

**Master of Public Administration
Sample Comprehensive Exam Questions**

Public managers must pursue their organizational, professional, and personal goals within an agency world characterized by "tight money, uppity workers, and loose organization." For each of these three problems, develop at least one approach/solution that will make it possible for you to survive as a public manager.

As you may know, the City of Omaha has recently failed in its attempt to institute a recycling program as a part of the city's refuse collection system. Based on your knowledge of core and non-core courses in public administration, explain how you would go about implementing such a program. We'd like to promise that the best answers will be sent to Mayor Morgan and the City Council. They probably won't, however.

The head of a public organization feels as if she has been banging her head against a wall for a whole year by issuing memos to her subordinate managers concerning the organization's lack of adequate financial reporting and control. Her perception is that her subordinate managers, while not confronting her on the issue, are ignoring her memos as the financial situation appears to remain unchanged. Then, she hires you as an assistant because of your MPA educational experience. As your first project, she tells you about the financial situation and her perceptions and asks you to make written recommendations for dealing with the situation. What do you recommend? Why?

You are the city administrator of Everytown, Nebraska, population 23,000. You have just learned that:

The City Clerk, on whom you depend for day-to-day office management, is highly dissatisfied with her salary and working conditions, and is working to establish a union for city employees;
The Executive Director of the Housing Authority has just been arrested for pandering and soliciting prostitution;
A young police women has just filed a charge of sexual harassment against your Chief of Police, a man highly respected in the community, and whom you have know for several years.
In the meantime, the business of the City must go on. How will you deal with the above three problems and still see to the day-to-day operations of city services?

Much has been made about the trend to "privatize" public services in recent years. As the head of a public agency with the responsibility to make decisions concerning privatization, what organization, financial, and human resource issues would you consider in making such decisions?

As a management consultant to a public organization you have been requested to make recommendations on how to improve its operations. After reviewing the organization's activities for a full week, you have discovered the following:

the number of constituent complaints concerning the delivery of public services have steadily increased over the past year.
first-line supervisors and department heads have continually overspent their budgeted appropriations for operating expenditures.
employee morale in several departments is quite low and is based on attitudes toward their supervisors and the lack of information about personnel actions affecting them.
capital project completions have consistently fallen behind scheduled dates and have delayed service provision plans by several months.
What do you recommend to improve operation and management of this agency? This can be thought of in terms of further analyzing these problems, anticipating problems, and devising methods for addressing the problems.

You are the chief administrative officer of a large public organization. In the most recent election an entirely new slate of elected officials have come into office with the ringing campaign theme that we "must run government more like a business". You are about to meet with these newly elected officials for the first time. Knowing that they are likely to bring this campaign theme into their discussions with you, how will you respond? Why?.

Employees in Goodoldboye, a small non-profit agency, are "up in arms" about the agency's antiquated compensation system and demand the board of directors take action. The board directs you, the executive director, to devise a new pay scale, one that compares favorably with those in use in similar agencies.

Describe the basic design by which you and your staff would generate the necessary information needed to develop an updated compensation system. Identify the types of information you would obtain, specify how and from where you would obtain this information, and explain how you analyze it. Include appropriate justifications for each of

the components of your research and explain how it helps to create an up-to-date pay plan.

You have recently become Head Honcho in a small public organization. As HH you are concerned for the following reasons:

your department heads are resistant to change and want to operate independently without reporting to you or following your lead in most matters.

your organization has a budget shortfall of significant proportions, yet no department head is willing to make cuts in his/her own department. Rather, each wants to force you to make the choice and, by default, take the "blame" for the effects of the cut.

some unknown employee has drawn a mural of you with horns on the wall of the reception area.

a quality control audit has indicated an excessive error rate and you have been given 90 days to reduce the error rate, or else!

Discuss how you will deal with any two of these problems. In the real world, you have to tackle all four, but we'll give you a break.

Assume that you have just been hired as the Assistant City Manager of Somewhere, Nebraska, population 11,111. Somewhere voters have passed a city ordinance that requires all public buildings to provide smoke-free working environments for their employees, and a smoke-free place in which citizens can come to conduct their business.

The city's Executive Secretary (CES), who is a valued employee is a smoker. He is trying to comply with the smoke-free environment ordinance by keeping his office door closed. This has the effect of trapping the smoke in that room. The CES's office serves as a reception area for visitors to city hall, and all city files are housed in his office. This means that people coming to city hall, and any workers who need to look at city files or need to consult with the CES, are enveloped with smoke when they enter this office. Your first assignment as the new Assistant City Manager is to solve this problem. What will you do?

You are the head of a public agency which has more than 200 employees. You see yourself as a Theory Y manager, and pride yourself on the success you've had with delegating responsibilities to appropriate personnel. You consider your agency to live by both the letter and the intent of the EEO/AA legislation.

Then, out of the blue, a secretary from one of the departments in your agency calls to make an appointment to see you. You can tell from the tone of her voice that she is angry and upset. She tells you that the Personnel Officer has issued a directive to all employees that requires them to formally notify their supervisors in writing if they are applying for any other job in the agency. She believes this directive is a response to her complaint that she is the victim of sexual harassment by her supervisor. She hands you a petition signed by 37 female employees who agree with her, and are requesting that the personnel officer's new directive be rescinded by you. What will you do?

It's pretty much decided that, if one of the candidates for president is elected, ASPA will be asked to assist in developing and implementing new federal policies which implement campaign promises. Assume that the Executive Director of ASPA has asked for your advice. What do you think ASPA can do? What will you tell him about policy development and implementation that will limit ASPA's role, or enhance it?

Assume you are jogging through the streets of Omaha, when a stranger approaches and says, "I know you! You just graduated from UNO with a degree in public administration." "Yep," you say proudly. "Then tell me," he says, "what's public administration? Why does this country need public administrators, anyway?" How will you answer the stranger's questions?

Recently editorials in the newspaper have demanded that state government of Nebraska be operated "more like a business". The governor has called you in and asked you to develop his response to this editorial. What information will you provide the Governor? In what areas do public and private sectors behave similarly? In what areas do they differ? Why? In your response you must present distinctive themes that differentiate public from private organizations and the field of public administration from the broader field of management.

One year ago, in April, Cityville (pop. 80,000), a suburban city, hired you, Arlene Mayberry, as the new city manager. You brought a reputation for sound financial management and were chosen unanimously by the council. Cityville has experienced revenue shortfalls in the past two years due to a decline in sales tax revenue. The shortfall resulted in modest increases in the mill levy during these two years. The school board's

mill levy increased substantially a year ago due to a cutback in state aid to school districts. The county's levy is scheduled to rise modestly for the next three years due to commitments previous commissions made to a significant capital improvements program.

In April, Save Our City, a group dedicated to holding the line on taxes, surprised everyone, including you, by electing two of its slate of three candidates to the city council. The council now consists of these two members, Robert Pipes and Caroline Nixon, both elected to four-year terms; Jane Scott, a very politically astute middle-of-the-road council member who has two years remaining on the council; Max Laney, an ex-police officer supported by the Fraternal Order of Police. Laney also has two years remaining on the council. Ron Reaume, who ran on a platform expressing concern for rebuilding a sense of community and respect for diversity, was elected to a two-year term. Reaume has already said he will not run for reelection. Scott and Laney have not indicated their plans.

You view this group as very diverse politically and potentially difficult to work with. You expect that a number of issues will be decided on 3-2 votes. In the summer following the election, after considerable debate and political maneuvering, the new council accepted the budget you had proposed on one of those 3-2 votes. The fiscal year runs from January 1 to December 31. None of the council members wanted to raise taxes, and the two-mill increase you reluctantly proposed was reduced to one mill with the two Save Our City council members voting against adoption; they favored no tax increase under anything other than financial exigency.

After adoption, Pipes and Nixon jointly issued a press release calling for tightening of the belt, increased productivity, and sacrifices just like those made by private-sector small businesses and ordinary citizens. The newspaper carried a front-page story without editorial comment, even though the publisher is known to be sympathetic to their cause.

After the budget was adopted, during the fall and winter it became obvious that police-community relations were showing signs of strain. A self-appointed task force representing a coalition of culturally diverse groups met and held a number of forums to gather information about how citizens felt they were being treated by the police. Every opinion imaginable was expressed during these forums, which were not well attended. It was clear that individual members of minority populations in Cityville felt they had been treated inequitably by the police. For example, one African-American youth said he was walking home from a late-night job carrying a bag of groceries when he was stopped by the police and told to empty the contents of the bag.

In the spring, responding to a 911 family disturbance call, the police shot and killed an Asian wielding a knife. The police claimed self-defense; the family, speaking little English, was distraught and suggested that the police had acted too quickly and more out of concern for their own safety than for the victim or family.

The event heightened tension in the community, even though the vast majority of Cityville supported the police. The council was aware of this majority, but Reaume in

particular believed something ought to be done and urged city staff to make some suggestions. He became an occasional visitor to the meetings of the task force on police-community relations and pledged to introduce their anticipated report to the council. Laney defended the police at the next council meeting, noting that police work had become more dangerous in Cityville, and that these events, tragic as they are, happen in today's violent world.

The next week, Pipes and Nixon declared that it might be worthwhile to look into a possible contract with the sheriff's department for law enforcement. They contended that the sheriff's department was larger, had better training, and could provide law enforcement more cheaply than Cityville could on its own. Laney went through the roof. The leadership of the police union quickly set up appointments with each of the council members. Reaume backtracked a bit, suggesting that rebuilding the sense of community in Cityville practically required maintaining an independent police force.

As this political maneuvering was going on, the budget process was beginning. The police chief, Jack "Buck" Fischbach, requested a meeting with you. Buck was a no-nonsense cop, professionally trained and tolerant of city managers at best. He had been one of the original founders of the Fraternal Order of Police in Cityville when he was just a corporal, years ago. He reminded the city manager that ten years ago the city had passed a half-cent sales tax to hire new police officers. You knew this. The chief added that since that time, in order to show fiscal restraint, the city had not hired a single officer, despite the addition of some 10,000 citizens. This was news to you, and you kicked yourself for not knowing it already. Further, the chief claimed that the police had become exasperated and very angry because lack of staffing had required them to cut back on the very community-oriented activities they were now being criticized for not having performed. He said he was going to develop and present to you a budget proposal designed to augment staff over a five-year period. You knew that the only way to hire more police would be to raise the mill levy.

After the chief leaves, you get a call from the newspaper publisher wanting to know how things are going.

Based on your knowledge of core and non-core courses in public administration, please respond TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- What are you going to tell the publisher?
- How are you going to approach the budget?
- How are you going to deal with the chief of police?
- How are you going to deal with the council?
- Did you want to become a city manager in the first place?

Midwest General is a not-for-profit hospital built in 1972. Many of the staff have been employed there since that time. Managers in all departments have moved up through the

ranks. The hospital uses a Hay System for determining salaries. Most employees have been there so long that they have reached the highest point in their salary range, and so cannot be given more than a 1 percent raise, unless they are judged "distinguished" in annual performance evaluations. Most are not.

For years the Emergency Room has been extremely busy. Now, with the advent of the "Insta-Care" clinic, usage has declined dramatically. The Emergency Room has had only two managers. The first was there for 15 years and "ran a tight ship". The second manager, who was equally authoritarian, was fired after four years for incompetence. Half of the staff has quit. Those who remain are discouraged and dissatisfied. There have been a number of patient complaints about long waits and inadequate care.

You have been hired to manage the Emergency Room. What will you do to assess the situation, what goals might you select to pursue in managing the unit, and how will you develop a plan of action?

Governor Nelson has proposed reducing state agency budgets by up to 5 percent and is undertaking a "strategic budgeting" exercise throughout state government. Ed Jaksha is standing in the background chuckling. If you were head of a state agency, using the knowledge gained from your courses in the core and those outside the core, how will you handle the following problem?

You are concerned that important programs will be cut, and that your best personnel will leave because expected salary increases will not be forthcoming. Your personnel are already stretched to the limit, as you have the same number of personnel as in 1981 but the service demands have almost doubled.

On top of this, you have requested federal funds to establish a major innovative program high on the list of priorities for the state legislature. The funds require a 25 percent state match which will be impossible with Governor Nelson's recommended cuts.

Finally, you believe your department has been one of the most efficient, effective and productive in State government. However, the response of across the board reductions appears to create a disincentive to such productivity.

You work for a community health center composed of inpatient, outpatient and social service departments. You must develop a management plan for the next two years. Many of the elements, however, are uncertain. Money available through state service contracts; direct revenues from patients; and, the cost of labor to provide those services. Describe how you would go about planning for your department. There are several approaches that

can be taken, so be sure to explain why you used your approach. Also, list any necessary assumptions.

Recent organizational reform movements are proposing ideas very different from the bureaucratic structure prevalent in most public organizations. With the advent of TQM, CQI, benchmarking, re-engineering and other efforts at quality improvement, employees seem to be becoming more involved in organizational decisions. At the same time the Vice-President's National Performance Review and the Winter Report have recommended eliminating layers of middle management.

With this in mind, write an essay in which you critique the position of middle managers in public organizations. What do they contribute? Are they really needed? If they are eliminated or their numbers drastically reduced, how will their traditional duties be handled? Be certain to consider information and knowledge gained in core classes and optional classes - where appropriate - to support your answer.

The newly elected governor's daughter has just finished her two-year Presidential Management Internship (PMI) with the federal government and has been appointed to an assistant deputy director position in a federal agency. The purpose of the PMI is to attract the "best and the brightest" to government service and give them the opportunity to have significant professional learning experiences that will lead them quickly to high levels of administrative responsibility. The governor was so impressed with the PMI that she was able to create the Governor's Management Internship Program (GMIP).

As the Deputy Director of the Division of Personnel you have been assigned the task of implementing the GMIP. The Program will place two highly qualified individuals in each state agency for a period of two years. After successful completion of the internships, the interns can expect to be placed in career civil service positions of responsibility and leadership, although not necessarily in the agency in which they did their internship.

What knowledge, skills, abilities, and other qualifications would you look for in potential interns?

What types of work assignments would you have the interns perform?

What other types of developmental activities would you provide the interns during their two-year internships?

Consider this situation:

Five years from now you find yourself working as the city manager of North Platte, Nebraska. The city's budget is very tight. You are considering budget proposals for next year which you will present to the city council next month. An analyst on your staff, working on the budget for the parks and recreation department, shows you a request in that budget for construction of a new ice skating rink in the wealthier part of town. He shows you a sophisticated cost-benefit analysis he has done of the project which demonstrates to you that the project's costs are substantially more than its benefits.

You call the mayor, explain the analysis to her and propose eliminating the ice rink project from the upcoming budget. The mayor, an astute politician, responds, "You know as well as I do that the residents in that part of town vote, and that they want this ice rink. Further, the council member from that district is planning on running against me next year and this will give him the ammunition he needs to beat me and put you out of a job. Your fancy cost-benefit analysis is nice, but it isn't relevant in the real world of government. Put the ice rink back in and we'll close the park on the poor side of town instead to plug the hole in our budget."

You indicate your indecision to your staff member. Incensed, he tells you, "When you hired me you told me that we would make the right decisions, and not be boxed in by politics. You are selling out, and if you go through with this, you will have my resignation letter on your desk the next morning."

Confused, you call your old professor. He says, "Remember in the MPA program you learned about the dichotomy between politics and administration. As you may recall, I argued in class that this is a false dichotomy, and that good decisions in government can synthesize both concerns. And don't worry about your job."

Questions:

What do you recommend about the ice rink? Justify your actions. Specifically discuss the distributional issue.

Discuss whether or not the politics/administration dichotomy is a false one or not.

Address the management issues involved in dealing with your staff person, the mayor, and the city council.

Finally, what if anything would you tell your friend, the editor of the daily North Platte newspaper, in order to try to influence public opinion?

We currently are being bombarded by movements directed at policy and management reform. Welfare, health care, and education are all slated for massive change. Correspondingly, efforts to reform government are also constantly raised. Most recently they include:

Clinton and Gore's National Performance Review to "reinvent" the federal government. Governor Nelson's attempts to improve the efficiency of state government including the reorganization of state operations

Douglas County's recent initiatives to consolidate departments and institute various personnel, budget and management reforms

The City of Omaha's efforts to instill "business" practices in city hall, privatize city functions and facilities and increase economic efficiencies.

What does the discipline of public administration have to offer to these various initiatives and efforts to reform government and the programs that government provides? What elements of the core classes in public administration relate to the ongoing debate about reforming government through reorganization, benchmarking, TQM, performance management, strategic planning, performance auditing and program evaluation to name a few? What would you tell Vice President Gore, Governor Nelson, Commissioner Duda or Mayor Daub about the need, utility, benefits and costs of their efforts? Why?

In the year 2000, you are hired as the city manager of Ahamo, Nebraska, a city of 10,000 on the Platte River. Its claim to fame is that it is the site of William Jennings Bryan's summer retreat, and more recently the home of Tommy Touchdown, former star quarterback of the Nebraska Cornhuskers, now the highest paid player in the NFL with the Carolina Panthers.

The city is facing a large projected deficit for fiscal year (FY) 2001. In addition, federal revenues that have funded a wastewater treatment plant will be eliminated in FY 2002. The city contracts with the County for fire safety services and utilities. The city police are unionized. No other employees are in a union. Because of the difficult situation of the city and because salaries have been frozen for a year, morale is low among city employees.

The City Council has asked you to provide a list of options for reducing the potential budget gap in FY 2001 and FY 2002. The Republicans on the Council insist that the budget be balanced by cutting spending, while the Democrats have given you informal signals that they would support a revenue increase if you take the lead on it and can present a good case for it. Please prepare one or more set of recommendations, giving justifications for your actions. What are some of the potential dangers associated with your recommendations?

Explain specifically what personnel reductions you would recommend and how you would select the positions to be reduced. How does the unionization of the police force affect your decision? How would you deal with the morale problem?

One of the recently-elected members of the council was elected on the platform of "doing more with less". In several public forums he has said that the mark of good public manager in these times is their ability to downsize government. He says that the citizens that there will not be a reduction of services or a tax increase, that better management

will solve the problem. The editor of the city newspaper has asked you to write a short editorial in response to the council member. What do you write?
What changes do you recommend for the City to avoid such problems in the longer term?

AHAMO, NEBRASKA
Projected Budget

FY 2001

Revenues 900,000
Property Tax 100,000
Other Taxes
(utilities and lodging excise)

Intergovernmental Aid
Federal 50,000
State 200,000
Interest 20,000
Fines, misc revenue 30,000
TOTAL \$1,300,000

Expenditures
Salaries and Wages 800,000
Benefits 150,000
Contractual expenses/other current 200,000
Equipment and capital 100,000
Debt
Principial 180,000
Interest 60,000
TOTAL \$1,490,000

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Combined Tax Rate=\$1.10/\$100 assessed value
City portion=20% of total
Assessed property value=market value
Employees by Department
(Full-time equivalents)
Parks and Recreation 6 (includes 2 FTE summer positions)
Public Works 7
Police 8
Government Administration 4
TOTAL 25

You have recently accepted a position as division supervisor of a major department of large nonprofit social services agency. So far, your division appears to be unaffected by the trend toward contracting out social services delivery systems to private firms, however, your division IS likely to undergo restructuring in the future as funding and responsibility for many federal and state programs is delegated to non profit agencies. In fact, you may find yourself ADDING staff as time goes on.

In the meantime, you face more immediate concerns. It quickly becomes apparent that there is significant tension among the personnel in your division, chiefly because of work-family issues. Changes in the labor market over the past ten years are reflected in your division: a significant percent of employees (over half) are either members of dual career couples and/or are parents of young children. The older, more traditional employees are finding the change difficult to accept. It seems to them that there is less commitment to the job than there used to be. The state has a generous work-related family benefits package, including a flexible leave policy where employees can use their leave for family matters in one or two hour increments as well as entire days when their children are sick. In addition, several of the women employees were on maternity leave at the same time, both key clerical and professional staff. It seems to these older workers that people abuse the flexible leave policy and get off easy, leaving it to those without children or with spouses who work in the home to shoulder the burden of work. The previous supervisor didn't seem to be aware of these hardships. In fact, the older, more traditional employees never brought these problems to the supervisor's attention, instead silently picking up the slack in the workload.

Those who have young children, including male employees with dual career spouses, see the situation differently. They feel like the previous division supervisor approved their requests for leave, but then made them feel guilty and inadequate for taking time off for essential family matters. The reality is that the make-up of the workforce is changing they argue, and an organization culture which disapproves of working parents and dual career couples will not be able to retain highly qualified employees. The previous division supervisor merely reflected the old organization culture, rather than try to manage change and manage diversity in a positive manner.

As the new division supervisor it is your responsibility to create a more harmonious working environment, particularly so that your division (and department) will be better positioned for major policy changes down the road. Explain the specific steps you would take to change the situation and WHY, citing ideas or concepts from CORE as well as optional MPA courses that are relevant to this case.

As a consultant, you are asked to provide advice in the following situation:

Four small townships in rural Jayhawk County, Kansas, with separate high schools are considering consolidating into one county-wide school. The four communities

(Alexander, Buchanan, Clinton, and Dole) all have aging facilities, and if they do not consolidate, will have to build new schools soon. The four high schools currently provide the minimum instruction required by the state. Most of the teachers do not have graduate degrees and, according to the state-designed pay-scale, are paid less than the statewide average. Few of them have training in areas that the merger proponents (Better Schools for Jayhawks) argue are now necessary in high school: computers, foreign language, and advanced math and science.

There is active opposition to consolidation from many. Many fear that property taxes will rise. The teachers are worried about statements by some school board members that they will either have to get additional training to teach more specialized subjects or be replaced by newly-hired teachers (whose salaries will be substantially less). Many parents are opposed to busing that will be required. And Clinton High School student-athletes have started a group called Save Our School (S.O.S.) that opposes consolidation on the grounds that they will be unable to defend their state basketball championship in Division 1-A (small schools).

The four school boards ask you to advise them about the following issues:

What are the implications of the personnel issues concerning the teachers? Would it be better to lay off the lowest performing teachers and hire new teachers with more specific skills?

Explain to them how the financing of the new school could be done and the likely impact on property taxes.

Because of the polarizing nature of the issue, what feasible compromises are there? Are they advisable?

Much has been made about the trend to "privatize" public services in recent years. As the head of a public agency with the responsibility to make decisions concerning privatization, what organization, financial, and human resource issues would you consider in making such decisions?

The mission of the Master of Public Administration as stated in the Graduate Catalog is as follows:

to provide knowledge and skills appropriate for careers in the public service; and

to instill a commitment to the profession of public service in a democratic society.

How have your core and optional courses related to the mission? What specific elements of these courses have been most useful accomplishing your personal professional goals?

As the result of recent state legislation, the city of Paradise now has great incentive to abolish its Department of Health. Under the guidelines of the new legislation, the city would transfer all responsibility and some resources for public health to the county. This move would provide some much needed efficiency in the overall administration of the city. It would also provide tax relief to city residents because they currently pay taxes to support municipal Department of Health and a county Department of Health while receiving services only from the city. As one might imagine, many professional and community organizations within the city are opposed to this move. The demands and needs of city residents are dramatically different than those of the suburban and rural residents of the county. The major concern of these stakeholders is that allocation of resources and priorities of the health care agenda will negatively impact city residents.

Interestingly, the city council and county commissioners have taken a hands off approach to the policy implications of this move. They have framed it primarily as an issue of government reform based on the perceived need to reduce costs and improve the efficiency of services delivered by the public sector. As a result, health administrators at the city and county level have been given considerable latitude in developing the framework for a consolidated Department of Health. Select one of the three approaches listed below that characterize the way in which a public administrator can go about articulating the public interest. Based on the approach you select, how would you lead the development and implementation of a consolidated Department of Health?

Approaches to the Public Interest:

The Rationalist approach stresses the expertise and neutral competence of the administrator. The responsibility of the administrator in this framework is to translate the policy objectives of the legislature into specific plans and programs. The public interest in this context is articulated through the policy objectives of the legislature. The administrator uses his/her technical expertise to optimize the efficient use of available resources.

The Idealist approach emphasizes the normative dimension of public administration. The public administrator assumes that he/she is an important agent of the public interest and that he/she has legitimate authority and autonomy within the policy making process. This authority and autonomy is undergirded by a set of public service values that includes not only concerns for efficiency and politics but a concern for justice, representativeness and dialogue.

The Realist approach assumes that the public interest is constituted from the interplay of competing interests in a pluralistic society. The public administrator's role in that context is to manage the continuing readjustment of conflicting interests. Thus the realist is skeptical about any substantive view of the public interest.

Drawing from all your core classes, describe what key skills, competencies and abilities public and non-profit managers will need at the turn of the century to be effective in providing public services to citizens, constituents and taxpayers?

What are the key barriers to becoming an effective public or non-profit manager? Answer this question in the context of organizational, political and economic factors that effect managerial success. How can these barriers be overcome? How do these barriers differ from those confronted in the private sector?

The State of Nebraska has recently merged five code agencies into three newly created entities under the umbrella of the State Department of Health and Human Services. The recently disbanded agencies included the Departments of Aging, Juvenile Services, Public Institutions, Health and Social Services. The new structure includes three distinct agencies focused on service delivery (Health and Human Services), Regulation and Licensure and Finance & Support.

discuss strategies they would use if they were in charge of this effort
what pitfalls or landmines might likely trip up the effort
how would they overcome the pitfalls and defuse the landmines
make a prediction as to whether the restructuring will succeed or fail, and justify your choice.

In 1987, E.S. Savas wrote,
"Waste in government will not yield to preaching, indignation, or finger-pointing at villains. The forces of competition must be brought to bear, to overcome the monopoly mechanisms we have unwittingly introduced in public services...In government services, the emphasis has been on better public administration, preservice education, in-service training, civil service reform, budgeting reforms, computers, quantitative methods, reorganization, organizational development, sensitivity training, incentive systems, productivity programs, joint labor-management committees, and the like. All of these are desirable, but they fail to identify, let alone address, the underlying, structural problem of government monopoly, which is the dominant factor responsible for malperformance of government services."

Do you agree? Why or why not? Carefully justify your answer. Then outline a general approach which you believe can improve government service delivery, and explain what improvements you expect as a result.

Much has been made about the trend to "privatize" public services in recent years. As the head of a public agency with the responsibility to make decisions concerning privatization, what organizational, financial, and human resource issues would you consider in making such decisions?

In 1989, Astrid Merget wrote,

"For students who want to serve and make a difference, offering careers as managers or analysts will not do the trick. We need to demonstrate the link between those careers and the lofty missions of government: cleaning the air, making the streets safe, unlocking a cure for AIDS, internationalizing the economy, bringing the underclass into the American mainstream. Attaining such goals requires leadership, not mere technical skills. We teachers of government and public administration understand that. Our vision of the holder of a master's degree in our field is that of a leader, not merely a manager or an analyst.

First, compare and contrast the roles of manager, analyst, and leader in the public sector. Second, do you agree with Merget? Finally, how could a public administrator reconcile their traditional role of neutral administrative competence with a leadership role?

The role of business and the private sector has increased in the implementation of public programs. This fact has made the work of public program managers (administrators) more complicated and demanding. What are some of the important implications of privatization to public administration? How does increased privatization affect the balance between efficiency and responsiveness that public administrators must maintain?

Many public goods and services are delivered to the public by a complex set of interactions among public agencies, private businesses, and non-profit organizations. Rather than primarily managing the resources and activities of public organizations, many public administrators now coordinate implementation networks. You are a manager of a division in a state government agency. Your division recently received a grant from the national government to provide a new set of services. Because your agency does not want to add more state employees it contracted with a non-profit organization to delivery a portion of these services.

Discuss some of the factors you need to consider in organizing and managing this public service delivery system. For instance, what are some of the skills needed to manage

programs involving, intergovernmental relations, contracting, public-private partnerships, or non-profit organizations? How do these skill help public managers maintain accountability and control of these implementation networks?

You are the new executive director of ABC Human Services a large non-profit agency that serves a regional area providing a range of services. A number of issues have hit you the first month on the job. First, The State, which provides a large amount of your funding is requiring non profit agencies to contract under at "continuum of care" model which requires you to work with other provider agencies jointly to bid for a State contract.

Second, your board has had 50 percent turnover and new board members are demanding that the agency be more "efficient" and provide "benchmarks" and "outcome measures" just like business. Third, the agency has had a number of complaints to state and local human rights commissions about discriminatory hiring and promotion practices.

How would you respond to each of these issues? How does your respond link back to MPA coursework?

EBM Corp. (a fictitious firm) makes a product called "energy binder mechanisms" and has its headquarters in Omaha. In addition to employing several hundred workers in Omaha, a few hundred more are employed at another facility in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. External (national) changes in the energy binder mechanism industry have resulted in decreased demand for energy binder mechanisms, and prices for the product have fallen, causing EBM Corp. to have difficulty maintaining strong profits.

EBM Corp. has turned to the NE Legislature for permanent corporate income tax relief. EBM Corp. is threatening to move their headquarters to Fort Lauderdale if they don't get permanent exemption from corporate income taxes. You are the legislative analyst charged with the task of evaluating whether EBM Corp. should receive the tax exemption, and your report will be presented to the Legislature.

A. Analyzing the situation, you are puzzled by EBM's insistence on a tax break, because their problems appear to stem from national changes in market demand. In order to make more profit, why doesn't EBM simply increase their production of energy binder mechanisms? Briefly, show why lowered costs (via the corporate income tax exemption) result in improved profitability.

B. The media in Omaha is very pro-EBM, and many citizens appear to support the proposed tax exemption for EBM. Your supervisor has specifically asked you to provide

the "other side of the story" by performing a careful and fair review of the benefits and costs to Nebraska of the tax exemption. In your benefit-cost report, how would you organize the analysis and what additional information (besides the information provided above) would you want to use in your analysis?

Recently, a major theme of government reform emphasizes the value of accountability.

- (a) What are some of the sources of this theme?
 - (b) How has it manifested itself in recent government reform efforts?
 - (c) Does the value of accountability conflict with other important values in government? If so, which ones, and how has the conflict manifested itself?
 - (d) Has the emphasis on accountability been a positive influence on government?
-

Governmental and non-profit organizations routinely use various forecasting techniques to develop scenarios about what the future might look like (e.g., will the number of driver's license learner's permits grow or decrease; what will be the change in sales tax revenues over the next 12 months; will the number of homeless mentally ill increase at a faster or slower rate in the next 18 months?). Develop an essay which discusses the key assumptions, sources of data, strengths and weaknesses of at least one qualitative and one quantitative technique for developing a forecast. Next, discuss more broadly the limitations of using numbers to inform decision making in the public and non-profit sector. Finally, identify the steps that analysts can take to make sure that numbers (e.g., forecasts) play an appropriate role in the decision making process.

You have recently accepted a position as division supervisor of a major department of large non-profit social services agency. So far, your division appears to be unaffected by the trend toward contracting out social services delivery systems to private firms, however, your division is likely to undergo restructuring in the future as funding and responsibility for many federal and state programs is delegated to non-profit agencies. In fact, you may find yourself adding staff as time goes on.

In the meantime, you face more immediate concerns. It quickly becomes apparent that there is significant tension among the personnel in your division, chiefly because of work-family issues. Changes in the labor market over the past ten years are reflected in your division: a significant percent of employees (over half) are either members of dual career couples and/or are parents of young children. The older, more traditional employees are finding the change difficult to accept. It seems to them that there is less

commitment to the job than there used to be. The state has a generous work-related family benefits package, including a flexible leave policy where employees can use their leave for family matters in one or two hour increments as well as entire days when their children are sick. In addition, several of the women employees were on maternity leave at the same time, both key clerical and professional staff. It seems to these older workers that people abuse the flexible leave policy and get off easy, leaving it to those without children or with spouses who work in the home to shoulder the burden of work. The previous supervisor didn't seem to be aware of these hardships. In fact, the older, more traditional employees never brought these problems to the supervisor's attention, instead silently picking up the slack in the workload.

Those who have young children, including male employees with dual career spouses, see the situation differently. They feel like the previous division supervisor approved their requests for leave, but then made them feel guilty and inadequate for taking time off for essential family matters. The reality, they argue, is that the make-up of the workforce is changing, and an organization culture which disapproves of working parents and dual career couples will not be able to retain highly qualified employees. The previous division supervisor merely reflected the old organization culture, rather than try to manage change and diversity in a positive manner.

As the new division supervisor it is your responsibility to create a more harmonious working environment, particularly so that your division (and department) will be better positioned for major policy changes down the road. Explain the specific steps you would take to change the situation and why, citing ideas or concepts from core as well as optional MPA courses that are relevant to this case.

(a) What is your specialization/concentration in the MPA program?

(b) Briefly describe the thesis of a book or article that you read for a class in the MPA program that is relevant to your specialization. You need not give a full citation of the work, but at least give the name of the author(s) and as much of the title as you know. If it is a journal article, which journal was it published in?

(c) Relate the themes of that book or article to your specialization area. Focus on the public sector implications. Discuss one (no more) of these topics:

Future trends in your specialization area that will present challenges to persons like yourself in the future, how the author(s) suggest addressing them, and your critique of their argument.

Critical dilemmas or trade-offs in management or policy-making, how the author(s) suggest addressing them, and your critique of their argument.

Systemic problems in current practice or policy, how the author(s) suggest addressing them, and your critique of their argument.

(d) How does your response in (c) affect your view of the state of the art in your specialization area?

Please respond to the issues posed by this case to the fullest extent of your ability.

The Background

Humanity Inc. is a not-for-profit human services corporation that provides counseling, education services, job training and employment services to clients in several states throughout the Midwest. The corporation has a number of grants and purchase service agreements with government agencies and insurance companies.

The senior vice-president for operations, Joe B. Green, directly supervises the operation of 21 treatment centers. Approximately 10 more centers are planned for the next three years. Each treatment center is headed up by a manager who runs the center with a relatively high degree of freedom. A typical treatment center has two supervisors, several case workers, an intake staff and three clerical personnel. Although the centers have standard systems in place that are common to all centers, the center manager is free to manage the center as he/she desires, and different centers have greatly varying structures, procedures and climates.

A Change at the University Center

Two weeks ago, the manager at the University branch informed Joe Green that he would be leaving the center at the end of the following week. Faced with an unanticipated managerial vacancy at a large and critical branch, Green met with his staff and decided to appoint Athena Savoy, as manager of the University branch. She was notified on Wednesday and was told to report to the University branch on the following Monday to take up her duties as center manager.

Athena's Background

Savoy had been with the Humanity Inc., for a few years when she received the sudden notice of her appointment as center manager. She has an undergraduate degree in social work and received an MPA four years ago. Upon graduation she had several offers from nonprofit and public organizations. She chose Humanity, Inc. because she felt that there would be greater opportunities to join the managerial ranks. She started out in the organization's training program, and was rotated through a wide variety of assignments. During this period, Athena learned that she had been identified as a "fast mover" and that her performance was being watched closely. After the training rotation period, she spent

two years as a caseworker and one year as an interim supervisor at one of the Humanity's urban centers.

Information about the University Branch

Having heard about her move on Wednesday, Athena spent most of Thursday and Friday talking to some of her contacts within the organization about the University branch, while she tried to conclude her other work responsibilities. The University branch, one of the largest in the system, had been a problem center for some time, with quite a bit of turnover among the employees and managerial staff. Located adjacent to the state university campus, it faced a clientele different from almost any other branch in the system. Athena had listed the important things that she had learned about the branch (see exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1: University Branch

Here is a summary of important information about the University branch:

It is a large center with 6 intake workers and twelve caseworkers, fairly good physical plant and high demand for services.

The rate of referrals has been very poor over the past three years, but there has been a recent increase over the past two or three months. Some people feel that this reflects the absence of any management and the referrals are not "good ones" (that the failure rate will go up as a result of the recent increase in referrals).

The Center's staff is very young, particularly the caseworkers. All except two of the caseworkers are women. Most have at least a Bachelor of Arts degree; several have Masters degrees.

There is no assistant manager, but one of the supervisory caseworkers seems to function as an assistant manager. He is resented by the caseworkers and seems to get into disagreements with the other supervisory caseworker, who has been at the center for 17 years.

Intake staff seems to be of uneven quality. There are some real winners, but some deadwood also.

Turnover among caseworkers is very high. It has run about 55 percent per year for the last five years. Recently the caseworkers submitted an informal group grievance to the manager complaining about the working hours and low pay.

Competition for full paying clients is keen. Several other organizations have facilities in the vicinity of the university branch.

For the last year, the branch has consistently failed to operate in the black and is projected to show losses for the next fiscal year.

You have been hired by top management to resolve this issue. What would you do? Justify your answer using a theoretical perspective that is relevant to the situation and discuss why you believe it will be effective.

There has been much discussion about the "new public management" (NPM) as a means to reform the public sector. Grounded in the value of economic efficiency, NPM advocates use of market-like management techniques to maximize performance outputs and minimize resource inputs. Briefly describe some of the techniques included in NPM, then assess their advantages and disadvantages for public agencies and citizens.

The relationship between politics (or policy making) and administration has always been a central concern of the study and practice of public administration. Select two events or issues from your coursework that are directly related to policy making and administration and discuss what these items tell us about this important relationship.

Recent public sector reform efforts have focused on developing and implementing performance measures and then using this information to determine budget allocations. Select one of the following organizations:

- a city fire department
- a hospital emergency room
- a municipally owned and operated general aviation airport
- a nonprofit day-care center for children from low-income families, funded primarily through a government contract.
- a university admissions office

Develop a list of appropriate performance measures for the agency you have selected, and include your rationale. Discuss the advantages and potential problems with using these performance measures to guide budgetary decisions. How useful would these be to the organization?

Please give short answers to eight of the following questions:

- (a) The name, term of service, and one major accomplishment for a U.S. President
- (b) The names of a congressional committee, interest group, and federal agency in a specific policy area
- (c) The name of two leading academic journals relevant to your MPA study and a general description of the sort of articles they publish
- (d) The difference between "Theory X" and "Theory Y"
- (e) Describe a market failure and a possible remedy for it
- (f) A brief explanation of one threat to internal or external validity
- (g) The three streams in Kingdon's policy-making model
- (h) The name and viewpoint (briefly) of a nationally prominent scholar in public administration
- (i) The citation of an important book or article in your specialization and a brief description of its major point(s)
- (j) A brief description of an important U.S. Supreme Court case and its impact

Please answer one of the following two questions:

1. (a) What changes occurred in policy and management practice in your specialization area as a result of the attacks of September 11, 2001?

(b) What future challenges do managers and decision-makers in the area of your specialization face as a result of these changes? Be specific.

(c) What social goals or governmental practices might be threatened by these changes? Again, be specific. How can we reconcile the old goals and practices with current concerns?
-

Many states (including Nebraska) are having gubernatorial elections this year. You are asked by a prominent newspaper in your state to write a series of Memos to the Governor on some of the major policy issues facing the incoming Governor and to suggest a set of workable management strategies to address these issues. Specifically they ask you to address three of these issues of your choosing:

The state budget crisis,

The state's problem of recruiting and retaining good personnel,

Heavy demand for improvements in state transportation infrastructure with dwindling federal resources,

The challenge of improving the capacity and impact of philanthropic organizations serving the state,

Problems with the state welfare system in the wake of the recession, federal changes, and limited willingness of taxpayers to fund programs,

Access to health care, and the need to improve public health programs in the wake of terrorist threats, and concerns about food safety and water quality,

Local school issues, including federal proposals for student testing and school performance benchmarks, vouchers and school choice, and the school financing crisis.

As you do so, note relevant literature and concepts from your course work that can help the next Governor and his or her staff. Include in your essay a discussion of strategies for implementation of these new policies.

Recently, the federal government established cultural and linguistically appropriate standards (CLAS) that must be met in the provision of social services. CLAS requires public entities to ensure that their services are provided in ways that are sensitive to cultural and linguistic preferences of citizens (e.g., language or religion). Failure to implement these standards could cost an agency or a jurisdiction federal grant dollars, or even result in court action. Pick a state or local agency and imagine that you are the senior manager responsible for changing your unit's procedures so that they comply with CLAS. Please discuss these questions:

- (a) What are the likely barriers to making the necessary changes?
 - (b) What actions would you take to overcome these barriers?
 - (c) Which types of changes are most likely to succeed and why?
-

In some areas of the nation, the problem of “affordable housing” has become acute. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), some 12 million renter and homeowner households, currently pay more than 50 percent of their annual incomes for housing, far above the 30 percent of annual income considered affordable by HUD. Further, according to HUD a family with one full-time worker earning the minimum wage cannot afford the local fair-market rent for a two-bedroom apartment anywhere in the United States. In response to this, activists and governments in many areas have proposed many different policies designed to bring housing costs down to acceptable levels. Apply knowledge from your course work to analyze three potential policies to address the situation:

- (a) Rent controls limiting the rent in an area to a specified amount, for example, no greater than 30 percent of the median household income in the area;
- (b) Property tax credits and development incentives given to developers of housing that will meet affordability targets (again usually expressed as having a monthly rent no greater than a specified amount; and
- (c) Housing vouchers given directly to families to help them pay for the cost of housing.

You have just taken over as manager of the Department of Administrative Services in the City of Goldenrod, population 150,000. There are 50 employees in the department, a few of whom have been there for over 25 years. You have worked for the City for ten years, but in a different department.

Although you knew the department had many problems, you decided to utilize your managerial skills to move the department forward. The previous manager had tried to build departmental teams in an attempt to break down some of the conflict evident among employees. This effort, however, was not properly done and the situation is worse than before the teams were formed. This is only one of several problems. Others that you know about include: low productivity, cliques, low skill levels, and lack of respect for the department managers. You know that you must turn this around in a short time in order to have any credibility with the staff.

- (a) Diagnose the problems, including those underlying the obvious ones.
- (b) What is the first thing you would do to improve employee relations?
- (c) Describe managerial strategies that you would initiate over the next year.
- (d) How will you handle the long-term employees?
- (e) What are your realistic expectations for the organizational behavior aspects of your department over the next two years?

Please read the following case:

Louis Ronaldo was just named the director of public works. Louis recently graduated with a master of public administration degree. Excited to start work, he heads to the maintenance yard to meet some of the foreman. His first encounter is with a senior foreman named Harold. Harold has been with the public works department for sixteen years. Harold is proud of the way he responds to problems and confident of his ability to handle them. He has never asked for or been given help. He works out of the city garage, which is four miles from city hall, where Louis is located. Harold sees himself as removed from politics and from the overall operations and problems of the department. Harold has seen many leaders come and go, and he really doesn't care what Louis does, so long as he is left alone to do his job to prevent problems and deal with everyday decisions. Most of the other department employees think like Harold, and most have worked there for many years. They have gotten used to working independently, don't see much of each other; and don't want to. Each worker knows his job and doesn't really care what the other employees do or think. Although no one works too hard, there are few citizen complaints.

Louis has different ideas, however. He wants to introduce participative management to the department, evaluate strengths and weaknesses and threats and opportunities. He believes that if all public works employees meet regularly to discuss problems and develop solutions and develop strategies and actions plans the department could be more successful in meeting the goals of the mayor and council and in responding to the demands of citizens. He also thinks workers would feel better about the department if they work more closely together.

Concerned about the existing culture, Louis calls you, an organizational consultant with experience in both strategic planning and organizational development. He wants you to come up with two strategies: a strategic plan for the public works department and a planned change strategy for implementing a participative management model for the department. Time is of the essence and so TODAY you only have to develop either a strategic plan OR a planned change strategy. Explain in detail each element of the plan and the key issues Louis is likely to face as he moves ahead with your plan.

Recently in Nebraska, some business interest groups have opposed tax increases because they argue that higher taxes reduce job growth. Articulate a research design that would test this hypothesis. Clearly identify the dependent variable, and some relevant independent variables. Assuming you could get any data you want what would you choose, and how would it best be collected? Then discuss any likely threats to the validity of the study. Finally, speculate as to what results you think you might find, and their policy implications.

Recent public sector reform efforts have focused on making public organizations more accountable. Select one of the following organizations:

- a municipally owned and operated general aviation airport
- a non-profit organization serving the homeless.
- a university financial aid office
- a non-profit hospital pediatrics clinic
- a state child abuse and neglect agency
- a city public works department

(a) What measures would you suggest to enhance the accountability of the organization?

Be specific.

(b) Specifically to whom should it be more accountable? If there are more than one set of clients, discuss any conflicts likely to result.

(c) What specific mechanisms or institutional procedures could be used to achieve accountability in this case?

(d) What negative effects might occur as a result of the emphasis on accountability?

(e) Critics of the accountability movement argue that it conflicts with democratic values.

Discuss this argument in the context of your example.

State governments are facing severe fiscal pressures--some have described the situation as the worst fiscal crisis for the states since World War II. Imagine you are the Director of the Governor's Office for Budget and Policy Development in the State of Jefferson. Governor Webster is facing the potential opposition of State Senator Calhoun in her party's primary who has pledged to, "root out the fat and corruption in state government and cut taxes to improve the state's business climate." The Governor has asked you to craft a budget that will, as much as possible, maintain services without increasing any of the major taxes. After hours of poring over the options with your staff, you are convinced that the Governor's request is not possible. Tomorrow you will meet with the Governor to suggest a set of budgetary and policy strategies to propose to the Legislature.

(a) What broad policy and budgetary strategies would you suggest to address the problem? What is your justification for these strategies and why is this justification compelling?

(b) What political strategies would you suggest? How do you reconcile the political strategies with the policy/budgetary strategies?

(c) Prepare a set of talking points for the Governor to address the expected criticism of Sen. Calhoun.

(d) How would you propose that Governor Webster explain the issues to the public and to affected state agencies?

Governing magazine, in conjunction with faculty at UNO and Syracuse University, have been grading the performance of state and local governments. Five areas of government management are considered: financial management, capital management, human resources, managing for results, and information technology. Listed below are the criteria used in the grading. Please select one of the five management areas below, and answer these questions about the criteria for the area you have selected.

(a) Critique these criteria. Is there anything missing that should be included? What values undergird these criteria, and are they appropriate values?

(b) In the process of grading, the various criteria for each management area need to be explicitly weighted to calculate a total grade. Using a 100 point scale, how would you weight the importance of each of these criteria and what is your justification for these priorities?

(c) Apply them to an organization with which you are familiar. How well does that organization perform according to these criteria?

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

1. Does the government have a multi-year perspective on budgeting, including: meaningful revenue and expenditure estimates; long-term revenue and expenditure estimates; and measures to gauge future fiscal impact of financial decisions?

2. Does the government have mechanisms that preserve stability and fiscal health, including: structural balance between revenues and expenditures; use of contingency-planning devices such as rainy day funds; appropriate management of long-term liabilities; rational investment and cash management policies?

3. Does the government provide sufficient financial information to policy makers, managers and citizens, including: accurate and thorough financial reports; useful financial data; a means for communicating budgetary and financial data to citizens; timely financial reporting; the capacity to gauge the cost of delivering programs or services; a budget that is delivered on time?

4. Does the government have appropriate control over financial operations, including: sufficient control over expenditures; appropriate managerial flexibility; solid management of procurement, including contracts?

CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

1. Does the government conduct a thorough analysis of future needs, including: a formal capital plan that coordinates and prioritizes capital activities; a multi-year linkage between operating and capital budgeting; a multi-year linkage between strategic planning and capital budgeting; sufficient data to support analysis?

2. Does government adequately monitor and evaluate projects through their implementation at both the entity-wide and agency levels?

3. Does the government conduct appropriate maintenance of capital assets with sufficient data to adequately plan for sufficient maintenance and funding?

HUMAN RESOURCES

1. Does the government conduct strategic analysis of present and future human resource needs (work-force planning)?

2. Can the government obtain the employees it needs by hiring in a timely manner and giving managers appropriate discretion in hiring and conducting effective recruiting efforts?

3. Is the government able to maintain an appropriately skilled work force by: conducting appropriate training; retaining skilled employees; and disciplining or terminating employees without undue constraints?

4. Can the government motivate employees to perform effectively by: rewarding superior performance through cash or non-cash incentives; evaluating the performance of employees effectively; providing sufficient opportunity for employee feedback; maintaining productive labor-management relations?

5. Does the government have a civil service structure that supports its ability to achieve work-force goals including: a classification system that is coherent and of appropriate size; personnel policies that permit flexibility in civil service and pay structure; and good communications of human resource policies and goals to employees?

MANAGING FOR RESULTS

1. Does the government engage in results-oriented strategic planning in which: strategic objectives are identified and provide a clear purpose; government leadership effectively communicates objectives to employees; government plans are responsive to input from citizens and other stakeholders, including employees; agency plans are coordinated with central government plans?

2. Does the government develop indicators and evaluative data that can measure progress toward results and accomplishments and does it take steps to ensure that this data is valid and accurate?

3. Do leaders and managers use results data for policy making, budgeting, management and evaluation of progress?

4. Are there organizations within the government whose responsibility it is to evaluate programs or agencies and are their conclusions utilized?

5. Does government communicate the results of its activities to stakeholders?

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

1. Do government-wide and agency-level information technology systems provide information that adequately supports managers' needs and strategic goals?
2. Do government information technology systems form a coherent architecture and are strategies in place to support present and future coherence in architecture?
3. Does the government conduct meaningful multi-year technology planning, including: an information technology planning process that is sufficiently centralized; providing managers appropriate input into the planning process; creating government-wide and agency IT plans?
4. Is information technology training adequate for end-users and technology specialists?
5. Can the government evaluate and validate the extent to which information technology system benefits justify investment?
6. Can needed IT systems be procured in a timely manner with appropriate controls to prevent going over budget?
7. Do IT systems support the government's ability to communicate with and provide services to its citizens?

Information technology has dramatically changed society in just a few years. Focusing on one area of the public or non-profit sector, how has information technology affected management practice in recent years? What problems or opportunities are presented by these changes? What issues do these changes pose for democratic government in a diverse society?

Alzheimer's disease is becoming more common. It is estimated that 50% of persons over 85 years of age have the disease. It poses significant problems for our health care system. With life expectancies increasing, and as the "baby boom" population ages, the potential is that larger numbers of persons will suffer from this disease. Caring for persons with this disease is very expensive. It requires 24-hour care and attention either from family members, or if done outside of the family, from qualified staff in facilities that are licensed by states. Many families struggle to care for their loved ones or to afford the costs of this care. Medicare (the health insurance plan for the elderly, financed by the payroll tax) does not cover long term care. Medicaid (the health insurance plan for the poor, financed by general federal and state tax dollars) is available when a person "spends down" their resources to levels determined by states. Long-term care insurance is

available through private insurers, and some employers are now offering to subsidize long term care insurance premiums for their employees.

You are a policy advisor to the President. He asks you to present him with the best two options to deal with this problem. He also asks you to address these specific questions for each option:

- (a) How would the option be financed?
- (b) Would the option require additional regulation on employers? If so, what is the justification for this regulatory burden?
- (c) What is the ethical justification for each option?
- (d) Which of the two options do you recommend and why?

Public programs, if they are to produce their intended policy effects, must be managed in the multiple political-administrative arenas of the American constitutional order. Given the complexity of the implementation process, program managers often find themselves stymied by the difficulties of bridging the gap between policy-makers and citizen-clientele. Implementing a national policy or program requires an extensive effort to pull together a large number of agencies and jurisdictions as well as nonprofit and for profit organizations. the struggle to assemble the necessary elements encounters many obstacles and pathologies which may deflect the program from its mandated goals.

Using your knowledge of public programs, select a major domestic program and:

- a) identify the major points of administrative discretion;
- b) make a judgment about the extent to which the implementation of this particular program has been distorted or uncoupled [or has been faithfully implemented] from legislative intent at each of the major points within the chain of activities from Washington, DC, to localities such as Lincoln or Omaha; and
- c) recommend some strategies for improving or overcoming any points of pathology in the implementation of the program [or explain why the program has avoided many of the common obstacles to program implementation].

Over the past several years Governor Johanns has proposed reducing state agency budgets by as much as 10 percent. This, in turn, elicited "strategic budgeting" exercises throughout state government. If you were head of a state agency, using the knowledge

gained from your courses in the core and those outside the core, how would you handle the following problem?

- You are concerned that important programs will be cut, and that your best personnel will leave because expected salary increases will not be forthcoming. Your personnel are already stretched to the limit, as you have the same number of personnel as you did five years ago but the service demands have almost doubled.
- On top of this, you have requested federal funds to establish a major innovative program high on the list of priorities for the state legislature. The funds require a 25 percent state match which will be impossible with the governor's recommended cuts.
- Finally, you believe your department has been one of the most efficient, effective and productive in State government, however, the response of across the board reductions appears to create a disincentive to such productivity.

The management of human resources is critical to organizational success, yet there are numerous challenges to public sector human management that may impede productivity and reinforce the negative "bureaucratic" reputation of government. What solutions can you suggest for the following challenges:

- balancing employee competence with the need for government to be representative of every aspect of the population
- the significant redefinition of government work in recent years including the management of non-governmental employees through the privatization process
- changing workforce demographics

Many different explanations of policy formulation exist. For example, in PA 8300 you probably studied explanations such as 1) traditional political factors, 2) socioeconomic factors, 3) political culture, 4) agenda-setting, 5) incrementalism, 6) subgovernments, or "iron triangles," 7) issue networks, and 8) advocacy coalitions. Which of these alternative and somewhat competing models does the "best job" in explaining policy formulation in the USA? Is it possible that different models can be combined or synthesized? Is it possible that different types of policies are "best" explained by different models of policy formulation? Be sure to explain what you mean by "best"; that is, be sure to justify why the model(s) you select is superior to other possible explanations.

Public managers face an increasingly complex world. One element of that complexity is globalization. Globalization has many positives, such as increased trade, incomes, and cultural exchanges. However globalization has its dark side also. World-wide health epidemics such as AIDS and SARS spread more rapidly potentially putting most people in the world in danger. Terrorism and crime can reach to any corner of the globe. Even the international slave trade has re-emerged. Please identify a specific policy problem that either has been or is likely to be created by globalization, and apply a theoretical model of policymaking to discuss the dynamics of the policy process that are likely to unfold as policy-makers attempt to resolve the issue. Then discuss how front-line managers and their clients might be affected by these policy changes.

You are the city administrator of Sometown, Nebraska, population 17,000. This week you learned of the following three developments:

- The City Clerk, on whom you depend for day-to-day office management, is highly dissatisfied with her salary and working conditions, and is working to establish a union for city employees;
- The Executive Director of the Housing Authority has just been arrested for pandering and soliciting prostitution;
- A young police women has just filed a charge of sexual harassment against your Chief of Police, a man highly respected in the community, and who has served the City for several years.

A. How would you deal with each of these three problems?

B. What effect would these developments likely have on city employees and the image of city government among the citizens? How would you address the fallout?

Child care is a problem for many families and for society as well. The heart of the problem is an economic one: the cost of high quality child care is greater than many families can afford. Please evaluate each these three approaches to the problem and discuss both the economic efficiency and social equity issues associated with them. What are the problems with these policies, and how would you re-design them?

A. Employers of more than 10 employees are required by federal law to provide adequate child care at federally-regulated prices for their employees, either by direct provision or by contracting with a provider.

B. Employees are eligible to receive an itemized deduction on their federal income tax for their child care expenses, up to a maximum of \$12,000 annually.

C. Children from low income families who qualify for either Medicaid or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) are eligible for federally-provided day care at nominal rates.

A group of women faculty on a state university campus believe that their pay is unfairly lower than that of their male counterparts. University administrators counter that pay differences are the result of the predominance of men in areas of study where market conditions require higher salaries. Articulate a research design that would provide evidence about this question. Clearly identify the dependent variable, and some relevant independent variables. Assuming you could get any data you want, what would you choose, what would it be and how would it be collected? Then, advise the women faculty how to use these results to answer the university administrators.

As a consultant, you are asked to provide advice in the following situation:

A Kansas State Education Commission is recommending consolidation for four small townships schools (North, South, East and West) in rural Jayhawk County, Kansas, each of which currently have separate high schools. The Commission has presented credible evidence that the merger will reduce costs for administration and food service, but costs will increase for transportation. Overall costs would decline. The four high schools currently provide the minimum instruction required by the state. The merger proponents (Better Schools for Jayhawks) are also advocating a property tax increase to provide instruction in the areas of computers, foreign language, and advanced math and science that they argue is necessary in order for students to succeed.

There is active opposition to consolidation from many. Many rural residents oppose the property tax increase. Several citizens have expressed concern that the loss of their school will hurt the community and reduce local control over the school. Student-athletes at both North High and East High have started a group called Save Our Schools (S.O.S.) that opposes consolidation on the grounds that opportunities for students to participate in sports and clubs will be reduced.

- (a) Provide the community your analysis of the trade-offs and the key social values to consider in making their decision.
- (b) Is the proposed property tax increase fair? Explain why or why not, carefully defining your notion of fairness here. Compare this source to at least one other source of funding.

(c) A group of community leaders ask for your help in their reaching a consensus without increasing the growing rancor in the community. What process would you suggest that they follow in reaching a decision?
