entire junior high school. On the wall in his classroom was a Monty Python-esque poster, which he used to describe his philosophy of education. In the poster’s several frames of action, one sees the cartoon profile of a man’s head. A large hand comes in from the top of the frame, and unscrews the top of the man’s head, to pour in “knowledge,” and then screws the top of the head back on. The teacher proceeded to explain to us that this was NOT his style of teaching. Rather, it was his intent to engender a more interactive form of education, where we as students were participants in our own educations, rather than serving as mere recipients of the facts we were supposed to learn. Although I was obviously struck by and still remember this alternative model of education, the vast majority of my educational experiences were more like the banking metaphor of education (Freier, 1970), that was loosely depicted in the poster, than they were like the more active/interactive model that my civics teacher once promoted, and that I now aspire toward.

The basis of an alternative to the banking model of education has a long heritage. In the mid-18th century, Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote what is considered to be one of Western history’s great thought experiments on education. In Émile [On Education] (1762/1911), Rousseau describes how nature can act as a perfect educator. He casts himself as a tutor, whose role is to structure and facilitate the experiences of his pupil so that he is able to comprehend the lessons being taught by nature. In describing the process of structuring and facilitating Emile’s education, Rousseau adopts an active alternative to the banking model — he does not directly convey facts and ideas to his pupil. He creates an environment and corresponding experiences that allow Emile to reflexively develop his own ideas.

More than century later, John Dewey, in Democracy and Education (1916), continued this line of thinking. For Dewey, no idea can be directly conveyed from one person to another. At best, such an effort results in the idea being misunderstood in a way that closely approximates the original idea held by the teacher. Instead, according to Dewey, education or thinking occurs when the learning experience allows or encourages students to reflect on the concept and thereby adopt it into their understanding of the world and their own relations and activities within it. Freire’s (1970) alternative to the banking model presents a dialogic model, wherein students and instructors interact as they explore and learn from their experiences. Contemporary scholars further develop the notion of experiential, experimental, and transformative education that was advanced by Dewey. In some cases they link it with post-traditional social theory, extending the anti-foundational aspects of the earlier work (Usher & Bryant, 1989; Shields, 2003; O’Leary, 2005; Dyke, 2006). From this perspective, any type of
education, including public administration education, should be interactive. Both face-to-face and technology-mediated distance education are, in principle, suited to accomplish this objective.

Beyond the active and interactive notion of education, a second aspect to consider in contemporary PA programs is elicited from what is known about communications, because the process of creating effective social and political discourse requires communication. The extent and importance of non-verbal communications in this discourse is widely overlooked. Birdwhistell’s (1952, 1970) research indicates that less than 35 percent of the social meaning of any communication is conveyed verbally. Reusch and Kees (1956) argue that, out of seven communication systems, only two involve words. Hall (1959) identifies 10 primary message systems, only one of which involves verbal language. Hall (1976) goes on to note that nonverbal communications systems are interwoven with the fabric of personality and into society as well. They are even rooted in how one experiences oneself at the deepest levels of personality, up to and including the process of gender identification.

What emerges from this research is a clear picture that effective communication — a critical aspect of social discourse — requires much more information than what can be conveyed by words alone. Moreover, the complex ways that humans acquire information from the world around them is extraordinary. The volume of data taken in by our senses and nerve endings — some 11 million bits of information per second — is overwhelming (Norretranders, 1999). Because we are consciously aware of only 16 to 40 bits of this information in any given second (Norretranders, 1999), one is left to wonder what becomes of the remaining 10-million-plus bits that we also acquire. It is clear that large portions of the data we take in (such as the feeling of the seam of a sock rubbing on my toe, or the sound of a computer fan humming while I type) are of little value in shaping behaviors and responses to the world around us. However, it is also clear that much of the information outside of conscious awareness is useful and, in fact, does affect our actions (Gladwell, 2005; Wilson, 2002). Jungian psychology, particularly as it has been read by June Singer and Mary Loomis (1982), is useful in conceptualizing human information-acquisition processes. Jung’s (1971) taxonomy of personality describes two attitudes — extraversion and introversion. Extraverts tend to be focused on the outer or physical world, while introverts focus more on the inner, subjective or psychological world. Jung then adds four functional types to these attitudes: thinking, feeling, sensation and intuition. Of these four functions, sensation and intuition are grouped into a perceiving pair; thinking and feeling become a judging pair. When all of the functional elements of Jung’s model are integrated, it yields eight modes, which combine the four functions with the two orientations or attitudes. These modes comprise the totality of how we take in and process data. Briefly, the eight modes and their operations are as shown in Table 1. (See Table 1.)
Drawing on Jung’s later work, Singer and Loomis’ interpretation emphasizes a more dynamic and holistic understanding of it. This more fluid and extensive interpretation of Jung suggests that, while well-developed modes are likely to be more active in a personality, other less-developed modes also continue to operate. As a simple example, this helps explain why some individuals are more attuned to the undertones or innuendos of a conversation (using well-developed, extraverted intuition) and others more attuned to the specific words spoken (using extraverted sensation). Because these modes are active, data acquired through them may exist below the level of consciousness, but, as Gladwell (2005) points out, individuals can learn the skill of “thin-slicing” or accessing that information for decision-making purposes. What remains critical in these processes of perception is the availability of extensive, rich layers of information. The more that perceptual data is limited or truncated, the more our functionality is diminished — not just in communication, but in all aspects of perception and cognition.

In sum, educational theories that started with Rousseau and Dewey made the case for effective education that is active, experiential, reflexive, collaborative, and that occurs in a relationship. These are the same necessary characteristics of social discourse that are illuminated by public administration theory literature when it responds to the conditions of late-modernism or postmodernity. Because the social interaction experience in a distance-learning environment is mediated and truncated through current and foreseeable technologies, this format appears to be insufficient to support the rich, effective discourse experiences that would enable MPA students to replicate the rich, effective relationships in a contentious public setting. Further, while technology-based distance education has the ability to offer learning environments that include some of these characteristics, it falls short in its ability to transmit sufficient levels of information.

The implication of these issues is that, in conditions of incommensurability (postmodern language games), nonverbal communication can become more important, because verbal communication is contested. The rich data available in face-to-face communication better enables effective social discourse to develop. Dewey, Rousseau, and others make the case that experience is critical to education. This type of communication experience is all the more important in some aspects of public administration education, because of the contemporary contexts where rich data is needed. Moreover, students in a live-format class have the opportunity to experience, reflect on and further develop their actions in, and their understanding of, such a rich and contentious data environment. At best, distance-education technology limits and obscures critical aspects of that experience. We cannot learn the skills to function in the conditions of postmodernity when we lack the appropriate contexts and opportunities. These skills have to be lived and experienced in person, which requires something more than technology-mediated educational experiences.
Limits to Technology-Based Distance Education in MPA Curricula

Table 1. Cognitive Modes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introverted Sensation</td>
<td>Draws on kinesthetic and proprioceptive bodily sensations, i.e., the sense of physical states such as stress, relaxation, excitement, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraverted Sensation</td>
<td>Relates to the physical connections to life through the senses — auditory, tactile, visual, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introverted Intuition</td>
<td>Recognizes symbols of the unconscious, beggar, father/hero, etc. The inward imagination generates ideas and suppositions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraverted Intuition</td>
<td>Allows for seeing the possibilities in a situation. Tends to be more aware of ambiance than the specifics of décor; focuses on the tenor of a conversation rather than the specific topic. Provides the source of hunches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introverted Thinking</td>
<td>Conceptual, problem-solving mode that is focused on ideas, concepts or symbols. Characteristic of philosophers and mathematicians.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraverted Thinking</td>
<td>Logical, problem-solving mode that is focused on the outer or physical world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introverted Feeling</td>
<td>Draws connections to inner values, be they personal, family, societal, abstract, spiritual, mystical or even those that potentially conflict with other held values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraverted Feeling</td>
<td>Draws connections to others through shared experiences and recognizes intrinsic value. The mode that encompasses the human factor of decisions.</td>
</tr>
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Also adapted from *Dancing the Wheel of Psychological Types*, by M. Loomis, 1991, Wilmette, IL: Chiron Publications. Copyright 1991 by Chiron Publications. Adapted with permission of author.

Conclusions and Discussion

There is a widely accepted axiom in ethics that “ought implies can.” That is, if one is morally obligated to act in a particular way, that person also should have the ability to act in that way. The risk and periodic tendency in technology development is the reversal of that axiom, so as to suggest that the ability to develop and apply a new technology somehow implies that we should do so. The concerns and arguments developed in the preceding pages should not be read as a blanket indictment of using various communication technologies in public administration education. Rather, the argument here points out that development of a new (renewed?) set of critical abilities by students and practitioners of public administration are not sufficiently supported by the current generation of technologies. Moreover, given the rich, experienced character of education that is required to adequately develop these competencies, it appears unlikely that any of the foreseeable generations of education technology will fully meet these needs.

Beyond the application of technology in public administration education, the argument here also suggests that we need to give continued attention to the pedagogical approaches used in the classroom. The claim that interactive and generative approaches can be utilized in a live, face-to-face format does not necessarily imply that they are universally applied in the classroom. We must
strive, individually and as a discipline, to be reflexive about the ways that we enable learning among our students.

Finally, having made these claims, and given the fact that our ability to predict the weather — let alone technology trends — is quite crude, a further conclusion might be that these issues should remain as part of the discipline’s discourse. It is important for us to continue to interrogate our assumptions and approaches to distance education, because many of the concerns revealed by a distance-education technology discourse apply equally well to live classroom approaches. The possibility that these parallel discourses can inform each other has the potential to synergistically improve practices in both technological and live classroom settings.

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Public Administration Programs in America’s Community Colleges: The Implications of their Surprising Scarcity

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Abstract

Almost half of all undergraduate students in the United States are enrolled in community colleges, and it was once expected that the nation’s community colleges would move aggressively to provide introductory-level education in public affairs/administration. Our research, however, reveals that less than two percent of America’s community colleges offer associate’s degree programs in public affairs/administration. A telephone survey of the programs that exist revealed substantial curriculum content overlap that could present articulation problems for students who move on to four-year degrees and graduate work in our profession. Community colleges play major roles in educating some categories of public servants, especially those in the public safety and health areas, but the need for “mass” education in public affairs/administration, which is oriented to training first-level supervisors in the basics of public service and management skills, is not being met by community colleges.

Introduction

The number of persons in the United States who could benefit from some form of education in public affairs and administration is quite large. The total number of civilian employees of our Federal, state, and local governments combined, as reported in the last published Census of Governments, was slightly more than 21 million (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002). That number approximately equals Australia’s total population (Australian Bureau, 2008). In fact, America’s government employees outnumber the total populations in 156 countries (Population Reference Bureau, 2008).

If we assume that one in 10 government employees needs at least minimal exposure to the content of our profession, then we need to educate more than
two million people. If we assume that only one in 100 government employees would need professional education in our field (a startlingly low ratio), the number would still exceed 200,000. The need for “mass” education in our profession is even more evident when we include those who work for the nation’s nonprofit organizations. In 2002, the same year as the last published Census of Governments, total employment in the nation’s nonprofit sector was approximately 8.8 million people (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2005). The total combined number of employees in the nation’s governments and nonprofits was nearly 30 million.

Back in the 1970s, some in our profession were expecting that the nation’s community colleges would move aggressively to provide introductory-level education in our profession. The National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) responded to those expectations. In 1979, NASPAA issued “Guidelines for Community and Junior College Students Who Intend to Transfer to Baccalaureate Programs in Public Affairs/Administration” (NASPAA, 1979). Considering the size and scope of America’s community colleges, and the fact that they tended to be well-attuned entrepreneurially to local workforce needs, it was reasonable to assume that they would play a significant role in meeting the needs for “mass” education in public affairs and administration. Unfortunately, this study reveals that they do not.

**COMMUNITY COLLEGES**

Community colleges play a major role in undergraduate education in the United States. Today, there are 1,202 community colleges in the nation, 991 of which are public institutions (American Association of Community Colleges, 2007). Almost half, 46 percent, of all undergraduate students in the United States are enrolled in community colleges. Some 6.6 million people are enrolled for credit in these institutions. Most (60 percent) are part-time students. Community college students are usually employed while they study, including 83 percent of part-time students and 77 percent of full-time students. The mean age of community college students is 29, and 34 percent come from minority groups. Community colleges play an important role in helping to achieve intergenerational mobility; 39 percent of the students represent the first generation in their families to attend college (AACC, 2007).

Fostering intergenerational mobility is a primary mission of community colleges. Open admissions policies and extensive remedial programs, for example, are common. There are generally two primary aspects in the missions of community colleges — developmental and preparatory (Donovan, 1988). Their developmental mission consists of activities that are geared especially to the needs of “under-prepared” students — those whose prior education has left them in need of some remediation. Developmental activities generally fall into four categories. Students are instructed in learning skills, they are taught general
education topics to remediate deficiencies, they are given opportunities to participate in a wide variety of educational and cultural offerings, and they can receive guidance toward careers and life choices.

The preparatory mission of community colleges is two-fold: (1) preparation for direct employment, or (2) preparation for transfer to a four-year institution. Community colleges typically work closely with local economic development authorities to create vocational-technical programs. These can lead to either certificates or terminal associate’s (AA/AS) degrees. Approximately half of all nurses and close to 80 percent of all law enforcement officers, firefighters, and emergency medical technicians (EMTs) are educated at community colleges (AACC, 2007). The second preparatory function is education for transfer to a four-year institution. “Articulation” is the process of coordinating the studies of students at the community college level with the curricula of four-year institutions to lessen overlap of course material and facilitate smooth transitions. NASPAA’s 1979 guidelines were designed to facilitate articulation to baccalaureate programs.

In a 1998 JPAE article, Banas and Emory argued that community colleges are the best place for entry-level education in public service available to the “vast cadre of operation-level public employees” (Banas & Emory, 1998, p. 225). Considering the obvious importance of community colleges in educating large segments of our population, it is surprising that little is known about the scope and characteristics of public administration education in community colleges. To remedy that gap, we conducted a survey of all identifiable public administration programs in American community colleges.

The Survey

The starting point for the survey was a list of community colleges, identified as offering programs in our field, in Peterson’s Guide to Two-Year Colleges (2007). Peterson’s is generally considered to be the most authoritative source of information on programs offered by America’s community colleges. Checks were made, mostly via Web sites, to assure that each institution did, in fact, offer an associate’s degree program in our field. A telephone survey was then administered to 20 program directors of the identifiable programs. No sampling procedures were needed; the number of programs turned out to be so small that all reachable program directors were surveyed. Questions asked included the following topics discussed here: program growth and change, curriculum content, articulation with four-year institutions, and whether NASPAA guidelines or other materials were used in developing these programs.

Findings

The most startling finding of our investigation occurred at the outset of our research. We immediately learned that very few community colleges offer degree
programs in public administration. Peterson’s Two-Year Colleges 2007 listed only 23 institutions with associate’s degree programs — 19 are listed under the category “Public Administration” and an additional four are listed under “Public Administration and Social Service Professions-Related.” No programs were listed under the categories of “public affairs,” “public management,” or “public policy.” The 23 programs are offered in 17 states; only four states have more than one program. Considering that there are 1,202 community colleges, the 23 with associate’s degree programs represent less than two percent (1.9 percent) of the total number of institutions.

Furthermore, none of the 20 directors who were interviewed characterized his/her student enrollments as undergoing rapid growth. All directors who could be identified and located were interviewed, which included all but three (a total of 20). Seven reported moderate growth, nine reported no change, and four reported declining enrollments. Community colleges, on the whole, are entrepreneurial. They tend to be very responsive in offering new programs where a demand for them seems evident. The fact that only a few existing programs reported rapid growth portends that there will not be much, if any, increase in the numbers of them that offer degree programs in our field.

We have heard some of our colleagues in university-based faculties voice displeasure about the existence of community-college-based programs. They have argued that associate’s-level degrees in our field cause serious articulation problems. Misgivings like these gave rise to the 1979 NASPAA guidelines. Our research indicates that the concern about articulation problems is justified. Our survey found that five curriculum areas are heavily emphasized in the associate’s degree programs — budgeting and financial processes; political and legal institutions and processes; organization and management concepts and behavior; decision-making and problem-solving; computer literacy and applications; and human resource management, and supervisory skills. It is clear, therefore, that a student who seeks to progress from an associate’s degree in public administration, through a bachelor’s degree in the same major, into a professional MPA degree, could be subjected to a “triple redundancy” of exposure to introductory materials in core topic areas.

Community college programs are mindful of articulation needs for students who move on to pursue higher degrees. Of the 20 directors surveyed, 16 indicated that their programs had an articulation process with a four-year institution that offered a bachelor’s degree in public administration. On the other hand, when we asked the question “Did your program, in developing your curriculum, make use of information derived from NASPAA?,” 16 of the 20 program directors said no. Only four indicated that they used information derived from NASPAA sources. It would appear that NASPAA’s guidelines for articulation, now more than a quarter-century old, are little-known and seldom followed, at least explicitly.
Public Administration Programs in America's Community Colleges: The Implications of their Surprising Scarcity

Implications
A modest finding of our research is that NASPAA’s 1979 guidelines need to be revisited and newly publicized among community college and university faculty, in order to better guide articulation from the few associate’s degree programs that exist. The larger finding is that the expectation giving rise to the adoption of those guidelines — the expectation that community colleges might play a major role in public administration/affairs education through associate’s-level degree programs — has not come to pass. Community colleges play major roles in educating some categories of public servants, especially those in the public safety and health fields. But they are not significantly engaged in providing entry-level education for public affairs/administration to the many present and future government employees who could benefit from such instruction, but who will not become baccalaureate or master’s degree students in our profession. The need for “mass” education in public affairs/administration, that which is oriented to training first-level supervisors in the basics of public service and management skills, is not being met by community colleges.

Upper-level institutions of higher education also are not meeting the needs for “mass” education in the basics of public affairs/administration. The total number of professional-level master’s degrees in public administration, public policy, and public affairs, as reported by NASPAA member institutions for the 2005-2006 year, was only 6,850 (NASPAA, 2008). That number is less than one per 1,000 United States government employees.

Certified Public Manager (CPM) programs are the most widely implemented, non-degree-oriented, training programs in our field. Proponents of the CPM approach to mass education in public affairs/administration have seen it as a way of improving public service professionalism (Hays & Duke, 1996; Sherwood, 1997). The CPM model conveys university-originated training to current employees, in cooperation with their employers. This model has the potential to reach many public employees who otherwise would never enter our baccalaureate and master’s degree programs.

CPM programs first began in the 1970s, and the National Certified Public Manager Consortium was formed in 1979 to set standards and operate an accreditation process. CPM programs serve important niches in their states, but they have not expanded sufficiently to meet much of the nation’s need for mass education in public service. The consortium’s roster lists accredited and active programs in only 27 states.

A recent study tabulated the total number of CPM program graduates from the inceptions of their programs. The 21 reporting programs listed only 11,048 total graduates (Voinovich Center, 2007).

The fact that institutions of higher education are not extensively engaged in mass education for public affairs/administration does not mean that America’s public employees are going untrained. University-based instructors deliver

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many forms of training to government employees, other than their CPM and degree programs. Government human-resources departments also do in-service training. Much training is contracted to private providers, and although it might be technically sound, this training is likely weak in terms of our public-serving ethos. When the training of public employees is not well-linked to higher-education-based programs in public affairs/administration, there is less certainty that the training will emphasize core values of public service. A strong argument can be made for fuller involvement of higher education institutions in the process of delivering mass, public service education.

In 1979, NASPAA’s focus was on articulation to four-year institutions. Yet, research indicates that only about three of every 10 students who enter community colleges transfer to four-year institutions (Hoachlander, Sikora, & Horn, 2003). Most community college students end their educations at this level. Doubt recently has been cast on the effectiveness of our professional master’s degree programs in promoting intergenerational social mobility (Oldfield, 2007). One of the greatest strengths of America’s community colleges is their success in attracting, and graduating, “first-generation” college students. Many of these graduates enter public service.

This statement is the conclusion of the article’s authors, who over the years have seen numerous documents that include in-house tabulations from various governments such as the Federal government and the State of Florida, and show that many government white-collar employees hold AA/AS degrees. We have seen similar tabulations of many local governments — particularly in their public safety departments — where the AA/AS degree often is the modal degree of police officers and fire fighters.

If more community college students who enter public service — but who do not go on to pursue bachelors degree programs — received some education in public affairs and administration, more of a dent might be made in the dual problems of mass education and intergenerational mobility. Encouraging introductory courses in public affairs/administration for the many community college students who enter public service via associate’s degrees and certificates in fields of health and law enforcement would be a start. Extending CPM course-offerings through collaboration with community colleges (which has been done on a limited scale) is another option. Whatever the mechanisms, if community colleges are not more fully engaged in educating public servants in public affairs/administration, the task of educating the nation’s public employees in the essentials, and especially in the core values of our field, will be that much harder.

References


Public Administration Programs in America’s Community Colleges: The Implications of their Surprising Scarcity


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Marketing Inclusion in the Curricula of U.S. Nonprofit Management Programs

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Abstract
The purpose of this study is to ascertain the degree to which marketing was integrated into the curricula of U.S. nonprofit management programs. Seventy-four program directors of U.S. nonprofit management programs responded to a national survey. They answered questions pertaining to the academic location of the program, their own academic fields, the number of marketing and marketing-related courses in their programs, their perceptions of what topics are considered part of marketing, and the relative importance they assigned to marketing in relation to other topics. Major points are the following: (1) Program directors are primarily from the public administration field (26 percent); (2) the nonprofit management programs had, on average, about one course dedicated to nonprofit marketing, and two marketing-related courses such as fund-raising or public relations; (3) program directors ranked marketing as sixth among 13 core subjects, indicating that a moderate importance is assigned to marketing in the curricula; (4) findings indicate that nonprofit management programs might benefit by recruiting nonprofit marketing professors to teach these courses and participate in curriculum development.

Introduction
The number of nonprofit organizations in the United States has been growing steadily, from 12,500 in 1940, to almost two million in 2006 (Independent Sector, 2007; Wymer, Knowles, & Gomes, 2006). This growth has stimulated a demand for nonprofit managers (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2005). Academic programs in nonprofit management have been growing in recent years to respond to this demand (Wilson & Larson, 2002; Young, 1999).

The first nonprofit management education program was established in 1981 at the University of Missouri, Kansas City (Smith, 2000). U.S. graduate programs offering three or more courses in nonprofit management areas numbered 17 in
Marketing Inclusion in the Curricula of U.S. Nonprofit Management Programs


Nonprofit management education programs have been established in schools of business, schools of public administration/public affairs, schools of social work, or through a collaborative arrangement from multiple areas in a university (Ashcraft, 2001; Mirabella & Wish, 2000; Smith, 2000; Young, 1999). The majority of nonprofit management programs are based in schools of public administration/public affairs (Mirabella & Wish, 2000).

The curricula in these programs vary widely and are influenced by the discipline in which the program is based (Dolan, 2003; Smith, 2000; Tschirhart, 1998; Van Til & Hegyesi, 1996). In an effort to provide more coherence to nonprofit management curricula, the Nonprofit Academic Centers Council (NACC) formed a committee to recommend a model core curriculum for graduate programs in nonprofit management (NACC, 2004). Likewise, American Humanics has developed a list of competencies that students must meet before being certified (American Humanics, 2004; Ashcraft, 2001). Marketing and communications is included as one of 13 core areas in the NACC model core curriculum (NACC 2004). Fundraising principles and practices, and nonprofit marketing are listed among the American Humanics competencies (American Humanics, 2004).

The marketing culture within the nonprofit sector has broadened and deepened (Salamon, 2002), as many nonprofits adopt business-management models of administration (Andreason, Goodstein, & Wilson, 2005). This trend is partly due to the dramatic growth in the number of nonprofit organizations (Andreason, Goodstein, & Wilson, 2005; Mirabella & Wish, 2001; Smith, 2000) and, hence, the more competitive environment in which they operate. As a result, nonprofit managers must more effectively differentiate their organizations from other organizations (the marketing concept of positioning). Nonprofit organizations also must obtain public awareness of their names (brands) and their missions. Through institutional advertising and public relations, nonprofit marketing helps develop favorable associations in consumers’ minds between the organization and its cause. Nonprofit managers therefore must more effectively identify potential contributors and manage supporter relations, known as target marketing and relationship marketing, respectively (Gainer & Moyer, 2004).

Nonprofit management education programs should be designed to respond to the needs of nonprofit leaders and managers (Smith, 2000). The academic and practitioner communities both recognize the need for marketing knowledge and skills in effective nonprofit management and leadership. However, Mirabella and Wish (2000) reported that only a small percentage of nonprofit management programs included at least one course on fundraising, marketing, or public
relations. Indeed, most nonprofit management programs have evolved within schools of public administration (Smith, 2000; Wish & Mirabella, 1998), and marketing topics appear to be especially deficient when the nonprofit management curricula are part of a public administration program (Cleary, 1990; Mirabella & Wish, 2000).

Larson, Wilson, and Chung (2003) surveyed students in six nonprofit management programs. The purpose of their study was to learn what courses students believed were most important in their curricula, and what courses needed more emphasis. Next to strategic planning, students rated fundraising and development as most important. General marketing, volunteer management, and advocacy in public policy also were rated highly. The authors found that about 90 percent of students in their survey were working, nonprofit professionals, who were very interested in a curriculum that would help them more effectively manage the operations of nonprofit organizations.

Because marketing has been identified as an important function for effective nonprofit management, and because the coverage of marketing topics has been shown to be deficient in prior studies, we conducted a study to evaluate the current state of the field of marketing within nonprofit management programs in U.S. universities. We believe that an investigation examining the inclusion of marketing in U.S. nonprofit management academic programs at a deeper level is timely, and will enhance our understanding of this important component of nonprofit educational programs. More specifically, we seek to better understand the coverage of marketing in U.S. nonprofit management educational programs, how broadly and deeply marketing is dealt with in these programs, whether or not these programs plan to increase their coverage of marketing in the future, and what importance is placed on marketing subjects within these programs.

**BACKGROUND**

*Nonprofit Marketing*

Andreasen, Goodstein, and Wilson (2005) credits the following factors with the growing adoption of marketing in the nonprofit sector: (1) need and desire to control and enhance financial position in a tight and competitive market; (2) learning gained about marketing through cause-related marketing efforts; (3) pressure to adopt more business-like practices — an attitude of social investment rather than old-style, hands-off philanthropy — and; (4) large nonprofits budgeting a marketing staff and activities in order to raise funds and further their missions.

Marketing is defined by the American Marketing Association (2007, n.p.) as “the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.” This broad definition covers all types of marketing organizations, including nonprofits. However, nonprofit marketing is generally
understood to be more narrowly defined as, “the use of marketing tactics to further the goals and objectives of nonprofit organizations,” (Wymer, Knowles, & Gomes, 2006, p. 4). Effective nonprofit marketing activities are generally planned so that the nonprofit “brand” is effectively developed, differentiated, and communicated in the public’s perception.

Nonprofit marketing also involves fund- and resource-development; all facets of an integrated communications campaign (logos, advertising, public relations, personal selling, etc.); event planning; volunteer recruitment; market research; and pricing. Social marketing — marketing aimed at changing behavior — also is considered a form of nonprofit marketing. In recent years, the field of cause-related marketing — where for-profit firms join with nonprofit causes in shared marketing efforts — also lies within the domain of nonprofit marketing.

Nonprofit marketing activities are fundamentally different from business marketing activities in one critical aspect. The difference is that the “for-profit” marketer is charged with maximizing the shareholder wealth that is most often found in the organization’s mission statement. This is typically accomplished by using communication and persuasion, in the form of advertising and promotion, to increase sales and market share. The nonprofit marketer is charged with helping the nonprofit organization further its mission. While the nonprofit marketer may be charged with the responsibility for raising a large amount of funds, along with other resources, these are all used to maximize the beneficial mission of the organization. Financial gain is never a final objective of a nonprofit organization. Indeed, marketers for nonprofits are often charged with aiding behavioral change on the part of stakeholders, rather than dealing with financial issues. Nonprofit marketers often use marketing research, public relations, and communications to promote the nonprofit organization and its cause, to position and differentiate the nonprofit organization in the public mindset, and to attract financial support in a variety of ways, such as event management and volunteer recruitment/retention.

Marketing and Nonprofit Management Education

The NACC (2004) recommended marketing as one of the key components of a nonprofit management education program. The NACC marketing and communications curricular guidelines include the basic principles of marketing, with particular emphasis on the importance of missions in the nonprofit sector. The NACC recommendations also emphasize the application of marketing principles and techniques, including communications and fund-raising in a nonprofit setting.

However, despite NACC recommendations, there is a great deal of inconsistency in the curriculum of nonprofit management education programs with respect to marketing. Not surprisingly, the quantity of marketing courses offered as a percentage of all courses has differed, depending upon the degree
being granted (Mirabella & Wish, 2001). Of graduate degrees offered in nonprofit management education programs, only four percent of the courses that culminated in an MPA were concerned with fundraising, marketing, and public relations, as compared with five percent for a Master’s in Social Work, 12 percent for a Master’s in Nonprofit Organizations and 19 percent for a Master’s in Business Administration (Mirabella & Wish, 2001). It is not surprising to find that different disciplines place differing degrees of emphasis on marketing.

To investigate the coverage of marketing in nonprofit management programs, answers to the following questions were sought from their directors:

1. Is the coverage of marketing increasing in the program curricula?
2. What is the perception of the domain of marketing?
3. What is the perception of the importance of marketing in the curriculum?
4. What is the status (full-time, dedicated, and adjunct) of the marketing instructor?

Survey, Sample And Findings

Survey

The investigators developed an online questionnaire to address the issues of this study. In addition to a number of background and descriptive questions, the survey asked its respondents the following:

- What they considered to be part or not part of the marketing discipline;
- Their rank-ordering of 13 NACC subject areas recommended for a nonprofit marketing curriculum;
- Their perception of the importance of marketing in a nonprofit curriculum;
- Future emphasis on marketing in their programs; and
- Their perceptions of the Internet as a communication tool for the future.

Opinions were ranked on a five-point scale, with agreements varying from “definitely yes” (5) to “definitely no” (1). Letters describing the study and encouraging recipients to complete an online survey were mailed to program directors — the intended survey respondents. A second letter encouraging online survey participation was mailed to the sample frame after approximately two weeks. Subsequent to the second solicitation letter, program directors were personally invited to participate in the survey through a series of e-mail messages and telephone calls, which are detailed in the following section.

Sample

The initial sample frame for this study was based on the prior work of Roseanne Mirabella regarding nonprofit management educational offerings in the U.S. (2004). This listing was used for the first two waves of solicitation letters. The first two letters attracted about 30 completed online questionnaires.
Seeking to acquire the most representative sample possible, we sent periodic e-mail invitations. A graduate student working as a research assistant telephoned program directors and personally invited them to participate in the online survey. During the telephone solicitations, we identified program director changes and made other updates to the initial sample frame. The telephoning tasks took approximately eight weeks, and yielded an accurate sample frame of 251 programs and 74 completed surveys, with a final response rate of 30 percent. To ensure rater reliability between earlier and later respondents, the responses to key variables were examined, and no statistically significant differences were found between the two groups.

The sample programs were housed in a variety of colleges and schools. The sample also represented a higher incidence of nonprofit programs that were located in business and business and public administration colleges, as well as in public affairs and administration, when compared to the sample found by Mirabella and Wish (2001). However, the link to public administration and to schools of professional studies and interdisciplinary programs is similarly strong in the sample in this study and in that found by Mirabella and Wish (2001). (See Table 1.)

**Sample Findings**

Of the 74 nonprofit-management academic programs in our study, 31 percent reported having an undergraduate program, 61 percent had a graduate program, and 60 percent had a certificate program. Seventy-four percent of program directors told us that their programs offered a degree with a major or concentration in nonprofit management.

**Program Director’s Discipline:** We asked for the academic discipline of program directors by providing a list of eight possible disciplines, plus an option to provide an unlisted discipline. Program director disciplines are presented in Table 2. Public Administration was the most represented discipline (26 percent of sample), followed by nonprofit management (20 percent), general management (18 percent), political

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**Table 1. Schools or Colleges Housing Nonprofit Management Programs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Percentage of Sample*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Science</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Schools</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business and Public Administration</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Affairs and Administration</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other School or College</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Figures are rounded to the nearest whole number. †Source: Mirabella & Wish 2001
Marketing Inclusion in the Curricula of U.S. Nonprofit Management Programs

...science (14 percent), and sociology (11 percent). The marketing field was reported as a base discipline by only one program director. (See Table 2.)

Instructor Status: Survey respondents were asked to identify the status (dedicated program faculty, faculty from another department, adjunct, or other) of instructors for marketing or marketing-related courses. Twenty-four percent had full-time faculty in their programs who taught some or all of marketing or marketing-related courses. Twenty-four percent had full-time faculty — not based in their programs but based in another academic department — who taught some or all of marketing or marketing-related courses. Adjunct faculty was used heavily, with 53 percent of respondents reporting that adjunct faculty taught some or all of marketing or marketing-related courses.

Marketing Courses: Program directors were asked to identify the number of courses in their curricula that were dedicated to marketing (where the entirety of the course dealt with marketing topics). As presented in Table 3, these

Table 2. Program Director Disciplines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Percentage of Sample*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonprofit Management</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Science</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Policy</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation and Leisure Studies</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Planning</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling/Gerontology/HDFS</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics and Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Studies and Human Services</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare Management</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary Social Policy/Management</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education Administration</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy Studies</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Policy Research and Analysis</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Planning</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Total percentage exceeds 100 due to rounding, and due to some respondents reporting more than one discipline.
programs had, on average (mean = 0.98), one dedicated marketing course. Twenty-six percent reported having no marketing courses in their programs. Thirty-five percent had a single marketing course. Ten percent had two marketing courses. Five percent had three courses, and one percent of the programs contained four courses. (Numbers do not add up to 74, due to non-responses.) (See Table 3.)

The titles of these marketing courses are listed in Table 4. In some programs, students were able to choose a marketing elective among marketing courses offered in a business school. Some programs had their students take a survey-marketing course, which may have been a nonprofit-marketing course (the most frequent choice) or an introductory business-marketing course. Several programs had their marketing component focus on a specific marketing sub-topic, such as public relations, fund-raising, or grant-writing. The data indicate that there is little consistency in marketing coverage across these programs. (See Table 4.)

Table 3. Marketing Coverage in Curricula

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courses Dedicated to Marketing</th>
<th>Number of Programs</th>
<th>Percent*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median/Mean</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Courses with Marketing Topic(s)</th>
<th>Number of Programs</th>
<th>Percent*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median/Mean</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.
Marketing Coverage in Other Courses: We asked program directors to identify non-marketing courses that contained a unit on a marketing or marketing-related topic. These figures are presented in Table 3. On average, program directors reported having two courses containing a unit on a marketing or marketing-related topic.
Almost one-third (31 percent) reported having one course with a marketing unit. Sixteen percent and 15 percent reported having two and three courses, respectively, with units that covered a marketing topic.

We then examined the number of dedicated marketing courses in the programs in our study and the number of other courses with marketing topics. Nineteen programs reported offering no dedicated marketing courses, representing 26 percent of the programs in our study. Six programs reported offering no other types of courses with marketing as a unit within the course (8 percent of the programs).

Inclusion of Targeted Marketing Courses: Nonprofit marketing literature has identified several areas of marketing that are especially important to nonprofit organizations (Gainer & Moyer, 2004; Sargeant, 2005; Wymer, Knowles, & Gomes, 2006). These topics are fund-raising, public relations, event planning, advertising/promotions, and Internet marketing. Because program managers come from diverse disciplines, and may have differing perceptions of what topics are included within the nonprofit marketing domain, they were asked about the inclusion of these specific topics in their curricula. Out of these courses, 69 percent of the programs offered a course in fund-raising, and about

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Percentage of Programs Offering This Course*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fund-Raising</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Planning</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising/Promotion</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet Marketing</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Table 6. Program Director Perceptions of the Marketing Domain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic is Part of Marketing</th>
<th>Percentage of Sample*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n=74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cause-related Marketing</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund-raising</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Events</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Recruitment</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.
half (51 percent) offered a course in public relations. Advertising/promotion was offered in roughly one-in-five programs (22 percent). Event planning and Internet marketing were offered in 12 percent of the programs. (See Table 5.)

Program Managers’ Perceptions

Perceptions of the Marketing Domain: Survey respondents were provided with a list of seven topics (as shown in Table 6) and asked to indicate which of those topics they perceived to be components of marketing. The results are presented in Table 6. Program directors generally perceived public relations and advertising to be part of the marketing domain (87 and 84 percent, respectively). A surprisingly low result, given its name, was that 76 percent of program managers believed cause-related marketing was part of marketing. Sixty-four percent of program directors believed that fund-raising and special events fell under the purview of marketing. Less than half of the program directors perceived volunteer recruitment and social entrepreneurship as components of marketing. (See Table 6.)

Perceived Importance of NACC Recommendations: As discussed previously, the NACC (2004) developed a list of 13 core topics for nonprofit management curricula. While this list was developed with graduate programs in mind, we felt it would be instructive to assess the program directors’ level of perceived importance of these topics. We asked them to rank-order the 13 core areas by degree of importance, with a ranking of 1 being the most important and a ranking of 13 being the least important. The results are depicted in Table 7. (See Table 7.)

Table 7. Relative Importance of NACC Core Subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n=74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Nonprofit governance and executive leadership</td>
<td>2.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Nonprofit financial resources</td>
<td>4.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Accounting and financial management</td>
<td>4.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ethics and values</td>
<td>5.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Human resources management</td>
<td>6.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Marketing and communications</td>
<td>6.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Organizational theory and behavior</td>
<td>6.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Scope and significance of philanthropy and voluntarism</td>
<td>7.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>History and theories of philanthropy, voluntarism, and the nonprofit sector</td>
<td>7.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Advocacy and public policy</td>
<td>7.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Nonprofit law</td>
<td>7.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Decision-making and analytic methods</td>
<td>7.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Information management and technology</td>
<td>9.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On average, program managers ranked “nonprofit governance and executive leadership” as the most important topic, followed by “nonprofit financial resources,” and “accounting and financial management.” Program directors therefore appear to believe that leadership is the most important component of a nonprofit management education, followed by the ability to manage financial resources.

Ethics and values, human resource management, and marketing and communications were ranked fourth, fifth, and sixth, respectively. The mean rankings for these three core subjects are close in magnitude, so it appears that program directors believe these three subjects are of similar importance.

Decision-making and analytic methods were ranked second-to-last in importance. This may imply that program directors perceive effective leadership — ranked most important — more in reference to a visionary role, rather than to an effective, top-level decision-maker in the organization. Finally, on average, program directors ranked the management of information and technology as the least important course in a nonprofit management program.

Due to the high number of variables (13) that the respondents were asked to rank, the top three items (governance and leadership, financial resources, and financial management), as well as the last item (information management and technology) have the most statistical significance in terms of rank-ordering. The remaining subjects are indicators of general importance when compared with the top and bottom of the scale, but are less statistically significant in terms of their exact ordering (Yakir & Gilula, 1998).

Role of Marketing in Nonprofit Management Programs: When program directors gauged the importance of various core subjects in the previous section, marketing ranked near the middle. To better understand program directors’ perspectives on the role of marketing in a nonprofit management program, we asked them to rate how important they believed the inclusion of marketing was to a nonprofit management curriculum. Program directors were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statement “The inclusion of marketing in a nonprofit curriculum is very important.” The scale was 5 (definitely yes), 4 (yes), 3 (neutral), 2 (no), and 1 (definitely no). The mean for this question was 4.52, which indicates that program directors believe marketing is a very important component in the curriculum.

Using the same format as the previous question, program directors were then asked their level of agreement with the statement, “Marketing topics should have more emphasis in the nonprofit curriculum.” Program directors were not as enthusiastic in agreeing that marketing deserved a greater role in the curriculum. The mean for this question was 3.59, between neutral and yes. To further understand this finding, a one-way ANOVA was run to determine if there were differences in the importance of marketing in the curriculum, with respect to specific college or program affiliation. It was found that there are statistically
significantly differences (p=.099). Not surprisingly, nonprofit programs housed in “other,” business, and business and public affairs schools/colleges placed much more importance on marketing than nonprofit management programs housed in arts and science colleges or in schools of public administration.

The next question asked program directors to assess their level of agreement with the statement, “Our program plans to place greater emphasis on marketing topics in the future.” The mean response was 3.12, slightly on the positive side of neutral. Taking the three questions pertaining to marketing as a group, program managers appear to believe that marketing is an important component of the nonprofit management curriculum, but they do not appear to want a greater emphasis on marketing, nor do they appear to be planning to increase the future coverage of marketing topics in their programs.

Internet Technology: The last in this series of questions asked program directors to assess their level of agreement with the statement, “The use of Internet technology for marketing and communication purposes in a nonprofit management curriculum is very important.” The mean response was 4.00 — a solid “yes” to the question. The investigators were interested in assessing program directors’ thoughts on this subject because of recent research, which indicated that nonprofit managers believe learning how to better use information technology and Internet capabilities for marketing and communication purposes are among their highest priorities (Wymer, Sargeant, Scaife, & Madden, 2008). The program directors’ agreement that the use of Internet technology is important seems to be in conflict with the prior ranking of 13 NACC (2004) core subjects, where information management and technology placed last.

Discussion And Implications

We wanted to know if marketing was being taught in nonprofit management programs more than it has in the past. Mirabella and Wish (2001) found that 19 percent of graduate-level, nonprofit coursework covered marketing topics, based on data from 2000. The 2006 data in this study indicate that 35 percent of coursework covers marketing topics in all nonprofit management programs (undergraduate, graduate, and certificate). This shows a much higher amount of marketing coverage, compared to six years prior. However, some programs continue to indicate a very low emphasis on marketing, and a disturbingly high percentage of nonprofit management program curricula include no coverage of marketing.

Program director perceptions of the marketing domain vary in intensity, relative to different marketing tactics, as indicated in Table 6. Variations in the perception of marketing’s domain may result in curricula with an under-representation of marketing topics. The disparity in the perception of what comprises marketing suggests that some marketing topics, such as positioning strategies, market research, and integrated communication strategies, may not be
covered, and thus students are deprived of full knowledge about the marketing options available to them. However, one of the limitations of this study is that it does not include a comprehensive list of marketing tactics, so therefore it can only be surmised that — based on the variation in perceptions — it is possible to assume that some marketing topics are omitted from nonprofit marketing curricula. These topics may include, for example, market research tools.

These tools would be helpful for nonprofit managers to better understand their various stakeholders, but they are most likely to be underutilized by graduates of some nonprofit management programs. The strategic marketing process that is beneficial to developing an integrated communication plan may also be missed by many students. The use of marketing tactics to position a nonprofit organization in the perception of its stakeholders could become minimized, if more robust marketing knowledge is not taught. Further, a limited perception of marketing’s domain could result in suboptimal hiring decisions, with respect to marketing instructors and the inclusion of marketing topics in a curriculum.

Prior research has reported that nonprofit management students, most of whom were nonprofit professionals, want more emphasis on marketing (Larson, Wilson, & Chung, 2003). Our findings indicate that program directors may not fully comprehend this need, or possess the means to respond to student demands.

By examining the disciplines of nonprofit management program directors (Table 2), it is reasonable to conclude that they have had limited exposure to marketing coursework. This may be part of the reason for a relatively low importance-ranking of marketing within core curriculum topics on the NACC’s list. However, program directors do view marketing as important to the curriculum. Directors might perceive marketing as still more important if they had a clearer perception of its full domain.

Many of the current marketing courses in nonprofit management programs are offered outside of their host schools. Also, it should be noted that 53 percent of marketing coursework is taught by adjunct instructors. This implies that nonprofit management students are unlikely to be taught by marketing professors who also have specific expertise in nonprofit marketing. It therefore may be useful for nonprofit management programs to identify nonprofit marketing scholars for recruitment as faculty members.

Given the results of this survey, there is work yet to be accomplished on the inclusion of marketing in nonprofit management programs. Despite a growing stream of journals, research, coursework, and other evidence of activity in the nonprofit marketing field (Andreasen, Goodstein, & Wilson, 2005; Mottner, 2005), the transfer of this knowledge to students who could use it has been slow. Further, information is needed about marketing in general, and nonprofit marketing in particular. This suggests a need for academically qualified, nonprofit-marketing faculty who can participate in the future development of
nonprofit management program curricula.

Based on these findings, as well as on earlier results noted in this research, it is obvious that marketing for nonprofits needs to be taught in more nonprofit management programs and most likely needs greater depth in the programs that already include marketing in their curricula. How is this to be accomplished? Given the endemic lack of funding in higher education, what needs to be given up in order to give students in nonprofit management programs better marketing-related training? These are difficult questions that can best be handled one program at a time, and with much thought.

However, before any of the questions posed here can be answered, it is clear that academics and practitioners in the nonprofit and marketing fields — and particularly those in the nonprofit-marketing field — need to make a more compelling case about the critical role that marketing can play in the life of a successful nonprofit organization, and what the total domain of marketing entails. Strategic marketing issues, consumer behavior (including donor behavior as well as the behavior of mission-related recipients), market research, market segmentation, the integrated marketing-management concept, market orientation, value-added marketing, relationship marketing, branding, and the use of marketing tools are all important pieces of knowledge for future nonprofit leaders. The wealth of available knowledge about services marketing would also be very helpful. For certain nonprofits, particularly those in the arts and heritage fields, a well-developed knowledge base in tourism marketing could prove meaningful. Further, specific marketing tools could be used to raise finances and implement the nonprofit’s mission.

For-profit marketers use marketing tools known as the four P’s of Product (offer, service or idea), Price, Promotion (communications), and Place (distribution or location). The four Ps have been adapted for nonprofit marketing and often incorporate three additional Ps from services marketing, which are People, Physical Evidence, and Process. (Physical evidence is the material part of a service. Strictly speaking, there are no physical attributes to a service, so a customer tends to rely on material cues. Some examples of physical evidence include packaging, Internet/Web pages, brochures, furnishings, signage, and uniforms.) In addition, specific tools of the nonprofit marketing field, such as major gift strategies, special-event management and marketing, marketing with volunteers, and marketing to volunteers, all add value to a nonprofit manager’s expertise. When a rich field of knowledge and practice surrounds cause-related marketing and social marketing, it also enhances the tools that nonprofit marketers can use for achieving their organizations’ missions.

The most significant finding of this study is that there is apparent progress being made to include marketing in nonprofit management programs. However, there is great room for improvement. The burden of this change lies not only with nonprofit-program managers, but also with nonprofit-marketing and
general-marketing academics, and the nonprofit community itself. Nonprofit marketing scholars can assist this process by demonstrating the link between the marketing strategies and tools used by nonprofit organizations, and their financial- and mission-related outcomes.

LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Although robust efforts were taken to include all U.S. nonprofit management programs in this study, only a portion participated. Therefore, the ability to generalize our findings is limited to the participating programs. Furthermore, because only U.S. programs were included, our findings cannot be extended to non-U.S. programs. Because our focus of analysis was at the program-director level, our results also are limited to their perspectives.

REFERENCES


Marketing Inclusion in the Curricula of U.S. Nonprofit Management Programs


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Toward Successful Overseas Training for Chinese Public Officials

Lin Ye  
*Roosevelt University*  
Jian Sun  
*Fort Hays State University*  
Xiaochuan Wu  
*Jiujiang Municipal Foreign Affairs Office*

**ABSTRACT**

Following the dramatic economic reform and development of the past 30 years, China is experiencing increasingly complicated political and social problems that call for the government to enhance its administrative capacity and working efficiency. Different levels of the Chinese government, ranging from national to local, have sent teams of public officials to developed countries for training, in order to build a modern and professional civil servant team. This paper demonstrates how to build and maintain a successful overseas training program by analyzing a case study of a group of 10 Chinese municipal officials who were trained for six months in their United States sister city. The case study finds that several important elements, such as strong academic support, a professional government internship, and active community involvement are crucial for the success of this type of training program.

**BACKGROUND: CIVIL SERVICE SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT IN CHINA**

During the past 30 years, China underwent a dramatic transition from a centrally planned economy to an open-market economy. This transformation of the national economy has required a modernized civil service system and public servant team, in order to facilitate economic development and address complicated social issues in a rapidly changing domestic and global environment. However, traditional Chinese civil service, aka “the cadre system,” was unable to satisfy these requirements. Borrowed in the 1950s from the former Soviet Union, the cadre system embodied the principles of autocratic management, secretive selection and promotion of employees based mostly on political loyalty to the Communist Party, and appropriate social-class background. It followed the rule of man, rather
than the rule of law (Chow, 1991; Liou, 1997; Manion, 1985; Tong, Straussman, & Broadnax, 1999). Prior to the 1980s, Chinese civil servants, typically called “cadre,” were recruited through political channels, without regard for professional training. Only vague procedures were used for recruitment, training, appraisal, and promotion. The government’s ability to manage economic growth was dubious, and became an obstacle to further development (Burns, 1990; Lam & Chan, 1996; Li, 1990; Tsao & Worthley, 1995).

In order to establish a highly professional civil servant team, a series of civil-service reforms took place in China since the 1980s (Aufrecht & Bun, 1995; Chow, 1991; Li, 1990; Tsao & Worthley, 1995). After piecemeal efforts in the early 1980s failed to produce substantive results, the central government in 1987 decided to adopt a Western civil-service model to replace the cadre system. This model would help establish a civil-service system that is governed by the rule of law and supervised by the public. Since then, modernizing the civil service system has become one of the major components of China’s administrative reforms. In 1993, the central government officially adopted the Provisional Regulations on State Civil Servants for national implementation, based on a model that combined Western civil service with some distinctive Chinese characteristics (Lam & Chan, 1996; Liou, 1997; Tong, Straussman, & Broadnax, 1999). After 12 years of implementation and revision, the Bill of State Civil Service Law was approved in 2005, and became effective on January 1, 2006 (Chan & Li, 2007).

Provisional regulations from 1993, and the 2005 bill, offered substantial development in the procedures, rationality, and professionalism of China’s modern civil service system. One focus of these two legislative acts was the development of a professional civil servant team that would be fundamentally different from the traditional “cadre” or political appointees. A professional civil service system requires that public administrators possess the managerial, administrative, and technical skills necessary to deal with the complicated social issues that arise in the course of economic and political reform. China has continuously taken measures to develop its professional civil servant team. Among its most significant efforts are overseas training programs that teach public administrators how to develop a better understanding of the Western civil service system, and integrate its rules and practices into their professional work. During the 10-year period between 1990 and 2000, China’s central government spent more than 100 million yuan (U.S. $13 million) per year to train civil servants overseas, and more than 40,000 Chinese officials, ranging from national leaders to local administrators completed some type of overseas training (Jiang, 2002).

Developing countries have found overseas training to be an effective and efficient way to improve their public administrators’ skills and expertise. Since the 1950s, the University of Manchester has been involved in the training and
The professional development of public administrators from developing countries such as India, Thailand, and Greece (Clarke, 1999). The United States also has become a major host country to help overseas public administration training programs. As early as 1978, South Korea issued a decree that allowed higher bureaucrats to participate in a Two-Year Overseas Training (TOT) program in the United States, at the Korean government’s expense (Chang, 1991). Japan also has sent many local public administrators to complete mid-career, short-term training in the United States (Nishishiba, 2007). Through its state reform efforts, the Dominican Republic established a bilateral government-university partnership for the United States to help to develop its professional public administration teams (Julnes, 2007).

China’s first official overseas-training program was held in France in 1991. Since then, more than 4,000 Chinese public administrators have received training in the Association Pour la Formation, les Échanges et la Promotion Avec l’Etranger (AFEPE) (Jiang, 2002). Chinese officials have also gone to the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Germany, and Switzerland for training in a wide range of disciplines (Centre for Socio-Economic Development, 1998; Shan, 2004; Tong & Straussman, 2003). One of the most highly regarded programs was established between the Development Research Center of the State Council, Tsinghua University, and Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government. The Kennedy School of Government provided training for 300 senior- and mid-level officials from China’s national government between 2002 and 2007. Per-person tuition for a seven-week training course totaled 200,000 yuan (U.S. $24,183), and was paid by the central government (Dong, 2007; Fa, 2004).

Along with the central government, China’s local governments also are enthusiastic about training their officials abroad. To some degree, it is as important for local administrators as it is for national ones to learn modern Western public administration theories and skills, because local officials more commonly deal with day-to-day issues that require such expertise. Many local Chinese governments have established different types of agreements with American cities, universities, and nonprofit organizations, in order to send officials there to complete training programs (Fa, 2004; Jiang, 2002; Shan, 2004). The following sections describe a training program hosted in Louisville, Kentucky, for 10 municipal officials from the City of Jiujiang, Jiangxi Province in China, and analyze the lessons learned from this program that can help similar projects.

The Jiujiang-Louisville Training Program
Jiujiang and Louisville became sister cities in 2004. To inaugurate the new relationship, the Sister City Committee proposed a six-month training program for public officials from Jiujiang, and it received great support from the School of Urban and Public Affairs (SUPA) at the University of Louisville, and from the Louisville Metro Government. SUPA offers three degree programs: a Master
of Public Administration (MPA), a Master of Urban Planning (MUP), and a Ph.D. of Urban and Public Affairs. SUPA’s interdisciplinary character provided strong academic support and a research platform for the initiative. The training program included formal public administration courses, internships with municipal agencies, field trips, roundtable discussions, and community activities. The program also was intended to create a dialogue for future sister city exchanges at all levels, on subjects such as education, arts and culture, tourism, and community partnerships. The program was designed as an annual project, and the second cohort arrived in Louisville in February 2007. This paper focuses on the first cohort, which completed training in 2006. Table 1 shows some basic information about the two cities. (See Table 1.)

Both Jiujiang and Louisville are mid-sized municipalities in their respective countries, with similar levels of economic development. Each city has an important river port that provides trade-related and logistical opportunities. Both cities are trying to develop more aggressive economic policies that can further utilize their natural resources and give them a competitive advantage in regional and global markets. Their similar geographic, demographic, and economic backgrounds give officials from both cities some common ground for effective communication and mutual learning.

The first training program was held from September 2005 to February 2006. Classes started in the first week of September and were completed before the Christmas holiday. After the holiday break, the trainees organized self-study sessions and wrote individual reviews of the coursework and internships they had completed. The trainees successfully completed the program in February, 2006, and each of them received an individual completion certificate issued by SUPA. The next sections examine the program’s entire process, including trainee selection, course delivery, government internship, and community involvement, followed by some key elements that can help similar programs be successful.

The Selection of the 10 Trainees

Ten mid-career Jiujiang municipal officials were chosen to participate in this training program, after several rounds of selection exams and intensive English-language training. After a preliminary round of basic written tests in both English and Chinese, 37 out of more than 100 candidates were chosen for three months of intensive English-language training at Jiujiang University. These 37 candidates then took the Business Foreign-Language Training (BFT) Examination in early 2005, and the 10 highest-scoring candidates were sent to Louisville. This strict selection process guaranteed high-quality trainees, and increased the program’s potential for success. The 10 trainees came from very diverse employment backgrounds. Six were from municipal agencies, including the Foreign Affairs Office, Human Resources, the Economic and Trade Committee, the Development and Planning Commission, the Bureau of
Environmental Protection, and the Bureau of Investment Promotion. Two were from special districts of the Jiujiang Economic Development Zone and the Lushan Mountain Administration Bureau (Lushan Mountain is one of China’s national parks and a world-renowned tourism site, named a World Cultural Heritage and World Geo-Park by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO). The other two were administrators of independent counties in the Jiujiang municipal jurisdiction. All had received a formal undergraduate education and possessed fairly strong English communication skills. Three had postgraduate degrees from Chinese universities; of those, two had received a Master’s Degree in Public Administration (MPA) in China in the past five years.

The City of Jiujiang government considered this training program as a great opportunity to develop a professional civil servant team for the city, and hoped these 10 trainees would become an exemplary group for other public officials in Jiujiang. According to an official report released by the City of Jiujiang government in 2005, the trainees were expected to develop a new understanding of the role of modern government, to become more open-minded and far-sighted toward global government affairs, and to obtain knowledge of Western public administration theories and practices. On their return to Jiujiang, they would showcase their experiences to all other municipal officials (City of Jiujiang, 2005). The training program also was expected to strengthen the sister-city relationship between Jiujiang and Louisville, and the sister-state relationship between Jiangxi and Kentucky, in addition to creating and extending the connections between other non-governmental organizations, local educational institutions, and local business communities in the sister cities (City of Jiujiang, 2006).

**ACADEMIC COURSES**

Four courses were taught by three instructors, all of whom were Ph.D. candidates at SUPA, with previous teaching experience. Two of the instructors were from China — Instructor A specialized in public administration and Instructor B had expertise in urban planning. Instructor C was American and conducted research in economic development and urban sociology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Brief Introduction to Jiujiang and Louisville</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jiujiang, Jiangxi</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population in 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>River Port</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: ¹Jiujiang Statistical Yearbook 2005; ²U.S. Census Bureau
The four courses were all offered in English:

1. Urban and Public Administration, taught by Instructor A;
2. Policy Analysis and Program Evaluation, co-taught by Instructors B and C;
3. Public Budgeting and Finance, co-taught by Instructors A and C; and
4. Planning in the USA, taught by Instructor B.

Each course was conducted in a three-week module, with a one-week break between classes. Classes met for three hours in the morning every weekday, and the trainees went to their internships every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon.

As explained above, the strict selection and training processes ensured that all 10 trainees possessed fairly advanced English-language skills and had no significant difficulties communicating. It was found, however, that in many instances, communicating in Chinese, the trainees’ native language, not only helped them to better understand the course materials, but also encouraged active discussions on some valuable topics. The design of the instructor team ensured that at least one bilingual instructor was available for every course, to facilitate bilingual discussions. Bilingual discussions were particularly helpful when the trainees compared different practices in China and the United States. In most of the courses, the use of both English and Chinese was allowed during discussions, but it was strongly encouraged that the final review or analysis be delivered in English.

Due to the trainees’ diverse backgrounds, the selection process for the four courses was also important. SUPA provided interdisciplinary expertise in public administration, economic development, and urban planning. The introductory public administration course laid the foundation for trainees to understand basic issues and theories of the Western civil service system, while two subsequent courses offered technical training in two of the most important fields of modern public administration. The Policy Analysis and Program Evaluation course provided basic instruction on the qualitative and quantitative approaches to analyzing policy issues in the public sector, with emphasis on research design and data analysis. The Public Budgeting and Finance course examined public budgeting from economic, political, cultural, and institutional perspectives. It also covered a wide range of theoretical and technical topics, such as the role of the political economy, the budget-setting process, revenues and expenditures, budget implementation, financial management, and political accountability. The last course, titled Planning in the USA, was designed to introduce the theories, issues, and practices that confront American cities and their planners. Its topics included urbanization, planning policies, decision-making processes, growth management, and environmental protection.
The design and instruction of the four courses aimed to stimulate discussions that compared practices in American and Chinese cities. To cultivate an interactive classroom environment, it was important for the trainees to be actively involved in discussions. Having been away from school for many years, and owing to the difference between the educational systems in the United States and China, the 10 trainees were not used to openly exchanging ideas in a classroom setting, particularly at the beginning of the modules. A flexible format and a relaxed classroom atmosphere helped encourage active learning and participation. Active teaching techniques such as role-playing, brainstorming, and group projects helped to develop effective class discussions. The trainees adapted well, and drew lessons from their diverse professional experiences in order to complete classroom exercises.

For example, in the Policy Analysis and Program Evaluation course, which focused on analytical tools and methodologies, the instructors referred to cases from both the United States and China. One of the final projects assigned to the trainees required them to conduct a hypothetical evaluation of the ongoing Chinese Medicare Reform. Although it was a Chinese case, the trainees were unfamiliar with Medicare. To complete this project, trainees first researched Medicare history and its current issues in China, and then applied the American models they learned from the course to design the evaluation. The trainees made many constructive recommendations after they completed their final projects, and their success gave them the confidence to design program evaluations in their real jobs.

Comparative discussion was also helpful for the Planning In the USA course, especially on the topics of development strategies and environmental policies. The trainees compared the economic transition process taking place in Jiujiang to those experienced by American cities, and re-examined the Jiujiang Economic Development Plan from different perspectives. For example, the trainees were concerned about environmental issues associated with economic growth in Jiujiang. They read materials in the fields of planning history, government zoning, and city planning, and discussed environmental protection and planning topics such as regional development, urban sprawl, and growth management, by comparing the respective policies in China and the United States. Discussions helped the trainees better understand environmental issues and make recommendations for Jiujiang’s future development.

In general, all four courses encouraged comparative analyses between the pairs of sister countries and cities. Active discussions about their jobs in China and what they were learning were very important, and helped trainees complete the courses. In addition, internships at various Louisville metro agencies further encouraged class discussion and comparative analyses. The next section discusses the government internships that trainees completed.
Government Internships
Coordination between the Sister City Committee and the Louisville Metro Government gave the trainees opportunities to intern at many Louisville metro departments, while they were taking courses at SUPA. These unpaid internships were arranged specifically to match with the trainees’ professional backgrounds, and it gave them a chance to practice what they had learned from the courses. They were sent to different metro departments, including the Metro Development Authority, Human Resources, Internal Auditing, the Metropolitan Sewage District, Louisville Water Company, Housing and Community Development, Policy and Strategic Planning, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, Neighborhood Development, and Air Pollution Control. The internships were arranged on a two-month rotation, with workloads of two afternoons per week.

Host departments provided many opportunities for trainees to observe and participate in governmental activities. For example, when they were taking the Urban and Public Administration course, trainees were invited to several Louisville metro council meetings. Metro councilmen introduced the trainees to the processes of discussing local issues, and seeing the mayor work with both the metro council and the staff demonstrated the fundamental separation of powers in the American system of government. When trainees took the Planning in the USA course, the Metro Development Authority arranged for them to attend several land-use and public zoning hearings, which helped them understand how these types of decisions are made.

Internships afforded the trainees hands-on experiences, and enabled them to practice the skills and knowledge accumulated during their coursework. They also had opportunities to establish friendly working and personal relationships with many government employees in Louisville. The trainees were invited to departmental meetings and social events, which provided them with more opportunities for community involvement — a major component of this training program that is covered in the next section.

Community Involvement
Interactions with the local community provided another great opportunity for the trainees to understand how government and communities work together on local issues in American cities. Louisville is home to several Fortune Global 500 company headquarters or major hubs. Humana, Inc., one of America’s largest publicly traded health benefit companies, and Yum! Brands, Inc., the parent company of several fast-food chains, are both based there. United Parcel Service (UPS), General Electric (GE), Ford Motor Company, and Toyota Motor Corp. have established major hubs or plants in Louisville. In addition, many local companies are involved or interested in doing business with China. Because several trainees were from Jiujiang’s business promotion and foreign
affairs agencies, they provided a great opportunity for Louisville’s local business community to learn more about China and Jiujiang, and to develop potential business connections between the two cities. The Sister City Committee organized seminars and events almost every week, which brought the Jiujiang group and local businesses together to exchange ideas and discuss possible plans. A series of “Introducing Jiujiang” seminars were offered to the public at different venues, including public libraries, the Asian Culture Center, and local universities. This gave trainees a chance to talk to American businesspeople, and to understand the major concerns and interests of foreign investors. The trainees’ interactions with the local business community gave them valuable opportunities to learn what they could improve to attract foreign investment, and facilitate international business development.

Another important component of the Jiujiang group’s involvement with the local community was establishing extensive cooperative relationships with local universities. As discussed above, SUPA offered four courses for the training group, and became a major partner with the City of Jiujiang, which provided a platform for future educational exchange programs. SUPA has a long history of sending its graduate students overseas for internships. One of the programs launched between SUPA and the City of Jiujiang was a graduate student and faculty exchange program. After several rounds of productive discussions between the training group and SUPA in the summer of 2006, the school sent its first two students to Jiujiang for a one-month internship with the municipal government.

This was only one of many successful outcomes yielded by the training group’s contribution to the educational exchange program. Trainees also explored the possibility of a sister university relationship between Jiujiang University and the University of Louisville, as well as other partnerships with local universities. For example, Bellarmine University, one of Louisville’s local colleges, has been trying to set up a study-abroad program where college students from Jiujiang University could complete their undergraduate degrees by taking courses at Bellarmine University during their junior and senior years. Possible educational exchange programs were also discussed between Jiujiang University and Jefferson Community and Technical College (JCTC).

The trainees’ involvement with the local community provided broad opportunities for them to work with their American peers in a real-world setting, helped them understand how American government and businesses operate, and established strong connections between the two cities and communities.

Program Success

After six months of training, the first cohort of the Jiujiang-Louisville program received highly positive feedback from many involved parties, including the two governments, local universities and communities, and the trainees themselves.
In 2006, the program won the Award for Sustainable Development: Population Greater than 100,000 from Sister Cities International, a Washington, D.C.-based international organization of sister cities.

Several major accomplishments achieved by this program were acknowledged in the City of Jiujiang’s official report, to show that this program had met and exceeded expectations. First, the four academic courses enhanced the trainees’ knowledge of modern government theory and practice. Second, the trainees’ involvement in the local community enlarged their vision of American culture and global affairs. Third, trainees’ internships in government agencies provided a basis of comparative training for their management skills. Fourth, various events hosted by the American business community and local educational institutions helped the trainees establish broad friendship and business connections that benefited both cities and their communities. Fifth, this cohort helped introduce the City of Jiujiang to American friends through many exchange events (City of Jiujiang, 2006).

In addition to receiving acknowledgements in the City of Jiujiang’s official report, the 10 trainees were able to apply what they had learned to their work professions, and produce comprehensive reports on how to improve management performance in the Jiujiang government. These reports covered environmental protection, human resources, business attraction, tourism development, and land-use planning, and currently are under consideration for adoption in Jiujiang.

According to Kirkpatrick’s widely accepted four-level evaluation model for training programs (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006, 2007), the above evidence indicates that the first cohort of the Jiujiang-Louisville program achieved at least the second-highest level of training success — behavior improvement by participants. As discussed in previous sections, the trainees showed signs of active learning, and showed favorable reactions to the training program (the two lower levels of success). In addition, their comprehensive reports reflected the trainees’ capability to apply what they had learned to improving their management skills in the workplace. The City of Jiujiang’s official report (2006) also indicated that this training program was likely to change how the entire Jiujiang government works, once the first cohort is able to share experiences and knowledge with other Jiujiang public officials. This is referred to by Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2006) as the highest level of success — improving the organization’s (business or government) performance, as a result of the trainees’ knowledge and skill development. Evidence of this success on a long-term basis is forthcoming.

In general, it is widely recognized that the first cohort of the Jiujiang-Louisville program achieved great success. The next section will generalize some key factors for success, taken from this program.

**Keys to a Successful Program**

As discussed, developing countries have sent numerous public officials to be
toward Successful Overseas Training for Chinese Public Officials

**Figure 1. The Jiujiang-Louisville model**

![Diagram of the Jiujiang-Louisville model]

Academic Support from Local Universities

Public administration has been considered a highly interdisciplinary field (Forrester, 1997; Frederickson, 1997; Meek & Newell, 2005). Meek and Newell (2005) argued that public administration needs to “integrate those disciplinary insights into a more comprehensive understanding of the problem, out of which public administrators can develop policy responsive to the full range of insights into a problem” (p. 332). Forrester (1997) believed that “scholars from other disciplines will continue to contribute to our understanding on public administration” (pp. 225-226). The interdisciplinary character of public administration requires public administration education to develop an integrated approach that encompasses multiple disciplines such as public policy, budgeting and finance, and city planning (Forrester, 1997; Meek & Newell, 2005).

In the Jiujiang-Louisville program, SUPA’s interdisciplinary capacity was a valuable asset for such training. Public administration and urban planning are two academic fields that have received a lot of attention in China during the past decade. In 2001, China officially launched a first-generation MPA degree program in 24 of its universities, each with an initial class size of 100 students. And the demand for professional public administrators in China has

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only increased (Tong & Straussman, 2003; Xu, 2002; Ye, 2004). The strong teaching and research capabilities provided by SUPA ensured high quality in the four courses. The availability of bilingual instructors facilitated more effective teaching and learning. Two of the trainees with MPA degrees from universities in China felt that the courses provided additional, systematic public administration knowledge and training for their jobs. Feedback from trainees with no prior formal education in public administration indicated that the training program significantly enhanced their knowledge and improved their skills.

In addition to formal courses at the University of Louisville, local universities and colleges hosted educational events for the training group that included seminars and roundtable discussions. Indiana University Southeast (IUS), located in the Louisville metropolitan area, invited the training group to attend several seminars on economic development and international trade. A special seminar on human resources management was also offered by IUS, as requested by the training group. These educational events supplemented classroom teaching and provided additional learning opportunities for the trainees. In order for similar training programs to be successful, it is very important that local academic institutions work together to build a strong academic support network and create an effective learning environment.

Sister City Committee and Local Government Leadership

Like other practice-based disciplines, public administration relies heavily upon hands-on experiences, such as service learning or field internships, for its education and training. Bringle and Hatcher (1996) argued that service learning and field internships can help students to “gain further understanding of the course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of service responsibility” (p. 222). Taylor (1988) found that internships helped students increase personal and social efficacy, establish a bridge between theory and practice, and develop better problem-solving skills.

Major concerns about overseas training programs are whether and how classroom lessons apply to trainees’ daily work (Chang, 1991; Fa, 2004; Shan, 2004; Ye, 2004). The Jiujiang-Louisville program provided a model to develop a successful training program that included both formal classroom training and professional internships in a real-world setting. Few other comparable programs have done this. The Sister City Committee played an important role in planning, arranging, and coordinating the internship program, with help from the Louisville Metro Government. For potential overseas training programs that are organized by other agencies or institutions, it is crucial for the leading agencies or host institutions to establish partnerships with local, state, or Federal government agencies, in order to provide internship opportunities for trainees. To some extent, outside activities can be more important than classroom-based training, by giving trainees firsthand experience that improves their practical skills.
Active Community Involvement

Another issue that has received increased attention in professional training programs is the students’ engagement with the community outside the classroom. Researchers have found that purposeful engagement in the community positively affects a wide array of gains and outcomes, including practical competence, skill development, and culture exchange (Kuh, 1995; Pontius & Harper, 2006). Active community involvement can help students seek support, friendship, and value-added learning experiences beyond the classroom.

For overseas training programs in particular, a potential obstacle is cultural differences between different countries. Chinese and American cultural differences show in many aspects, including education, government, and overall lifestyles. In the Jiujiang-Louisville program, active community involvement provided the trainees opportunities to develop mutual learning dialogues with American government officials, businessmen, and residents. These extracurricular activities allowed the trainees to develop more communication with their American friends, encouraged them to actively participate in educational and community events, and helped them adjust to American lifestyles.

The Sister City Committee was the main organizing agency that planned many community events for the training group. A mid-sized Midwestern city such as Louisville offers few opportunities for the local community to interact with international groups, especially a group of 10 Chinese municipal officials. Many volunteers provided strong support to raise the local community’s awareness of this group’s existence, and encouraged business people to get to know the trainees at formal or casual events. One of the training program’s accomplishments was to establish a bridge of long-term friendship between the two cities and their citizens. Larger American cities should be able to provide continued opportunities for their residents to interact with international people. The host community’s active involvement can demonstrate local hospitality, provide opportunities for trainees to observe and experience America life, and help trainees understand a foreign country from both professional and personal perspectives. A better understanding of Western countries’ cultural and political environments also helps trainees develop professional knowledge and skills.

Conclusions

As discussed in this paper, the first cohort of the Jiujiang-Louisville training program enjoyed great success, and several positive conclusions can be drawn. First, training public officials overseas has become a widely adopted initiative, as China modernizes its civil servant team. It is likely that more programs will take place, as the Chinese central government offers additional financial and political support. Second, developed countries such as the United States provide good models and practices for mutual learning and exchange, which can benefit both the involved governments and their people. The most important challenge
is to maximize the training program’s success. The Jiujiang-Louisville program demonstrated that, in order for such overseas training programs to be successful, several factors needed to work together, including interdisciplinary academic support, local leadership for professional internships and other activities, and active community involvement. This successful program can serve as a model for other projects to follow.

References


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Doing Better: Sports, Economic Impact Analysis, and Schools of Public Policy and Administration

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Abstract
Consultants on economic impact projects face a challenge in terms of measuring the estimated benefits of such projects, particularly when they are promoted within a heightened, politicized context, as is often the case with the sports facilities. Supporters and opponents of such projects hire consultants (public and private) to measure the value of the investment, which is frequently couched as an economic impact assessment. This often leads to conflicting conclusions, with significant divergences in the measured value of the project. We use a comparative case study to highlight how this happens, and to illustrate for public policy and administration scholars how the lessons for conducting such analyses are lost on policy students, and also are reflected as bad or useless knowledge in the communities they serve.

Introduction
Enhancing economic development has always been an important task for local officials, but global competition, exurban centers, and “fend-for-yourself federalism” has intensified the need to enhance state, county, and municipal tax bases for providing desired levels of public services to residents (Kanter, 1995; Greider, 1997; Savitch & Kantor, 2002). Responding to this emerging requirement, the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) lists 35 member or affiliated institutions that currently offer a master's degree in public administration, public policy, or public affairs with a concentration in economic development (NASPAA, 2006). According to Visser and Wright's 1996 study, 27 percent of universities in the Midwestern United States offer courses on economic development. While the content of these programs varies, understanding what is or is not economic
development, and how to measure it, are competencies in the curricula at many accredited institutions. Despite substantial educational resources, and the expertise routinely available to public administrators and community leaders, many university faculty and graduates have contributed to an obfuscation of the issues, and hindered the ability of communities to develop informed and effective economic development policies.

When reputable consulting firms and academicians put forth analyses with vastly different perspectives, the academic sector should step back and assess its role in building the knowledge base to support these assessments, and in launching related policy discussions. Have the nation's public policy programs properly trained their graduates, relative to the very public dimension of the research they produce for economic development decisions? Certainly, value emerges when divergent opinions and ideas are contrasted. From this conflict and argumentation, better decisions can emerge. But when widely varied measurements of economic development result from assessments of the same potential investment or project, it can create an image that, by simply hiring a different policy analyst or consultant, one could get a different, more desirable, answer (Crompton, 2006). This is not an ideal image for graduates from schools of public administration, public affairs, and public policy. There should be a level of consistency in any measurement of economic development and impact, and in the resulting analyses that inform related public debates.

In order to illustrate the phenomenon to students, this article suggests that professors of economic development courses should incorporate examples of competing assessments from current policy situations. Such material keeps students engaged, while highlighting how different outcomes can be created by varied methodologies, and how assumptions in technical reports are presented, carried out, and can make a significant impact on the final results or outcome of a situation. Students should develop a deep appreciation of how economic development and economic impact reports can shape policy discussions, and the political environments where they are introduced. Tracking the execution and ultimate outcomes of dueling reports also provides professors with an opportunity to draw attention to the elements that generate (1) what Lindblom and Cohen refer to as “usable knowledge” (1979), and (2) examples of Wildavsky’s truth for those in power (1979). The remainder of this article conducts such an exercise with competing economic development reports that are based on the construction of a new football stadium for the National Football League’s Dallas Cowboys franchise in Arlington, Texas.

When communities consider the idea of building a facility for a professional sports team, inevitably project promoters will pay for a study and host presentations to illustrate the economic benefits for the investing agency(ies). Several such reports have been authored by staffs of the nation’s leading consulting firms (Hudson, 2001), many of whom are graduates of prestigious
universities. For more than two decades, academicians and policy analysts have discussed their concerns with the economic returns projected in many of these studies (Noll & Zimbalist, 1997). Meanwhile, opponents of the facility often will recruit a faculty member or other expert to provide a report that often presents a vastly different set of numbers on the stadium’s economic value than those being presented by promoters. The ensuing debates can become contests between dueling consultants, which produces an environment that is antithetical to the development of informed public dialogues. The situation typically worsens when citizens realize that the authors of the conflicting studies are affiliated with leading (and in some instances the same) academic institutions that purport to teach economic development, ethics, research methods, and policy analysis. The resulting impression that policy analysts only produce outcomes that cater to paying clients can denigrate the profession and tarnish the image of numerous universities and graduate programs (Crompton, 2006).

By contrasting two economic development reports used in a recent stadium debate, this paper seeks to identify the parameters for validly assessing economic impact as it relates to sports facilities, because this subject needs to become part of the curricula for public administration, public affairs, and public policy programs. The persistent nature of sports investments (Bagli, 2004; Hudson, 2001) underscores the need for graduates of NASPAA programs to understand how to assess economic impact, as opposed to economic development. The next section presents a brief primer on the important terms that this case exercise illustrates. The section after that presents the facts of the case, and its context for development. The main portion of the article breaks the case down into pieces that illustrate the elements of conducting economic analyses, and show how making inaccurate assumptions can easily mislead the public. The final section summarizes the main points of the case, and stresses the pedagogical value of these types of exercises.

A Primer: Economic Development And Economic Impact

One of the fundamental causes of confusion in the debate over sports investments (or any public-funded investment, for that matter) is the inconsistent and inappropriate use of terms. There are four terms that tend to become entangled with one another, which lead to errors in analytic conclusions and recommendations. The terms are economic development, economic growth, economic impact, and cost-benefit analysis. Though related, each of them is distinct. The fact that a relationship exists between them is what causes analysts to confuse the issues, whether it is done out of ignorance or for nefarious purposes. This section highlights important distinctions among these four critical terms. While a course curriculum could develop these definitions in much greater detail, the discussion here aims to illustrate the differences between them, in order to highlight the value of the upcoming comparison exercise.
Economic development is a core function of local government (Judd & Swanstrom, 2004; Logan & Molotch, 1987). Some argue that it has become its own academic discipline (Mier & Fitzgerald, 1991), with an established field of extensive theoretical work (Bingham & Mier, 1993). But what exactly is economic development? There is some debate over this concept in the academic literature. Economists define development in terms of well-being or welfare, and look at measures of wealth or income as proxies of that well-being (Malpezzi, 2003). For instance, one of the first professional organizations in this field defined economic development as “… the process of creating wealth through the mobilization of human, capital, physical, and natural resources” (American Economic Development Council, 1984, p. 18). The public finance field reinforces this conceptualization, as evidenced by Musgrave and Musgrave (1989), who argue that economic development “… should be broadly defined to include all expenditures of a productivity-increasing nature” in meeting the goal of capital formation (p. 781). The scholarly community focuses on structural factors that generate increases in social welfare, however measured.

Based on this interpretation, successful local economic development, therefore, would be reflective of efforts not aimed at specific businesses, but of efforts aimed at environmental attributes, such as the jurisdiction's situation within the regional economy, factor costs for local businesses, market access, the diversity of the jurisdiction's economic base, amenity levels in the community, and the business climate (Malizia & Feser, 1999). As Flammang (1979) notes: “… economic growth is a process of simple [quantitative] increase, implying more of the same, while economic development is a process of [qualitative] structural change, implying something different if not something more” (p. 50).

Academic efforts to define economic development contrast significantly with terms from the consulting sector that describe development as the attraction of new businesses, expansion of existing businesses, creation of new businesses, and retention of existing businesses (Bleakly, 1993). This illustrates an important distinction. Within this perspective, economic development is a process aimed at structural change, with a goal of economic growth (Flammang, 1979). Therefore, economic growth for consultants is mostly concerned with an increase in economic activity. It is easy to see, then, how growth and development are often intertwined in the political arena. But even this definition of economic growth — with its focus on businesses and job creation — is problematic, because it implies that all job growth is good. This approach is flawed, and economists would probably note that the focus should not be on increased jobs but on increased wealth. While new jobs imply new wealth, public discussions often fail to discern the good new jobs from the bad ones.

One could easily envision a situation where a community attracts a new business that generates 100 new jobs. However, if those new jobs are low-paying, and the community's effort to attract them means foregoing the opportunity to
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improve local schools, then are the goals of economic development fully met? This conundrum leads to the crux of the issue in this article: the inappropriate uses of economic impact analyses. Often, when a new project is touted as an “economic development” opportunity for a community, boosters will secure an economic impact analysis that heralds all the project-related benefits. The analysis typically includes primary spending associated with the project, as well as construction spending. By using a multiplier factor, the consultant’s report also tracks the secondary spending of money as it circulates through the local economy. In the end, what comes out is an estimate of all economic activity associated with the project. Thus, economic and fiscal impacts may refer to “total spending” and “taxes collected,” and many erroneously believe that this constitutes economic development.

Economic development with the goal of economic growth is actually the measure of new wealth generated for a city or area, after removing all substitution effects. Unfortunately, many believe that economic impact automatically generates new wealth for a community, and this simply is not the case. The complex situation gets even worse when a new facility is proposed for a project, or an event, already located within a region. The economic growth associated with a project is drastically different from its economic impact, because the latter tabulates all spending, and does not differentiate transfers from net gains, or consider the distribution of benefits within a highly integrated metropolitan region (Becker & Becker, 1996). Studies of economic growth determine (1) if invested funds represent and produce new wealth and (2) how much of any new wealth created can be captured by a particular city. As noted by Sandy, Sloan, and Rosentraub (2004, p. 190), “The value that communities actually seek when they make an investment in a sports facility — real growth in their local economies — can only be measured by determining the increment in total welfare (value) due to real economic development.”

Economic impact analyses attempt to measure all of the economic effects associated with a new project, but these effects tend to be inflated by the assumptions that analysts use in generating estimates. Several common errors include the following: choosing inappropriate multipliers, ignoring opportunity costs, using variable geographic areas as the basis for different aspects of the analysis, and ignoring intra-jurisdictional spending shifts or substitution effects (Crompton, 2006; Crompton, 1995). The case-comparison in the pedagogical exercise proposed in this article enables students to explore and understand the magnitude of the implications associated with these errors.

Finally, policy analysts and public decision-makers must understand the limits of economic impact analyses, in order to ensure that they base their findings and decisions on the correct outputs. This is particularly important as it relates to the role of opportunity costs. Scholars differ on whether such costs should be included in an economic impact analysis; some instead argue that such
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costs should be included in the estimates of a cost-benefit analysis (Blair, 1993). While including all costs associated with an economic development project might be desirable, there also are difficulties in operationalizing many of these costs, such as the price difference between the project in question and the next-best alternative investment. By ignoring these opportunity costs, the apparent magnitude of benefits from an economic impact analysis can take on proportions that make it more attractive to boosters. Furthermore, the processes of economic impact analysis and cost-benefit analysis both fail to examine the distribution of benefits associated with a given investment, meaning that either tool might lead an analyst to find a positive impact, or conclude that a project’s benefits exceed its costs, even in a case where supporting such a project might be antithetical to public policy concerns — especially if the investment uses public tax money, and then worsens a community’s wealth distribution.

The article turns now to a comparative-case exercise that illustrates the differences between two economic impact analyses of the same project, with a focus on the assumptions underlying each version. While this article uses a comparative approach that is based on the new Dallas Cowboys stadium in Arlington, Texas, the framework could be applied to any economic development curriculum, because it applies to any economic impact analysis, and therefore could be based on an example more pertinent to the students’ local setting. The next section provides a brief overview of a situation that occurred in the Dallas-Fort Worth region when the Dallas Cowboys made their play for a new facility.

The Case Of “Arlington’s Cowboys”

In 1971, the Dallas Cowboys’ National Football League (NFL) team moved from their home field, the Dallas-based Cotton Bowl, to Texas Stadium, in the adjacent suburb of Irving, Texas. The facility, with its unique partial dome, had seating for 65,675 fans, a stadium club, and, after remodeling, 381 luxury suites. When it opened, the stadium was “state-of-the-art.” When remodeled, its new and expanded revenue opportunities made the Cowboys one of the NFL’s most valuable and profitable franchises. In 2004, Forbes magazine placed the value of the Dallas Cowboys at $923 million, as a result of revenue streams produced by the stadium and the popularity of a football franchise that frequently was described as “America’s Team” (Ozanian, 2004). This number jumped to $1.173 billion by 2006, but the increase does not include the value of new revenue streams for the franchise that would come with a new stadium (Badenhausen, Ozanian, & Roney, 2006).

Even though revenue opportunities at the facility in Irving were high, the three-decades-old stadium lacked some of the revenue-generating attributes of newer facilities. If the Cowboys played at a stadium similar to those built for franchises in Tampa Bay, Cincinnati, Nashville, Houston, Denver, Cleveland, Seattle, or Washington, D.C., the team would be even more valuable. Therefore,
When the Cowboys first decided to pursue a new facility, they were interested in returning to Dallas. But when negotiations with the city failed, the team signed an agreement to move 16 miles west, to the suburb of Arlington, Texas. Located at the center of the Dallas/Fort Worth metropolitan region, Arlington has been home to the Texas Rangers of Major League Baseball’s (MLB’s) American League since 1972, when the team was lured from Washington, D.C., by a set of city-sponsored incentives. Twenty years after the Rangers’ arrival, Arlington agreed to build a new ballpark, financed primarily by a new sales tax. In 2004, the city was eager to use a similar tax package to help build a new facility for the Dallas Cowboys. Local statute required a citywide referendum to approve the use of tax revenue for another stadium. The Cowboys commissioned a consulting firm to produce a study of the economic and fiscal impacts of the new stadium, and the team’s presence in Arlington, in order to reassure voters about the value of the city’s investment. The city posted the report on its Web site, and officials referred to it extensively in the weeks prior to the referendum.

The consulting firm used by the Cowboys and cited by the City of Arlington concluded that the economic impact of the stadium and team would be between $12.5 billion and $27.7 billion across 30 years (Economic Research Associates [ERA], 2004). Opponents of the plan retained two academicians, and their report projected a loss of approximately $290 million across the same period of time (Rosentraub & Swindell, 2004). The magnitude of these differences suggests drastically different implications for Arlington’s tax base. In addition, the ensuing duel over the project’s alleged value created confusion and gave voters the impression that analysts would simply provide numbers to fit a client’s agenda or the agenda of a citizens’ advocacy group. The balance of this paper focuses on measuring economic impact, and the approaches used by analysts in both studies, with a goal of identifying the concepts, materials, assumptions, and definitions that should guide informed discussions of policy choices, and that should be included in economic development classes taught by NASPAA-endorsed programs.

LESSONS FROM THE DUELING REPORTS

Comparison 1: New vs. Existing Local Spending

Under the referendum’s plan, Arlington was responsible for providing $325 million to build the proposed 75,000-seat facility. The Cowboys agreed to pay the remainder of the costs, excluding those related to land acquisition and financing. To raise these funds, Arlington proposed to make annual payments on bonds sold to investors, from an added increment to the local sales tax. Revenues would be generated by an increased hotel occupancy tax and a tax on the short-term rental of motor vehicles. The city would spend this $325 million on construction costs for the new facility (jobs and materials, as opposed to
ongoing operations and maintenance costs). This amount was included in the consultant’s study as part of the facility’s economic impact. But the academic analysis of economic growth excluded these funds. Why? Because the $325-million commitment did not represent “new” spending in the local economy.

If the stadium were not built, proposed tax increases would be unnecessary. In the absence of higher taxes, families and individuals would have more money available to spend on other things, and the money would still be spent by these citizens. As Noll and Zimbalist (1997, p. 60) conclude, “… tax collections are simply transferred to those who build and operate the public investment (in this instance, the stadium). Whereas taxpayers naturally regard these taxes as a cost to themselves, from the perspective of society as a whole, taxes are simply transferred from one pocket to another.” Arlington, home to regional retail centers, entertainment facilities, hotels, and restaurants, would be the location for a substantial portion of this spending by its residents and visitors. The new taxes would not generate new wealth, but would merely give the city control of the money spent by individual consumers, based on a collective choice to build a new stadium.

The possibility also exists that, in the absence of spending, there would be increased savings and therefore more money would be available for other investments. Under either scenario — that of increased savings or that of static consumption — the basic point remains: The tax money to pay for a stadium already was in the Dallas/Fort Worth economy, and was subject to the same multipliers that ERA used in its report. The application of these tax dollars to the stadium’s construction created no new economic value (development or welfare increment), and therefore it was not appropriate to classify this impact as growth, as a benefit, or as a return on the public sector’s investment.

Microeconomic theory posits that higher taxes depress consumption. A sales tax is a consumption tax, and Arlington would run the risk of driving regional shoppers away with a higher sales tax rate (8 percent after the referendum), which could hurt non-stadium-related businesses. It also is possible for sales to drop to a point where the tax could not generate the revenues needed to cover bond payments. For comparison purposes, the assumption is that the tax would have no negative effect on retail sales patterns (an optimistic assumption, given economic theory).

At the time of the referendum, the Dallas Cowboys agreed to pay approximately $325 million for construction of the new stadium (their maximum responsibility was to be capped at $360 million). It should be noted that final construction costs exceeded the anticipated $685-million price tag, and the Cowboys paid all extra expenses. Regardless of the facility’s total cost, the team — in order to meet part or all of its obligations — was able to collect an additional fee on tickets sold to all events held at the stadium, as well as a fee on stadium parking. An unspecified amount of the team’s share also would come
from other sources, such as an equity investment by the team or its owners, and funds from the NFL (similar to arrangements that have been used in other cities with NFL teams).

If equity investments by the team or its owners exceeded any of the proposed funds to improve Texas Stadium in Irving, they would represent new money, and generate real economic growth. Any funds that were used to pay for construction, and that came through financing programs involving the NFL, also would represent new money for the region. As with taxes, additional fees on admission and parking did not represent new money.

With these uncertain funding sources for the Cowboys’ share, projections of economic growth must be based on a possible range of outcomes. The academic study assumed that at least 25 percent of the Cowboys’ investment would be raised from new fees on tickets and parking. The study projected a range that showed up to 50 percent of the funds coming from fees, with a midrange point of 33 percent.

If 25 percent of the investment was raised via fees on parking and event admission, the Cowboys then could contribute a maximum amount of $243.8 million (75 percent of their share of the costs) to economic growth from stadium construction, because those paying both the tax and the fees in effect would be paying for remaining construction costs. Again, if the stadium was not built, and these fees were not collected, then consumers would be able to spend these fees on other forms of consumption (thus injecting the same level of spending into the economy, whether or not the stadium was built). If one-third of the construction cost funded by the Cowboys came from the two fees, then the maximum amount of new money invested in the stadium would be $217.8 million. If one-half of the money came from the new fees, then the total new money invested in the project would be $162.5 million. The ERA report included all spending by the Cowboys in its measure of economic impact, a technically correct measure of impact, but not an accurate measure of the increment as it related to the regional economy. Focusing on economic impact — without limiting real development to the team’s investment — created the illusion of a far more robust economic return than what would or could actually occur. When one removes Arlington’s expenditure of tax money and the fee revenues to be used by the Cowboys, the estimated economic development benefit from building the stadium would need to be reduced by approximately $376 million. It still would yield a guardedly optimistic projection of new regional economic growth, but it would be much different and far lower than what was cited by the City of Arlington and the Cowboys.

Comparison 2: Capturing Local Shares of Growth

Another challenge for policy makers is how to capture as much of the new economic growth generated by an investment as possible — a process made
more difficult by the economically porous borders of taxing jurisdictions. If new money invested by the Cowboys to build the stadium ranged from $162.5 million to $243.8 million, it would be a reasonable expectation that 35 percent of these funds be spent on labor, and 65 percent to purchase materials (both studies agreed on this proportion). Arlington, as part of a complex and highly integrated regional economy, would only capture a portion of this economic activity, because workers and firms located throughout the region would compete for and receive contracts and work on the project. The Dallas-Fort Worth combined Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSA) is home to 199 other municipalities in 13 counties; 59 of these are in Tarrant and Dallas counties alone. Given the mix of metropolitan area workers and businesses that are specifically located in Arlington, approximately six percent of all labor costs and five percent of all building-material costs would directly benefit Arlington residents and businesses (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2004). This would yield the following returns for Arlington in terms of direct expenditures. (See Table 1.)

Under the most optimistic scenario, Arlington could expect a total payroll impact of $5.1 million for city residents from construction of the $625-million facility. Depending on the source of the Cowboys’ contribution to these construction costs, the real increase in payroll for Arlington’s residents might only be $3.4 million. This is substantially less than the ERA’s projection of $35.3 million in direct economic output (as reported in adjusted 2010 dollars).

Including materials purchased from stores located in Arlington, the best-case scenario for new, one-time-only money generated by construction of the stadium is $13.1 million (while it is more likely that only $8.7 million would be added to Arlington’s economy). A one-time infusion from construction spending — somewhere between $8.7 million and $13.1 million — into Arlington’s economy would induce additional spending on other goods and services. Within the county — the smallest area for which multipliers exist — one might anticipate spending an additional $9 million to $13.5 million. Given Arlington’s size in terms of jobs, as a percent of all jobs in its county, it should capture approximately 21 percent of the economic growth generated by indirect, construction-related spending. If that were to occur, the maximum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cowboys’ Non-Tax/ Tax Investment</th>
<th>Project Expenditures: New Money</th>
<th>Arlington’s Share</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Investment</td>
<td>Labor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50/50 Split</td>
<td>$162,500</td>
<td>$56,875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66/33 Split</td>
<td>$217,800</td>
<td>$76,230</td>
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<tr>
<td>75/25 Split</td>
<td>$243,800</td>
<td>$85,330</td>
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In thousands of dollars; all money transferred from other expenditures is excluded.
possible economic growth that Arlington could realize from building a new stadium would be $15.7 million, though the gain could be as low as $10.5 million. (See Table 2.) This growth figure is substantially less than the overall economic impact of $71.8 million, as reported in the ERA report related to this construction money (measured in 2010 dollars). One also should note that this economic growth would accrue to Arlington residents and businesses, even if the stadium were built in Irving or Dallas — given the proportion of construction workers and businesses located in Arlington, and the existing integrated aspects of the regional economy.

Comparison 3: Annual Spending

The ERA consultants concluded that Arlington would enjoy $127 million of new, direct output each year, and $155.1 million of combined (direct and indirect) annual economic activity (measured in 2010 dollars). The present value of this annual figure — calculated across 30 years — figured prominently in measuring the economic impact of the team and facility. Conversely, the academic study concluded that there would be no change in the distribution of economic development produced by the Cowboys’ move from Irving to Arlington, which substantially reduced the city’s total return over 30 years. Why such divergent conclusions?

The difference is related to the nature of metropolitan economies. From their Irving location, the Cowboys already spend money that creates economic opportunities for individuals and firms. Those relationships and expenditure patterns would continue after the team moved the location of its 10 annual home games a mere 16-mile distance, from Irving to Arlington. In addition, because the vast majority of fans attending games and other events are residents of the Dallas/Fort Worth region, pre- and post-game expenditure patterns also are likely to remain largely unchanged. The consultants believed that:

A significant portion of the economic impacts generated by the operations of a NFL franchise will result from patron spending outside of the stadium. In the process of attending NFL games, patrons purchase goods and services from local establishments. These purchases, including

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Table 2. Stadium Construction: Arlington’s Total Share

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cowboys’ Non-Tax/ Tax Investment</th>
<th>New Money Invested</th>
<th>Arlington’s Share of:</th>
<th>Arlington’s Total Share</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Labor</td>
<td>Materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50/50 Split</td>
<td>$162,500</td>
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<td>$243,800</td>
<td>$5,120</td>
<td>$7,935</td>
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</table>

In thousands of dollars; all money transferred from other expenditures is excluded.
food, beverages, gasoline, lodging, and other miscellaneous retail items, represent demand for goods and services in the following BEA [Bureau of Economic Advisors] RIMS II [Regional Input-Output Multipliers] sectors: retail trade, eating and drinking places, hotels and lodging places, and professional sports clubs and promoters (Economic Research Associates, 2004, p. 28).

These anticipated benefits likely will not occur. This claim is based on (1) the dramatic differences in facility design that have taken place across the past 20 years, (2) the extensive literature devoted to studying the location of businesses before and after the building of sports facilities, and (3) the experiences of Arlington, Dallas, and Irving with the location of retail outlets, restaurants, hotels, and other entertainment facilities after the building of Texas Stadium, Ameriquest Field/The Ballpark in Arlington, and two other arenas that host basketball and hockey teams. Since the 1980s, owners have pursued facility designs that capture a far greater share of game- or event-day spending, as team owners encourage fans to purchase their pre- and post-game entertainment and meals at the sports complex.

Employment data from the U.S. Department of Commerce indicates that in no category of spending analyzed by the ERA group does Arlington account for more than 30 percent of the jobs in Tarrant County, despite the concentration of tourist amenities there (2004). Using any local capture rates (rates related to small levels of out-of-stadium expenditures that are not substitutions from one form of consumption to another, such as meals eaten or shirts purchased), that exceed this proportion is inappropriate, because a single stadium has never been shown to cause a shift in regional employment patterns.

The academic study sustained this point by using data from Arlington’s

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Jobs Located In</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fort Worth/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arlington PMSA*</td>
<td>Arlington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>42,997</td>
<td>11,195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>46,092</td>
<td>11,956</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>50,927</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>52,357</td>
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<td>58,156</td>
<td>12,887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>59,328</td>
<td>12,992</td>
</tr>
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</table>

* Primary Metropolitan Statistical Areas
Doing Better: Sports, Economic Impact Analysis, and Schools of Public Policy and Administration

experience with the facility it built for the Texas Rangers. In 1994, when that new ballpark opened in Arlington, there were a total of 42,997 jobs in eating and drinking places in the Fort Worth-Arlington area; 11,195 of these jobs were located in Arlington (26.0 percent). In 2002 — the last year for which the U.S. Department of Commerce has data available by industry cluster — there were 59,328 such jobs in the Fort Worth-Arlington area, and 12,992 jobs in Arlington (21.9 percent). Arlington's share of jobs actually declined after the ballpark opened, which indicated no real shift in consumption patterns, and hence no new wealth (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 2006). Despite a 27.2 percent increase in Arlington's population from 1990 through 2000 (North Central Texas Council of Governments, 2006), the proportion of jobs at eating and drinking places located in the city actually declined. This underscores the point that the location of a single sports facility in a suburban city does not alter the concentration of hospitality sector jobs. (See Table 3.) Although there is evidence that such shifts are possible with downtown facility locations (Austrian & Rosentraub, 2003).

The academic study also examined one other data set to see if the presence of a sports facility changed consumption patterns. The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts reports the annual taxes collected on mixed beverages. As a gross receipts tax, this revenue measures consumption at the point of sale. In 1994, 29.5 percent of the receipts from this tax in Tarrant County came from businesses located in Arlington. In 2003, Arlington was the location for only 24.2 percent of county tax revenue, and in 2004, Arlington produced 22.9 percent of the county’s share of this tax revenue source. (See Figure 1.) The presence of a ballpark did not lead to an increased share of county consumption occurring in the city of Arlington.

Figure 1. Mixed beverage tax collections in Arlington, as a percent of Tarrant County Collections, 1994—2004

[Graph showing the percentage of mixed beverage tax collections in Arlington from 1994 to 2004, with a decrease in the percentage over time.]

Source: Texas Department of Public Accounts
Comparison 4: Related Property-Tax Growth

Stadium advocates often point to probable increments in a city’s property-tax base as a result of a facility’s presence. Arlington was no exception. To counter this argument, the academic study examined changes in the assessed value of property in Tarrant County, as a way to illustrate the inability of sports facilities to affect suburban city property values when there are no development agreements (there were no development agreements in Arlington’s deal with the Cowboys, as there were in both San Diego’s deal with the MLB Padres, and Cleveland’s deal with the NBA Cavaliers and MLB Indians). Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of recent growth around the community. The northern sector near the ballpark experienced no significant changes (even though it has the second-largest amount of developable property in the city and is located across Interstate 30 from the ballpark), while the southeastern and southwestern sectors showed the largest rates of growth. Ironically, the central sector abutting the west side of the Rangers’ ballpark was the only area that lost ground. (See Figure 2.)

Comparison 5: New Tax Revenues

Arlington would enjoy new sales-tax revenues from transactions at the stadium — revenues that now occur in Irving and elsewhere — and it also would see new hotel-tax income. In 2002, there were a total of 89,600 hotel rooms in Dallas and Tarrant counties, with 25,200, or 28.1 percent, located in Tarrant County (Texas A&M University Real Estate Center, 2002). In 2004, the Arlington Convention and Visitors Bureau listed 4,988 hotel rooms in the city on their Web site and showed Arlington with 19.8 percent of the available rooms in Tarrant County, as well as 5.6 percent of the rooms in Dallas and

![Figure 2. Growth by area in Arlington, 2002 – 2003](image_url)
Tarrant counties combined (2004). Because there is no local income tax or wage tax, the location of jobs associated with these industries would not generate any returns for Arlington taxpayers. The stadium — and any other facility built within the Cowboys’ complex — would be publicly owned, and therefore exempt from property taxes.

The ERA consultants’ report projected that Arlington would earn $314,000 in new or additional tax income if all NFL teams, a substantial number of game-related personnel, and tourists stayed in Arlington hotels, and if a substantial number of people who needed hotel rooms to facilitate their attendance at the game also stayed there. The report provided no information to support the assumption that teams and visitors would prefer to stay in Arlington, as opposed to elsewhere in the region, especially when the facility would be located near the boundary of Arlington and other nearby municipalities. Given the distribution of hotel rooms in the region, there is a very strong likelihood that the revenue earned by Arlington could be even less robust than the small amount projected by the ERA consultants. The ERA consultants also anticipated $1.47 million in sales-tax revenues from purchases at the stadium, which they said would yield a maximum $1.8 million-per-year tax increment for Arlington.

Before concluding that this potential $1.8-million per year in new tax revenue was a net gain for Arlington, property taxes lost as a result of the facility being city-owned would have to be included as one of the costs associated with the city’s investment (a missing element in the ERA report). The Cowboys would make annual payments to the Arlington Independent School District (to ensure that schools remained fiscally unharmed). Table 4 includes that income stream. (See Table 4.) The Cowboys also would pay rent for using the facility, while maintaining responsibility for “all operating, maintenance and utility costs …” (City of Arlington, 2004, p. 20). With a modest discount rate of 5 percent, the present value of a $2-million, annual income stream across 30 years is $30.7 million. If one used a discount rate of 10 percent, which is more appropriate for private-sector investment analyses, the present value of the rental income flow would be $18.9 million. The ERA report used a discount rate of 3 percent to calculate present values, although such a rate was not customarily used by the Federal government and other organizations (Stiglitz, 2000). (A rate of 3 percent might be appropriate in the current economic situation, but it is far lower than prevailing rates at the time of the study.) This is akin to assuming very low inflation during the discount period, and thereby increases the project’s present and apparent value. When including income from the naming-rights deal, the present value of the rental income would range from $38.4 million (using a 5-percent discount rate) to $23.6 million (using 10 percent).

The “Master Agreement” also called for a $16.6-million community contribution from the team, payable in annual installments of $500,000,
beginning in 2006 (City of Arlington, 2004). Using a 5-percent discount rate, the present value of these contributions is $7 million (and it is not appropriate to use a higher discount rate on these dollars, because they represent a donation to the city to fund projects that otherwise would require tax money from residents).

The present value of the anticipated increase in sales and hotel taxes for Arlington is $22.8 million. The anticipated cost to acquire the land where the stadium will be built is $42 million. Using current property tax rates, and without increasing tax rates or the value of the property, the present value of the foregone tax income is $19.8 million (using a 5-percent discount rate).

Before estimating a net position for Arlington’s taxpayers, one other aspect of the arrangements with the Cowboys should be included. All rental payments made by the team could be used as a credit toward its effort to purchase the new stadium at the end of the lease. This means that annual rental- and naming-rights income received by the city would create a $75-million credit for the Cowboys towards the purchase of the complex. The total purchase price of the complex is $100 million. The Cowboys then would be able to acquire the entire complex and the surrounding land for $25 million. If the team ever

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<tr>
<th>Income/Costs, Net Position</th>
<th>Discount Rate</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income for Arlington</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rental Income</td>
<td>$30.7</td>
<td>$18.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Naming Rights Income</td>
<td>7.7</td>
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<td>Contribution By Team</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sales &amp; Hotel Tax Increment</td>
<td>22.8</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payment for Acquisition</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mega-Event Tax Income</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Cowboys Annual Event Tax Income</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposed School Tax Payment</td>
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<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income Subtotal</td>
<td>97.6</td>
<td>62.8</td>
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<table>
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<th>Cost to Arlington Taxpayers</th>
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<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Property Taxes Foregone</td>
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<td>19.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Bonds</td>
<td>325.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal and Transaction Costs for Bonds</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer Credit for Cowboys</td>
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<td>42.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost Subtotal</td>
<td>388.1</td>
<td>388.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Net Position               | -290.5        | -325.3        |

* In millions of dollars.
moved to another city, it could sell the land and the stadium, and retain all of the money from that transaction. This creates another important potential financial return for the team.

“Payment for Acquisition” refers to the $25 million required from the Cowboys at the end of the lease to purchase the complex. The academic study calculated the value of property taxes lost, with a 5-percent discount rate. Table 4 lists the project bonds at face value; because the calculations are in present values, it is not appropriate to include future interest payments. A national firm that has handled the financing of sports and convention center facilities — as well as numerous other public sector projects in cities across the U.S. — estimated that the potential bond and legal fees associated with a transaction of this magnitude ($325 million), plus the estimated legal and transaction costs, would total $1.3 million. The table does not include an entry for income earned on these funds (interest earned until payments are required from the fund for construction costs), because that income is offset by the required interest. The present value of applying all rent payments made by the Cowboys for the purchase of the complex is shown as Arlington’s cost of acquiring the land (thought to be $42 million at the time of the referendum). With a 5-percent discount rate, taxpayers in Arlington are providing a subsidy of $290.5 million to build the new Cowboys stadium complex. If the city used a 10-percent discount rate, the subsidy would be an estimated $325.3 million. The best outcome Arlington could expect is that it would suffer a net loss of only $290.5 million as a result of (1) building the stadium, (2) the team’s presence, and (3) hosting myriad annual and mega-events. The potential loss for Arlington also could be as high as $325.3 million.

Comparison 6: Mega and Annual Events

A stadium with a retractable roof provides an opportunity to host events such as a Super Bowl, the NCAA Men’s Final Four Basketball Tournament, and national political conventions. There is ample evidence to suggest that these events increase the level of spending in an area, because visitors stay at hotels and visit other regional attractions. The ERA consultants anticipated that two major college football games, a college bowl (Bowl Alliance) game, and a number of other events would take place at the new stadium. Several of these events already take place in the region, but could move to the new facility. The amount that Arlington could gain from hosting these events would be a function of the actual spending that takes place within its borders. A study by the NFL and the Sport Management Research Institute of Super Bowl XXXII found that the game, played in the northern part of Miami-Dade County, Fla., generated economic effects from the City of Miami that reached as far north as Palm Beach County — about 70 miles away (National Football League, 1999). While other experts have challenged the absolute size
of the economic impact and spending that this study attributed to the Super Bowl, the essential conclusion that spending occurred across an entire region underscores concerns with the capture rate projected for Arlington (Coates & Humphreys, 2002). Miami, the City of Miami Beach, and Fort Lauderdale could not contain the level of spending generated by a Super Bowl. The only valid way to estimate the portion of spending that would occur in Arlington is to look at its share of the hotel rooms within the region, and the proportion of hospitality-sector jobs that exist within the city.

Arlington is the location of approximately 5 percent of the region’s hospitality-sector jobs. Some of the existing jobs at the stadium would be new in Arlington, except for those that are shifted from other entertainment-related jobs, or displaced from other employment sectors in the city. The jobs, however, would not be new to the region; they instead would represent a simple redistribution of employment opportunities within the region. If the new stadium ever hosted college football, spending patterns would not be substantially or significantly altered. The only change that could exist for Arlington is related to sales at the stadium. As with the construction benefits and the annual benefits, the Arlington taxpayers’ investment does more to subsidize economic activity for the region than can be specifically recaptured for the investing taxpayers.

**Teaching Economic Analysis: Responsibilities for the Future**

Policy analysts, public administrators, local and regional elected officials, and community leaders each have increasing responsibilities for economic development. The ability of any city, county, or state to enhance its tax base and be better able to provide the array of public services that meet citizen preferences is dependent on economic development. As a result, schools that train public and community leaders, as well as the analysts who produce studies of economic impact and development, need to make sure that students understand the aspects of measurement for economic impact and development. While not every graduate of an MPP or MPA program needs to know how to perform a study of the economic value of a project, they should understand how to measure economic development, and know the meaning of the different, yet related, economic terms. Professors of public policy and administration are by and large quite familiar with the value of case studies as teaching tools. But the exercise here pushes the envelope further, by engaging students in a comparative critique of studies, in order to highlight the effect of selective information, incorrect execution, and overly optimistic assumptions regarding a public investment decision.

As this comparative case review illustrates, a focus on economic impact, rather than economic development or growth, provided accurate information. But when intertwined with the political interests of the Cowboys and some elected leaders of Arlington, it ended up focusing attention on the wrong issue. It
created an image of economic returns for a set of taxpayers, but that image did not reflect reality. Indeed, a more prudent use of research tools suggests that, if Arlington subsidized the stadium project, it could fail to gain revenues needed to offset its commitment of funds. If that outcome materialized, taxes might have to be raised in order to maintain city services, or else residents could face service cutbacks, even after making payments to ensure that the new stadium is built. Under that outcome, the city’s economic position could be worse after constructing the stadium, which was not the intent of community leaders who worked to bring the Cowboys to Arlington.

In terms of a curriculum for a seminar in economic development, there are several issues that schools should include for mastery by students. First, economic development curricula should emphasize a clear understanding of the differences between the concepts of economic impact and economic development, and how they are used by professional analysts and officials. Graduates of public affairs, public administration, and public policy programs must understand that the general public often misinterprets the term economic impact as one of economic development.

Second, students need to understand the analytical techniques related to the ability of any city to capture the economic growth associated with an enterprise in a highly integrated economic region. The setting of a project matters. Goods and services easily move across municipal boundaries, and people visiting a region for an event may well sleep in one city, eat in another, and visit a tourist attraction in yet a third. Workers often travel from homes in one city to their jobs in another city, so a stadium in one city will likely employ hundreds of workers from other communities.

Third, the existence of any entertainment asset in one city shifts economic activity. But, because workers often travel from the cities where they live and work, the location of a stadium in any one city of a region generates very little, if any, new economic development for any one city in that region. Because the Cowboys were not going to leave the region — even without a new stadium they already were one of the NFL’s most valuable franchises — the location alone could not realistically create any substantial new level of economic development for any one particular city. The benefits would be spread across the region, relative to the location of businesses (suppliers of services and products to the Cowboys) and the residences of workers. At the regional level, new economic development would occur when tourists who would not otherwise have visited the region come to an event. If a team only attracts fans from within the region, then economic activity is shifting, but there is essentially no new regional economic growth. Understanding the substitution effect is critical to making investment decisions with public dollars.

Fourth, academics and practitioners have a special ethical responsibility to ensure that the communities using their information clearly understand nuances
in definitions and assumptions. Analysts and administrators cannot assume that citizens will understand all the terms common to the language of experts or practitioners, and practitioners of the policy sciences in turn are responsible for defining their terms, and underscoring how these definitions do or do not fit with the common phrases and understandings used by others. While critics may dismiss this as an impossible task — how can people know how someone else understands their work? — in the case of communities looking at sports facilities as investments, the dominant policy concern is with the direct returns of new wealth created for those whose taxes are committed to the project.

The case-comparison uses an approach where students can see the implications of different elements of economic analyses, and how it can work for an economic development course, by raising a range of discussion issues for master’s-level or even doctoral-level students. In addition to the material in this article, there are many other related issues that also could form the basis of class discussions. For example, public investments in sports facilities raise issues with the quality of jobs created, which also is related to the broader question of distributional equity associated with the governmental support of economic development initiatives (Krumholz, 1991). Students might also engage the more fundamental discussion of the appropriateness of any governmental jurisdiction subsidizing private businesses (implicitly picking winner and loser businesses). In the technical dimension, many economic impact analyses delve into the mechanics of choosing and using the most appropriate economic multipliers to calculate indirect and induced spending associated with the project’s direct benefits, using such tools as RIMS II or other input-output modeling techniques. Analysts often apply the wrong multiplier or an overly generous multiplier to direct spending, and thereby increase estimated total impacts on growth (Crompton, 2006). Similarly, analysts using inflated dollar figures may give the impression that the real value of the returns on an investment is higher than might otherwise be expected, due to optimistic inflation assumptions in present-value calculations. Professors could easily set up the comparative-case study approach with two cost-benefit analyses, and could highlight for students the importance of opportunity costs associated with any public investment.

A more pragmatic justification for the comparative-case study is how exercises like the one in this article address several of the standards touted by NASPAA, the accrediting body of MPA and MPP programs. For instance, the exercise in this example highlights the economic institutional players in a metropolitan region, and the relative levels of knowledge that various parties bring to the negotiating table. The exercise raises crucial ethical issues, framed in a politicized environment, in terms of the assumptions underpinning an economic impact or growth analysis (regarding multipliers, discount rates, varying geographic areas, distinguishing new from existing economic activity), and the potential...
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influence of funding sources on the outcome of an analysis. In addition to the economic institutions and practical ethics involved in this exercise, students also may address the NASPAA standard on quantitative analysis and information-management skills. The ideas of triangulation and pattern identification require students to develop an appreciation for the multitude of data sources that can help inform a variety of debates and analyses. In all, comparative-case exercises like this one achieve multiple pedagogical goals, and serve the institutional needs for NASPAA-accredited or accreditation-aspiring programs.

While we — the faculty at the nation’s schools of public policy, public administration, and public affairs — may not have gone wrong in teaching economic development, we can do more to ensure that the policy work we deliver, and that our students produce, informs public discussions in a positive manner. Dueling consultants do not always clarify the weighty choices confronting cities, as their leaders strive to develop the tax bases needed to finance community and economic development and to support municipal services that truly define the quality of life.

Since its citizens passed the referendum on the Arlington facility, which was estimated to cost $625 million at the time, the city in December, 2006, unveiled new plans for the stadium (more than two years after the studies) that showed an increase in size from 75,000 to 80,000 seats, and an updated cost projection that topped $1 billion (City of Arlington, 2006). Taxpayer commitments to these projects deserve quality analyses. It is our responsibility to provide the expertise and to make sure that the proper talent is available to conduct these analyses in a rigorous, ethical, and responsible manner. This responsibility exists whether or not any of the involved consultants have received their training at schools of public administration or public policy. Studies overestimating the financial benefits from sports facilities, convention centers, and other amenities abound. Unless the graduates from schools of public administration and policy can demystify these analyses and provide citizens and elected officials with carefully considered and accurate data, real economic development will suffer.

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Footnotes

1 “A Gross Receipts Tax Is Imposed on the Amount Received from the Sale or Service Of Mixed Beverages or From the Sale, Preparation, or Service of Ice Or Nonalcoholic Beverages That Are Sold, Prepared, or Served for the Purpose of Being Mixed With an Alcoholic Beverage, and Consumed on the Premises of the Permitted Mixed Beverage. The Mixed Beverage Tax Is Imposed on the Person or Organization Holding the Mixed Beverage Permit, and Not the Custom er. It May Not Be Added to the Selling Price as a Separate Charge, and May Not Be Backed Out from the Amount Received. Any Reimbursement You Choose to Collect from Your Customer Must Be Clearly Labeled as a ‘Reimbursement.’ Reimbursements, however, become part of the tax base. An Amount Labeled as a ‘Tax’ is Fully Due to the State, in Addition to the Mixed Beverage Tax” (Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, 2004, ¶1-2).
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Teaching Health Policy in an Economic Framework to Non-Majors

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ABSTRACT

A policy course requires a set of evaluation tools to explore the effects of proposed and existing policy initiatives. This paper offers an economic approach for teaching health policy to students who are not economics majors. The author provides a model that uses a graduate-level elective course as an example. In this course, an economics “boot camp” is used to provide a short, intensive overview of principles of economics. Next, two comprehensive health economics applications are used for a transition from economics principles to health policy analysis. In the balance of the course, economic concepts are integrated into evaluations of four health policy goal areas: access, cost, quality, and market interventions. A discussion of the methods for applying this design to other graduate and undergraduate policy courses for non-economics majors is also included.

INTRODUCTION

A course in U.S. health policy presents two important pedagogical issues. First, it provokes lively discussion and disagreement among students, often based on anecdotal reports of inequity and ethics. Second, health policy is both complex and dynamic. Ever-changing health policies and pending, new initiatives make this a demanding course for faculty and students. Nonetheless, virtually all students and their families have been consumers in the U.S. health care industry, which forms a common starting-point for engaged learning.

The first issue requires a neutral framework for evaluating the effectiveness of health policy, and economic analytical tools can provide this framework. The second issue requires a health policy course to have a manageable method of organization. Problems created by overlapping policy initiatives and changing political and economic conditions need to be addressed in a structured format.

The academic composition of students in such a course can be diverse. For example, students of health policy may seek degrees in public administration or health care management. In the latter case, this degree is typically offered in a school of business or health science, or through a joint program at these two schools. As a result, the students’ base of academic preparation can vary widely.
Different types of students bring different perspectives, which introduce both enhancements and challenges to the classroom. Blending an academically diverse group of students also offers a unique opportunity for interdisciplinary learning. In this context, students may benefit from their varied perspectives. Students can be encouraged by their cohorts to broaden their view of the health care industry, as each one brings a unique experience and perspective to the classroom. The advantages and difficulties of interdisciplinary learning have been summarized in earlier works by Newell (1994), and Lattuca, Voight, and Fath (2004), among others.

**Course Design**

In the example course discussed here, titled Health Policy and Economics, all students are expected to meet the following goals:

1. To understand basic economic principles;
2. To apply economic evaluation tools in evaluating health policy;
3. To know the current, broad health policy initiatives that address cost, quality, access, and market reform; and
4. To understand the impact of these policies on target populations. This course is taught as an elective in a Master of Business Administration (MBA) program, and it is open to other graduate students at the university.

The diversity of class composition can introduce several instructional challenges. In a typical class, MBA students have had at least two undergraduate courses on the principles of macroeconomics and microeconomics. If not, then they have had a required foundation graduate course in economics. About half of these students have also completed an MBA-level managerial economics course. Many MBA students elect to complete a concentration in health services within the program, but they do not necessarily have current or past work experience in that environment. University students from outside the MBA program are also attracted to this course. These may include students from graduate programs in nursing, occupational therapy, and physical therapy, who are taking the course to meet an elective requirement. In many cases, these students have had no economic principles courses, but most of them have current experience working in an environment that is directly influenced by health policy. A good course design can mitigate the students' lack of economics study.

There are at least three possible approaches to addressing the challenges described above. In the first approach, the instructor could cover relevant economic principles as they arise in the discussion of health policy initiatives. In this method, the course launches headlong into a review of U.S. health policy, and introduces and applies the economic tools *ad hoc*. This course design does not use a full economic framework approach, but it enlists economic concepts as
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an add-on feature to policy discussion.

The second approach is thoroughly to cover the principles of economics topics before there is any discussion of health policy. This approach runs the risk of boring those with prior economics education, and overwhelming those with none. This method also effectively separates the study of health policy from economics, which runs contrary to the contemporary structure of health policy research.

The third approach uses a short, intensive overview of economic principles at the beginning of the course, and then follows on continuously with examples of their effective applications to relevant health policy topics. Using this approach, basic economic principles are introduced to provide a foundation for later use in health policy analysis. Later applications expand these principles in depth and complexity, as needed.

The course described in this paper is organized around the third approach. It has three distinct components: an economics overview, a transitional applications section, and a structured health policy review. The design is similar to the model described by Caviglia-Harris (2003), for teaching economics in an interdisciplinary course on environmental studies, and it is similar in approach to the course outlined by Duchovic, Maloney, Majundar, and Manalis (1998), for teaching science to non-science majors.

ECONOMICS “BOOT CAMP”

The first unit of this section is an overview based on a list of concisely stated principles of economics, and it focuses primarily on the microeconomic principles that will be used throughout the course. At a minimum, concepts such as scarcity, trade-offs, opportunity cost, incentives, marginal analysis, and markets should be covered. Mankiw (2004, pp. 3-15) and Henderson (2005, pp. 12-13) provide good examples of this type of list. It is very important for the instructor to use examples from health services, wherever possible, to illustrate these concepts. Students are thus immediately able to recognize how economics is relevant to studying health policy. Interestingly, this method is remarkably easy and effective. Because all of us have some experience with the health care market, the instructor is able to effectively engage students’ comprehension of theoretical concepts by drawing on their personal experiences.

In the second unit, I review the law of demand, demand and demand-determinants, supply and supply-determinants, and market equilibrium. Here, I use a health-services market example of physician office visits. To introduce graphing as an analytical tool, I present this example in the context of the market for physician office visits in the Canadian health care system. First, I use a graph to illustrate demand, supply, and market equilibrium in an unregulated price environment. Next, we consider the effects of price controls on office visit fees, and review the concepts of shortage and surplus.
A brief unit on elasticity follows. Simple calculations of price, income, and cross-price elasticities are introduced, again using examples from health services. We then compare the price-elasticity of demand for brain surgery to the price-elasticity of demand for cosmetic surgery, in order to recognize the wide range of elasticities that exist for specific services in the larger health care market. This unit is supplemented with two tables from journal articles on methods for estimating the price-elasticity of demand and also income elasticity, which demonstrates applications of these tools in health services.

The next economics unit introduces the concepts of production and cost. Here, I use the example of inpatient hospital stays, and rely on production and cost tables to walk students through a depiction of production and cost curves. I review the marginal analysis approach, while equating marginal revenue and marginal cost, in order to determine the optimal level of production. This provides an example of how marginal analysis can determine an optimal outcome, which is useful later in the course.

Together, these units comprise the economics “boot camp” section of the course. While there is not enough time to present the principles in depth, as one would in a principles of economics course, the economics boot camp gives students a sense of how these principles can be used to guide the analysis of health policy effects.

**Transitional Applications**

The second section of the course leads students from the “economics boot camp” into two comprehensive health applications. The health production-function presentation follows Grossman (1972), and topics include a health production-function model, the relationship between medical care inputs and health status, the marginal product of medical care spending, and optimal medical care spending.

The market for health insurance is also introduced as part of this transitional applications section. After a brief review of employer-based, group health insurance (indemnity and managed-care plans), the theory of risk and insurance is presented. Key concepts introduced here are utility of income, risk aversion, the probability of an event, choice under the condition of uncertainty, and the expected value of an outcome. Students work through several calculations on the value of insurance and the price of uncertainty. Following this segment is a discussion of asymmetric information, adverse selection, and moral hazard in the health insurance market.

Both of these applications emphasize the conceptual frameworks of analyses, so students are provided with two, thorough examples of how economics is used in health policy research. The initial economic principles overview and this transitional applications section prepare students to use an economic approach for evaluating the variety of health policy issues that are covered in the course’s third section.
HEALTH POLICY

The third section of the course introduces the broad range of U.S. health policy initiatives. This section can be organized around targeted populations or health policy goals. Targeted populations include the poor, the elderly, children, women, the disabled, military personnel, employees, and other specific sub-populations. Health policy goals are generally aimed at cost containment, quality assurance, improved access, and market reforms. The proposed course design uses health policy goals as a broad organizational structure. Highlighted within each goal are policies aimed at specific targeted populations. For example, within the health policy unit on improved access, we consider those policies related to improving access for selected targeted populations — Medicare and Medicaid recipients, employees, and recipients of the States Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). In a later unit on policies for containing health care costs, a discussion centers on selection of cost-control policies aimed at specific populations. With this approach, students can review a variety of policy initiatives that are designed to address each of the listed, targeted populations throughout the duration of the course. This method of organization also enables students to understand how health policies with the same goal can be crafted differently, depending on the targeted populations.

The four health policy goals — cost containment, quality assurance, access improvement, and market reform — form the basis of design for the rest of the course. Henderson’s Health Policy and Economics (2005) follows a similar outline, and it is currently the required text for this course. Given the dynamic nature of health policy, however, even the best textbooks cannot remain current for long. This requires continuous updating to course content. Students assist with this activity through a course assignment to find one article each week on proposed or enacted health care legislation, and to be prepared to discuss it briefly at the beginning of each class. Given the academic diversity of the students in this course, these articles inevitably reflect a variety of sources, such as clinical publications, business publications, and the popular press. This range of perspectives broadens students’ exposure to the conception and perception of U.S. health policy.

Many health policy topics yield opportunities for using economic tools and concepts to examine the potential effects of a policy initiative. The principles that students learned in earlier economics units now are routinely used to enhance discussion of policy effectiveness and outcomes, where appropriate. Several examples are provided below, but many others are integrated into policy topics used throughout the course.

For example, when reviewing U.S. policies to contain health care costs, the economic implications of price controls are revisited. We consider how the conditions of a price ceiling may change health care providers’ behaviors as they seek to improve their own incomes. An economic approach to analyzing the effects of price controls in a pharmaceutical monopoly market is also
demonstrated. Using a graph to illustrate the monopolist’s demand, marginal revenue, and marginal cost curves, we first determine monopoly output and price. Then, students determine the effects of a price ceiling on the price and output for the same monopoly.

Medicare and Medicaid expansion and enhancement policies, designed to improve access to care, usually lead to an increased demand for health care services. Simple graphing models can be used to illustrate the shifting demand for medical care, and, assuming an unchanged supply curve, to describe why we see increases in price, quantity, and overall spending in these markets.

Quality assurance initiatives include a variety of professional and provider regulations and standards. These policies can create considerable increased costs for a health care organization. Students work through a quality-assurance policy example where the average cost per hospital service unit increases by five percent as a result of the policy enforcement. Students then determine the effect on price and quantity in a monopoly hospital market.

Economic analysis is also used to describe the effects of health policy on the market for nurses. On the demand side, I emphasize the theme of changing demographics in the U.S, with an aging population that demands more chronic-care services. We look at several initiatives to increase the number of nursing personnel. Using shifts in supply and demand curves, we consider several possible outcomes involving wages and the number of nurses employed in the market, depending on the effectiveness of various policies.

A Federal policy strategy aimed at preventing the re-importation of U.S.-manufactured drugs from Canada is used to describe the effects of market-intervention in an international setting. We examine the effects of this policy on the pricing and distribution of pharmaceutical products, and we consider Medicaid program efforts to circumvent these regulations in several states.

**Assessments And Outcomes**

Students are evaluated on their learning outcomes with three main types of assessments. First, mid-term and final exams require that four or five essay questions be answered during a two-hour test period. Students must use graphs, functions, or other economic tools to support narrative answers. In the mid-term exam, students are required to address one comprehensive problem that is drawn from one of the transitional applications topics — either the health production function or the health insurance market. Second, students put their newspaper and journal articles on health policy in a portfolio, with brief written comments on each piece. They are assessed on the relevance of the articles and their ability to recognize health policy and its economic implications. Third, a written paper and oral presentation on an approved topic in health policy is required. Students are expected to become classroom “experts” in the selected area of health policy, and to
include an economic evaluation in their projects. Past topics have included Medicare Part D, patient satisfaction measurements, a comparison of physician incentives for managed care, states’ Medicaid HMOs, medical error-reduction strategies, and the uninsured.

Among students who complete this course, the overall results of these assessments show no significant difference between the overall performance of those with little or no previous economics exposure, and those who completed a course in managerial economics. Not surprisingly, students with a health education background and students with a business education background present different sets of strengths. Students with clinical backgrounds often demonstrate a better feel for the nuances of health policy implications, because they have seen first-hand the effects of changing regulation. Students with a business background are more likely to grasp the economic implications of health policy initiatives, because of their prior exposure to economics courses.

Extensions Of The Course Design

William Becker (2000, p. 117) notes that “a few courses in undergraduate economics, and perhaps only an introductory course, are often the only interaction that the college graduates of tomorrow will have with the economics profession.” As indicated, undergraduate and graduate students increasingly receive limited economics education while pursuing advanced study in their chosen disciplines. In higher-level coursework, these disciplines often require at least some level of familiarity with economics.

The inclusion of an economics boot camp at the beginning of the course is a model that could be used in other policy courses where economic evaluation is important. Topic-based courses that require some economics knowledge include environmental, gender, and labor studies, among others. If courses are team-taught, the economics faculty could lead the boot camp and transitional applications sections of the course, while field faculty could instruct the third section.

This course design is not intended to replace a course in health economics within a degree program that requires one. A course in health economics would necessarily involve a higher level of prerequisite economics education as an academic foundation. However, when developing the curriculum for a Master of Health Administration degree, for example, the diverse academic backgrounds of students could render a stand-alone health economics course as unfeasible. This course design, on the other hand, combines economic and health policy content in an effective delivery package that enables students from a variety of educational experiences to achieve similar levels of success.
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Dr. Monica Cain earned a Ph.D. in Economics (2002) from the College of Liberal Arts and an M.S. in Community Health Services (1995) from the School of Medicine at Wayne State University. She is an Associate Professor of Economics at Winston-Salem State University in the School of Business and Economics, where she teaches undergraduate economics and graduate health care administration courses.
Teaching Research Methods: Learning by Doing

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“I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.”
— Confucius

ABSTRACT
This paper outlines ways to structure a research-methods class so that students gain a practical knowledge of how research is done. Emphasis is placed on data collection, using statistical software, and writing up results. Included in this article are several assignments and exercises that, when combined, work to produce a scholarly empirical report. Students gain an appreciation of the fruits and frustrations involved in the research process, and learn to be more critical consumers of research projects.

INTRODUCTION
In search of a way to teach research methods, I have turned to a practical, hands-on approach that encourages students to partake in the rewards of conducting their own empirical research. This article outlines goals and objectives, and includes a list of assignments that culminate in a presentable work of original research. In this undergraduate, political science, research-methods class, students learned about the research process that is integral to all social sciences. Further, this teaching method can easily be adapted to meet the needs of students at all levels, including graduate students in public administration and public policy. This paper outlines the steps used to accomplish this task, including the disadvantages and possible corrections for those who wish to adopt the method.

GOALS
Each institution, department, and instructor stresses different goals for training in research methods. Some might emphasize the diversity of social sciences, and the types of questions asked in various sub-disciplines. Others might advocate epistemology and the need to understand the role of scientific knowledge. The goals of this course briefly cover these very important issues in the methodology
literature. But the goal of this particular research-methods course is to communicate the research process by using a very practitioner-oriented method that includes data gathering, analysis via a statistical software package (SPSS version 13), and learning the language of social-science research.

Many students at both undergraduate and graduate levels possess very weak foundations for conducting empirical research. Empirical research is different from most of the other “research” that many students have completed. This deficit makes it a challenging undertaking that can lead to frustration for both the instructor and the student. By following the steps and assignments offered here, an instructor can avoid many of the pitfalls associated with producing an original empirical research paper, while simultaneously teaching research-methods principles.

The instructor must find a way of conveying to students the importance of asking an appropriate social-scientific question; learning how past researchers have addressed an issue; collecting data; and learning how to interpret cryptic statistical output. What follows is a brief outline of the steps taken to administer such a course, through a series of assignments, followed by a frank evaluation of each step and some reflections on what should be done differently in order to improve future experiences.

ASSIGNMENT 1: GENERATING THE QUESTION

Managing the work and progress of research is the instructor’s primary concern. For students to learn by doing, I prepared broad topics prior to the beginning of the semester. These general topics in local government were meant to tap into the students’ various interests. They included the Alabama constitution, bureaucrat-lawmaker relations (principal-agent problems), intergovernmental cooperation, and citizen contacts. I provided students with citations and background readings for each topic. Students were assigned homework from a traditional research-methods text, and also completed workbook exercises (Johnson & Reynolds, 2005b; Pollock, 2003) prior to discussions of specific research questions. During a class session, students were divided into teams, and each team came up with a set of very intuitive hypotheses. The hypotheses were then followed with the question of “why?,” which directed students to the next step of writing a literature review. Below are examples of the students’ hypotheses.

State Constitutional Issues

Hypothesis 1:
Partisan identification is connected to support for the state constitution.
Why?

Hypothesis 2:
Lawmakers who favor home rule are unhappy with their positions.
Why?
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Intergovernmental Relations
Hypothesis 3: Lawmakers are increasingly tied to other governments and non-governmental organizations (e.g., Chamber of Commerce). Why?
Hypothesis 4: The smaller the city, the more it needs intergovernmental cooperation. Why?

Citizen Contacts
Hypothesis 5: Lawmakers are not concerned about citizens. Why?
Hypothesis 6: Lawmakers will probably claim that the poor are less likely to contact them. Why?

Bureaucratic Politics
Hypothesis 7: Lawmakers with longer service records tend to show more trust in government employees. Why?

With guidance from the professor, all of the hypotheses were generated from topics of student interest. Tailoring the research questions in this way facilitated the cumulative method of writing a research paper by encouraging the students’ “buy-in” to the process. Using student-generated hypotheses for the purpose of teaching research and reporting methods also fostered motivation, interest, and — ultimately — a deeper understanding of research results. In addition, the early partnership between professor and student in the hypothesis-generating process allowed for the type of collaboration that continues throughout the semester. The collaborative nature of the exercise also allowed certain aspects of the research to be designed specifically to meet course expectations and requirements. For example, the above-mentioned hypotheses were easily adapted to the bivariate analysis techniques presented in this particular class.

As an instructor, I want to encourage students to explore their interests, but I also need to maintain enough control for course goals to be met. In conducting this class, I sided with control over choice. Admittedly, the questions and topics were closely tied to my own research interests and areas of expertise. Not all students were thrilled by the idea of researching local governance, but I found that they enthusiastically embraced the challenge once we started a literature review and began gathering U.S. Census data for the cities that were in their research projects.
ASSIGNMENT/STEP 2: THE LITERATURE REVIEW

This step offers the instructor an opportunity to expose students to important online archives that typically are not used in other courses, but that are essential to conducting original research. Using the Internet posed new problems and new possibilities. At this point, it was helpful to discuss the benefits and dangers of Internet research. For example, use of Wikipedia — a popular online information source for many students — was discouraged, but other available resources and research methods were discussed and debated in the classroom. Exercises from the Johnson and Reynolds (2005b) workbook were assigned to give students a functional background on what constitutes a legitimate source.

Ultimately, students learned how to conduct literature reviews by using peer-reviewed articles from JSTOR (www.jstor.org) and EbscoHost (www.ebscohost.com). Most university libraries have paid subscriptions to access these databases. Students ideally should have on-campus database access, but, depending on library policy, they might have to access databases from an off-campus computer, via a log-in on the school’s Web site. Instructors should check with their school libraries to obtain off-campus computer access procedures. Instructors also should note that the most recent publications often are not available through these academic databases. There is usually a three- to five-year lag time between the journals’ actual publication dates, and the dates they become available on an academic database, called a “moving wall.”

For this portion of the paper the assignment was straightforward:

This section is the part where you discuss the works of past researchers who have examined similar questions. Be able to cite at least 5-7 sources taken from peer-reviewed works found in the JSTOR or EbscoHost archives. End this section with a paragraph that clearly states the hypotheses you plan to test, and why this relationship is important, based on the literature you just reviewed.

The number of citations and the length of the literature reviews were picked arbitrarily. One of the aims of this assignment was to familiarize students with the vast archives of available peer-reviewed journals. However, conducting the literature review this way often resulted in students overlooking books as sources. Students were advised to talk to me if they wanted to include books in their literature reviews, because I was concerned about them citing books that did not rely on empirical evidence to make their claims. Although this problem did not arise when this teaching strategy was employed, it may be a problem in future classes.

ASSIGNMENT 3: DATA GATHERING

Data gathering poses problems for social science researchers, and new
challenges for students in research-methods courses. The goal of this portion of the course was twofold: to educate students about the very large archives of available raw data and how they are entered into a statistical software package; and to create a survey instrument that in this case could be used to gauge the attitudes of local elected officials. Empirical work was the foremost priority, but I also saw an opportunity for students to become better acquainted with the community. Students explored the United States Census Web site and gathered demographic statistics for 15 cities located in our region.

Based on their original research questions, students then submitted survey questions designed to measure the relationships that they were investigating. As a class exercise, the questions were then vetted, in order to determine whether or not they properly operationalized the intended concepts. This exercise produced a questionnaire that captured the students’ various interests, and also served as an instrument to gather lawmakers’ opinions on various issues. After reviewing the chapter on “elite interviewing” (Johnson & Reynolds, 2005a, pp. 270-301), students were assigned city council members from area municipalities. To conduct interviews, they were expected to either “cold-call” locally elected officials to set up appointments, or attend a public meeting.

The surveys were administered in this manner so that class participants could get to know community leaders. In order to stay on schedule, one week was allotted for interview completion. This aspect of the class was less successful than the first part. About half of the class participants (7 of 13) were able to connect with at least one of their assigned elected officials. Six of seven completed more than two surveys.

Students who were able to establish contact provided colorful stories about their experiences. One student met with the mayor of a small town for more than two hours, because the mayor felt compelled to rationalize and explain each response. One student described how a respondent became aggravated by many of the questions. The involved councilwoman said that most of the information was “none of our business,” but that she “would tell [us] anyway.” A student who called city hall for the mayor’s and the city council’s contact information was subsequently told to reach the elected officials — who all served part-time — at their places of full-time employment. She met with at least two council-members while they worked — one at the local grocery store — and conducted interviews during their breaks. Finally, and most alarmingly, a student who showed up to a biweekly council meeting found that council-members had relocated to a more “private” conference room to conduct the meeting. This practice alarmed many in the class because it violated the spirit of the government’s open-meetings act. The student eventually was able to find the meeting room and was allowed inside, but claimed that she did not feel welcome. She was allowed to distribute the questionnaire to the council-members, and followed up by leaving them voicemail messages asking whether or not they had completed the forms. It was
no surprise that none of this city’s lawmakers participated.

Data gathering is a very important and exciting component of the “learning by doing” teaching method. By completing workbook exercises in this section, students learned about the data resources available from the U.S. Census Web site; how to input raw data into SPSS; how to operationalize abstract concepts from the social sciences; and how to construct and conduct a survey. I had reservations about the portion of the survey where students conducted interviews. My first concern was with the institutional review process. The institutional review board (IRB) is a committee that seeks to ensure the safety of all research participants, and the IRB process often varies from school to school. Some institutions say that elite interviews do not need IRB oversight, while others might require that the institution’s IRB chair sign off on the project. One needs to pay special attention to a university’s IRB policies on elite interviewing, “but the proper course of action is to contact your institution’s research office for information regarding the review policy on human subjects” (Johnson & Reynolds 2005a, p. 187).

My second concern was that students had limited success in completing the assignment. Even though half of the students (6) were either unable to gain access to lawmakers, or were “stood up” by those who made appointments, the exercise was still very rewarding for those who achieved access. Since the conclusion of the class, I have debated about whether or not students should conduct their fieldwork independently, and I am considering using one of many online survey applications to bypass this problem in the future.

Nonetheless, students found their fieldwork to be the most exciting part of the semester-long project. They learned about the data-gathering process and saw that it can be somewhat messy, because researchers are constantly wrestling with less-than-ideal situations. They also learned about the challenges of operationalization, and of finding ways to measure the abstract concepts that interested them. The obstacles they encountered taught them that this was a difficult step of the process — one where researchers are often forced to make compromises due to lack of accessibility, time constraints, and limited resources.

**Assignment 4: Data Analysis**

Data analysis was conducted over the course of two assignments. The first assignment required students to enter and analyze the Census data they had obtained earlier in the semester. Analyzing the data gave students the ability to apply many of the skills that they learned from the workbook (Johnson & Reynolds, 2005b; Pollock, 2003). For example, they generated measures of central tendency and variance for cities in the sample by using SPSS. The assignment also required students to prove their proficiency in performing some fundamental tasks within SPSS. They demonstrated that they knew how to read the SPSS output, and how to convert new information into a
narrative that could become part of their required, end-of-semester paper. The assignment read as follows:

Provide a narrative of the univariate analysis of the cities we have selected. You should use the “cities” dataset we compiled to generate some of the descriptive statistics that will be needed in your narrative. Here are some of the questions your narrative should address:

1. Where are your cities located?
2. Why were those cities chosen?
3. What [are] the cities’ average population[s] (be sure to report the mean, standard deviation, and the median). If there is a large difference between the mean and the median be sure and explain that difference.
4. What other variables matter (e.g., income, race, education, per-capita income, etc.)? Why are those variables significant to your study?
5. Report mean, standard deviation, and/or the median for the variables you discussed.

The second step analyzed the bivariate relationship of interests and required that students write a narrative to describe the SPSS output and its implications. By this time in the semester, students were able to manipulate variables, and they were making new variables by either computing or recoding original variables in the data set. They were required to report measures of central tendency and variance in the dependent and independent variables that were applicable to their research. The assignment read as follows:

Start this section by discussing the variables independently from each other. What is their distribution (mean, median, mode) and standard deviation (if applicable)? Next, discuss the type of statistical analysis you are conducting. Is it a measure of central tendency and variance (standard deviation)? Does it use cross-tabs? Discuss each procedure and your results (percentages, differences, and whether or not your hypotheses are confirmed). Be sure to convert the cryptic SPSS output to a more presentable WORD file that is embedded into your document.

This proved to be an exciting step, as students started calculating new variables and finding support for their hypotheses or, in most cases, failing to reject a null hypothesis. Much discussion arose over the value of “confirming” the null hypothesis, as students questioned whether or not value was derived from the “non-finding.” After all, it is not easy to get excited about a null hypothesis. As the instructor, I stressed that understanding how the world operates is part of the scientific discovery process, and that even finding support for a null hypothesis is an important step in that direction.
In addition to familiarizing students with measures of central tendency and variance (standard deviation), the second data-analysis assignment aimed to have students demonstrate that they understood measures of association (e.g., Chi-square) and measurements of strength and direction (e.g., Lambda, Cramer’s V, and Gamma). To do more than simply report the output, students were urged to view this exercise as a “telling of the story” that the SPSS output represented (Majone, 1989; Stone, 2002). Students also were encouraged to convert the SPSS output into a more presentable written format that could be inserted into the document.

**ASSIGNMENT 5: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER**

Up to this point, students were turning in independent assignments that all seemed to be related, i.e., the literature review was related to the data analysis, but had not been compiled as a cohesive research document. The goal was that each assignment would serve as a component of the final research paper. As a class, we reviewed *Structuring Your Papers*, by Barry Weingast (1995), and discussed how to properly write an introduction to the work. This assignment read as follows:

*Introduction*

Why is this topic relevant? To make results that are more than just “interesting,” your specific subject also needs to be relevant to the broader discussion of political science. Explain why this topic deserves investigation. End this section with a separate paragraph, called the “road map” paragraph, to “guide” the reader. For example: “This paper proceeds as follows. In section one …” (For further details, see http://www.stanford.edu/~weingast/caltech_rules.html).

At this point, we also discussed how to end the papers by writing conclusions:

*Conclusion*

What would you have done differently if you had the resources to gather your own data? Discuss the limitations of your research. Reflect on what your findings mean with respect to the broader literature on that topic.

I asked students to speculate on other factors that were not included in their models. I also encouraged them to go ahead and provide social commentary in this portion of the paper, so that they could reflect on what their work is telling us about how the world operates.

**CONCLUSION**

The format of “learning by doing” was very rewarding for the students. This process used a hands-on approach to learning empirical research methods.
Students got their hands dirty, both students and the instructor became frustrated, and students learned about the constraints that bind the research process. Understanding empiricism and the systematic analysis of data was an important lesson conveyed to the students in this class, because they saw how this step creates the basis of good social-science research. Students found that the research process allows for some creativity by the researcher, and that there is a clear line between being creative and being dishonest. They learned that the research process puts a premium on transparency and transmissibility, meaning that readers of research reports should be able to duplicate the findings.

The assigned steps that students followed required them to develop original research questions; to collect and analyze data; and to draw some sort of conclusion from the empirical evidence. The approach offered in this article is one classroom-based option, with many possible variations. For example, in a qualitative-methods course, one might consider doing case studies with a shared theme. In this case, the instructor might suggest that the class concentrate on unfunded mandates, with each student focusing on a different mandate (e.g., Americans with Disabilities, county inmate healthcare) and its effect on local governance.5

A course that stresses the “hands-on” approach should teach students how research is conducted, but it also should require them to do the research, as a way of communicating the importance of empiricism in the social sciences. Both instructors and students can benefit from this teaching strategy. It gives the instructor an opportunity to integrate research with teaching, and to inject students directly into an active research agenda. Professors are able to share with students their experiences of trying to research a particular area. In this case, students appreciated the frank discussions regarding the difficulties, rewards, and opportunities that they discovered while researching local government.

Finally, the practitioner-oriented aspect is particularly well-suited to graduate students in either public administration or public policy. Their newfound skills can immediately be put to use in various public-sector careers, where data analysis is an important element of assessment. While the class was offered to a general audience, most of the participating students had political science majors or minors, and the topics were broad enough to get other students interested in the content. The most important goal of the class was for students to learn about the empirical research process in a pragmatic, “hands-on” environment.

This approach was rewarding for both instructor and students, because the learning method was based on a combination of active “hands-on” participation and text-based examples. Integrating mundane scientific processes into an action-oriented course application offered students an interesting alternative that enhanced their desire and abilities to learn the material.
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REFERENCES

FOOTNOTES
1 I put works by Bledsoe (1993), Fenno (1997), and Stone (1989) on reserve at the library. These pieces served as background material that enabled students to get acquainted with research projects.
2 See http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/archives/journals/movingWall.jsp for JSTOR’s “moving wall” policy.
3 The Web site http://factfinder.census.gov/ was used as a source of primary data.
4 A copy of the survey is available at http://www2.una.edu/naaguado/survey.htm.
5 Professor Suzanne Leland suggested this variation, which she used successfully in an intergovernmental relations class.

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