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An Examination of the Worth of a Civic Engagement Program at

Contra Costa College, San Pablo, California

Submitted by

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Abstract

Based on the findings from the literature review of this study, there is a belief among some public administrators that members of the general public are ill prepared and unknowledgeable when it comes to participation in the public policy process. This paper looks to examine the potential benefits that a civic engagement program at Contra Costa College (CCC) may have in improving and facilitating public participation from both the side of the public administrator and the side of the public. A literature review will examine the lack of attention that public administration education programs give to the subject of public participation and various aspects and findings about civic engagement in individuals. As a counterpoint, the relative worth of public participation will be examined to question whether such a focus on public participation in educational programs is worthwhile. Survey data was collected from CCC students and members of the public gauging their overall knowledge of public policy and their opinions on the worth of civic engagement and public participation. Interviews were conducted with public officials and administrators of already existing civic engagement or similar programs to gauge their thoughts concerning public participation. Analysis of the data will attempt to connect the insights and impressions of students and administrators with the findings of relevant literature to gauge the overall worth of a civic engagement program at Contra Costa College. The importance of this study lies in the contributions that public participation can bring to the development and implementation of public policy. Citizens can bring local insights to the design and direction of public policy so it seems prudent to try to study avenues to increase and improve public participation. A civic engagement program at CCC is one such avenue to research. The researcher behind this study is Louis Tamillow, a graduate student of Golden Gate University pursuing a Master's Degree in Public Administration. He previously attended the University of

California Berkeley where he received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Economics. He currently works as a substitute teacher for CCC, the locale of this study.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Within the field of public administration, public participation has increasingly become a focal point of examination. As such, the merits and demerits of public participation has been extensively examined and discussed. Regarding the demerits of public participation, some may question the general public's knowledge, capability, interest and/or commitment to participating in and effectively contributing to the public policy process. On the other hand, the purported benefits of public participation in the public policy process is that it promotes a sense of democracy and support within the public over public policy that they had a hand in creating and provide public policy makers knowledge of local problems. Additionally, through public participation, policy makers and public administrators gain insight into the problems that the public deems important; overall, this better allows government to accomplish its purpose of serving the public. Thus, the thrust of this research is to examine whether it is effectively possible to increase and improve the quality of public participation through the implementation of a civic engagement program at Contra Costa College (CCC). Through an examination of the effectiveness of a civic engagement program at CCC, one can look at a potential way to resolve the problem of a lack of citizen knowledge, capability, interest, and/or commitment to contributing to public policy and can potentially improve the design and implementation of public policy.

Research Problem and Research Question

The subject of public participation in government has long been examined by public administration scholars. Noted benefits of public participation have been “to assure that public

managers and employees act in a way consistent with the desires of the public” and to garner public support for various public policies as individuals are less likely to oppose something they had a hand in creating (Denhardt and Denhardt 2009, p. 138). Furthermore, “high quality” public participation has been found to increase the public’s feelings of trust and satisfaction with government, belief that government is responsive to the public’s concerns, and increased tolerance for differences in opinion (Halvorsen 2003, p. 539).

However, public participation has also been noted as a source of tension and inefficiency amongst some public administrators as they largely view public participation as public hearings and legal arbitration (potential sources for conflict) and some see the public as being largely ignorant of public policy and unmotivated to effectively contribute to the public policy process (Denhardt and Denhardt 2009, p. 410). Additionally, while the focus on public participation has risen over the years, rather than truly attempt to capture the aforementioned benefits of public participation it is being used in a token fashion to “coopt” citizens into the public policy process in order to quell feelings of protest that the public may have in not being included while at the same time not actually giving them any real power to influence public policy (Denhardt and Denhardt 2009, p. 138). Furthermore, the deeper that the public gets involved into the public policy process (i.e. the planning, design, and implementation phases), the more difficult public participation becomes as it “requires not only the correct tools to facilitate the process, but also a rethinking of the underlying roles of, and relationships between administrators and citizens,” which speaks to public participation changing the dynamics of representative democracy as discussed later in this paper (Blair 2004, p. 106). This frames the research problem of there being a disconnect between public officials and members of the public in public participation where public officials believe the public to be largely ignorant of public policy and unmotivated to

participate and contribute to public policy, which lends itself to some public officials' belief that public participation can be a source of tension and costly inefficiency and unenthusiastic attempts at public participation. Evidence, data, and personal observations gathered through survey, interview, and secondary data in this research suggest this research problem to be true in California. As such, the question this research looks to answer is whether a civic engagement program at CCC can help resolve some of the problems associated with public participation and facilitate the fruition of its associated benefits.

Purpose of the Study

Thus, the thrust of this research is to look into whether a civic engagement program at CCC can help improve and increase public participation among students in order to better capture the benefits of public policy and resolve some of the problems associated with the process. If some public administrators believe the public to be largely ignorant of public policy and unmotivated to participate, then education may be an important avenue to explore to educate and inform students of public policy and its importance to their everyday lives. Hence, looking into the question of whether a civic engagement program at CCC can produce more politically engaged and public policy knowledgeable citizens is important as a possible avenue to produce better public policy by improving public participation.

Background and History As this research seeks to remedy the quality of public participation in government, a formal definition of public participation helps to frame the problem. Public participation is “[t]he direct involvement of citizens in the processes of policy formation, program implementation, and administrative decision making” (Chandler and Plano 1986, p. 160). With this definition in mind, Denhardt and Denhardt frame the problem as public

participation being mainly “input and output” oriented in that the public mostly participates in government through satisfaction surveys that seek to measure efficiency and performance, but have limited impact on the actual design of policy (Denhardt and Denhardt 2009, p. 221).

Furthermore, Denhardt and Denhardt frame public participation as a source of tension for some public administrators as they may view public participation as mainly public hearings or legal arbitration (Denhardt and Denhardt 2009, p. 410). Such activities can be time-consuming and potentially confrontational or adversarial. Thus, some public administrators may see public participation as a hindrance to efficient public administration. As such, an examination of a civic engagement program at CCC as a potential means to improve public participation in the public policy process may lead to a means to resolve public participation as a source of tension and inefficiency and instead make it an effective contributor to the design of public policy.

In framing public participation as it applies to and influences democracy, public participation can either be seen as a contradiction to or as an augmentation of democracy depending on one’s point of view. As public participation pertains to the direct involvement of citizens in government and the direction and perhaps the design of public policy, it can be seen as a contradiction to the principles of representative democracy where elected officials represent a group of people (Hornbein and King 2012, p.717-718). The direct involvement of citizens in public policy decisions and design is an augmentation of direct democracy instead. The United States government was built upon the principles of representative democracy. As such, public participation can be seen as a breakdown of some of the democratic principles that the United States was built upon.

However, if one were to look at some of the early thoughts of democracy in America expressed by Alexis de Tocqueville, some of the early thoughts that pushed an American desire

for democracy were expressed through the idea of the sovereignty of the people or the idea of citizens' power to influence and control the direction of government. As de Tocqueville expresses, this is opposed to the notion of the "will of the nation" which despotic rulers utilized to make others submit to their "right of command" (de Tocqueville 1835, p. 43). These two opposing ideas led to an American colonial desire to have increased control over their government to oppose oppressive, despotic rule, which represents a desire for the principles of direct democracy. Furthermore, this idea of the sovereignty of the people is supported by the work of Follet (1918) as discussed by Morse (2006) where Follet saw public participation as an important part of democracy, with democracy being in Follet's words "the will of the whole," both citizens and administrators, as the very definition of public participation as the direct involvement of citizens in governmental decisions intrinsically speaks to democratic values (Morse 2006, p. 9). As such, this increased attention to public participation in government can be seen as another push by American citizens to strengthen the principles of direct democracy in America through increased citizen influence over public policy issues. As such, public participation in part represents a push and pull between the principles of representative and direct democracy.

Overall, the influence of public participation on democracy in America should be framed in terms of costs and benefits whereas there should be a balance in the extent or limits of public participation (i.e. how much should citizens be involved in the design of public policy and so forth), which ultimately influences some of the balance between adherence to the principles of representative and direct democracy. However, the promotion of representative and direct democracy does not have to be mutually exclusive. Public participation can improve representative democracy as increased and improved communication between citizens and

elected officials improves public officials' understanding of the will and concerns of the people and implement policy that better represents and addresses the will and concerns of the people. As such, the importance of this research to examine whether a civic engagement program at CCC can produce more politically engaged, public policy knowledgeable citizens is illuminated as improvements in public participation can also potentially produce improvements to democracy in America.

As for the scope of the research, CCC seemed like a proper educational institution to examine the effectiveness of a civic engagement program as CCC does not have a dedicated program or major for public policy. The closest related program to public policy was public service education that only offered four courses: Occupational Work Experience, Topics in Public Service Education, Lifeguard Training, and Independent Study. This serves as the frame for the research's instrument for data collection and analysis in comparing CCC students to students in already existing civic engagement or similar programs, which will be discussed more in depth later in the paper. Additionally, due to Middle College High School (MCHS) existing on the CCC campus another aspect of this study will examine the potential affect that a civic engagement program would have on high school students. Overall, based on the above criterion, the scope of this research will be CCC and MCHS and the students enrolled within these institutions.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

In conducting the literature review for this research proposal, relevant literature concerning the issue of teaching public participation topics in educational institutions and various aspects and findings of civic engagement in individuals was examined. First, in Robert

Hornbein and Cheryl Simrell King's article "Should We Be Teaching Public Participation? Student Responses and MPA Program Responses" the authors took an online survey of public administration graduate students from 23 MPA programs across the United States to gather responses on public participation (Hornbein and King 2012, p. 721). Hornbein and King begin the article over the confused state over the value of public participation. The authors note that while public participation has grown over the last 50 years, its value is still disputed. Critics of public participation question whether citizens have the skills, knowledge, motivation, and selflessness to effectively contribute to public policy and benefit the public at large. Furthermore, they cite a lack of resources to engage citizens, that public participation reduces efficiency, and that public participation contradicts representative democracy (Hornbein and King 2012, p.717-718). On the other hand, the authors note that proponents of public participation see it as essential to democracy. In their view "[p]ublic participation helps restore citizen trust in government, is essential to designing policies and programs, increases public acceptance, and builds social capital that strengthens communities" (Hornbein and King 2012, p. 718). This confused state over the worth of public participation is also reflected in the work of Rushefsky (2008) where he states that "[s]ome have argued that our political leaders are too tied to public opinion, that we have too much democracy, and our leaders do not exercise their own judgment sufficiently." On the other hand, Rushefsky also states that "there is some evidence to suggest that the public does not believe it has very much influence over government officials," a statement that lends itself to supporting the problems of public participation tokenism (Rushefsky 2008, p. 31). Ultimately, Hornbein and King note the assumed importance of public participation, but ask the question "are students of public administration being educated to

effectively engage and work with citizens,” which puts the current relative worth of public participation into question.

Hornbein and King cite the studies of Cooper and Gulick (1984) and Schachter and Aliaga (2003) to show that over time education in public administration has overall not offered education in public participation. Cooper and Gulick (1984) concluded that public administration programs focused on technical expertise instead of democratic citizenship. Almost twenty years later, Schachter and Aliaga (2003) examined the course syllabi of 68 NASPAA-accredited MPA programs and found that 43 of the 68 programs did not offer courses in public participation (Hornbein and King 2012, p. 720-721). Moving on to their survey, Hornbein and King saw that while a majority of respondents answered that they felt public participation was important (94%) and that it was an important part of their program (59%), their answers to open-ended questions expressed a different theme. In their answers to the open-ended questions, respondents expressed concerns over the lack of “civic capacity,” that is citizen knowledge and ability to contribute to public policy (Hornbein and King 2012, p. 726). Some respondents cited common arguments such as citizen apathy and a lack in skills and knowledge as to why citizens were not capable for effective public participation (Hornbein and King 2012, p. 725). Others cited a lack in education over how administrators can engage with the citizenry and educate the citizenry to be prepared for direct public participation (Hornbein and King 2012, p. 726). As further evidence pointing to a lack of education concerning public participation, in a search through 164 MPA/MPP program course catalogs only 12 out of 164 programs offered courses that focused on public participation (Hornbein and King 2012, p. 728). Overall, Hornbein and King assert that there is a lack in public administration student preparation to facilitate public participation and stands as the basis for identifying and framing the problem this research examines.

Second, Wang (2001) investigated in what ways government was engaging citizens and in what areas. The methodology used by Wang was the distribution of a national survey to all chief administrative officers of cities with populations greater than 50,000 asking them about their public participation practices. Several interviews were also conducted with chief administrative officers asking them about their public participation practices and specific examples and instances of their practices (Wang 2001, p. 324-325). Wang found that public hearings, citizen advisory boards, and community meetings were widely utilized. Much fewer governments used citizen surveys, focus groups, hotlines, and individual citizen representatives. Citizens rarely participated in central management functions such as hiring and budgeting and policy decision-making, but participated relatively frequently in discussions over public services, understandably so, as the public is the consumers of such services and pay for them (Wang 2001, p. 329-330). Overall, Wang's research alongside Hornbein and King's findings helps frame the research problem in that there are areas where public participation is lacking and can possibly be utilized to help inform decisions.

Third, Prieger and Faltis (2013) found that California lags behind other states in non-electoral civic engagement and examine reasons as to why. Their operational definition of non-electoral civic engagement was measured across five variables: discussing politics with family and friends, involvement in non-electoral political activities, group participation, group leadership, and helping a neighbor with a favor (Prieger and Faltis 2013, p. 2). Of particular interest to this research proposal is the discussion of politics and involvement in political activities as those are most associated with public participation in public policy. Prieger and Faltis identify that Caucasians are more likely to participate in civic engagement and that the reason California lags behind in civic engagement is due to California's demographic makeup

containing more African Americans, Asians, Hispanics, naturalized citizens, and noncitizens (Prieger and Faltis 2013, p. 3).

They conclude that this is due to socio-economic reasons and confirm this through a regression analysis (Prieger and Faltis 2013, p. 13). The authors connect and attempt to explain this reasoning and findings to the major models used to explain civic engagement behavior (such as meeting with a public official) which are the rational actor model (individuals weigh the costs versus the benefits of civic engagement activities), socio-economic status model (wealthier individuals will participate more in civic engagement as they have the time and resources available more easily do so), and the civic voluntarism model (which is a combination of the previous two models) (Prieger and Faltis 2013, p. 4-5). These findings are relevant to this research proposal as the research will be conducted in San Pablo, California where this problem of socio-economically struggling minority groups exists and illuminates the thrust of this research in potentially identifying education as a factor that affects civic engagement in conjunction with the major three models introduced above.

Third, King, Felty and Susel (1998) examined various methodologies to improve public participation. Blair's insights that in-depth public participation requires a rethinking of the "underlying roles of and relationships between administrators and citizens" is based off of King, Felty, and Susel's findings (King, Felty, and Susel 1998, p. 317). The author's findings are based around interviews with experts in the field of public participation and focus groups with citizens to determine "best practices" in public participation. As King, Felty, and Susel found, public participation processes are based around four components: (1) the issues, (2) the administrative structures or systems in which participation takes place, (3) the administrators, and (4) the citizens (King, Felty, and Susel 1998, p. 319-320). As King, Felty, and Susel find citizens are

usually the farthest away from the public policy issue component of public participation. The administrator controls the administrative structures or systems in which citizens can influence or affect the issues. As such, the amount of influence that citizens have on public policy decisions depends on how much administrators allow citizens to affect public policy (King, Felty, and Susel 1998, p. 320). These processes lead to token public participation where administrators do not allow citizens any real influence on public policy issues due to restrictive administrative structures. To expound on this model, the reasons for a restrictive administrative public participation system may be due to administrator beliefs that citizens do not have the skills, civic capacity, and motivation to contribute effectively to public policy as suggested by the findings of Hornbein and King. For “authentic” public participation to take place in King, Felty, and Susel’s view, public participation needs to be “reframed” for both citizens and administrators to be involved with public policy issues where citizens have an active dialog with administrators and “those that are affected by the change are comfortable with the decision made” (King, Felty, and Susel 1998, p. 320).

Last, Nicoll, Richard-Schuster, and Ruffolo (2013) examine the University of Michigan’s Community Action and Social Change (CASC) minor that has the purpose of preparing undergraduate students to participate in civic engagement activities. From their examination, they develop a model for undergraduate civic engagement. First, they found that students and alumni that took courses in the CASC minor were more likely to participate in civic engagement activities later in life based on focus groups with University of Michigan students and interviews with alumni (Nicoll, Richard-Schuster, and Ruffolo 2013, p. 8). These findings were supported by other studies examining the effect of service learning courses and the affect they had on influencing students’ civic engagement activities and behaviors (Nicoll, Richard-Schuster, and

Ruffolo 2013, p. 4). The CASC education model is based on a core course on community change and social action, electives based around context, diversity learning, and action service learning, and a capstone course where students put together a portfolio integrating their learning across the courses they took in the program. The findings and model developed by Nicoll, Richard-Schuster, Ruffolo, and the University of Michigan are potentially useful for this research in regards to ideas and aspects of a possible model to incorporate into a civic engagement program at CCC if such a program can be linked to effectively improving public participation engagement among CCC and MCHS students. It also serves as a secondary data source to compare the primary survey and interview data collected in this research project. Lastly, this and other relevant literature discussed here raises the question of whether such civic engagement education models designed for higher education can work for high school students (i.e. the MCHS students to be studied in this research).

Chapter 3 - Research Methodology

This is a qualitative case study research design which includes an examination of the Nicoll, Richard-Schuster, and Ruffolo's study of the University of Michigan's Community Action and Social Change (CASC) minor and primary data collected in this research project. Primary data in this research will consist of survey and interview data collected from CCC students and other members of the public. These two data sets will be compared and conclusions will be drawn from a cross-analysis of the data, essentially testing the external validity of some aspects of the University of Michigan's CASC minor to the student population at CCC. If the data analysis supports the hypothesis of this research, then applicable program design from the CASC minor may be applied to the CCC civic engagement program.

The author of this research project hypothesizes that if Contra Costa College (CCC) offered a civic engagement program to eligible CCC and Middle College High School (MCHS) students, then it would produce more politically engaged and public policy knowledgeable citizens. The independent variable of this research proposal is a civic engagement program. The dependent variables are the amount of civic engagement that CCC and MCHS students participate in and the amount of knowledge that CCC and MCHS students have of public policy and the public policy process. The relationship between the two variables hinges on comparison and analysis between primary datasets from survey and interview data and between secondary data obtained from the Nicoll, Richard-Schuster, and Ruffolo study.

In regards to operational definitions, this research requires definitions for the civic engagement program, what an “eligible student” is, what more “civically engaged” means, and what more “public policy knowledgeable” means. For the definition of the civic engagement program, it would be a 16-20 unit program of study (which is in line with other social sciences majors at CCC) that would result in a student being awarded an Associates of Arts degree in public policy. These 16-20 units would be based around the subject of public policy and the learning outcomes of being able to facilitate public participation through enhanced communication skills, cultural awareness, service learning, and knowledge of the public policy process. An eligible student would be any CCC student enrolled at CCC and MCHS students who have taken American Government and Civics, which would exclude ninth graders as MCHS students do not take American Government and Civics until the tenth grade. More civically engaged would mean student reported increases in civic engagement activities such as visiting/communicating with public officials, attending public hearings, volunteer service work, and so forth. More public policy knowledgeable means that students have a working body of

knowledge about the public policy process as displayed by test scores and grades about public policy topics increasing by a full letter grade.

Regarding data collection, data will be collected from a representative sample of CCC students and from the general public. A random sample of CCC students was surveyed in-person at various locations on the CCC campus, such as their lunch area and in front of their parking lot, where every third person was asked to take a survey. However, on days where there were not many students, the method of asking every third person was replaced with asking every person seen in order to increase the amount of responses. Student respondents were asked to show a current CCC student ID in order to ensure they were actually a student at CCC. CCC professors were also asked to distribute the survey to their classes. A random sample of other members of the general public were also surveyed in-person from various locales and working environments across the Bay Area using the same methodology of asking every third person when feasible as the student survey. An assistant was also asked to administer the survey at their workplace, the workplace being the Social Security Administration building located in Richmond, CA. Due to the limited amount of time allotted to complete this research project, it was only feasible to survey a couple hundred individuals (122 students and 95 individuals from the general public. As such, the representativeness and accuracy of this survey is compromised, but that was an unavoidable consequence due to time constraints.

With the literature review, hypothesis, and variables in mind, questions that were included in the survey is “how often do you discuss politics with family, friends, and other individuals,” “how many times have you participated in political activities such as visiting/communicating with public officials, attended public hearings and so forth,” and various

questions gauging each individual's knowledge of public policy and the public policy process. As such, the survey contains mostly closed ended questions in a Likert scale.

In collecting the interview data, administrators of the California Center for Civic Participation, an organization whose purpose is to introduce young people to civic engagement and participation, were contacted for a structured interview. The Executive Director of the California Center for Civic Participation James Muldavin got back to me for an interview. City managers and other public officials of the cities of San Pablo and Richmond were also contacted for interviews. Contacted public officials include the City Manager of Richmond Bill Lindsey, the City Manager of San Pablo Matt Rodriguez, the Assistant City Manager of San Pablo Kelsey Worthy, and former Vice Mayor of San Pablo Leonard McNeil. Kelsey Worthy was the only public official that got back to me for an interview. Questions such as "how important or constructive do you think public participation is to the public policy process" and "how knowledgeable is the average American citizen on the public policy process" were included in the interview to gauge interviewees' opinions on public participation and the public policy knowledge of citizens and to inform the design of a potential civic engagement program at CCC. The data collected from these interviews were compared to survey responses from CCC students and secondary data collected in the Nicoll, Richard-Schuster, Ruffolo study.

With the above operational definitions and data collection instruments in mind, the method of analyzing the data collected and secondary data included a meta-analysis where secondary data collected from the Nicoll, Richards-Schuster, Ruffolo study was compared to primary survey and interview data identify the potential external validity of a civic engagement program working at CCC. Confirmation of the research's hypothesis hinges on whether there is a noticeable difference between survey and interview data collected from CCC students, other

members of the general public, public officials, and administrators and data collected from students of other civic engagement programs in regard to participation in civic engagement activities and knowledge of public policy and the public policy process. If CCC students and other members of the general public participate noticeably less in civic engagement activities and are noticeably less knowledgeable of public policy and the public policy process than students already in civic engagement programs, then the presence of the independent variable of a civic engagement program may be identified as having direct covariation with increases in the dependent variables of public participation and public policy knowledge.

In addressing internal validity, it may be difficult to ensure the internal validity of the research as the analysis uses secondary data from other case studies, which may not have had internal validity when collected. If the data from existing civic engagement programs did not have internal validity of their program being the primary cause for changes in student civic engagement behaviors or changes in public policy knowledge (i.e. some other variable could have affected the dependent variables), then internal validity for this research may be compromised. As such, various control variables were identified and controlled for (such as individuals already being highly civically engaged and having previous knowledge of public policy through self-study, which can be identified through pretests) to ensure internal validity. External validity is potentially ensured through confirmation and acceptance of the research's hypothesis as that shows that other civic engagement programs and their effects on civic engagement and public policy knowledge are externally valid at CCC, which could mean that similar civic engagement programs with similar populations of students could work at other educational settings.

Chapter 4 - Results and Findings

Survey Data

This research hypothesizes that if CCC offered a civic engagement program to eligible CCC and MCHS students, then it would produce more politically engaged and public policy knowledgeable citizens. To investigate this hypothesis this research sought to find if there is a correlation between the independent variable of a civic engagement program and the dependent variables the amount of civic engagement that CCC and MCHS students participate in and the amount of knowledge that CCC and MCHS students have of public policy and the public policy process. To measure any covariation between the independent and dependent variables, survey data was collected from CCC students and other members of the general public and interview data was collected from Assistant City Manager of the City of San Pablo Kelsey Worthy and Executive Director of the California Center for Civic Participation (CCCP) James Muldavin. Furthermore, secondary data was obtained from the Nicoll, Richard-Schuster, and Ruffolo study of the University of Michigan's CASC minor and this data was compared to the primary data of this study. Ultimately, the findings of this research generally support the hypothesis of this research, but the suggested "best practices" for the shape and design of a civic engagement program at CCC was not expected by the author of this paper.

First, a survey consisting of 13 questions designed to measure an individual's political engagement, knowledge of public policy issues and the public policy process, and their opinion concerning the value of a civic engagement program was distributed to CCC students and other members of the general public (See Appendix A). The survey resulted in 122 responses from CCC students and 95 responses from the general public. In the student survey, the majority of

responses came from a younger generation (98 from the 18-24 age group, 14 from the 25-34 group, 6 from the 35-44 group, 3 from the 45-54 group, and 1 from the 55-64 group) and the majority of respondents were male (47 female and 75 male) (See Table A).

Table A

Age	Female	Male	Total
18-24	36	62	98
25-34	5	9	14
35-44	4	2	6
45-54	2	1	3
55-64	0	1	1
65+	0	0	0

The skewed response toward the younger generation was expected as student populations generally skew younger, but the skew toward more male respondents was not foreseen. This skew toward more males was simply how the data collection played out as some days of data collection were slow (very few students around to survey) so the methodology of surveying every third person was abandoned for attempting to survey every person seen in order to increase responses. This may have resulted in the skew toward more males as more males just happened to pass by. It was determined that less bias would be introduced into the research to let these results stand rather than attempt to “balance” them out by targeting more female students.

The responses from the general public was more balanced in regards to age (20 responses from the 25-34 age group, 22 from the 35-44 group, 22 from the 45-54 group, 22 from the 55-64 group, and 9 from the 65 or older group) and sex (56 female and 39 male) (Table B). There were a total of 9 non-responses to 9 questions in the general public survey. On one particular collected survey, an entire page of questions was not answered which may imply that at least some of the non-responses may have resulted from carelessness as respondents missed questions perhaps from going through the survey too quickly or some other distraction.

Table B

Age	Female	Male	Total
18-24	0	0	0
25-34	11	9	20
35-44	14	8	22
45-54	16	6	22
55-64	12	10	22
65+	3	6	9

The survey asked respondents various questions (refer to Appedix A for a full list of questions) to determine their political engagement, knowledge of public policy issues and the public policy process, and their opinion about the value of a civic engagement program at CCC.

Generally, the political engagement of both the student and general public sample groups seems to be very low. A majority of respondents said that they do not attend public city council or board of supervisor meetings, those that do attend such meetings at least once a month do not express their opinions and concerns about public policy issues at such meetings, and a majority have either never or done so within the past five years contacted a public official to discuss public policy issues.

Table C.1 Student Attendance at City Council Meetings

How many times do you attend city council or board of supervisor meetings each month (in-person or watch on TV/electronic device)?

- a. 0
- b. 1-2
- c. 3-4
- d. More than 5

Age	18-24		25-34		35-44		45-54		55-64		65+		Total
Gender	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F M Tot
A	20	40	4	4	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	26 45 71
B	13	18	0	3	3	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	16 24 40
C	2	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3 4 7
D	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2 2 4

Table C.2 General Public Attendance at City Council Meetings

[illegible]

Table D.1 Number of Times Students Expressed Opinion at City Council Meetings

How often do you express your opinions during the public council meetings you attend? This can be through phone calls or online messages depending on the medium used to attend the meeting.

- 0
- 1-2
- 3-4
- More than 5

[illegible]

Table D.2 Number of Times General Public Expressed Opinion at City Council Meetings

Age	18-24		25-34		35-44		45-54		55-64		65+		Total
Gender	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F M Tot
A	0	0	11	9	14	7	14	5	10	9	1	5	50 35 85
B	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	6 4 10
C	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 0 0
D	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 0 0

Table E.1 Student Contact with Public Officials

The last time you contacted a public official to discuss public policy was within the:

- a. Current month
- b. Last month
- c. Last year
- d. Past five years
- e. Never

Age	18-24		25-34		35-44		45-54		55-64		65+		Total
Gender	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F M Tot
A	3	7	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3 10 13
B	8	11	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	9 13 22
C	9	8	3	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	14 10 24
D	0	7	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 9 9
E	16	29	2	3	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	21 33 54

Table E.2 General Public Contact with Public Officials

Age	18-24		25-34		35-44		45-54		55-64		65+		Total		
Gender	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	Tot
A	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	1	3
B	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	2
C	0	0	1	0	2	0	3	0	1	2	1	1	8	3	11
D	0	0	3	2	2	2	4	3	2	4	1	1	12	12	24
E	0	0	7	6	10	6	8	3	7	3	1	4	33	22	55

The above findings are contrasted with a majority of respondents saying that they discuss politics and public policy issues with friends, family, and other individuals at least once or twice a week or more.

Table F.1 Student Rate of Political and Public Policy Discussion

How often do you discuss politics and public policy with family, friends, or other individuals?

- Every day
- Several times per week
- Once or twice per week
- Less than once per week
- Less than once per month

[illegible]

Table F.2 General Public Rate of Political and Public Policy Discussion

Age	18-24		25-34		35-44		45-54		55-64		65+		Total
Gender	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F M Tot
A	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	3	0	1	2 4 6
B	0	0	3	0	1	0	2	3	4	4	2	0	12 7 19
C	0	0	3	5	3	3	8	0	4	1	1	2	19 11 30
D	0	0	1	2	6	3	2	2	0	2	0	2	9 11 20
E	0	0	4	2	3	2	3	1	3	0	0	1	13 6 19
									1 n/a				

Additionally, most respondents felt that public officials took public opinions expressed at city council meetings seriously or somewhat seriously and that city council meetings and discussing public policy issues personally with public officials were constructive or somewhat constructive to improving public policy.

Table G.1 Student Opinion on How Seriously Public Officials Consider Public Opinions

I believe most elected public officials consider public opinions expressed at such meetings:

- Seriously
- Somewhat seriously
- Not seriously
- Neither seriously or not seriously

Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Total
Gender	F M	F M	F M	F M	F M	F M	F M Tot
A	10 25	0 1	0 0	2 0	0 1	0 0	12 27 39
B	18 22	4 5	3 2	0 1	0 0	0 0	25 30 55
C	5 11	1 3	1 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	7 14 21
D	3 4	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	3 4 7

Table G.2 General Public Opinion on How Seriously Public Officials Consider Public Opinions

Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Total
Gender	F M	F M	F M	F M	F M	F M	F M Tot
A	0 0	0 0	2 0	2 0	0 2	2 2	6 4 10
B	0 0	7 5	10 5	9 3	7 5	1 4	34 22 56
C	0 0	2 2	1 2	4 2	2 1	0 0	9 7 16
D	0 0	2 2	1 1	1 1	2 2	0 0	6 6 12
					1 n/a		

Table H.1 Student Opinion on the Constructiveness of City Council Meetings

Public council meetings are _____ to improving public policy.

- Very constructive
- Constructive
- Somewhat constructive
- Not very constructive
- Not at all constructive

Age	18-24		25-34		35-44		45-54		55-64		65+		Total
Gender	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F M Tot
A	3	11	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	6 14 20
B	16	26	0	5	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	17 32 49
C	16	15	3	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	22 17 39
D	1	8	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1 9 10
E	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1 3 4

Table H.2 General Public Opinion on the Constructiveness of City Council Meetings

Age	18-24		25-34		35-44		45-54		55-64		65+		Total
Gender	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F M Tot
A	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	2	2	2	1	7 3 10
B	0	0	1	3	2	1	4	2	1	3	1	2	9 11 20
C	0	0	9	3	8	5	9	2	7	4	0	1	33 15 48
D	0	0	1	3	0	2	3	1	1	1	0	1	5 8 13
E	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1 3 4
							1 n/a		1 n/a		1 n/a		

Table I.1 Student Opinion on the Constructiveness of Meeting with Public Officials

- 1) Meeting with public officials to discuss public policy is _____, for improving public policy.
- Very constructive
 - Constructive
 - Somewhat constructive
 - Not very constructive
 - Not at all constructive
 - Not applicable

Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Total
Gender	F M	F M	F M	F M	F M	F M	F M Tot
A	7 14	3 0	0 0	1 0	0 0	0 0	11 14 25
B	14 22	1 4	3 2	0 1	0 1	0 0	18 30 48
C	10 9	1 2	1 0	1 0	0 0	0 0	3 10 13
D	3 9	0 1	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	3 10 13
E	1 1	0 1	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	1 2 3
F	1 7	0 1	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	1 8 9

Table I.2 General Public Opinion on the Constructiveness of Meeting with Public Officials

Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Total
Gender	F M	F M	F M	F M	F M	F M	F M Tot
A	0 0	1 1	1 0	3 1	2 1	2 0	9 3 12
B	0 0	0 2	5 1	5 1	2 4	1 1	13 9 22
C	0 0	6 2	6 2	3 2	5 3	0 4	20 13 33
D	0 0	1 2	1 3	1 0	1 1	0 0	4 6 10
E	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 1	0 1	0 2 2
F	0 0	3 2	1 2	4 2	1 0	0 0	9 6 15
					1 n/a		

A majority of respondents felt they were at least somewhat knowledgeable about issues in public policy with students feeling more confident in their knowledge of public policy issues. This is somewhat contrasted with individuals feeling less confident in their knowledge of the

Table J.1 Student Knowledge of Public Policy Issues

- Very knowledgeable
- Knowledgeable
- Somewhat knowledgeable
- Not very knowledgeable
- Not at all knowledgeable

Age	18-24		25-34		35-44		45-54		55-64		65+		Total
Gender	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	Tot
A	1	12	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1 13 14
B	12	15	2	4	0	2	2	1	0	1	0	1	16 23 39
C	15	23	3	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20 25 45
D	6	10	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7 12 19
E	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3 2 5

Age	18-24		25-34		35-44		45-54		55-64		65+		Total		
Gender	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	Tot
A	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	2	2	4
B	0	0	1	1	3	1	3	2	1	3	0	1	8	8	16
C	0	0	3	5	6	2	9	2	6	5	1	2	25	16	41
D	0	0	2	1	3	5	3	1	3	1	0	2	11	10	21
E	0	0	5	1	2	0	1	1	2	0	0	1	10	3	13

I am _____ about the public policy process.

- Very knowledgeable
- Knowledgeable
- Somewhat knowledgeable
- Not very knowledgeable
- Not at all knowledgeable

[illegible]

Table K.2 General Public Knowledge of Public Policy Process

Age	18-24		25-34		35-44		45-54		55-64		65+		Total
Gender	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F M Tot
A	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3 1 4
B	0	0	2	1	1	1	3	0	1	1	1	0	8 3 11
C	0	0	1	2	5	1	8	3	6	7	0	2	20 15 35
D	0	0	3	3	4	5	3	2	3	2	0	3	13 15 28
E	0	0	5	2	3	1	1	1	2	0	0	1	11 5 16
							1 n/a						

Lastly, a majority of respondents responded very favorably toward a civic engagement program at CCC with a majority either agreeing or strongly agreeing that a civic engagement program at CCC would both increase and improve student and general public participation in government.

Table L.1 Student Opinion on Civic Engagement Program Effect on Student Engagement in Public Participation

A civic engagement program at CCCC would improve student participation in government.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Total
Gender	F M	F M	F M	F M	F M	F M	F M Tot
A	17 22	2 6	3 1	2 1	0 1	0 0	24 31 55
B	16 27	2 2	1 1	0 0	0 0	0 0	19 30 49
C	2 9	1 1	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	3 10 13
D	1 2	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	1 2 3
E	0 2	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 2 2

Table L.2 General Public Opinion on Civic Engagement Program Effect on Student Engagement
in Public Participation

Age	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Total
Gender	F M	F M	F M	F M	F M	F M	F M Tot
A	0 0	0 3	6 0	8 0	4 5	2 1	20 9 29
B	0 0	7 3	4 5	5 3	5 4	1 4	22 19 41
C	0 0	2 2	4 3	2 3	3 1	0 1	11 10 21
D	0 0	2 1	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	2 1 3
E	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0	0 0 0
				1 n/a			

Table M.1 Student Opinion on Civic Engagement Program Effect on General Public's
Engagement in Public Participation

A civic engagement program would help to increase general public participation in government.

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neither agree nor disagree
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly disagree

Age	18-24		25-34		35-44		45-54		55-64		65+		Total
Gender	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F M Tot
A	16	16	3	5	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	23 22 45
B	14	25	1	2	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	15 30 45
C	4	11	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	6 12 18
D	0	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 6 6
E	2	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3 5 8

Table M.2 General Public Opinion on Civic Engagement Program Effect on General Public's
Engagement in Public Participation

Age	18-24		25-34		35-44		45-54		55-64		65+		Total
Gender	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F M Tot
A	0	0	0	0	5	0	5	0	4	4	2	1	16 5 21
B	0	0	7	4	3	5	7	3	5	5	1	4	23 21 44
C	0	0	2	3	6	2	3	3	2	1	0	1	13 10 23
D	0	0	2	2	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	3 3 6
E	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0 0 0
					1 n/a								

Four key pieces of information can be drawn from these findings: (1) individuals in this sample are generally interested in politics and public policy, (2) individuals feel that public participation in government is at least somewhat constructive to improving public policy, (3) individuals feel that they are knowledgeable of public policy issues, but less, knowledgeable of the public policy process, and (4) in spite of this general interest in politics and public policy and belief that public participation is at least somewhat constructive to improving public policy individuals generally do not participate in government to affect public policy. Additionally, there does not seem to be much of a systematic difference between students and the general public. There are some differences such as the student sample reporting that they contact public officials more often than members of the general member (which may be explained by youthful exuberance for policy issues, having more time on their hands by having no job, and so forth), but the general takeaway from the data is that both groups generally do not contact their public officials to discuss public policy. These findings may be in line with some of the findings in the Hornbein and King study where their graduate student respondents cited common arguments such as citizen apathy as to why citizens were not capable for effective public participation as the majority of respondents in my research state that they do not attend city council meetings, express their opinions at such meetings, or contact public officials to discuss public policy (Hornbein and King 2012, p. 725). These findings may point to a lack of motivation or passion on the part of citizens to participate in government, which may corroborate some of Hornbein and King's findings.

Another explanation for why individuals in this survey sample generally do not participate in government in spite of believing that public participation is at least somewhat constructive to improving public participation may be the civic voluntarism model discussed by

Prieger and Faltis (Prieger and Faltis 2013, p. 4-5). As the civic voluntarism model is a combination of the rational actor model and socio-economic status model, it states that individuals will weigh the benefits of public participation in government against the costs (financial and otherwise) of participating in government to determine whether they will engage in public participation, but this rational process is also influenced by their socio-economic status. As such, even if an individual feels that the benefits of public participation outweigh the costs (and thus are motivated to participate in government) their socio-economic situation may prevent them from actually engaging in public participation as they do not have the finances, transportation means, and so forth to do so. This is also in line with their findings that California lags behind other states in public participation in spite of being seen as more politically progressive due to having demographically more minorities, naturalized citizens, and non-citizens who generally have worse socio-economic situations. Hence, any civic engagement program implemented at CCC may have to take a two-pronged approach to address the potential problems of motivation and socio-economic status that prevent individuals from participating in government.

Secondary Data

Secondary data used in this research was obtained from the Nicoll, Richards-Schuster, Ruffolo study of the affects that the University of Michigan's (UM) CASC minor had on increasing the civic engagement of UM students. Data was collected across five focus groups involving 21 UM students in their final year of completing the minor and across ten interviews conducted with alumni who have completed the CASC minor as a part of the university's evaluation process of the CASC minor. The focus groups were approximately three quarters female and one quarter male and for the interviews seven were female and three were male.

During the focus group sessions and alumni interviews, UM students stated that the CASC minor either initiated or reinforced ideas and engagement that they had concerning civic engagement. During one interview, an alumnus stated “so I was passionate about social change before I got into the minor. I did the minor to fulfill that passion” (Nicoll, Richards-Schuster, and Ruffolo 2013, p. 10). This statement is in alignment with the primary survey data collected in this study where CCC student and general public survey responses showed the sample populations to have an interest in public participation and believed themselves to have knowledge of public policy issues, but a lack of actual engagement in public participation. This establishes similarities between the sample groups surveyed in this research and the UM student and alumni groups of the Nicoll, Richards-Schuster, and Ruffolo study and supports the external validity that program elements of the CASC minor could work in a civic engagement program at CCC to produce more politically engaged, public policy knowledgeable students.

Further statements from the focus groups and interviews expressed how UM students were exposed to social and policy issues throughout their learning experiences in the CASC minor and that the program taught them skills to approach or deal with social and policy issues (Nicoll, Richards-Schuster, and Ruffolo 2013, p. 11). Furthermore, UM students stated that action was an important component of the CASC minor. Civic engagement was not solely the adherence to particular beliefs and values. It also involved action to implement those beliefs and values through public participation and policy. These statements are in line with statements made by James Muldavin during an interview conducted by myself (discussed in more depth later in this paper) where Mr. Muldavin stated that the success of a civic engagement program at CCC depends on student interest in the issues being discussed. Once the students’ interest has been obtained, then students can more easily and readily learn the “textbook” basics of public policy

and the public policy process. Several parallels can be drawn between these statements. The discussion of issues seems to be at the forefront of both Mr. Muldavin's recommendations and the CASC minor. Afterwards, the skills (or in Mr. Muldavin's words the "textbook basics") are taught for students to be able to address such issues. Students can then actively utilize the skills they learned through actual public participation such as attending public city council meetings and discussing issues with public officials. This implies some general guidelines to implementing a civic engagement program at an educational institution.

Interview Data

Comparing the survey results to the interview data collected produces interesting results which lends support to the worth of a civic engagement program at CCC and the potential design for such a program. In the two semi-structured interviews conducted with Kelsey Worthy and James Muldavin, they were asked similar questions regarding the worth of public participation to public policy, how knowledgeable American citizens were of public policy and the public policy process, and the worth of a civic engagement program at CCC. The interview with Kelsey Worthy, the Assistant City Manager of the City of San Pablo, seemed to be in line with the findings of the Hornbein and King study where he believed that public participation produced many benefits for improving public policy, but citizens were largely ignorant of public policy and the public policy process which was a hindrance to obtaining the benefits of public participation. When asked how constructive public participation is to improving public policy, Mr. Worthy stated that he believed that it was very important and cited some of the commonly stated benefits of public participation such as garnering increased public support for public policy bills and implementing public policy more in line with the will of the public. Mr. Worthy also stated that the opinions he did receive from the public were utilized to evaluate the

importance of various programs and bills designed to address various public policy issues. If members of the public seemed to be less enthusiastic about certain programs and issues, this indicated to Mr. Worthy that the city of San Pablo may need to focus its efforts and resources toward other issues. When asked about what public participation subtracts from public policy, Mr. Worthy struggled somewhat to give an answer as he felt that public participation was mostly a positive endeavor, but eventually stated that public participation efforts did increase financial costs and increased the time frame of the public policy process, which is in line with some public officials' belief that public participation reduced the efficiency of the public policy process. However, Mr. Worthy felt strongly that the increased time frame and whatever other "inefficiencies" that public participation brought about were more than compensated for with the benefits that public participation brings. When asked how knowledgeable he believed the average American citizen was of public policy, Mr. Worthy stated that "unfortunately most Americans are largely ignorant of public policy and the process that goes into it" and also expressed some concerns about the amount of citizens who attend city council meetings through the statement that "San Pablo is always looking for more people to attend meetings." When asked about any efforts that the city of San Pablo is taking to educate the public on public policy, Mr. Worthy stated there was a "youth's league" to educate and get youths involved in politics. For other members of the general public, there were much fewer efforts with Mr. Worthy stating that flyers were sent out to inform the public about upcoming city council meetings, but those flyers were not meant to necessarily educate the public. As Mr. Worthy stated, "the hope was to educate the public on issues during the meetings." Overall, Mr. Worthy's beliefs somewhat contradict the survey findings of this study where students and other members of the general public generally believe themselves to be knowledgeable of public policy issues, but less

knowledgeable of the public policy process. As such, when asked about the worth of a civic engagement program at CCC, Mr. Worthy felt that a civic engagement program at CCC would be valuable in increasing and improving public participation as it can educate students on public policy issues and the public policy process, increase student motivation to participate in government, and through the potential design of the program bring students to city council meetings to introduce them to the actual application of the process.

James Muldavin, the Executive Director of the California Center for Civic Participation (CCCCP), had some differing opinions than Kelsey Worthy. He agreed with Mr. Worthy that public participation was constructive to improving public policy as citizens can bring increased insights to the issues important to them. When asked about what public participation subtracts from public policy, Mr. Muldavin also somewhat struggled to come up with an answer, but like Mr. Worthy stated that public participation efforts can be costly as “the public is unfamiliar with the process which can bring difficulties and confusion.” When asked about how knowledgeable he felt the average American citizen was of public policy, Mr. Muldavin felt that citizens were generally knowledgeable of public policy issues as he believed that people realize that public policy affects their lives in significant ways and thus feel the need to educate themselves on such issues. Mr. Muldavin’s opinion on the overall public policy knowledge of American citizens was interesting as it conflicted with Mr. Worthy’s beliefs and was a bit surprising as I expected his statements to be in line with Mr. Worthy’s statements and the findings of Hornbein and King. However, he somewhat conditioned that statement with the thought that individuals will be knowledgeable of issues that particularly affect their lives. Additionally, he agreed with Mr. Worthy in that most citizens are ignorant of the public policy process. Mr. Muldavin’s thoughts on the overall knowledge of citizens on issues in public policy and the public policy process is

generally in line with the survey data where students and other members of the general public felt they were knowledgeable of public policy issues, but less knowledgeable of the public policy process. However, this lack of knowledge in the public policy process does not mean that a civic engagement program at CCC would generally be effective at producing more politically engaged, public policy knowledgeable citizens. He looked at the success of such a program through the lens of student interest in that a program of study concentrating on teaching the basics of the public policy process may not be well received by students as he thought students would see it as “dry” and “boring.” As Mr. Muldavin stated, “students don’t want to listen to some talking head drone on from a textbook.” As such, Mr. Muldavin believed that such a program would need to focus on public policy issues that interest students in order to grab their attention. Once student interest in public policy is sparked through issues that interest them can one begin to effectively introduce students to the public policy process as a means for them to affect and influence public policy issues. Furthermore, Mr. Muldavin expressed that details such as whether this civic engagement program would be a “one-off,” annual program or a continuous program of study would need to be established based on the goals of the program. Such details would determine the worth of such a program. The recommendations made by Mr. Muldavin are in line with the Nicoll, Richards-Schuster, Ruffolo study where they found that UM students believed that discussion of social and public policy issues were an important part of the CASC minor and framed the skills they learned to address such issues (Nicoll, Richards-Schuster, and Ruffolo 2013, p. 11).

Key or Significant Findings

From the survey data, four key pieces of information can be drawn: (1) individuals in the survey samples are generally interested in politics and public policy, (2) individuals feel that

public participation in government is at least somewhat constructive to improving public policy, (3) individuals feel that they are knowledgeable of public policy issues, but less, knowledgeable of the public policy process, and (4) in spite of this general interest in politics and public policy and belief that public participation is at least somewhat constructive to improving public policy individuals generally do not participate in government to affect public policy. These findings somewhat conflict with the findings of Hornbein and King where the graduate students they surveyed generally believed the public to be ignorant about public policy.

However, some of the findings of the Hornbein and King study may be corroborated as the graduate students they surveyed also believed the public to be mostly unpassionate about public policy, and thus mostly uninterested in public participation, an opinion that may be supported by primary survey data that shows that the majority of respondents do not attend city council meetings or contact public officials to discuss public policy. However, Prieger and Faltis offer an alternative explanation for the lack of actual engagement in public participation in Californian government through the rational actor model, socio-economic status model, and the civic voluntarism model that prevents minorities and other individuals in difficult socio-economic situations from engaging in public participation even if they believe public participation is beneficial. As such, further research in this area would be to attempt to identify the exact reasons why individuals in the San Pablo and surrounding areas do not engage in public participation, be it motivational, socio-economic, or other reasons.

Key findings from the secondary data obtained from the Nicoll, Richards-Schuster, and Ruffolo research is that the CASC minor was successful in increasing the amount of civic engagement in UM students and the external validity of their findings to the CCC campus and students due to the similarities between UM and CCC students in terms of age, interest in civic

engagement and public participation, and initial lack in actual engagement in public participation. The confirmed plausibility of the external validity of the Nicoll, Richards-Schuster, and Ruffolo study is key in supporting the hypothesis of this study that a civic engagement program at CCC can produce more politically engaged, public policy knowledgeable students as the success of the CASC minor at the University of Michigan and the similarities between UM and CCC students suggest that implementation of similar program designs at CCC could very well work.

Key findings from the interview data lend credence to the research problem that some public officials feel that the public is largely ignorant of public policy issues and recommend important program designs to implement in a civic engagement program at CCC. First, opinions expressed by Kelsey Worthy in that he believed that the public was unknowledgeable of both public policy issues and the public policy process and that there is a lack of public participation during San Pablo city council meetings identify that there is indeed a problem concerning public participation in San Pablo and that action to resolve this problem should be taken. While James Muldavin took a different position in his belief that the public is indeed knowledgeable of public policy issues, he did agree with Mr. Worthy that the public is less knowledgeable of the public policy process, which means that the public may be lacking in the skills and civic capacity to contribute effectively to public participation efforts and influence the design of public policy. As such, education efforts to increase the public's knowledge of the public policy process and thus the skills and civic capacity of the public to contribute to the design of public policy is important to improve public participation as a tool to improve public policy. A lack of public civic capacity to contribute effectively to public policy through public participation was also supported through the survey data as respondents also reported that they were less knowledgeable of the public policy process.

Cross-analysis of the survey, interview, and secondary data revealed some common trends in the successful design of a civic engagement program at CCC. These common trends were a focus on the discussion of issues to engage the interest of students and an action-oriented focus and application of skills learned to approach and deal with public policy issues. These trends are supported by CCC student responses that they are indeed knowledgeable of and interested in public policy issues, UM students that expressed similar sentiments and beliefs as the CCC students surveyed, and statements and recommendations made during the James Muldavin interview that agreed with the issue specific and action-oriented program design of the University of Michigan's CASC minor. These trends toward issue specific discussion and action-oriented program elements are in line with King, Felty, and Susel's findings that citizens value active discussion of issues with administrators during public participation (King, Felty, and Susel 1998, p. 320). Ultimately, these developing common trends point to the external validity of the Nicoll, Richards-Schuster, Ruffolo study findings to CCC and support the hypothesis that a civic engagement program at CCC could produce more politically engaged, public policy knowledgeable students.

Overall, the survey, interview, and secondary data collected corroborates part of the research problem in that there is a belief among some public officials that the public is unknowledgeable of public policy, but, at least in the opinion of the populations sampled, individuals believe themselves to be knowledgeable of public policy issues. However, they are less knowledgeable of the public policy process, which suggests a lack of skills and civic capacity to engage in public participation and influence public policy. As such, the research question of whether a civic engagement program at CCC can produce more politically engaged, public policy knowledgeable students is important in order to increase the ability and civic

capacity of citizens to be able to more effectively contribute to the public policy process and to do so on a more frequent basis.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

Based on the above findings and analysis, this study concludes that the hypothesis that a civic engagement program implemented at CCC can produce more politically engaged, public policy knowledgeable citizens is plausible. This conclusion is based on survey data that shows that the surveyed sample populations of CCC students and members of the general public are generally interested in politics and public policy and that public participation in government is at least somewhat constructive to improving public policy, feel that they are knowledgeable of public policy issues, but less knowledgeable of the public policy process, generally do not participate in government to affect public policy, and have shown an interest in and positive reception toward a civic engagement program being implemented at CCC.

The hypothesis is also supported by secondary data obtained by Nicoll, Richard-Schuster, and Ruffolo in their study of the University of Michigan's CASC minor that University of Michigan students were more likely to participate in civic engagement activities later in life based on student focus groups and interviews with alumni (Nicoll, Richard-Schuster, and Ruffolo 2013, p. 8). The external validity of the findings from the Nicoll, Richard-Schuster, and Ruffolo study to CCC students is considered very plausible based on similarities between the CCC and University of Michigan student sample populations in regards to age, interest in public policy and public participation, and lack of initial engagement in public participation.

However, interview data (primarily from the James Muldavin interview) obtained in this research somewhat tempers the above findings in support of the hypothesis. Based on the opinion of Mr. Muldavin, the success of a civic engagement program at CCC depends on the students' interest in the public policy issues being discussed and application of the knowledge and skills they are learning, rather than simply rote discussion on the "textbook" basics of the public policy process. This implies that student feedback on policy issues they wish to discuss and application of class material is important in the implementation and success of a civic engagement program at CCC.

Recommendations

The above conclusions help shape recommendations and a possible action plan for the implementation of a civic engagement program at CCC.

Recommendation 1: Beginning in the 2015 Winter Semester, offer CCC and MCHS students (those 10th grade or above students who have successfully completed or will have successfully completed or will be taking an American Government class that would prepare them for this course) a single pilot class titled "Introduction to Public Policy." This course should focus on current public policy issues and past pieces of important public policy to grab the students' interest and then integrate and apply "textbook" information on the basics of the public policy process to these examples. Through this methodology, students may better be able to learn about the public policy process as it is taught to them in a way that holds their interest through application to policy issues they care about. Research papers where students can choose a policy issue that interests them to research can be assigned as midterm and final research projects. Additionally, a class assignment or field trip where students are required to attend one public city

council meeting should be a requirement for completion of the class to encourage and increase student interest in public participation in government.

Recommendation 2: Complete the hiring process to obtain an additional instructor to teach the class if existing staff within the CCC political science department do not have the knowledge and qualifications in public policy and public administration to teach such a course.

Recommendation 3: After completion of the course, the course instructor will survey students using class evaluation questionnaires during the final week of the class to gauge their overall satisfaction with the class, determine whether the class improved their knowledge of public policy issues and the public policy process, and identify what improvements, if any, could be made to the class.

Recommendation 4: By the 2016 winter semester, class evaluations should be compiled and analyzed by the course instructor and department head of the political science department and pertinent student suggestions for improvement and changes to the class should be implemented. The same class evaluation process should be implemented throughout the 2016 school year.

Recommendation 5: Depending on the success of this class over this 2 year evaluation period, such as if 75% of seats open in the class are filled and 75% of students who have taken this class report that their knowledge of public policy and the public policy process has improved and their engagement in public participation has increased, then in the 2017 winter semester an additional section of this class should be implemented to expand the amount of students that can take this class.

Recommendation 6: In the 2018 winter semester, if this expansion proves successful, such as steady or increased rates of student enrollment and increases in student public policy knowledge and public participation engagement, then the pilot course can be slowly expanded into a civic engagement program where classes in service learning, cultural awareness, and public policy and administration (topics that Nicoll, Richard-Schuster, and Ruffolo report that are pertinent to increasing student civic engagement) can be added to the program in subsequent semesters (Nicoll, Richard-Schuster, and Ruffolo 2013, p. 4).

Recommendation 7: As a potential long term goal and culmination for this program, if class expansions continually prove to be successful and effective at increasing student knowledge of public policy and engagement in public participation then this civic engagement program should culminate into a public policy major of 16-20 units where students receive an Associate of Arts Degree in public policy.

Recommendation 8: In regards to the MCHS student aspect of this program, where MCHS students grade 10 and up would be eligible to take courses in this civic engagement program at CCC, Katherine Boyd (2004) of the California Center of Civic Participation offers some valuable insights into youth civic engagement. Before looking into incorporating youths into a civic engagement program, an organization should look into whether the organization is ready and willing to put youths in a position of power to influence policy issues, which goes hand in hand with whether youths have the civic capacity to handle such a position of power (Boyd 2004, p. 14). As such, the recommendation that only MCHS students grade 10 and up should be eligible to enroll in a civic engagement program at CCC is prudent as during grade 10 MCHS students have either completed or are taking a class in American government, which would prepare them for the “Introduction to Public Policy” course discussed in Recommendation

1. In this same vein, the city of San Pablo's readiness to engage youths should be evaluated to address the class requirement for students to attend at least one city council meeting. As discussed in the Kelsey Worthy interview, the existence of a "youths league" program in the city of San Pablo is a sign that the city of San Pablo does have some capacity to effectively engage youths in public policy.

Recommendation 9: Various financing options should be looked at in order to finance a civic engagement program at CCC. The CCC budget is currently very tight and thus a "self-sufficient" financing method of covering class, class materials, and instructor salary costs through student enrollment fees may not be not entirely possible. As such, as Kemp (2012) suggests possible private, non-profit, and public partnerships and operational grants should be examined to cover the costs (Kemp 2012, p. 18). Possible partners could be the city of San Pablo that may see such an endeavor beneficial to their endeavors to increase public participation during city council meetings and the California Center for Civic Participation that regularly provides advice and assistance to burgeoning civic engagement programs. Additionally, updating student enrollment fees may help further cover the costs although may prove to be an unpopular option amongst CCC students (Kemp 2012, p. 18).

Summary

Ultimately, the recommendations outlined in this study are based on systematic, stepwise fashion where the success of previous smaller iterations of the civic engagement program's design suggest that expansion of the program could be successful in furthering the program's goal of increasing student knowledge of public policy and the public policy process and student engagement in public participation. Once such expansions start to show stagnating or

diminishing results from student class evaluations, then that suggests that the program may be reaching its “carrying capacity” for size and classes. At that point, expansion will stop and other class improvements based on student suggestions will periodically be implemented as pertinent.

Further Research

Further research for the potential direction and expansion of a civic engagement program at CCC should be the next steps in the examination of the design of this program. First, further research should look into what keeps individuals in San Pablo from engaging in public participation. Possible reasons identified in the literature review of this research are a lack of motivation among citizens to engage in public participation and socio-economic reasons. Identification of the most prominent reasons can help lead the direction of a civic engagement program at CCC to help address these issues. Second, implementation of online courses and use of social media in this civic engagement program may produce positive results to improve the political engagement of students. In providing some guidance to potential literature and avenues of research, Leah Murray (2013) looked into utilizing Facebook to enhance the civic and political engagement of students. As Murray states, “[s]tudents ‘speak’ Facebook, they understand its use for a conversation medium” (Murray 2013, p. 3). Hence, Murray conducted a study into the use of Facebook as a conversation medium to discuss political and policy issues with her students.

Additionally Jugert, et al. (2012) look into the affect that online interactions over the internet have on civic engagement. They premise this discussion in previous findings that offline civic engagement endeavors seem to be predicated on macro-level influences such as voting preferences and the political history of a country, socio-demographic factors such as age, sex,

socio-economic status, and so forth, and psychological and social factors. What is unknown is whether these same factors play the same roles in influence civic engagement activities online (Jugert, Eckstein, Noack, Kuhn, and Benbow 2012, p. 123-124). Greater understanding of motivations behind civic engagement activities online can help guide the use of internet and social media technologies to facilitate discussion of public policy issues.

On the other hand, Ferber, Foltz, and Pugliese (2006) identify possible pitfalls in the use of the internet, and by extension social media, to increase public participation. Public participation over the internet, termed cyberdemocracy by the authors, can bombard public officials with public opinion and information and, in Ferber Foltz, and Pugliese's opinion, can influence public officials toward parochial interests rather than national interests (Ferber, Foltz, and Pugliese 2006, p. 391). As such, they proposed a "three-way model" where participants/members of the public interact and offer their opinions to senders/moderators who will compile and send public opinions on policy issues to recipients/public officials (Ferber, Foltz, and Pugliese 2006, p. 394). Such a three-way model, amongst others, should be studied for their value in implementation in class forums in a civic engagement program at CCC to potentially facilitate class discussion of policy issues.

Last, Wang and Bryer (2013) look into any possible cost function relating the quantity and quality of public participation with associated financial costs. Their model begins with a standard net benefit formula where $\text{Net Benefit} = \text{Benefit} - \text{Cost}$ where benefits include short term benefits of public participation such as improved public trust and improved decision-making capacity and service delivery and costs involve production costs (Wang and Bryer 2013, p. 181-182). Ultimately, Wang and Bryer found little evidence that production costs are associated with the quantity or quality of public participation (Wang and Bryer 2013, p. 185-187).

Overall, further research into this topic of public participation cost functions, in particular as associated with youth and young adult engagement in public participation, can help convince the city of San Pablo to provide funding and grants to support the efforts and goals of a civic engagement program at CCC that potentially increase benefits and reduce costs associated with a public participation cost function.

Overall, looking into how a civic engagement program at CCC can address student barriers to public participation, utilization of upcoming social media technologies to facilitate the discussion of policy issues and facilitate the action-oriented focus of the program, and investigating cost functions associated with public participation involving youths and young adults is suggested as possible avenues for further research and improvement of this program.

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Appendix A

Survey Questions

Hello. My name is Louis Tamillow and I am currently a graduate student at Golden Gate University. I am currently conducting research on whether the implementation of a civic engagement program at Contra Costa College would effectively produce more politically engaged, public policy knowledgeable citizens. If possible, I would be grateful if you could complete this questionnaire designed to measure your amount of political engagement and knowledge and gage your opinion on how effective a civic engagement program at Contra Costa College would be in producing more politically engaged, knowledgeable citizens. This survey will only take approximately 5-10 minutes to complete and your confidentiality and anonymity will be protected. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

- 2) Age
- 3) Gender
- 4) Occupation
- 5) How often do you discuss politics and public policy with family, friends, or other individuals?
 - a. Very often
 - b. Often
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. Not often
 - e. Little to not at all
- 6) How many times do you attend city council or board of supervisor meetings each month (in-person, watch on TV)?
 - a. 0
 - b. 1-2
 - c. 3-4
 - d. More than 5
- 7) Do you express your opinions during the public council meetings you attend? This can be through phone calls or online messages depending on the medium used to attend the meeting.
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

- 8) Public officials take into account the public opinions expressed at such meetings.
- Strongly agree
 - Agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Disagree
 - Strongly Disagree
- 9) How constructive do you feel public council meetings are to improving public policy?
- Very constructive
 - Constructive
 - Somewhat constructive
 - Not very constructive
 - Not at all constructive
- 10) When was the last time you contacted a public official to discuss public policy? Within the:
- Current month
 - Last month
 - Last year
 - Past five years
 - Never
- 11) If you have contacted a public official to discuss public policy, how constructive did you feel that the communication was to improving public policy?
- Very constructive
 - Constructive
 - Somewhat constructive
 - Not very constructive
 - Not at all constructive
- 12) How knowledgeable do you consider yourself to be of public policy?
- Very knowledgeable
 - Knowledgeable
 - Somewhat knowledgeable
 - Not very knowledgeable
 - Not at all knowledgeable
- 13) How knowledgeable do you yourself to be of the public policy process?
- Very knowledgeable
 - Knowledgeable
 - Somewhat knowledgeable
 - Not very knowledgeable
 - Not at all knowledgeable

- 14) A civic engagement program which introduced students to public policy and the public policy process would improve public participation in government.
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neither agree nor disagree
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree
- 15) A civic engagement program which introduced students to public policy and the public policy process would increase public participation in government.
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Neither agree nor disagree
 - d. Disagree
 - e. Strongly disagree

Appendix B

Kelsey Worthy Interview Questions

My name is Louis Tamillow and I am currently a graduate student at Golden Gate University. I am currently conducting research on whether the implementation of a civic engagement program at Contra Costa College would effectively produce more politically engaged, public policy knowledgeable citizens. Your participation in this interview is greatly appreciated.

- 1) How important or constructive do you think public participation is to the public policy process? In other words, what value does public participation add to the public policy process, if anything at all?
- 2) How does public participation help to create better public policy?
- 3) Does public participation subtract anything from the public policy process?
- 4) How knowledgeable is the average American citizen on the public policy process?
- 5) How do you utilize the ideas and contributions you receive from public participation?
- 6) What efforts, if any, are in place to educate the public on public policy and/or the public policy process?

A civic engagement program introduces students to current public policy issues and the public policy process.

- 7) What do you consider the value of implementing a civic engagement program at CCC?
- 8) How (or what) would you like to do to improve public participation in government?

Appendix C

James Muldavin Interview Questions

My name is Louis Tamillow and I am currently a graduate student at Golden Gate University. I am currently conducting research on whether the implementation of a civic engagement program at Contra Costa College would effectively produce more politically engaged, public policy knowledgeable citizens. Your participation in this interview is greatly appreciated.

- 1) How important or constructive do you think public participation is to the public policy process? In other words, what value does public participation add to the public policy process, if anything at all?
- 2) How does public participation help to create better public policy?
- 3) Does public participation subtract anything from the public policy process?
- 4) How knowledgeable is the average American citizen on the public policy process?
- 5) I know of some of the programs operated by the California Center for Civic Participation such as the Capitol Focus and Women in Politics programs designed to teach youths about state politics through various activities such as interviewing government officials, expressing their opinions and concerns about policy, and putting together their own policy recommendations. Could you expand upon some of these programs and activities, how they may benefit youths, and how these program designs may be implemented into a civic engagement program at Contra Costa College.
- 6) What other efforts, if any, do you know of to educate the public on public policy and/or the public policy process?

A civic engagement program introduces students to current public policy issues and the public policy process.

- 7) What do you consider the value of implementing a civic engagement program at CCC?

- 8) Do you have any further suggestions as to how to effectively implement a civic engagement program at CCC?
- 9) How (or what) would you like to do in the future to improve public participation in government?