Howard Baker Public Policy Challenge 2016
General Information, Template, Deadlines & Resources

The Howard Baker Public Policy Challenge (HBPPC) is a challenging, fun and educational program that requires a semester-long commitment. Begun in 2013, the Challenge is a “real-world” experience that shows students how to make an impact on real issues through the use of public policy, research, analysis and teamwork. The Challenge is open to all UT students. Students may register as:

- an individual (based on your interests, we will assign you to a team)
- a team (a club or group that wants to address a particular issue)
- a team enrolled in a Spring semester credit course – your professor will discuss in class

(If not enrolled in a class integrating the Challenge into the course, students can ask their advisor about getting independent study credit for your work.)

The Baker Center will provide the organization, resources and template for students in creating a policy brief and short PowerPoint presentation. The challenge requires students to engage in teamwork, leadership, research, critical thinking, and analysis and develop their knowledge of the policy process, communication skills, presentation skills and writing. Students will learn about current issues affecting their world and how they can impact change.

The HBPPC is based on the University of Pennsylvania’s Fels Institute Policy Challenge and we have borrowed heavily from their process. The Challenge requires a team to tackle a real issue which can be addressed with a public policy solution (draft legislation) or something that informs public policy (educational website, a training program, a mobile app, a software program, etc.). We will offer some problems gathered from local, state, and federal agencies, but students can find their own too. Our three 2014/15 winners developed policy solutions to:

- Enact legislation to require mental health screening of TN incarcerated juveniles
- Remove plastic bags from the UT campus within 5 years
- Link Tennessee Families First clients to jobs

http://bakercenter.utk.edu/howard-baker-public-policy-challenge-finals-winners/

Requirements of the HBPPC
The Challenge requires completion of a policy brief and PowerPoint presentation which will be presented on Sunday, April 24, 2016, 1:30 pm. Policy briefs should be direct and concise, about 6-9 pages, excluding appendix and references. They should have:

- A clear intriguing title
- Persuasive and appealing Executive Summary
- Statement of the problem
- Review of current policy (if applicable) and/or alternative policy solutions
- Recommended solution supported by facts and research
- Action Plan (implementation timeline, budget, stakeholder communications, marketing, promotion and evaluation plan)
All sources should be listed. The supporting arguments for a policy recommendation must communicate in a compelling manner why it is the best! For example, students must thoughtfully consider not only the substance of a specific policy, but also the socio-political influences, stakeholders (direct and indirect, for and against), institutional processes, and decision-making structures which are involved in approving, initiating and implementing the recommended policy.

**Timeline and Deliverables 2016**

**Wed., January 20, 5:30 pm**

Reception/Orientation – Toyota Auditorium

**M-F - Jan. 25-Feb. 5**

(2 week timeframe)

1st Deliverable Due: **DRAFT Problem Statement** – Email and discuss **BY APPOINTMENT** with nissa@utk.edu

(Students enrolled in a course using the Challenge will just meet with their professor)

**Mon. Feb. 15**

2nd Deliverable Due—**DRAFT Executive Summary** (1-2 pgs.) Schedule a team meeting to discuss draft **BY APPOINTMENT** with nissa@utk.edu or with your professor

**Wed., March 1-April 15**

3rd Deliverable Due: Submit a Blog Post about your topic and team with team photo anytime during this period

**Mon., March 7**

4th Deliverable Due: **DRAFT Policy Brief** – Email and make **APPOINTMENT** with nissa@utk.edu or with your professor

**March 14-18**

Spring Break

(M-F) April 11-14

Team practice in Toyota Auditorium – sign up for a time via Google docs

**Fri., April 15**

5th Deliverable Due: **FINAL brief** emailed in PDF to nissa@utk.edu (will be forwarded to judges)

**Sun., April 24, 1:30 pm**

Howard Baker Public Policy Challenge Finals

6th Deliverable – Five (5) Minute PowerPoint Presentation & 10 minute Q & A with judges. Bring PPT on thumbdrive or email to Nissa@utk.edu

**Complete information on the Policy Challenge is available on our website including:**

1. Template for the Policy Brief
2. Details on the deliverables
3. Judging criteria
4. Resources, example briefs and presentations
The HBPPC -- What’s in it for me?
Students gain a lot from this experience. They will learn how to:

- work on a team,
- write a policy brief while engaging in the policy process
- deliver a presentation
- conduct research
- talk to key stakeholders (supporting, against and impacted by the policy)
- develop a budget, timeline and implementation plan

Real issues will be targeted and supplied by the local community and state-wide agencies, but students are free to select a policy topic of their choice. The four parts of the policy brief include:

1. Executive Summary (1 page)
2. Statement of the problem (1 page)
3. Examination of existing and/or alternative solutions (1-2 pages)
4. Policy solution (2-3 pages)
5. An action plan to promote and implement the policy, note budget and funding sources, provide timeline and evaluation process (1-2 pages)

Policy Brief Template – 6-9 pages, excluding budget, references and appendix

I. Executive Summary (1 page or less)
The Executive Summary is your opportunity to appeal to the heartstrings of your reader. Provide a concise overview of the problem, explore alternative policy solutions, present your proposed solution and action plan and why it is important. Some people will only read this page, so be sure to grab their attention so they read the full brief!

II. Problem Statement (1 page or less)
Policies are never developed in a vacuum. When selecting and developing your policy approach, the context of the problem is extremely important. Issues to consider may include:

- Who/what does the problem affect, and who has identified the problem (e.g. legislators, bureaucrats, public)? Do all involved parties agree that a problem exists? What has the public reaction been to the problem? Identify the opposition.
- How widespread is it? Is the community concerned? How do you know? Why does this issue deserve attention and resources? What will happen if nothing is done?
- Are there any policies in place to address the problem? Are they working? If not, why?
- What instruments (educational programs, software, training, counseling, etc.) or existing policy are available to authorities to address the problem?
- What has worked for others? Is it an issue that can be effectively addressed through public policy?
- What is the timeframe? When does the problem need to be addressed?
- Can the problem be quantified? Can you measure the scope and scale of the issue?
- Who can implement the solution?
- How will the solution be funded?

Use citations to support your statements.
III. Examine Alternative Solutions (1-2 pages)

Present 2-3 alternative solutions. How have others dealt with this problem? What have been the results? Have there been unintended consequences of existing policies? Legal issues? What groups or individuals are involved or impacted by this problem? Is there opposition or support for existing policy? Who wants to change it and why? In order to develop a successful policy, you must:

- Identify the current circumstances, goals, problems, impediments, stakeholders, existing policies, budget, etc.
- Is there a current policy that exists but needs to be changed? How? Will there be opposition? Who will support?
- Determine what is necessary to a successful implementation, including necessary actions from other agencies, which circumstances are likely to change, and how success or failure will be identified and measured
- Indicate what problems are likely to arise as a result of policy implementation. Is your solution constitutional?
- Continually evaluate the policy and objectives in response to changing circumstances and new information

IV. Propose a Policy Solution (2-3 pages)

Provide clear rationale for your policy choice. Support your policy solutions with facts and figures, such as a cost benefit analysis, and answer the questions above. Research and look for factual data to support your choices. In some cases, there may be several competing policy options. Convince the reader that this is the best option.

V. Develop an Action Plan (1-2 pages)

A carefully developed policy addressing a problem may still fail if the implementation plan is inadequate. Develop a plan to “sell your solution” to those with the power to implement and address those impacted and/or in opposition. Include a budget.

- **Issues that may inhibit implementation include:** Constitutional or jurisdictional restraints, turf issues between counties or departments, lack of staff training/capabilities, lack of information about the policy solution, etc.

- **Define the steps to have your policy accepted** by the appropriate officials. How will you respond to arguments against your policy?

- **Provide a timeline for implementation.** How long will it take to implement and how will you do it? A proper implementation plan must include the order and timeline in which tasks should be completed

- **What will it cost and how will it be funded?** Identify possible sources and provide a budget. Legislative appeal (state, local, federal – specify who)? Grant-making approach (ID possible funders)? Insufficient budget, staff, or time can all lead to failure.

- **Identify your stakeholders and beneficiaries.** How will you reach out to stakeholders and intended beneficiaries to promote your policy? Have you received feedback from intended beneficiaries that supports your logic? Have you convinced opponents?
what results can you expect and how will you evaluate success? How do you know that your solution will effectively meet that unmet need? What will happen if your policy is not adopted?

create an outreach plan to enlist support. Identify the tools to be used in the communications plan. Identify probable supporters, such as lawmakers, civic leaders, business leaders, and organizations. Examine their past record, party affiliation, constituency, etc. Identify all potential allies or opponents that you have met with and vetted the project with. Support your policy with facts and be prepared to persuade opponents and grow your supporters.

• improper communication or coordination between those implementing the policy and those impacted by the policy.
• Weak public support or knowledge; your policy may depend upon public support. In such a case, attention must be given to targeting and outreach.

note: Constant evaluation is the cornerstone of any successful policy. Successful results, accountability and sound use of resources, such as money, is important. The problem, policy options, objectives, and impediments to implementation must be evaluated at all times, including after implementation. Problems will always be dependent upon an array of changing circumstances and relationships, but you must be prepared to address these issues by anticipating them in advance.

vi. Appendix - An appendix is not required, but you can attach:
   A. Expanded Budget – Estimate costs for the program, including marketing/outreach campaign
   B. Letter to potential ally
   C. Marketing materials
   D. Grant application (letter of inquiry)
   E. Listing or chart of outputs and outcomes
   F. Additional space for more detailed outlines of any component of your proposal
   G. Graphs or charts detailing the problem you are addressing
   H. Newspaper clippings addressing the problem or your solution

hbppc deliverables – more details
1st deliverable—draft executive summary and problem statement – Email in advance of meeting time and bring to meeting with HBPPC director. Email nissa@utk.edu to set an appointment for your team. For those enrolled in a class, you should meet and discuss with your professor.

This deliverable is intended to help your team make sure you have a problem that is narrow enough in focus and doable within the time limitations. It is for use during the initial meeting with the Challenge Director, so it need not be a publication-ready document, just a description of a few of the ideas that your team is considering. You may want to outline 2-3 ideas in this 1-2 page document or variations on one topic. For each idea, describe the problem you’re focused on, the policy solution you’re considering, and any concerns or important questions you have about the solution. Offer a paragraph or two for each idea—just enough content to understand the basic concept and email in advance of your meeting or class discussion. Some suggested questions for each element are given below, but you’re welcome to format the document however you’d like!
• **The Problem**: What is the problem that you want to tackle? Who is being affected by it? What are the causes of this problem? What are its effects? Who has the power to implement a solution?

• **The Solution**: Would you be proposing a new program? New legislation? Developing a mobile app or creating a website or educational video? Scaling up an existing one? Lobbying for a good, tested idea? Why do you think this has not been done before? Why does this seem like the right solution to you? How will you pay for it?

• **Concerns and Questions**: What do you need to know before moving forward with this idea? Who do you need to talk to? What are the obstacles you might encounter?

**2nd Deliverable - Draft Executive Summary**
The executive summary is part of a full Policy Brief. It provides an overview of the key components of the policy proposal and action plan. It is designed for a reader that does not have enough time to review the entire document. The executive summary is both descriptive and persuasive. The reader should be convinced that the problem is significant and the proposed solution is feasible and worthwhile. Visit the Baker Center or Penn site for several examples of executive summaries and see in the resources that follow at the end. Email to nissa@utk.edu or as instructed by your course professor. Comments will be returned and an opportunity to meet and discuss your summary may be set up at this time.

**3rd Deliverable - Draft Policy Brief**
Submit a rough draft of your policy brief. During this time, you should continue to research and refine your proposal. Send to nissa@utk.edu or as instructed by your course professor

**4th Deliverable - Meet the Team blog**
Write a brief blog post about your team and include a photo. Here is an example from last year, but feel free to be creative http://bakercenter.utk.edu/team-barry-carr/ We will begin posting these as they are received. Send to Nissa@utk.edu

**5th Deliverable - Policy Brief Final**
The Final Brief should include the basic sections presented above and present your solution in a convincing, fact-based method. Send PDF to nissa@utk.edu. This will be forwarded to the judges.

**6th Deliverable - PowerPoint Presentation – Due on competition day**
Five minutes - Teams should use PowerPoint to create their presentations. There is no minimum or maximum number of slides. Some suggestions and examples re: PPT can be found here: http://www.garrreynolds.com/preso-tips/design/ http://www.ncsl.org/legislators-staff/legislative-staff/legislative-staff-coordinating-committee/tips-for-making-effective-PowerPoint-presentations.aspx

**Judging Criteria**
Our judges will come from government, community, public service and business. They will be provided with a scoring sheet to assist in their decisions as they assess each team’s success.

1. Did the team define the problem and persuade you of its significance?
2. Is the proposal doable?
3. Is the initiative worth doing?
4. Has the team developed a thorough action plan?
5. How will they measure and monitor outcomes/success?
6. Have they engaged all stakeholders?
7. Was the team’s oral and written presentations persuasive?

Resources
This year we have provided a template for you in creating your policy brief, which varies slightly from last year’s format. However, the following examples can provide ideas for topics and issues, along with ways to present your information in print and PowerPoint. We also have online videos from three workshops on the public policy and they are designated with an *.

Executive Summary Example

Policy Writing Guidelines/Checklist:
- http://www.fao.org/docrep/014/i2195e/i2195e03.pdf
- Food Security Communications Toolkit by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The first 30 pages cover a policy brief: http://www.fao.org/docrep/014/i2195e/i2195e03.pdf

SAMPLE Policy Brief PowerPoint presentation example on YouTube:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0IbUerpLu_o

TWO Workshops:
*September 2014 Policy Challenge Workshop: How to Write a Policy Brief Executive Summary & Presentation Skills Workshop*, Dr. Dorie Stiefel, UTK Political Science and Dr. John Haas, Communications
- Video: https://sf.ites.utk.edu/utk/Play/472997e2b88a47d6a4653f262fbd8b1d1d

*How to Write a Policy Brief* – Dorie Stiefel, UTK Political Science
- Video: http://sf.ites.utk.edu/utk/Play/f8f7c3ffac304c37be26f444754f04c71d

*Public Policy 101* – Nov. 21, 2015 with the Roosevelt Institute
2015 HBPPC Winners’ Policy Briefs

Grand Prize

Runner Up

Runner Up

Fels Institute Links:
- Examples from Fels Challenges  https://www.fels.upenn.edu/challenge/pastchallenges
- https://www.fels.upenn.edu/sites/www.fels.upenn.edu/files/5_executive_summary_examples.pdf
- https://www.fels.upenn.edu/challenge/pastchallenges/penn
- https://www.fels.upenn.edu/watch-2014-penn-finals