Gerald R. Ford Institute for Public Policy and Service

  Spring 2009 Submitted Plan:

Program Mission

**Step1: Department/Program Mission (Due May 15, 2009)**

The Gerald R. Ford Institute for Public Policy and Service exists to enhance student awareness, understanding, and appreciation of life’s public dimensions. It strives to develop leaders and engaged citizens who understand the competing and conflicting interests of our world and the ability to advocate for the greater good.

**Step 2: List goals/outcomes (Due May 15, 2009)**

**Objectives: The Gerald R. Ford Institute for Public Policy and Service serves as a bridge between the classroom and real world. It supports the transition of our students as they begin to apply their studies to long-term career and life goals. To this end, students will:**

**1) Enhance their understanding of historical and current events through interaction with other students, faculty, colleagues, the community, guest lecturers, and visiting scholars;**

**2) Refine leadership skills through classroom-based small group assignments, on-campus activities, and community projects;**

**3) Develop collaborative, ethical relationships in a world of competing interests;**

**4) Research and evaluate contemporary policy issues and defend the conclusions and recommendations of such efforts;**

**5) Demonstrate clear, concise, and persuasive writing and oral presentation skills to peers and external audiences;**

**6) Critically evaluate their understanding of our global society through diverse networking opportunities;**

**7) Experience the breadth of future career interests through internships with local, regional, national and international entities in public policy and service;**

**8) Engage in civil, productive discussion of controversial issues with peers, faculty, community leaders, residents, and policy-makers;**

**9)  Apply the principles of engaged citizenry through the opportunities, challenges, and satisfaction of community service;**

**10) Engage in meaningful research that will inform the policy and service communities through directed study and FURSCA opportunities.**

**Step 3:   Identify program components (Due: May 15, 2009)**

Required courses, elective courses,out-of-classroom or other experiences that are designed to achieve each educational objective. NOTE: Every class will not, nor is it expected to,achieve each outcome. The goal is to get an even distribution of experiences that achieve the outcomes.

**GERALD R. FORD INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY AND SERVICE**

**CONCENTRATION REQUIREMENTS**

***Courses***

**PBSV 101** Introduction to Public Service (Open only to Ford Institute members)

• Taken in the fall of the freshman year or first fall semester following admission to the Institute.

    (Learning Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9)

**PBSV 397** Senior Colloquium (Open only to Ford Institute members)

• Taken in the spring semester of the senior year; seniors graduating in December may take the course as a tutorial in the fall or in the previous year with the director’s permission.

    (Learning Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8)

**PLSC 101** Politics of American Democracy

    (Learning Objectives 1, 2, 4, 5, 8)

**PLSC 216** Public Policy Analysis

    (Learning Objectives 2, 4, 5, 8)

**General Requirement** (Members must complete at least one of the following)

**COMM 241** – Public Speaking

**COMM 245** – Argumentation and Advocacy

**ENGL 203** – Advanced Expository Writing

**ENGL 205** – Introductory Creative Writing

**ENGL 207** – News and Feature Writing

**E&M 101** – Introduction to Micro-Economics

   One semester of modern language at the **200 level or above**

    (Learning Objectives 5, 6)

**Philosophy Requirement** (members must complete at least one of the following)

**PHIL 201** - Ethics

**PHIL 202** – Social Philosophy

**PHIL 206** – Contemporary Moral Problems

**PHIL 301** – Environmental Ethics

**PHIL 302** – Leadership Ethics

**PHIL 303** - Business Ethics

**PHIL 304** – Ethics and Public Policy

**PHIL 308** – Biomedical Ethics

**RS 242** – Christian Ethics

    (Learning Objectives  1, 3, 4, 5, 8)

**IDY 392** Internship (One unit taken after attaining junior status)

    (Learning Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)

***Other Requirements***

*Speakers’ Program*

Each semester, the Ford Institute sponsors/co-sponsors bringing outside policy and service leaders to campus to engage with students. The director may also approve speakers brought to campus by other departments and programs if they are relevant to the Ford Institute mission. This requirement serves two purposes. First, it exposes our students to leaders who bring messages/topics that are critical to leadership in our global society. Second, connects students with important decision makers who can help with projects/papers, internships, graduate/professional school advice, and career placement. During a typical semester, Ford sponsors and approves a minimum of five speakers. Ford Institute members must attend **at least two events.**

    (Learning Objectives 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8)

*Service Learning Requirement*

The Ford Institute encourages students to make a life-long commitment to their communities by providing a minimum of **10 hours of volunteer work per semester.** This component allows students to give back to their communities, while enriching their Albion College experience through learning about cultural competence and the important factors that mediate our global society.

    (Learning Objectives 1, 2, 3, 6, 8, 9)

***Program Options***

*Directed Study or Independent Research*

The Ford Institute encourages students to undertake directed readings (study) and independent research programs to foster in-depth knowledge of specific areas of interest to the student.  These semester-long, or FURSCA projects lead to papers of scholarly potential.

    (Learning Objectives 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10).

**Step 4: Select methods/data sources and instruments (Due May 15, 2009)**

**GERALD R. FORD INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY AND SERVICE**

**EVALUATION COMPONENTS**

**General Expectations**

For each objective the following methods and data sources will be employed:

1) Enhance their understanding of historical and current events through interaction with other students, faculty, colleagues, the community, guest lecturers, and visiting scholars;

    • exam questions in PBSV 101, PLSC 101

    • topical essays in PBSV 101, PBSV 397

2) Refine leadership skills through classroom-based small group assignments, on-campus activities, and community projects;

    • PBSV 101 essay and small-group oral presentation to community leaders regarding observations and recommendations on the Albion community.  Community leaders use an assessment rubric evaluating observations, background research, recommendations, organization, and delivery. A peer evaluation is also included.

    • PBSV 101 debate on a contemporary policy issue, presented to the campus and local community.  Alumni and other leaders evaluate the debate on the following areas: preparation/research including a comprehensive understanding of the issue, presentation of main arguements, appropriateness of rebuttals, and response to opposing position challenges.

    • PBSV 397 Capstone project.  Students work in small groups (4-5) to research and summarize a controversial contemporary policy issue and provide recommendations on effectively addressing the problem.  The topic is assigned 5 days before the due date requiring a productive effort by all group members.  On the due date, each group presents their summary and recommendations to a "congressional" member and staff, played by alumni with extensive policy and government advocacy background.  Other alumni and faculty observe these scenarios and evaluate the encounter based on group appearance/demeanor, background summary, stakeholders, history of legislation, recommendations, organization, response to questions, and quality of the two page briefing document.  A peer evaluation is also included.

3) Develop collaborative, ethical relationships in a world of competing interests;

   • Topical essays in PBSV 101, PBSV 397

   • Exam questions and papers in the Ethics class of choice

4) Research and evaluate contemporary policy issues and defend the conclusions and recommendations of such efforts;

   • topical essays in PBSV 101, PBSV 397

   • PBSV 101 essay and small-group oral presentation to community leaders regarding observations and recommendations on the Albion community.  Community leaders use an assessment rubric evaluating observations, background research, recommendations, organization, and delivery. A peer evaluation is also included.

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5) Demonstrate clear, concise, and persuasive writing and oral presentation skills to peers and external audiences;

   • exam questions in PBSV 101, PLSC 101

   • topical essays in PBSV 101, PBSV 397

   • PBSV 101 essay and small-group oral presentation to community leaders regarding observations and recommendations on the Albion community.  Community leaders use an assessment rubric evaluating observations, background research, recommendations, organization, and delivery. A peer evaluation is also included.

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6) Critically evaluate their understanding of our global society through diverse networking opportunities;

    • Indirect assessment through observation of interaction with speakers, informal Ford Institute discussions, and meetings with external audiences.

7) Experience the breadth of future career interests through internships with local, regional, national and international entities in public policy and service;

    • Internship supervisors complete an assessment at mid-term and at the end of the assignment.  The assessment rubric includes ordinal scale ratings of the following: Relation with Others, Judgement, Ability to Learn, Response to Criticism, Attitude, Dependability, Organization, Quality of Work, Attendance, and Overall Performance.

    • Students complete a final paper (6-8 pages) describing how the internship experience enhanced their understanding of pulic policy, service, and leadership principles.

8) Engage in civil, productive discussion of controversial issues with peers, faculty, community leaders, residents, and policy-makers;

    • Indirect assessment through participation grades in PBSV 101 and PBSV 397.

    • Indirect assessment through observation of interaction with speakers, informal Ford Institute discussions, and meetings with external audiences.

9)  Apply the principles of engaged citizenry through the opportunities, challenges, and satisfaction of community service;

    • Indirect assessment through observation of Ford staff and feedback from service learning partners.

10) Engage in meaningful research that will inform the policy and service communities through directed study and FURSCA opportunities.

     • Students complete a paper that addresses the four basic areas of a comprehensive research project - introduction/rationale, methods, results, conclusions - using formatting and referencing requirements of a professional journal appropriate to the topic field of interest.

**Step 5: Analyze and interpret the data (Due October 1, 2009 with preliminary data; due November 2, 2009 with final data for this assessment cycle)**

The following assessments are in process:

    • PBSV 101 essay and small-group oral presentation to community leaders regarding observations and recommendations on the Albion community.  Community leaders use an assessment rubric evaluating observations, background research, recommendations, organization, and delivery. A peer evaluation is also included.

The students completed their small group presentations to Albion community leaders (Mayor Joe Domingo, Economic Development Director Peggy Sindt, Councilman Thornton Bradley, Forks Senior Center Director Thomas Hunsdorfer, Public School Superintendent Fred Clarke, and Albion College Provost Susan Conner) on Tuesday, September 15, 2009.  The reviewers completed an evaluation form (available on request) for each of the three morning and three afternoon groups.  This evaluation assigned 20 points to each of the following categories: Summary of Observations on the Community; Depth of Research (Personal, Residents, Historical); Recommendations and Rationale; Organization of Key Concepts, Strengths, Limitations; Delivery of Presenters/Respondents and PowerPoint.  The evaluation also provided space for written comments on each of the categories.  Total scores ranged from lows in the mid-50 to 100; comments by some reviewers were extensive and highly constructive, while others provided only numerical scores.  Lower scores tended to be associated with constructive criticism - and the comment "this is not a grade" alluding that the evaluator had his or her heart in the right place in trying to provide the useful information to the students.  The peer evaluation asks the students to rate the members of their small group on five axes, each worth 10 points: Attendance at Meetings; Timeliness of Completing Assigned Tasks; Contribution to Discussions at Team Meetings; Participation as a Member of the Team - Positive Work.  This type of evaluation tends to present a ceiling effect, with students limiting their negative evaluations of students.  It becomes obvious when a student is not a productive group as the evaluations will contain lower scores and will be consistent across the group.  Preliminary examinations of this year's evaluations however, showed a consistent problem with students attending team meetings.

    • PBSV 397 Capstone project.  Students work in small groups (4-5) to research and summarize a controversial contemporary policy issue and provide recommendations on effectively addressing the problem.  The topic is assigned 5 days before the due date requiring a productive effort by all group members.  On the due date, each group presents their summary and recommendations to a "congressional" member and staff, played by alumni with extensive policy and government advocacy background.  Other alumni and faculty observe these scenarios and evaluate the encounter based on group appearance/demeanor, background summary, stakeholders, history of legislation, recommendations, organization, response to questions, and quality of the two page briefing document.  A peer evaluation is also included.

The Capstone Projects for the 2009 graduating class were conducted on April 27, 2009.  Eighteen members of the Ford Institute Visiting Committee (Albion and Ford Institute alumni; external leaders) attended the sessions in which students in six work groups (5-6 students each) advocated for tax credits to support higher education to the "staff" of a U.S. Senator.  Evaluations by the Visiting Committee were very strong, praising the students for the grasp of the policy, their appearance, recommendations, and briefing documents.  Areas identified for improvement included inconsistencies in the oral presentation skills and ability of some students to "think on their feet" during the question and answer period.  Peer evaluations showed similar concerns to the those observed in this year's PBSV 101 class -problems with attending meetings.  This program is held a week prior to finals - and the students are all seniors.  Although the date and assignment were provided at the beginning of the semester (which should have allowed students to block out the time required to work in the group effectively) it was clear that a smaller, but not unexpected group of students shared the major responsibility for the final product.

**Step 6: How will the data collected be used for decision-making, strategic planning, etc. (Due October 1, 2009 with preliminary data; due November 2, 2009 with final data for this assessment cycle)**

*NOTE:You will need to submit a summary report of your findings to the Assessment Committee for review. In that report, please include details of how the data will be used, any program changes that will be made (or not made). Questions to ask yourself/to include in the report are as follows:*

* *How, exactly, will your data be used to help with program planning and improvement?*
* *Will your program form a committee to review assessment findings, and make recommendations for change or improvement in a timely manner?*
* *Will your entire department convene to discuss assessment results and program changes?*
* *Who will make formal recommendations for curricular or other changes—the chair/head? The committee?*

For the PBSV 101 presentation, the preliminary examination of the data suggests that this is assignment is doing what we hoped it would do - engage students in their new community, observe their surroundings, and provide a critical but compassionate summary of the communities strengths and weaknesses.  It also provided them the opportunity to interact with community leaders to discuss their ideas.  This is the third year for this assignment.  Well accepted by the community members, they comment on the great qualities of the our students, how they look forward to working with them, and to please invite them back again next year.  The variability in the evaluation instrument, however, must be examined for the future.  The comments are extremely valuable, but the scoring approach needs to be more refined so that each section of the instrument has more standardized criteria.  Such a rubric will allow for more comparable results for the students and for our own planning in assuring that the activity addresses the important issues of community engagement.  Similarly, the ongoing issue of attendance in small group meetings must be examined to assure quality and equity in the final product.  As the Institute restructures over the next year, a new faculty committee will be constructed with one objective being review of evaluation material.  This committee will join in the discussion of how to better improve the class and the evaluations.

As the Senior Capstone model was new for 2009, the evaluations, both peer and Visiting Committee are important.  In discussions with the Visiting Committee, the new process was deemed a much better, more real-world project than the previous model and should be continued.  Discussions on the variability in oral presentation ability suggest that this is an area to deal with across the Ford classes.  Beginning with the 2010 senior class, each student will lead the discussion of at least two journal articles relevant to class discussion.  They will provide a summary of each article and provide questions to their peers.  We are also examining co-curricular approaches for upper-class students to provide speaking and other mentoring opportunities to Freshmen and Sophomore students.  As for scheduling of the presentations, the same agenda will be used with presentations occurring in the latter part of the semester.  Reminders throughout the semester will be delivered to keep the weekend open and that failure to will have significant detrimental effects on grades.  The new external advisory board of the Institute will provide discussion and feedback on this activity.