

PAST CAPSTONE CLIENTS INCLUDE:

- The Department of State
- Congressional Research Service
- House Judiciary Service
- National Intelligence Council
- Department of Homeland Security
- Department of Agriculture
- The National Park Service
- Princeton University Press
- The State of Texas
- Texas Governor's Office
- Texas High Speed Rail Corporation
- Texas Aerospace Commission
- Texas Office of Rural Community Affairs
- Texas Water Development Board
- San Antonio Metro Health District
- Texas Early Childhood Education Coalition
- Minnesota Council of Nonprofis
- Filene Institute for Credit Union Research
- Capital Area United Way
- Ambassador David Abshire & Laury Foundation
- The World Bank
- Grameen Capital India
- Centra Technology

For more information visit: htttp://bush.tamu.edu/capstones





2006-2007 CAPSTONE PROJECTS

Capstone projects at the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University are integrative, team-based, applied research projects required of all students. Led by a faculty member on behalf of a client agency, these projects require students to think independently, frame and analyze issues, and apply their academic knowledge and skills.

Capstone students have broad discretion in defining the project, allocating tasks, communicating with the client, and establishing and ensuring deadlines using effective communication, teamwork, and collaborative learning strategies. The projects fully prepare students to supervise, conduct, and evaluate large-scale public policy research and culminate in a formal, written report and oral presentation to the client.

"The Capstone Projects are fundamental to the experiential learning methodology of the Bush School. They are 'real-world' projects prepared for 'real-world' prestigious clients such as the Congressional Research Service, and their results profoundly impact policy at local, state, regional, national, and international levels. The project is essentially 'the rite of passage' to graduation and is the culmination of the student's two-year educational and leader development experience at the Bush School."

~ Dick Chilcoat Dean, The Bush School

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"VOTING SYSTEMS AND ELECTION REFORM: WHAT DO ELECTION OFFICIALS THINK?"

Client: The Congressional Research Service (CRS)

As a follow-up to previous capstone research conducted in 2004-05, this project identified trends relating to issues of interest, such as attitudes toward electronic voting and demographic characteristics of election officials. It examined officials' views, focusing on the experiences and perceptions of officials about compliance with the requirements of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) that went into effect in January 2006 and explored topics such as the purchase of voting systems. Findings were presented to CRS in Washington DC.



"FEDERAL FUNDING IN RESPONSE TO HURRICANE KATRINA"

Client: Congressional Research Service (CRS)

This project evaluated the extent that New Orleans residents were aware of and utilized federal programs and policies passed by Congress to facilitate the post-Katrina recovery of New Orleans. A literature review and case study analysis of events similar to Katrina over the past century were prepared, and an objective examination of the benefits and hindrances of the federal programs was conducted. The project also included a survey of homeowners and business owners about the federal programs, seeking their experiences and insight into how those programs were used and managed and whether citizens were aware of the programs and benefits. Research findings were presented to CRS in Washington DC.



"AN ANALYSIS OF THE NONPROFIT CAPACITY-BUILDING 'INDUSTRY' IN MINNESOTA"

Client: Minnesota Council of Nonprofits (MCN)

The effectiveness of nonprofit capacity-building efforts and the degree to which those efforts influence nonprofit organizational effectiveness were measured. Students utilized a multi-method research approach, and addressed substantial gaps in both practitioner-oriented and academic literature by providing a comprehensive, empirically derived understanding about the link between capacity building efforts and organizational change. The final product was presented to MCN and interview participants via a live webinar.



"THE BOARD'S ROLE FOR CREDIT UNION MERGERS"

Client: Filene Institute for Credit Union Research

The role of the board of directors in decision-making during mergers and acquisitions of credit unions was explored. Credit unions that had debated merger proposals were identified and CEOs and board members from these organizations were interviewed and decision-making practices of credit union boards and executives were evaluated. The final product, a Filene research monograph, was presented to Chicago, IL, and Austin, TX, audiences.



"PRINCIPAL PERFORMANCE IN TEXAS: TOOLS FOR MEASURING EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP"

Client: The State of Texas

A set of indicators for an effective principal was created, focusing on three areas: Student Performance, Teacher Retention, and Financial Management, with the understanding that an effective principal will have students who perform well on TAAS/TAKS exams, have acceptable levels of teacher turnover, and do so in a financially efficient manner. After defining what it means to say a principal is "effective," the project verified the data to see if a principal's influence was statistically significant when controlling for other, non-principal factors such as location, demographics, and school size. Finally, it looked at various groupings of principals in Texas in order to report on the current patterns of principal effectiveness in Texas. Findings were presented in Austin, TX.

"DEVELOPED COUNTRIES' IMPOSED STANDARDS ON TRADE OF AGRICULTURAL IMPORTS FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES"

Client: Dr. Bernard Hoekman, Lead Economist and Senior Advisor for the World Bank, Trade Division

Trade standards imposed on developing countries by developed countries were analyzed. Developed countries, like the U.S., would like to reduce the risk borne by agricultural products to zero. Often this zero-tolerance policy places large burdens on developing countries seeking to export livestock and animal products. This project found alternatives to the current U.S. zero-tolerance policy and discussed the feasibility and effectiveness of instituting these policies.



"THE INTERAGENCY PROCESS IN SUPPORT AND STABILITY OPERATIONS: INTEGRATING AND ALIGNING THE ROLES AND MISSIONS OF MILITARY AND CIVILIAN AGENCIES IN CONFLICT AND POST-CONFLICT ENVIRONMENTS"

Client: Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Stability Operations

This study addresses the support, stability, and reconstruction missions and tasks for the US government in counterinsurgency warfare. The main findings suggested the need to improve agency and interagency structures, as well as the need to educate and train a core of interagency civilian and military professionals. The findings were presented at a conference on the topic, hosted by the Bush School and the Strategic Studies Institute of the U.S. Army.



"U.S. POLICY AND THE FUTURE OF UZBEKISTAN PROMOTING REFORM, SECURITY, AND REGIONAL STABILITY"

Client: The Department of State

An extensive database on contemporary Uzbekistan was developed, and interviews with leading American and foreign experts on Uzbekistan and the region were conducted. The project explored the challenges, opportunities, and policy options confronting U.S. policy-makers and developed a multi-move simulation for the client.



"THE PEKING DIARY: GEORGE H.W. BUSH AND CHINA: 1974-75"

Client: Princeton University Press

A review of the diary of George Bush, 41st President of the United States, when he served as the Chief of the U.S. Liaison Office in Beijing (1974-1975) was the focus of this capstone. The project contributed research for an upcoming publication through Princeton University Press, expected in 2008.



"FRAMING A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO CLIMATE CHANGE"

Client: The Long Range Analysis Group, National Intelligence Council

The effects of global climate change on U.S. national security interests over the next 20 years were analyzed. The research identified the most likely manifestations of global climate change in 2025, assessed how politically salient climate change will be in 2025, offered policy options for U.S. foreign policy to consider in response to climate change, and defined the level of commitment the U.S. government should devote to climate change. Findings were presented to the National Intelligence Council in Washington DC.