

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 2009 randomly assigned from the following list:

The CapStat program provides extensive access to data on government operations and local conditions in Washington, D.C. Should any components of the CapStat program be implemented in Madison, Wisconsin? Client: Mayor, City of Madison

Household batteries (those used in flashlights, portable radios, etc.) contain metals and other substances that pose toxic risks when they are disposed of after use. Should Wisconsin create a recycling program for household batteries? Client: Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Wisconsin currently allows people who fear that they will not be able to make mental health care decisions in their own best interests during future episodes of mental illness to implement psychiatric advanced directives through the delegation of power of attorney. Should Wisconsin change its laws with respect to psychiatric advanced directives? Client: Chair, Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

Wisconsin maintains a public accessible registry of people convicted of certain sex crimes. Assess the operation of the registry and consider possible improvements. Client: Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary and Corrections

Wisconsin currently elects Supreme Court Justices. Should the electoral process be modified or replaced with an appointment system? Client: Chair, Assembly Committee on Judiciary and Ethics

Poor dental care can result in other health problems. Do residents of Wisconsin have adequate access to dental care? What state interventions could improve access? Client: Chair, Assembly Committee on Health and Health Care Reform

Should Wisconsin adopt new policies to reduce drunk driving? Client: Chair, Assembly Committee on Public Health

Should Wisconsin adopt policies to promote the safe disposal of expired or otherwise unwanted prescription drugs? Client: Chair, Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

Previous increases in the number of people imprisoned are leading to increases in the number of people returning to society. Many observers of the criminal justice system have concerns about the effectiveness of the parole system in helping those released from prison become productive members of society. Some researchers have suggested that special courts, called re-entry courts, be created to supervise people released from prison. Should Wisconsin establish a re-entry court in Milwaukee or other urban areas? Client: Chair, Senate Committee on Judiciary and Corrections

Should Wisconsin raise taxes on wine, beer, and spirits to raise revenue and reduce the social costs of alcohol consumption? Client: Chair, Joint Committee on Finance

In light of the current fiscal stress in Wisconsin should the rate or coverage of the sales tax be changed? Client: Chair, Joint Committee on Finance

On July 30, 2008 the Board of Governors of Federal Reserve System published final rules in the *Federal Register* to amend Regulation Z, which governs mortgage lending. Do these rules go far enough in ensuring that another mortgage crisis will not arise in the future? Specifically, should mortgage originators face financial penalties for mortgages that go into default within some period of origination? Client: Chair, House Committee on Financial Services

Assess the current privacy rights enjoyed by U.S. citizens and legal residents when they cross the border. Specifically, what rights should citizens have with respect to the electronic information stored in their computers? Client: Chair, House Committee on Homeland Security

How should federal farm subsidy programs be changed to place effective caps on payments to individual and corporate farmers? Client: Chair, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

Should the United States extend “country of origin” labeling to processed foods? Client: Chair, Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

What role if any should the federal government play in increasing the availability and effectiveness of science and mathematics teachers in primary and secondary education? Client: Chair, House Committee on Education and Labor

What role if any should the federal government play in increasing the supply of nurses to the U.S. health care system? Client: Chair, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

The Obama transition team proposed spending \$250 million per year in creating public-private business incubators. Develop alternatives for implementing this proposal. Client: Director, White House Office of Urban Policy

The Obama transition team has set a goal of having one million plug-in hybrid cars on the road by 2015. Consider options for promoting this goal. Client: Chair, President’s Council on Environmental Quality

Although some major pharmaceutical companies have voluntarily limited the promotional benefits they provide to physicians, and some medical and educational institutions have set their own restrictions and implemented disclosure rules for their employees, concerns remain that some physicians are unduly influenced by their connections with pharmaceutical companies. Should the federal government regulate the relationship between physicians and pharmaceutical companies? Client: Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services

Some hospital-contracted injuries and illnesses are no longer reimbursed under Medicare Part A. Should this approach be expanded to create stronger incentives for hospitals to reduce risks to their patients? Client: Administrator, Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Department of Health and Human Services

Should the federal government create a domestic “peace core” to promote arts and music in public schools? Client: Ex Officio Congressional Representatives, National Council on the Arts

Should U.S. copyright laws be changed to facilitate the digitization of out-of-print and other originally printed material? Client: Chair, Subcommittee on Courts, the Internet, and Intellectual Property, House Committee on the Judiciary

Should the Federal Communications Commission require cable television providers to adopt ala cart or theme-tiered pricing for end users or otherwise restrict the bundling of channels. Client: Chair, Federal Communications Commission

Almost a quarter of Medicare beneficiaries are enrolled in Medicare Advantage (formerly Medicare + Choice) rather than the standard Medicare fee-for-service plan. Medicare Advantage has been criticized on a number of grounds. Its provisions were modified in 2008. Should they be further modified? Client: Chair, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

The Qattara Depression in Egypt is a geological formation with a depth of as much as 133 meters below sea level. Since early in the Twentieth Century, geologists have suggested the possibility of generating electricity by piping water for the approximately 60 miles from the Mediterranean Sea to the Qattara Depression. [See H. Sirry Bey (1929) *The Qattara Power Scheme*. *Geographical Review* 19(2), 290-292.] Should this project be pursued? Client: President, World Bank

Should the Obama Administration continue implementation of a missile defense system in Eastern Europe? Client: U.S. Secretary of State