

POLICY PROJECTS

Students in Public Policy Methods complete policy analyses on randomly assigned issues. Over the course of the semester, they do memorandum exercises intended to help them apply concepts introduced in [Policy Analysis: Concepts and Practice](#) to their issues. Near the end of the semester, each student submits a fifteen page policy analysis (exclusive of an executive summary and an *unlimited* number of pages of appendices) to me and to one other student. The other student writes a collegial critique and I prepare a more comprehensive evaluation following a [template](#) that helps me cover important points systematically.

Projects for 2004 randomly assigned from the following list:

Excessive and improper use contribute to the problem of antibiotic resistance. What, if anything, should the federal government do to reduce the extent or consequences of antibiotic resistance? *Client: Chair, U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education and Welfare*

Federal regulations governing human subjects research are applied broadly. Some critics charge that the regulations do not adequately protect subjects in medical research. Other critics charge that the regulations are inappropriately applied to social science research involving negligible risks to people. Can the current system administered by the Office of Human Subjects Research be improved? *Client: Administrator, Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget*

A number of states and localities, as well as the International Plumbing Code, recognize that the optimal ratio of bathroom facilities for women to men in public buildings is larger than one. Are Wisconsin laws and regulations governing "potty parity" for public facilities appropriate? *Client: "Wisconsin Women = Prosperity Initiative," Office of the Lieutenant Governor*

Walking down State Street brings one in contact with panhandlers. Should the City of Madison adopt any policies to regulate public begging? *Client: Mayor David Cieslewicz*

The discovery of "mad cow disease" in Washington State has raised questions about the adequacy of public policies to prevent it and keep it from infecting consumers. Some policies have already been changed. Are the policies now in place adequate? In particular, should the ban on the use of cow parts in cow feed be extended to feed for other animals? *Client: Chair, U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry*

The music recording industry lost considerable good will in its crackdown on internet music sharers. It will not be long before a large enough number of people have sufficient bandwidth and computer memory to make the sharing of pirated movies over the internet common. What policies should be advocated by the Motion Picture Association of America to deal with this potential problem? *Client: Jack Valenti, President, Motion Picture Association of America*

Health stores and other outlets sell a variety of dietary supplements. Do current regulations provide consumers with adequate protection against possible health risks from use of such supplements? *Client: Commissioner, Food and Drug Administration*

Recent corporate accounting scandals have prompted some calls for mandatory auditor rotation of the sort used in Italy and some other countries. Should publicly traded corporations be required to periodically rotate their accounting firms? *Client: Chair, Securities and Exchange Commission*

In 2001, the Institute of Medicine released a report calling for greater availability and advertising of "less hazardous cigarettes" (LHCs). Should the federal government adopt policies to encourage LHCs? *Client: United States Surgeon General*

In the wake of 9-11, the federal government instituted temporary regulations of and subsidies for insurance coverage of losses to commercial buildings from terrorism. What role should the federal government play in the market for terrorism insurance? *Client: Secretary, U.S. Department of the Treasury*

Corporate reporting, even if done electronically, typically is in a traditional print format that makes the extraction of data time consuming and costly. A number of public agencies, including the Bundesbank, UK Inland Revenue, and the U.S. Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, now require firms to submit reports in the eXtensible Business Reporting Language (XBRL). Should policies be adopted to make this the standard reporting form for publicly traded U.S. corporations? *Client: Chair, Securities and Exchange Commission*

Pharmaceutical companies typically avoid testing drugs on pediatric patients because of ethical concerns and the relatively small monetary gain from being able to indicate pediatric use in labeling. Consequently, many pediatric patients must be treated "off label." Section 111 of the Food and Drug Administration Modernization Act provided some incentives in the form of patent extensions. Should stronger incentives be created to encourage pharmaceutical companies to engage in more pediatric testing? *Client: Chair, Subcommittee on Health, House Committee on Energy and Commerce*

The so-called "Paragraph IV" certification under the Hatch Waxman Act requires firms wishing to market generic versions of drugs whose (20 year) patents have expired to notify originating firms. If the originating firm files a legal challenge, then the FDA automatically stays approval of the generic drug for 30 months regardless of merit. Should the generic laws be changed to eliminate this automatic delay? *Client: Chair, Subcommittee on Health, House Committee on Energy and Commerce*

Under the North American Free Trade Agreement, the U.S. must eliminate barriers to sugar imports from Mexico by 2008. Consider options for a broader elimination of import restrictions on sugar. *Client: Chair, Subcommittee on Production and Price Competitiveness, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry*

Wisconsin has been a leader in encouraging organ donation. Currently, there is proposed legislation to provide a tax deduction for live organ donors. Take a fresh look at public policies to encourage live donation in Wisconsin. *Client: Chairperson, Assembly Committee on Health*

Recent years have seen an expansion of the Wisconsin prison system. Nonetheless, capacity limitations require Wisconsin to contract with out-of-state prisons for correctional services. Consider alternatives for eliminating out-of-state incarceration for Wisconsin felons. *Client: Chairperson, Assembly Committee on Corrections and the Courts*

Obesity is associated with a number of health risks. Many believe these risks are heightened when obesity begins in childhood. Should the State of Wisconsin take any steps to encourage school districts to address the problem of childhood obesity? *Client: State Superintendent, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction*

Many scientists see the day when xenotransplantation will be technically feasible. Concerns have been raised, however, that endogenous retro-viruses may cross species boundaries. How should the U.S. regulate xenotransplantation? *Client: Chair, Secretary's Advisory Committee on Xenotransplantation, Department of Health and Human Services*

The Department of State is planning to require applicants for visas to the United States to be fingerprinted. Should this policy be implemented? *Client: Chair, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations*

The highway fatality rate in Wisconsin could be reduced if more people used their seat belts. Should the state adopt policies, such as those set out in Assembly Bill 90, to encourage greater seat belt use? *Client: Chairperson, Assembly Committee on Highway Safety*

General contractors in Wisconsin need only pay a small registration fee and carry liability insurance to conduct business. In some cases, general contractors shift these requirements to homeowners. Should Wisconsin change the way it regulates general contractors? *Client: Chairperson, Assembly Committee on Small Business*

The federal government provides subsidies for ethyl alcohol production. Should the State of Wisconsin provide additional subsidies? *Client: Chairperson, Assembly Committee on Economic Development*

On October 17, 2003 the Wisconsin Attorney General issued an informal legal opinion that exclusion of contraceptives from coverage under employment-based group health insurance that otherwise covers drugs violates the Wisconsin Fair Employment Act. Should the Commissioner of Insurance implement this decision or seek legislative clarification? *Client: Wisconsin Commissioner of Insurance*

The Dane County Lakes and Watershed Commission is currently considering restrictions on the use of phosphorous-containing lawn fertilizer. Does this approach make sense? Should the Department of Natural Resources either encourage or discourage counties from adopting this approach? *Client: Secretary, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources*

In 1996, the federal government created medical savings accounts to provide a vehicle for tax free saving toward medical expenses. The law required that medical savings accounts be used in conjunction with high deductible insurance policies. It also placed many restrictions on

eligibility and did not make the program permanent. Some of these restrictions have been removed with the introduction of the new health savings accounts. Should health savings accounts be made a more accessible and larger part of federal health policy? *Client: Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Department of Health and Human Services*

Should the Federal Government create national identity cards and mandate their use for particular purposes? *Client: Chair, House Select Committee on Homeland Security*

Should federal agricultural programs be restructured to place caps on the amount of subsidy that can be received by individual feed grain farmers? *Client: Chair, Subcommittee on Production and Price Competitiveness, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry*

Some critics of New Source Review (NSR) regulations argue that they discourage firms from replacing existing plants that produce high levels of pollution. Should the Environmental Protection Agency revise the NSR regulations to remove disincentives for investment in new plants? *Client: Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency*

Ritalin and other psychiatric drugs are widely prescribed to children with attention deficit disorder (ADD). Some school districts even require students diagnosed with ADD to take these drugs as a condition for participation in special education programs. Should the federal government adopt policies to better control the use of these drugs? *Client: Chair, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, House Committee on Education and Workforce*