



Howard Baker Public Policy Challenge 2017

General Information (1.27.17)

The Howard Baker Public Policy Challenge (HBPPC) is a challenging, fun, educational research program that requires a semester-long commitment. Winners will be chosen by a team of experts and will receive cash prizes to further their proposed policy solutions as follows: Grand prize = \$3,000 and two runner-ups = \$1,000 each.

Begun in 2013, the Challenge is a “real-world” experience that shows students how to engage in civic life and make an impact by using public policy research to solve real issues confronting society. **The Challenge is open to all UT students.** Students may register as:

- a **team** represented by 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
- an **individual** – you may wish to apply for special topics credit as this takes time and commitment, particularly when working on your own

STUDENTS MUST register by Jan. 20, NOON at <http://tinyurl.com/HBPPC-2017>

The **HBPPC requires students** to develop a:

- 5-9 page policy brief
- 3-5 min. semi-final video (determines teams advancing to Final competition on 4/23/17)
- 5 min. PowerPoint presentation
- Short blog post about their problem and team (optional)

Students will engage in research and analysis, stakeholder identification and engagement, project management, teamwork, critical thinking, creativity and innovation as they develop their knowledge of the public policy process, communication skills, presentation skills, interviewing and creating a policy brief, Powerpoint presentation and video. **Students will learn about current issues affecting their world and how they can impact society directly.** The Baker Center will provide resources (examples, advice, etc.), a policy brief template and support throughout the semester.

The HBPPC is based on the [University of Pennsylvania’s Fels Institute Policy Challenge](#) and has evolved since 2013. The Challenge requires an individual or team to tackle a real issue which can be addressed with a public policy solution or something that informs public policy (educational website, a training program, a mobile app, etc.). We will offer some problems gathered from local and state agencies, but students can find their own too. Our **previous winners** developed policy solutions:

- 2016 - \$3,000 - [Born Drug-Free in TN](#) – Lucas Freeman - Neonatal abstinence
- 2016 - \$1,000 = [Farm to UTK](#) – Mary Waddill, Morgan Faulk, & Kristin Riggsbee, Nutrition graduate students – fresh produce available on campus
- 2016 - \$1,000 = [VOLCON](#) - Mark Christian, Kaitlyn McNabney, Guinevere Shaw, & Michael Ashworth – graduate students – designed website for volunteers to sign up for Community Schools work.

- 2015 - \$3,000 - [Pay Now/Pay Later](#) - Provide mental health screening of TN incarcerated juveniles.
- 2015 - \$1,000 - [Project Baggage](#) - Remove plastic bags from the UT campus within 5 years.
- 2015 - \$1,000 - [Connect Forward](#) - Link Tennessee Families First clients to jobs

HBPPC – Process

To make the field of participants in the Final Challenge on Sunday, April 23 more manageable, students will compete in a semi-final by submitting their policy brief and a **3-5 minute video** presenting their problem and solution. It will be due on **April 10, 2017**. The video should support the policy and will be judged on content, not technical merit of the video itself. Policy briefs should be direct and concise, about 5-9 pages, excluding appendix and references. The Brief must include:

- **Title/Cover page**
- **Executive Summary**—This section is for those who won't likely read the entire brief. Therefore, it must interest the reader and provide a synopsis of the main parts and findings.
- **Introduction & Problem Statement**-- Introduction, background, current policies, solution
- **Policy Options**--Alternative solutions working in other areas and your solution -justified
- **Action Plan**-- Timetable for implementation, stakeholders identified with roles, promotion & marketing plan, evaluation plan, future/continuous improvement process
- **Budget and Funding Sources/Needs**—Resources needed for policy implementation and possible source
- **Conclusion**—Concise summary of proposal
- **Appendix**—Any supplemental information that is *essential* to the proposal
- **References**—Sources used to develop proposal

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, costs, stakeholders (direct and indirect, for and against), institutional processes, and decision-making structures, which are involved in approving, initiating and implementing the recommended policy. **It is very important to consult those supporting the issue, against the issue, impacted by the problem, and those in power to implement your solution.** Your project may also be a tool, such as a website, educational program, software or app that further addresses or informs an existing problem.

Judging Criteria

- Is there a clear problem definition and significant issue?
- Is the solution doable and worth doing?
- Is there a solid implementation plan?
- Do they have a plan to measure success?
- Have they engaged the issue's stakeholders?
- Was the team's oral and written presentation persuasive and will they be effective?

Timeline and Deliverables 2017

Wed., January 18, Noon	Pizza & HBPPC – Reception/Q&A – Toyota Auditorium
M-F - Jan. 30 - Feb. 3	1st Deliverable Due: DRAFT Problem Statement –During this week independent teams should Email their statement and discuss BY APPOINTMENT with nissa@utk.edu and ekeels@utk.edu . Students enrolled in a course using the Challenge will meet with their professor as directed by his/her syllabus.
Mon. Feb. 13	2nd Deliverable Due—DRAFT Executive Summary (1-2 pgs.) Teams should schedule a meeting to discuss draft BY APPOINTMENT with nissa@utk.edu and ekeels@utk.edu OR with your professor
March 1-31	3rd Deliverable Due: Anytime during the month, submit a Blog Post about your topic and team with team photo
Mon., March 6	4th Deliverable Due: DRAFT Policy Brief –Email and make APPOINTMENT with ekeels@utk.edu OR with your professor
March 13-17	Spring Break – Enjoy!
Mon., April 10	Semi-Finals: Those wanting to compete in the HBPPC Final on Sunday, April 23 must submit a 3-5 min. video and policy brief to class professor or Eric for critique.
Thurs., April 13	Finalists moving on to Policy Challenge Finals announced.
Tues., April 18	5th Deliverable Due: ALL Finalists will submit their final policy brief PDF to ekeels@utk.edu (will be forwarded to judges)
Sun., April 23, 1:30 pm	Howard Baker Public Policy Challenge Finals 6th Deliverable – Five (5) Minute PowerPoint Presentation & 8 minute Q & A with judges. Bring PPT on thumbdrive or email to ekeels@utk.edu

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

1. Template and tips for the Policy Brief
2. Details on the deliverables
3. Resources, example briefs and presentations

Comment from 2016 Grand Prize Winner: Lucas Freeman - 2016

Overall, I found the policy challenge to be a tremendous learning experience. I have written countless research papers during my time as an undergraduate student (and through internship experiences), but having to form an action plan, derive a budget and funding sources, think rigorously of potential impediments to policy implementation, and reach out to stakeholders and allies across a variety of disciplines allowed me to develop skills that, I believe, employers will place tremendous value on.

Regarding the allocation of my winnings, I intend to continue pushing forward with my policy, and adapting if and when necessary. I will be reaching out shortly to Dr. Buchanan (Director, Knox County Health Department), as well as Ms. Henley and Ms. Hudson (also from KCHD) to assess if and how we can integrate my policy proposal's drug-awareness and health-education campaign into their public health offerings to mitigate opioid abuse and neonatal abstinence syndrome here in East Tennessee (e.g., through the Knox Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Initiative, a/k/a KAPPI). I also intend to reach out to Ms. Burrows from the Governing Institute to discuss potentially running a piece related to my policy proposal through her institution.

Questions? Contact Nissa Dahlin-Brown at nissa@utk.edu (**until Feb. 17**). After Feb. 17, contact Eric Keels at ekeels@utk.edu