

To: MPA Students Interested in PA 8990, Capstone Project
From: Professor Robert Blair
Subject: Enrollment Procedure for Spring 2008 Capstone Project Course
Date: October 24, 2007

This message provides information about procedures for enrolling in the spring 2008 Capstone Project course. MPA students are required to obtain permission of the capstone instructor/School of Public Administration to enroll in the Capstone Project course. To receive approval, students develop and submit the basic idea for their capstone project prior to enrollment in PA 8990.

I am the instructor of record for the spring 2008 Capstone Project course, and I will review the proposed projects and give enrollment approval for those that meet course requirements. The review process may involve revisions of the proposal in keeping with the instructor's comments. It is possible that after several revisions your proposal may not be accepted for the coming semester. You will be directly notified of your approval by e-mail, with a copy to Dr. Meagan Van Gelder. When you receive e-mail notification, you will need to call Meagan at 402-554-2625 (or e-mail her: mvangelder@mail.unomaha.edu), to have her authorize your enrollment through E-Bruno.

The syllabus for the spring 2008 Capstone Project course is also being sent with this note for your information. Please visit the School of Public Administration web page for Current MPA Students (<http://www.mpa.unomaha.edu/>). Click on "Capstone Project" to see more background information about this requirement. Included on this page is information to help you in thinking about your project, links to several past capstone topics and student authors, and links to the introductory and concluding sections of selected recent capstone projects.

Students must be in the last 9 hours of their MPA program. In addition, you must have completed PA8120, Research Methods, to enroll in PA8990.

Students who wish to enroll in PA 8990 for spring 2008 must prepare a brief statement of their proposed project and e-mail it to rblair@mail.unomaha.edu no later than November 19, 2007 at 9:00 pm.

Your statement must follow the format provided below (address all information and items):

- Student Information: Your name and current e-mail address;
- Courses Completed: Number of MPA courses you have completed, including that you have completed the required research methods course;

- Project Title: Tentative title of your project;
- Problem Statement: Clear, concise statement of the issue, problem, and/or program to be examined, analyzed, and studied; statement of dependent and independent variables, as well as important expected causal relationships, if relevant to the design of your proposed project;
- Importance of Proposed Project: Statement of the importance or significance of your proposed project (the all-important “so what?” question);
- Theoretical Framework: Discussion of the major organizing framework or theoretical concepts and variables which might serve to organize and drive your project.
- Project Research Design: Discussion of the project’s likely research design and feasibility within the time limits of the spring session, including specific information addressing the following: What research design might be used? Is it expected the project might use quantitative or qualitative methods? Will the proposed project require collection of new data, or will it use existing data? How many organizations and participants (units of analysis) will be involved? Do you or will you have access to the persons or organizations you want to analyze or study? What approaches might be used to analyze your data?

Length of the statement of the proposed project must not exceed 2 single-spaced, typewritten pages (11 point Times New Roman font, with 1” maximum left, right, top, and bottom margins). You must use the section titles provided in the bullet points above for organizing your proposal. Proposals not meeting these guidelines will be returned without being read. This is a firm requirement.

PA 8990 will meet three times during the spring 2008 session. There will be an introductory session, a milestone meeting, and a final session for presentation of projects. Make sure you note these dates on the syllabus accompanying this letter. Participation is mandatory for these sessions; please do not request a waiver. Students in the Online MPA program will complete their work via distance. Online MPA students residing in Nebraska will be expected to attend the final presentation session. Alternative presentation arrangements will be used for Online MPA students who live outside Nebraska.

If you have any questions about PA 8990 or about the proposal review and enrollment process, please contact me via e-mail or telephone, 402/554-3865.

Sincerely,

Robert Blair