

## 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 Nonprofits
- Filene Institute for Credit Union Research
- Capital Area United Way
- Ambassador David Abshire & Laury Foundation
- The World Bank
- Grameen Capital India
- Centra Technology
- Texas Senate Committee on Education
- Brazos Community Foundation

For more information visit: <http://bush.tamu.edu/capstones>



THE BUSH SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC SERVICE

TEXAS A&M  
UNIVERSITY

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 and their course instructors define the project with the client, allocate tasks, and establish 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.



## 2008-2009 CAPSTONE PROJECTS

*"The capstone projects are a key component of our students' experience at the Bush School. They are real world projects conducted for prestigious clients in the public and private sectors. By working on these important issues, students learn the value of objective research and also get to see their results affect policy at all levels. Each project offers unique learning opportunities as well as the chance to meet and learn from individuals and organizations that are engaged in important areas of public policy. The capstone process is one way our students demonstrate the academic knowledge and leadership skills developed during their Bush School years."*

INTERIM DEAN BENTON COCANOUGHER

ATM | TEXAS A&M  
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2008-2009  
CAPSTONE  
PROJECTS

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# 1 Assessing Regional Border Security

**CLIENT: CENTRA TECHNOLOGY, INC./DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY**

**SUPERVISING INSTRUCTOR: JEFFREY A. ENGEL**

Government agencies face special problems when they seek to assess non-disaster security risks in areas where there are multiple jurisdictions and levels of governance. The client, Centra Technology, in support of the Department of Homeland Security, sought a conceptual approach or theoretical model for determining how governments should value, assess, and balance risks that arise from illegal immigration, weapons smuggling, the narcotics trade, natural disasters, and terrorism. The students compiled and evaluated the available literature on the subject and developed a structure by which policymakers should consider the difficulties of regional risk assessment.

# 2 Combating Child Labor through DESTINO

**CLIENT: CREATIVE ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL, INC./U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR**

**SUPERVISING INSTRUCTOR: KISHORE GAWANDE**

This project focused on how to reduce child labor in Panama, using the DESTINO (Disminuyendo y Erradicando el Trabajo Infantil para Nuevas Oportunidades) program, a joint effort of two Panamanian organizations: Casa Esperanza and Fundación Tierra Nueva. DESTINO seeks to reduce the incidence of child labor through community workshops, income generation activities, scholarship activities, teacher training programs, and civil society programs. The study looked at child labor statistics gathered by DESTINO as well as additional work done by the Centro de Capacitación y Desarrollo Integral to improve income generating activities among indigenous women. The DESTINO project is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor and is being managed by Creative Associates.

# 3 Effective Intelligence Operations during Counterinsurgency Campaigns

**CLIENT: THE RAND CORPORATION/DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**

**SUPERVISING INSTRUCTOR: JASEN J. CASTILLO**

The United States Army's recently published field manual detailing an improved counterinsurgency doctrine is seen by many as a crucial step towards improving military effectiveness in counterinsurgency campaigns. This capstone project laid out a framework to help the intelligence community craft its own unique doctrine for counterinsurgencies. The project looked at intelligence operations that are crucial for defeating insurgencies, the operational factors that are most effective, and the lessons learned from past counterinsurgency successes and failures. Blending historical case studies and first-person accounts from field operatives, the project outlined the kinds of intelligence operations that should be implemented and the goals they must meet in order to run a successful counterinsurgency.

# 4 Evaluating the Consequences of Texas' High Dropout Rate

**CLIENT: UNITED WAY OF TEXAS**

**SUPERVISING INSTRUCTOR: LORI TAYLOR**

This capstone project examined the causes and consequences of the high number of high school dropouts in Texas, in particular, the long term impact on GDP of our current dropout rates. To assess the economic impact to Texas of this key education measure, the ongoing capstone project identified the best way to measure the dropout rate and gauged the dropout rate's economic impact. Finally, the team reviewed available research regarding dropout prevention programs in order to identify best practices that could be implemented in Texas. One goal of the study was to inform and encourage a broader discussion by the Texas Legislature of the state's high school dropout rate and the societal and economic impact of failing to address the problem.

# 5 Generation Y in the Federal Workplace

**CLIENT: CONGRESSIONAL RESEARCH SERVICE**

**SUPERVISING INSTRUCTOR: DOMONIC BEARFIELD**

Some members of Generation Y (generally considered to be those born between the late 1970s and 2000) have already entered the workforce, and many more soon will. This project explored how Gen Y differs from previous generations in terms of expectations about work, salary, job security, time off, benefits, retirement, pensions, etc., and how the CRS can address these issues in recruitment and retention efforts. Reliance on digital technology in personal and professional lives is one defining characteristic of Gen Y—instant access and response, personalization, and information sharing via podcasts, wikis, and blogs. Gen Y also holds different views on personal privacy, and the CRS is interested in how these attitudes toward privacy will affect the agency's core value of confidentiality.

# 6 Investigating the Current Terrorist Threat to the U.S. Homeland

**CLIENT: NATIONAL COUNTERTERRORISM CENTER**

**SUPERVISING INSTRUCTOR: SARA DALY**

This project analyzed the current terrorist threat to the U.S. homeland both from homegrown terrorists and those who represent foreign terrorist organizations or who come to the United States to carry out an act of terrorism. Although there has been no terrorist attack in the United States since 9/11, the assumption that there is little support for al-Qaeda or the jihadi worldview from U.S. citizens or others is challenged by recent cases that reveal there are still individuals in the country who may become involved in terrorist activity. The study examined recent cases of thwarted attacks and failed plots to determine current capabilities and tactics possessed by terrorist groups and individuals. The students also looked at how successful al-Qaeda and those who share its views have been at finding new recruits for U.S. operations.

# 7 Municipal Funding of Nonprofit Agencies

**CLIENT: CITY OF COLLEGE STATION**

**SUPERVISING INSTRUCTOR: EDWINA DORCH**

The City of College Station funds nonprofit agencies through a program called Outside Agency Funding because the nonprofits provide services not offered by the city. In working to streamline the application, review, and monitoring of this funding, it became clear that there is no standard method outlined and packaged for municipal governments to use as a guide or best practice in funding nonprofit agencies. This capstone project developed a guide for municipal governments that fund nonprofit agencies.

# 8 National Preparedness Goal, Execution, and Performance

**CLIENT: THE HOMELAND SECURITY AND JUSTICE TEAM/GOVERNMENT**

**ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE (GAO)**

**SUPERVISING INSTRUCTOR: SHARON CAUDLE**

A presidential directive ordered the secretary of homeland security to develop a domestic all-hazards preparedness goal. In 2007, the Department of Homeland Security finalized the national goal and related preparedness tools such as national planning scenarios and identification of specific capabilities that communities, the private sector, and all levels of government should collectively possess to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from all major hazards. This capstone project reported to the GAO their observations about what national preparedness means in terms of assigning authority and responsibility for preparedness across the nation's highly decentralized system of public, not-for-profit, and private sector entities. They also reviewed factors management should consider to achieve preparedness within acceptable risk tolerances, to allocate resources for preparedness, and to assess performance in developing needed preparedness capabilities.

# 9 Proliferation Security Initiative

**CLIENT: NUCLEAR NONPROLIFERATION OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION (NNSA)**

**SUPERVISING INSTRUCTOR: LARRY NAPPER**

This capstone project conducted a focused examination of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) and identified options for U.S. policy makers by designing a simulated interdiction operation. The simulation involved a cargo aircraft carrying sensitive nuclear components bound for Iran that stops for refueling in a Central Asian country, thus creating the opportunity for cooperative action. Capstone students joined students from Texas A&M's Department of Nuclear Engineering to construct and execute a mini-move simulation. In addition to a literature review and interviews with PSI experts, the students conducted an initial play of the simulation for the client along with an after action report.

# 10 The Regional Impact of Climate Change on Public Infrastructure and Decision Making

**CLIENT: HOUSTON-GALVESTON AREA COUNCIL (HGAC)**

**SUPERVISING INSTRUCTOR: ERIC LINDQUIST**

In the wake of Hurricanes Rita and Ike, policy and decision makers in the Houston area are concerned with the growing threat of climate change impacts and how to adapt to these changes. This capstone studied the regional impact of climate change on public infrastructure in 13 counties in the Houston-Galveston area, focusing on resiliency planning as one alternative solution to the problem. They also looked at how local governments respond to recommendations from a non-binding metropolitan planning organization (MPO). The goal was to offer conclusions that reveal the needs and solutions for local and regional governments regarding funding, capacity building, and regulatory authority necessary for adaptive responses to the hazards of global climate and environmental problems at the regional level.