

Public Service and Social Responsibility: A Role for Public Affairs in Undergraduate Business Education

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ABSTRACT

The public management, nonprofit, and business sectors are becoming more integrated. Governments are increasingly dependent upon businesses and nonprofit organizations to provide public services, regulation is increasing, and nonprofit organizations provide an alternative for public service delivery as well as maintain a watchful eye over businesses and governments. A solid understanding of public problems and the intersections between the sectors is critical for managers of today. Public affairs programs can play an important role in this process by expanding their focus to offer courses to undergraduate business students that bridge the gap between public affairs issues and the business sector. By developing mutually beneficial partnerships with business schools, public affairs programs will gain substantial benefit, both academically and professionally. We can pursue our mission to encourage public service in a broader arena, recruit talented undergraduates to public affairs programs and positions, expand teaching and research opportunities, and enhance our reputation as a field.

INTRODUCTION: ENGENDERING PUBLIC SERVICE MOTIVATION IN BUSINESS STUDENTS

A recent *Public Administration Review* symposium (December 2010) on the future of the field highlights the continued blurring of boundaries and the resulting need for our field to continue to develop collaborative management capabilities. Public affairs discussions about managing in networks tend to involve the bolstering of the public management competence in these relationships, while being relatively silent with regard to the capacity of the private sector participants to serve as effective partners. We propose a new focus beyond the usual boundary of the operating environment of public affairs programs, by expanding our teaching to the “other” side—to participate in undergraduate business curricula as a means to encourage

and enhance public value. Stemming from the growing interdependence among sectors, public affairs programs today have an unrecognized opportunity to expand our realm of influence by encouraging public service in a broader arena, enhancing our reputation as a multidisciplinary field of study, and recruiting many talented students to the practice and study of public administration.

We contend that a role and emphasis for public administration within business schools will result in substantial mutual value. It will be incumbent on public affairs programs to cultivate this relationship, as it is unlikely to develop on its own. The development of public administration in recent years focuses on governance rather than government, third-party and contracted delivery of governmental services, public-private partnerships, and network-based collaborative public management, reflecting the field's capacity for enhanced intersectoral understanding. Public administration literature on managing in networks (Agranoff, 2007) provides us with the most succinct defense of a heightened outreach from the "public" side of the public-private training relationship. Networks are flexible, but hard to manage and limited in their accountability for outcomes. But there is much to gain as network participants learn from each other and develop unanticipated new ideas and approaches as they go. Network relationships can be frustrating as different values come into conflict, but a greater appreciation and nurturing of shared interests may also develop.

This article describes a collaborative case regarding the teaching of public affairs content as a requirement within an undergraduate business administration curriculum. The relationship may have been easier to establish and govern than would be the case in some decentralized university settings, but the approach and the benefits of such an effort provide a model for improving future public/private/third sector collaborations as well as increase the salience of public-oriented career opportunities for undergraduate business majors. The article includes five major parts: First, we briefly describe the shared challenges and identities of the business, governmental, and nonprofit sectors, and the need for students of all three fields to understand how issues cross their increasingly porous boundaries. Second, we argue for the extension of our mission to serve the public interest beyond our program boundaries. Third, we speculate about additional benefits of a public affairs presence in the undergraduate business curriculum in the context of our field's present and future needs, most notably as a proactive response to workforce concerns. Fourth, we show how public affairs departments can help fill a recognized gap in business education. Fifth, we provide a case study of a public administration department's successful integration within their business school's undergraduate curriculum. We conclude with further approaches to strengthen academic networks across the business and public management curricula in which public affairs programs are "steering" collaboration for mutual benefit.

“BOUNDARYLESSNESS” IN MANAGEMENT TEACHING

The nature of public administration is rarely captured within a single jurisdiction, agency, or even sector in its teaching or practice. Kettl (2006) describes the need to revisit the definition of *boundaries* in the field, as they become more porous, less precise, and less constraining. The continued erosion of these boundaries is anticipated as a major theme for the future of public administration (O’Leary & Van Slyke, 2010). Scholars of networks (Goldsmith & Kettl, 2009) find that if public managers are diligent on managing the redefinition of these complicated boundary components, the public interest may be well served. If the public benefits from the recasting of boundaries among public problems, academics who teach public affairs must also bring related academic fields together.

Public affairs is by nature a multidisciplinary field, especially with the rise of third-party government (Bozeman, 1987), public enterprises, and extensive government contracting. The market for undergraduate public affairs will grow as the sectors work more closely together. As businesses receive greater proportions of revenue from government sources and are subject to more laws and regulations, the need for employees with an understanding, and a degree, in public affairs will likely grow. For businesses to respond effectively to public sector solicitations for private service delivery, they need management teams that understand the meaning of public value (Moore, 1995; Goldsmith & Burke, 2009).

Cross-sector collaboration is growing in importance for all three sectors in society. The business literature increasingly identifies external forces, such as those generated by the public, government, and nonprofit organizations, as important to business decision making. For example, Steiner and Steiner (2009) outline the countervailing forces model of the business, government, and society (BGS) relationship, which focuses on the complex multiple interactions among the major elements of society—environmental catalysts, the public, government, and corporations—that influence each other. This model recognizes that businesses can be both a driver of change in society and affected by social change; success depends in part upon its response to these factors, in addition to economic forces. We need to consider all forces, environments, and stakeholders in society, whether we work in business, government, or other public service organizations.

The discussion about the need for preparing public affairs students for collaboration across sectors is already under way, but equally valuable to the practice of our field (broadly defined to include both public and nonprofit management) is the preparation of those in the business sector for such collaboration. Ever since the national Academy of Public Administration’s 2000 “Priority Issues” report, public affairs programs have reoriented toward cross-sectoral training (Boyle & Whitaker, 2001). These programs have the academic and practical experience to take the lead in working with other sectors (Horne & Paris, 2010). Horne and Paris focus on government-nonprofit collaboration, but two of their “recommended learning objectives” apply as readily to collaboration with business.

They recommend that students “be familiar with the basic formal structures and processes of government agencies and nonprofit organizations” and also “understand the particular strengths of government and nonprofit organizational forms and their implications for structuring collaborations” (pp. 16–17). A course or curriculum component covering the basics of business, government, and nonprofit organizations can include these in its learning objectives, providing students with a basic understanding of the structures, processes, and strengths of organizations in all three sectors.

Civil society is well served by a shared understanding between public and private interests. Business sector models and support are critical to the success of many public initiatives. If we are to address global problems such as economic development and the reduction of poverty, environmental sustainability including climate change, and the demographic challenge, the three sectors must join together to improve global problem solving (Sachs, 2008). From the perspective of the business sector, Porter and Kramer (2006, 83) put it best: “Corporations need a healthy society . . . (and) a healthy society needs healthy corporations.” The healthy society arises from attention to shared public concerns. In short, there is a shared mission that can be integrated across public affairs and business management academic programming.

THE MISSION: ENCOURAGEMENT AND PREPARATION TO SERVE THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Newcomer and Allen contend that public-oriented academic programs “need to prepare students to serve in the public interest” (2010, p. 207); but in general, this directive is bounded by such programs. Our contribution to this literature is the argument that public affairs programs should expand their implementation of this mission to serve the public interest beyond the boundaries of our own programs. Including a course focused on public service within the core of the business school curriculum furthers this goal far beyond what we can accomplish only with MPA, MPP, and similar graduate programs. The importance of engaging businesses to play a role in serving the public interest and addressing social problems is acknowledged by the literature, as is the importance for doing so through business education (Samuelson, 2009, p. 34). It is thus critical for us to reach out to other programs to expand our realm of influence.

We have seen an increase in public affairs graduate programs that merge various fields, such as joint graduate degree programs with health care administration, criminal justice, and law (Newcomer & Allen, 2010). If graduate programs are integrating in this manner, similar potential is present for undergraduate programs, where students are exposed to a full range of pedagogy. With the increase in common topics of interest across the fields of business and public affairs, such as corporate social responsibility and social entrepreneurship, there is greater opportunity for partnerships across disciplines in education.

Some may question whether offering undergraduate public affairs courses to undergraduate business students may contribute to the identity challenges of our field in a negative way. We already have definitional challenges due to the diversity of programs under the umbrella of public affairs (Mandell, 2009). Would teaching undergraduate business students further dilute the identity of our field or compromise the integrity of public affairs teaching? We believe it does not. Many other disciplines offer courses to undergraduate students to provide a foundation of the field with a core curriculum—for example, universities have included English, math, and history requirements for business, science, and social science students for generations. The identity of the students does not muddy the identity of the field so long as the content remains consistent with the public service mission of the program. Increasing our mission's sphere of influence is a convincing rationale for the integration of public affairs content into business education, but it is not the only benefit of doing so for our field.

MEETING FUTURE NEEDS OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE FIELD

Creating undergraduate public service programs linked to business has additional benefits for the public administration workforce, both professionally and academically. Most significantly, it enlarges the pool of students who are interested in public service careers and education at a time when expanded recruitment is critical. Undergraduate programs in Public Affairs face a difficult challenge—much of the “recruitment” to graduate programs in a particular field is dictated by a student's undergraduate major, which in turn influences career choices. Yet, few schools offer undergraduate majors in public administration, and many undergraduate students are simply unaware of what such a degree means or have little understanding of the opportunities for careers in government and nonprofit organizations. Management education often concentrates on preparing students for work in traditional, large companies (Dart, 2008), although some entrepreneurship programs have expanded to focus on the future small business owner. Despite this, many business students do go on to work in the government and nonprofit sectors. A recent *New York Times* article (Rampell, 2011) suggests that this trend may be growing as a result of the recent recession. Faced with heightened competition in the for-profit job market as well as being predisposed toward “doing good,” this generation of recent college graduates is showing more interest in public service related work.

One of the most significant benefits of integrating public affairs coursework into the business undergraduate curriculum is to introduce related degrees and employment opportunities to undergraduate students, particularly as we face the critical challenges of the aging out of the public workforce. Although figures vary across reports, agencies, and levels, the challenge is clear—the public sector faces extensive turnover in the coming years due to the aging of the public workforce and the retirement of the baby boomer generation (Broder, 2001; Civil Service

Subcommittee, 2003; GAO, 2008; Lewis & Cho, 2011; Spors & Fialka, 2002; Wamunya, 2003; Wolf & Amirkhanyan, 2010). The mean age of employees rose by approximately 5 years for each level of government between 1980 and 2005–07 averages—the federal government by 5.6 years, state government by 5.5 years, and local government by 4.6 years. Median and modal ages have grown even more rapidly during this period—for example, the federal sector’s median age rose by 9 years, and its modal age rose by 18 years. Averages for 2005–07 indicate that over 60% of those employed in the federal workforce are 40 or older, and only 17.6% are younger than 30 (Lewis & Cho, 2011). In 2008, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) reported that a third of the 2007 federal workforce would be eligible to retire by 2012. The problem is even more pronounced for certain agencies, occupations, and organizational levels. For example, GAO reports that “64% of career executives are projected to be eligible by 2012” (GAO, 2008, p. 3). Although most studies have focused at the federal level, recent research suggests that state and local governments face similar challenges (Lewis & Cho, 2011). This turnover is expected to drain the public sector not only of numbers of workers but also of leadership, experience, and organizational memory (Wolf & Amirkhanyan, 2010).

Public administrators will be competing with the private sector to replace this highly educated workforce whether they wish to or not. As a discipline, we should make a proactive effort to start this recruitment during the undergraduate years. Exposing business students to employment opportunities across the sectors will help “to reflect the reality for students, rather than the stereotypes, and to highlight organizations, careers, and alumni from a more real and diverse profile than the traditional ‘gray pinstripe’ image would have us envisage” (Dart, 2008, p. 735). Introducing public affairs at the undergraduate level—even if only through a course or two as part of the core business or management curriculum—may lead to a greater pool of students interested in both careers and graduate education in public affairs.

Cross-fertilization may also open opportunities to develop foundational research and teaching across the business and public management training fields. Among the challenges identified in adding such courses to the business curriculum are the lack of business textbooks that cover such topics and the difficulty in finding qualified faculty (Arosteguy, 2007), both of which can be lessened by encouraging partnerships with public affairs departments to offer such courses. Although there is some overlap with the field of business ethics, the business literature recognizes that such an expansion of the “domain of the business ethics curriculum...takes the subject into relatively uncharted water where the academic literature has only just started to make inroads, and where business ethics scholars, in particular have yet to really engage” (Crane & Matten, 2004, p. 365). Public affairs literature and scholars, however, are already well involved in the context, institutions, and practices of government and nonprofit organizations. As our

boundaries further dissolve, we can expand on these avenues for research. As the Minnowbrook III scholars envision, public administration research in the future will be interdisciplinary and collaborative (O'Leary & Van Slyke, 2010).

The application of public affairs literature to the discipline of business could even have the benefit of improving public administration's reputation in the broader management arena (Shareef, 2010). Kelman (2007) refers to "the public administration ghetto," explaining that our field was tied to "mainstream organization studies" in its early years, but has since "taken a separatist turn" (p. 233). Demonstrating our value to other disciplines, both in research and teaching, has the potential for much greater benefit than harm to our own discipline.

These areas of benefits—expanded recruitment to the field, collaborative teaching and research partnerships, and an enhanced reputation as a field—are mutually reinforcing, positive benefits for public affairs. As leaders of the field, we should feel a sense of urgency to think strategically about the future of our discipline. We simply cannot wait for schools of business to ask us to participate. Rather, for the benefit of our own field, both professionally and academically, we must take the lead role in collaborative efforts to bridge the gap across sectors. Encouraging public affairs departments to take the lead on this role is only half the battle. We turn now to the business perspective: Why should business programs attend more to governmental topics? Would they be receptive to the notion?

MEETING A NEED IN BUSINESS EDUCATION: A ROLE FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Public affairs courses can be a valuable component of business education, complementing more traditional business courses with courses that familiarize business students with social problems, nonprofit organizations, and government. Business managers of today and into the future need a solid understanding of the opportunities and threats they face from organizations from other sectors. Businesses are now subject to significant nonmarket forces, yet business students often lack "a coherent or in-depth understanding of the historical, political, or cultural context in which businesses operate today" (Waddock, 2007, p. 551). Students in both business and public service programs also move between sectors as their jobs frequently change. Opportunities emerge for business students to work in public service settings and public administration students are desired by corporations.

Government regulations continue to increase, thus posing both burdens and benefits on businesses. Government regulation often emerges when businesses disregard societal values. Taking a more proactive approach to such social values can curtail a strong governmental response to regulations that may be even more costly to businesses, as it takes away a business's flexibility in determining how to respond. A role in crafting legislation and regulation can give firms a competitive advantage (Barrett, 1991).

Government contracting provides lucrative opportunities for businesses, but some business students are not even aware that governments have such contracts

available. Thus, they have an opportunity to broaden out to a new “market” for their efforts. As Elkington & Hartigan (2008) argue, there are “market opportunities” in social problems, some of which bring profit opportunities. The public interest is served when private or nonprofit contractors recognize the need to couch winning proposals in ways that create the greatest public value.

Nonprofit watchdogs have greater insight into and influence over the policies and practices of businesses, particularly with the expansion of Internet usage. Business students need to know how to work with nongovernmental organizations in the United States and globally. By partnering with nonprofit organizations, businesses may improve their credibility with stakeholders or mitigate the potential for attacks from other nonprofit organizations (Argenti, 2004; Selsky & Parker, 2005).

These all amount to new job opportunities for the business school’s prospective students. But as we explained in the previous section, we can go further in the expansion of undergraduate business student awareness of job prospects, to the entire range of possibilities of working in government or nonprofit service providers. We have highlighted this as a benefit to the field of public affairs, but an expansion of career opportunities is as beneficial to the student, particularly during periods of a tightened job market (Rampell, 2011).

These outlined benefits for business education—improved knowledge of regulation, contracting opportunities, and nonprofit influences as well as broadening of the job market—may be obvious to many public affairs scholars and professionals, so an important secondary question is whether business schools would be receptive to these ideas. Shareef’s (2010) concerns about the receptiveness of both fields to “such a multidisciplinary sharing” (p. 648) for MBA students are equally relevant to the application of public administration to undergraduate business students. Shareef questions whether business schools would be receptive to social issues and values, but much has changed in their clients’ operating environment since the early 1990s.¹ Businesses recognize the need for attention to social issues, ethics, and other sectors in society. Businesses have witnessed a rise in nonprofit activism driven by the advent of the Internet as well as by the implementation of significant pieces of regulation such as the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 following corporate accounting scandals and, more recently, the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act of 2010 in response to the 2008 banking crisis. Their recognition of the growing importance of social issues is perhaps most directly reflected in the growing importance of corporate social responsibility as a strategic issue for companies.

The business education literature suggests recognition of the need to expose students to social and environmental issues, including both the implications of such problems for business and the potential for businesses to play a role in social change (Dart, 2008). Business schools are also recognizing the importance of the public interest and social problems as integral components of the management literature as well as acknowledging the insufficient attention paid to those areas.

Part of the response is the rise in ethics-related centers at top universities, such as the Center for Business and the Environment at Yale (CBEY), the Center for Corporate Citizenship at Boston College, and the “Thunderbird for Good” initiative at the Thunderbird School of Global Management.² These centers may be stand-alone resources or may be actively involved in networking and changing the culture of the universities in which they are housed.

Given the espoused benefits of integrating public affairs teaching in undergraduate business and the literature’s suggestion that business schools may be receptive to the notion, we’re left with a subsequent question: How can public management programs convince business schools of their role in the expansion into government and nonprofit studies?

OVERCOMING DIVIDES: THE SOCIAL CHANGE COURSE

Suffolk University’s experience over the past 4 years provides an example for the integration of public affairs ideas into business teaching, through public management involvement in the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) curriculum. It will be clear in this case that the challenges at Suffolk may be less daunting than in other situations, yet some factors here should translate to a broader audience pursuing such change.

Suffolk University is located on Beacon Hill in Boston and has a distinct nature in a metropolitan area known for its abundant academic assets. The university’s identity was established from the outset with social contribution in mind. It was founded in 1906 by Gleason Archer, an attorney who pursued a dream to provide legal training to young Bostonians who would not be admitted to the older, elite university law schools. The Suffolk Law School and, after 1937, its Business School offered in-career professionals a chance at advancement through evening classes toward the Doctor of Jurisprudence (JD) and Master of Business Administration (MBA) degrees. A smaller College of Arts and Sciences was also formed in 1934. The Master of Public Administration (MPA) program first admitted students in 1973 and has been housed in the Business School almost since its inception.

Over the past decade, the College of Arts and Sciences and the Sawyer Business School have revamped their undergraduate offerings in an effort to convert from predominantly a “commuter school” for the youth of Boston’s inner city and suburbs, to a residential campus with prominent international offerings. But part of its effort to increase attractiveness to undergraduates has involved enhanced quality of offerings, so that it would not be a “second-choice” school. Herein lies the beginning of the public administration–business curriculum integration. Starting in 2007, all Business School undergraduates are required to take a redesigned entry curriculum, including the one-credit “Freshman Experience” orientation course and the three-credit “Management Foundations” course, which includes team-building exercises and exposure to all of the disciplines offered within the Business School. The Institute for Public Service, the department that houses

Suffolk's public administration programs and faculty, is something of an outlier in the Business School, since its accreditation focus has been oriented toward NASPAA standards rather than the Business accrediting body, the AACSB. Nevertheless, Business School leadership invited public administration faculty to participate in the design and teaching of the undergraduate entry curriculum, and the invitation was accepted. The standardized Management Foundations course included separate modules on marketing, entrepreneurship, accounting, and others, as well as a week on public sector management. Business-focused faculty found that the "public management week," which focused on contributions from Mark Moore's (1995) *Creating Public Value*, was a refreshing and thought-provoking contrast to the business content in the course.

A comfort between business and public administration faculty teaching styles seemed to arise, and the Institute for Public Service sought to expand its undergraduate role. The Business School had expanded contemporary focuses in globalization and international business topics and now included a "social change" requirement as a portion of its treatment of business ethics topics. The College of Arts and Sciences met this need at first, but eventually was not able to keep up with growing numbers of Business School undergraduates. In 2009, joint conversations between the BSBA leadership and the Institute for Public Service led to the development of a Social Change course more tailored and more focused toward their charges. Public administration faculty agreed to design the three-credit course and offer two sections of about 30 students apiece. The courses filled so quickly that they added a third section that first semester. Two years later, six public administration faculty teach 12 sections of Social Change annually, all at full capacity.

The full syllabus for the Social Change course and other materials are available from the authors. Briefly, the one-semester course covers the following topics:

- Social Change and Social Movements
- Three Sectors of Society: Government, Nonprofit, and Business Organizations
- Public Policy and Regulation
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Social Entrepreneurship
- The Dynamic Environment, including intersections and partnerships between sectors
- Issue Areas, which vary somewhat by class but have included civil rights, the environment, health care, and quality and equity in public education

With this course, undergraduate business students from a wide variety of majors are exposed to social problems in society and the way different sectors can

address these problems. Case studies, class discussions about current events, and video clips bring these concepts to life in similar methods used throughout the rest of the BSBA curriculum. The course uses a compendium of readings and cases, but if one text were to be considered central to the course, it would be Steiner and Steiner's (2009) *Business, Government, and Society: A Managerial Perspective*.

The Social Change course strengthens the BSBA degree and is well thought of by business faculty and administrators. The course has also been valuable for the Institute for Public Service as it has exposed students with other undergraduate majors to nonprofit and public organizations as well as to the department's minor in Public Service. It fits within the department's mission to include the introduction of public service to business students, and comments from course evaluations suggest the course leads some students to consider public service during their careers. The course enables the Institute for Public Service to fulfill its mission to foster a public service spirit with a much wider audience of students. In the face of reduced enrollment in the MPA program, this course has likely prevented cutbacks in public administration faculty while opening up other collaborative opportunities, including an undergraduate global health course that is an elective for global business students.

This amounts to a positive success story of business–public affairs collaboration, providing a good sense of the possible benefits of such networking. But we acknowledge that it may have been easier to accomplish this effort at Suffolk, where the business and public administration programs serve the same leaders, in the same school. All universities and colleges contrast in leadership styles, resources, and support; we would expect that it tends to be more difficult to establish networks between political science departments within a college of arts and sciences, and management departments in a business school. Public affairs schools with strong resources may not readily collaborate with prominent and resource-rich business schools. Still, some lessons from Suffolk's experience should apply across a wide range of possible collaborative environments.

A practical question is how to implement such cross-disciplinary teaching in the context of university politics. Business schools might see public service offerings as a threat to their expertise and turf. As our fields converge, more MBAs are working in public fields such as health and managing nonprofit organizations, and more MPAs are taking positions in business at some point in their careers. Often there is admissions competition between MBA and MPA programs for the same students. A business school may worry that its students will take related versions of its courses from the public administration department, while public administration faculty may teach business courses. This all comes with the risk of loss of department credit hours, potential reduction of university funding for the department, and accreditation concerns about faculty ratios (e.g., full-time vs. part-time; academically qualified vs. professionally qualified faculty), depending on

how course and faculty sharing are structured. This issue is of particular concern when departments are in different schools, but even when business and public administration departments are in one business or management school, departments may be concerned about the negative effects of working together.

There is no one answer or method to eliminate these concerns, but the benefits of collaboration across departments outweigh the risks and burdens, especially when one considers the future direction of both public affairs and business training. Such collaboration may result in programs that attract more potential students as well as assist departments in weathering times of increased or decreased enrollment. For example, offering a choice of degrees to potential students may increase the probability that a student will choose one university over another. A university that offers an MBA-Health, MPA-Health, and MHA (Master of Health Administration) appeals to a broader group of applicants than a university that offers only one of these degrees, so interdepartmental competition for students may be offset by increased enrollments overall.

Furthermore, department capacity and related student needs vary over time. Departments may not have the faculty to teach all of the different courses that they want to be available to their students; sharing faculty and/or courses can help solve this problem. A business school may not offer a human resources course, or a public administration department may not offer a marketing class; but together, they can do both. If there are discrepancies in enrollment growth across departments, collaboration can bridge periods of high need and save faculty from layoffs during periods of reduced need. Team teaching can improve course content and build on shared expertise and may lead to more collaboration in other areas including research. As accrediting bodies such as AACSB and NASPAA move toward similar standards in credentialing and Assurance of Learning, a school or department can benefit from another school or department's experience.

Drawing from the Suffolk University case, there are some practical steps universities can take to bring public affairs and business education together: (a) demonstrate a willingness to collaborate with and support other departments; (b) start with small efforts, such as interdisciplinary course modules, advice on course preparation and content, and guest lectures; (c) explore the needs of the university through other departments and advising offices; and (d) take a leading role in meeting those needs that relate to public service. These steps and their related activities can increase public service exposure in undergraduate programs as well as nurture relationships with other departments to help mitigate any existing turf issues. These steps are not in a particular order. Rather, we see them as mutually supportive and very possibly cyclical. As departments demonstrate more willingness to collaborate, the needs of other departments may become more visible. Conversely, if collaboration is not yet occurring, exploring the needs of the university and other departments might be a valuable way to open the door to collaboration.

Public administration departments can demonstrate a willingness to collaborate with and support other departments. This can take a number of forms, including the following:

- *Teaching courses in other departments.* As explained earlier, in the Suffolk University case, public administration faculty members have shared in the multidepartment responsibility of teaching introductory freshman management courses, which demonstrates a willingness to collaborate and ensures the inclusion of public administration content within the courses. The department has also “loaned” faculty members out to other departments during times of need. For example, due to a freshman year bubble a few years ago, some undergraduate programs are now struggling to meet junior and senior needs for some of the upper-level core courses, particularly in light of the business school accreditation standards for ratios of academic and professionally qualified faculty. To help bridge this temporary gap between student need and department capacity, a public administration faculty member has agreed to teach two undergraduate organizational behavior classes for the Management Department.
- *Offering credits for courses from other departments.* Suffolk University allows students to take a limited number of courses in other departments to apply to their graduate degrees. Generally, this takes the form of elective course credit hours, where an MPA student can take two MBA courses as electives, or vice versa.
- *Offering joint degrees or offering courses needed for other degree programs.* Often, there are opportunities to share faculty expertise across departments for particular components of a curriculum. For example, the Institute for Public Service at Suffolk teaches health and nonprofit courses for the MBA-Health and MBA-Nonprofit degrees.
- *Inviting guests from other departments.* Another idea for strengthening linkages is to invite faculty from other departments as guest lecturers or students from different departments to attend an “open” class that may be of interest to them.

These suggestions may be more or less applicable across universities, so the exploration of university needs is a critical component. Opening communication channels with the faculty and administration of other departments or schools is one path to uncover need. Advising offices are also a valuable source, since they have a bird’s-eye view of student needs and curriculum challenges. The last step, taking a leading role in meeting needs, is also essential. Taking on this leadership role to encourage partnerships, teach across disciplines, and develop new coursework involves the investment of faculty and administrative time, but the benefits are well worth the effort.

CONCLUSION

It is the responsibility of public affairs educators to reach our discipline's goal of encouraging and preparing students to serve the public interest. Offering courses beyond our own department enrollments will broaden our impact substantially. Even though not all students will become interested in public service careers, many of them will incorporate public interest concerns in their day-to-day lives or through corporate social responsibility programs during their careers. Many of this generation's college students show a postmaterialist focus; they care less about making money and want to make a more meaningful contribution to the world when they graduate. Public affairs programs can help them identify social problems and the means to help tackle them from any sector, thus encouraging public service on a much broader level.

The practice of teaching public service topics to undergraduate business majors holds many common roots. Taylor, Weber, Maslow, McGregor, Deming, Schein, and others are commonly treated across all students of organizational theory; finance and accounting, as delivered to business students, invariably includes at least a nod to public budgeting and accounting. The core competencies of leadership are common across sectors and across developed nations. For example, Beinecke (2009) examines public service and business leadership across developed countries, finding common models and core competencies of personal skills and knowledge, interpersonal skills, transactional skills, transformational skills, and policy and program knowledge.

Suffolk's Social Change course treats little of the advanced theory common across the MBA and MPA curriculum, instead introducing the business undergraduate to the public and nonprofit sectors as well as the meshing of sociological, cultural, and ethical aspects of business functioning in recent decades. Trends are united within practical case studies. It is of course not the only way to bring public affairs concepts to the business undergraduate. Another growing approach to expand the horizons across the undergraduate campus and experience is the service-learning course or exercise. This is a broader tactic, discussed effectively elsewhere in the education literature. Direct exposure for younger students to community and societal problems frequently instills a greater desire to respond to these problems—through organizations located across the three sectors; through development of social entrepreneurship solutions; and in many business students through an enhanced desire to work in and develop corporate social responsibility and sustainability programs. Among the interesting challenges of service-learning programs is the question of whether they should be voluntary or required; the latter provides a broader swath of exposure to civic values and challenges, but coerced volunteerism can breed skepticism just as readily as it can create greater community commitment.

What kind of a curriculum may continue the interest in developing public interest in business students? More in-depth courses in specific policy areas are

one response, such as Suffolk's Global Public Health course. The possibilities are broad and should build from faculty expertise and willingness. Ethics and entrepreneurship are both interesting "bridging" topics, where a number of similarities and distinctions could come from an analysis of public and private sector concepts. The Social Change course incorporates both of these topics to some extent, within the discussions of corporate social responsibility and social entrepreneurship, respectively; but these topics could easily stand alone as separate courses infused with the nuances across sectors.

Throughout this paper, we have demonstrated the extensive mutual benefit that may come from partnerships between public affairs departments and business schools to infuse the undergraduate business curriculum with public affairs coursework. Doing so meets a growing need for business students but also provides valuable opportunities for public affairs as both an academic and a professional field to address some of the anticipated challenges of the years to come. We gain a wider audience to pursue our mission of encouraging public service, help our profession meet the needs of a future workforce, open research and teaching opportunities, and work toward improving our reputation as a scholarly field. In sum, our answer is emphatically yes in response to Dart's (2008, p. 731) question: "Should we reshape and expand the metaphoric bubble of the business student to include important dynamics of our world inside it?" Public affairs educators should press beyond the boundaries of their department, programs, and schools to help answer this call.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Although Shareef's work was published in 2010, his conclusions were drawn from citations from the early 1990s.
- 2 For a more complete list, see the AACSB Ethics/Sustainability Resource Center at www.aacsb.edu/resources/ethics-sustainability/.

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