Merging Theory and Practice: Integrating Team Learning and the Study of Intergovernmental Relations (IGR)

Abstract
In response to a call to integrate High-Impact Educational Practices (HIP) into our courses, the following re-design of PADM 5310: Public Organizations makes three (3) broad changes to the existing course. These changes reflect a more thorough attention not only to certain HIPs, but also to issues of fit and alignment with the learning objectives of the Masters in Public Administration (MPA) program. These changes also position the instructor to merge theory and practice and demonstrate real-world concepts of team learning to the study of (local, state, and federal) intergovernmental relations.

Change #1: Re-conceptualize two major course topics into one updated course offering
- Original course offering focused on managing human behavior in public (local, state, federal, and non-profit) organizations
- Revised course offering merges the study of intergovernmental relations with managing human behavior in public organizations

Change #2: Introduce new group project-based assignment
- Facilitates collaborative learning
- Explores diversity through other students’ perspectives
- Experiences real-world application of working on team projects in the public (local, state, federal, and non-profit) sector

Change #3: Re-conceptualize course assessments into collaborative writing assignment and group presentation
- Original course assessments included an individual writing assignment accompanied by an oral presentation
- Revised course assessment changes to a collaborative writing assignment and group presentation incorporating: 1) self assessments, 2) peer assessments, 3) possibility of “firing” non-team players, and 4) use of Blackboard discussion forums to facilitate team learning

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- Writing Intensive Courses
- Collaborative Assignments and Projects
- Diversity/Global Learning