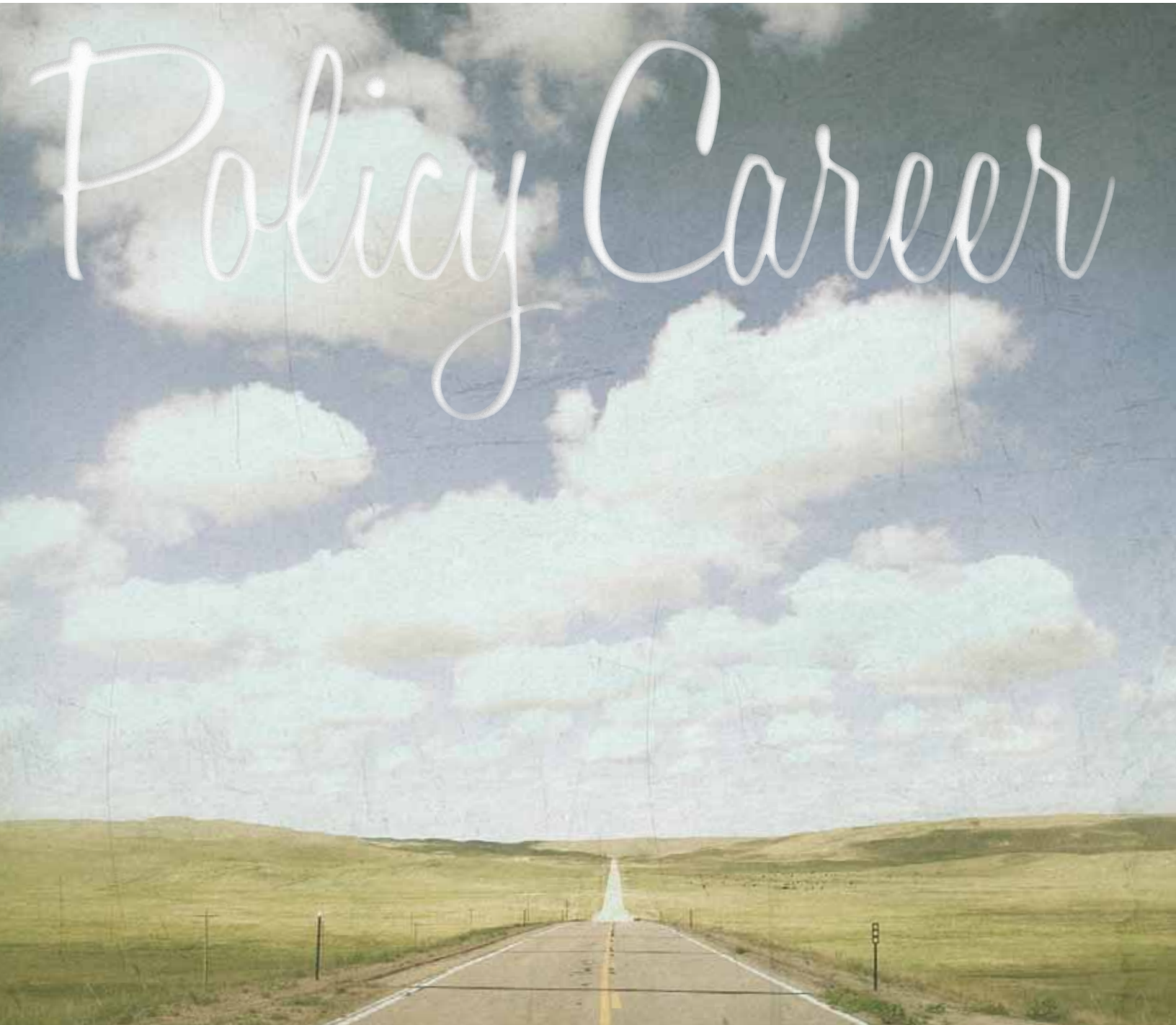




INSTITUTE FOR HUMANE STUDIES
AT GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

CREATING YOUR PATH TO A

Policy Career





The Institute for Humane Studies, founded in 1961, is a unique organization that assists undergraduate and graduate students who have a special interest in individual liberty. Each year IHS awards more than \$600,000 in scholarships and sponsors the attendance of hundreds of students at its summer seminars. Through these and many other programs for students, the Institute promotes the study of liberty across a broad range of disciplines, encouraging understanding, open inquiry, rigorous scholarship, and creative problem-solving.

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ABOUT THE INSTITUTE FOR HUMANE STUDIES

The Institute for Humane Studies was founded in 1961 by Dr. F. A. “Baldy” Harper, a former economics professor at Cornell University. Part of a generation that had lived through two devastating world wars and seen the rise of numerous totalitarian dictatorships, Harper set up an institute devoted to research and education in the conviction that greater understanding of human affairs and freedom would foster peace, prosperity, and social harmony.

History demonstrated the great capacity of humans to solve their problems through “the practice and potentials of freedom,” and Harper envisioned this as the primary focus of the Institute for Humane Studies. “Not in government or force, not in slavery or war, but in the creative, and thereby spiritual, power of freedom, shall our inspiration be found,” he wrote in an early proposal for the Institute.

Based for many years in Menlo Park, California, the Institute moved in 1985 to Fairfax, Virginia, and associated with George Mason University. At George Mason, the Institute has been able to pursue its mission more effectively in cooperation with other organizations affiliated with the university.

Today, with a primary focus on students, the Institute continues the work begun by Baldy Harper. The mission of IHS is to support the achievement of a freer society by discovering and facilitating the development of talented students, scholars, and other intellectuals who share an interest in liberty and who demonstrate the potential to change the climate of opinion to one more congenial to the principles and practice of freedom.

Each year IHS awards over \$600,000 in scholarships to students from universities around the world. IHS also sponsors the attendance of hundreds of students at its summer seminars and provides various forms of career assistance to students and recent graduates pursuing careers in academia, journalism, public policy, and film and writing. Through its programs, the Institute promotes the study of liberty across a broad range of disciplines, encouraging understanding, open inquiry, rigorous scholarship, and creative problem-solving.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This publication serves as a guide for classical liberals interested in a career in public policy. While the advice and anecdotes contained in this publication cover many of the most common aspects of working in the field, it is by no means exhaustive. Many of the authors in this guide did not find success until after long periods of trial and error. Still, the subjects covered serve to highlight skills central to all policy positions and provide a glimpse into the numerous opportunities available in public policy and related careers.

You may find conflicting opinions within this guide. That is because there are unsettled questions about the best way to advance liberty through policy. The goal of this guide is not to settle these disputes, but to make the reader aware of the different points of view and make an informed decision when creating their own path to a policy career.

It should be noted that the authors give several examples involving specific activities and organizations, some of them with specific political, strategic, or policy stances with which you may disagree. This guide is about an effective career advancing liberty through policy generally, not about the specific policies or tactics used. Examples or approaches highlighted should not be construed as an endorsement by IHS or any of the other authors or organizations in this guide.

Finally, it is key to understand that thinking like a policy entrepreneur is perhaps more important than picking an existing role within the policy world. This guide opens with a high-level discussion of how social change occurs and the role think tanks and other organizations play in generating change. For good reason: the existing opportunities within the policy world are not the only opportunities. The reader should understand how social change happens and constantly survey existing efforts to see what “gaps” are not being filled. Identifying and filling these gaps can often offer more opportunity and have more impact than simply assuming all that can be done is being done.

WHY PUBLIC POLICY?

1. The Structure of Social Change

Rich Fink, President, Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation

(A version of this originally appeared in the *Philanthropy Magazine*, Winter 1996, under the title, *From Ideas to Action: The Role of Universities, Think Tanks, and Activist Groups*.)

Universities, think tanks, and citizen activist groups all present competing claims for being the best place to invest resources. As grant-makers, we hear the pros and cons of the different kinds of institutions seeking funding.

The universities claim to be the real source of change. They give birth to the big ideas that provide the intellectual framework for social transformation. While this is true, critics contend that investing in universities produces no tangible results for many years or even decades. Also, since many academics tend to talk mostly to their colleagues in the specialized languages of their respective disciplines, their research, even if relevant, usually needs to be adapted before it is useful in solving practical problems.

The think tanks and policy development organizations argue that they are most worthy of support because they work on real-world policy issues, not abstract concepts. They communicate not just among themselves, but are an immediate source of policy ideas for the White House, Congress, and the media. They claim to set the action agenda that leaders in government follow. Critics observe, however, that there is a surfeit of well-funded think tanks, producing more position papers and books than anyone could ever possibly read. Also, many policy proposals, written by “wonks” with little experience outside the policy arena, lack realistic implementation or transition plans. And all too often, think tanks gauge their success in terms of public relations victories measured in inches of press coverage, rather than more meaningful and concrete accomplishments.

Citizen activist or implementation groups claim to merit support because they are the most effective at really accomplishing things. They are fighting in the trenches, and this is where the war is either won or lost. They directly produce results by rallying support for policy change. Without them, the work of the universities and policy institutes would always remain just so many words on paper, instead of leading to real changes in people’s lives.

Others point out, however, that their commitment to action comes at a price. Because activist groups are remote from the universities and their framework of ideas, they often lose sight of the big picture. Their necessary association with diverse coalitions and politicians may make them too willing to compromise to achieve narrow goals.

Many of the arguments advanced for and against investing at the various levels are valid. Each type of institute at each stage has its strengths and weaknesses. But more importantly, we see that institutions at all stages are crucial to success. While they may compete with one another for funding and often belittle each other’s roles, we view them as complementary institutions, each critical for social transformation.

Hayek's Model of Production

Our understanding of how these institutions “fit together” is derived from a model put forward by the Nobel laureate economist Friedrich Hayek.

Hayek's model illustrates how a market economy is organized, and has proven useful to students of economics for decades. While Hayek's analysis is complicated, even a modified, simplistic version can yield useful insights.

Hayek described the “structure of production” as the means by which a greater output of “consumer goods” is generated through savings that are invested in the development of “producer goods”—goods not produced for final consumption.

The classic example in economics is how a stranded Robinson Crusoe is at first compelled to fish and hunt with his hands. He only transcends subsistence when he hoards enough food to sustain himself while he fashions a fishing net, a spear, or some other producer good that increases his production of consumer goods. This enhanced production allows even greater savings, hence greater investment and development of more complex and indirect production technologies.

Case Studies in Policy Rebecca Gaetz — South Carolina Policy Council

Development is fast and intense.

One minute I'm coordinating an event for hundreds of people and the next I'm nodding and smiling politely, as a major donor shakes with rage and says, “The president is leading all of us to the burning flames of hell.” True story.

A “typical day in the office” does not exist. Mail has to go out and members need to be touched. There is always a major grant proposal to write and deadlines to meet. It never fails that an important donor will call in the middle of chaos and require an hour of my time—which I am always delighted to give—no matter what.

My friends like to crack jokes about how exhausting it must be “thinking all day” at a think tank. Laugh as they may, it's true. Producing is a major factor in fundraising, but “thinking” is also essential. I'm constantly thinking of dynamic ways to bring in more people and more money, and most nights, these thoughts even invade my dreams.

The best part of the day is opening mail—big checks are major motivators. Surprisingly, I've also started to appreciate hate mail from fringe fanatics and pamphlets from radicals. A strong sense of humor is a must in this job!

Here's some advice for anyone considering a career in think tank development: The only way to sell your mission is to believe and understand it. It is critical to wrap your head around the policy before you can even begin to relate to donors.

Another must in development is the ability to write clearly and concisely. Also, if you don't like people, stay away. If you aren't in front of a donor, you'll be in front of your computer. Spreadsheets and databases are a necessary evil—but can be managed with the help of interns and (if you're lucky) development staff.

In a developed economy, the “structure of production” becomes quite complicated, involving the discovery of knowledge and integration of diverse businesses whose success and sustainability depend on the value they add to the ultimate consumer. Hayek’s model explains how investments in an integrated structure of production yield greater productivity over less developed or less integrated economies.

By analogy, the model can illustrate how investment in the structure of production of ideas can yield greater social and economic progress when the structure is well-developed and well-integrated. For simplicity’s sake, I am using a snapshot of a developed economy, as Hayek did in parts of *Prices and Production*, and I am aggregating a complex set of businesses into three broad categories or stages of production. The higher stages represent investments and businesses involved in the enhanced production of some basic inputs we will call “raw materials.” The middle stages of production are involved in converting these raw materials into various types of products that add more value than these raw materials have if sold directly to consumers. In this model, the later stages of production are involved in the packaging, transformation, and distribution of the output of the middle stages to the ultimate consumers.

Hayek’s theory of the structure of production can also help us understand how ideas are transformed into action in our society. Instead of the transformation of natural resources to intermediate goods to products that add value to consumers, the model, which I call the Structure of Social Change, deals with the discovery, adaptation, and implementation of ideas into change that increases the well-being of citizens. Although the model helps to explain many forms of social change, I will focus here on the type I know best—change that results from the formation of public policy.

Applying Hayek’s Model

When we apply this model to the realm of ideas and social change, at the higher stages we have the investment in the intellectual raw materials, that is, the exploration and production of abstract concepts and theories. In the public policy arena, these still come primarily (though not exclusively) from the research done by scholars at our universities. At the higher stages in the Structure of Social Change model, ideas are often unintelligible to the layperson and seemingly unrelated to real-world problems. To have consequences, ideas need to be transformed into a more practical or useable form.

In the middle stages, ideas are applied to a relevant context and molded into needed solutions for real-world problems. This is the work of the think tanks and policy institutions. Without these organizations, theory or abstract thought would have less value and less impact on our society.

But while the think tanks excel at developing new policy and articulating its benefits, they are less able to implement change. Citizen activist or implementation groups are needed in the final stage to take the policy ideas from the think tanks and translate them into proposals that citizens can understand and act upon. These groups are also able to build diverse coalitions of individual citizens and special interest groups needed to press for the implementation of policy change.

We at the Koch Foundation find that the Structure of Social Change model helps us to understand the distinct roles of universities, think tanks, and activist groups in the transformation of ideas into action. We invite you to consider whether Hayek's model, on which ours is based, is useful in your philanthropy. Though I have confined my examples to the realm of public policy, the model clearly has much broader social relevance.

FURTHER READING:

F.A. Hayek, "The Intellectuals and Socialism," *The University of Chicago Law Review* (Spring 1949).

2. The Role of the Think Tank

Joseph G. Lehman, President, Mackinac Center for Public Policy

If you are exploring careers in public policy, you should consider the policy-shaping role of think tanks. The enactment of a law by a legislative body is but the final step in a long march that typically starts outside the halls of government and the minds of policymakers. Although it is seldom obvious to casual observers, think tank professionals can exert influence on public policy that is both enormous and indirect. To understand why, you must know how think tanks work.

Most think tanks are not formally part of the government, nor do they sustain themselves by selling products or services. They are usually nonprofit organizations, but they differ from more familiar nonprofits whose daily activities are directly and visibly linked to their missions.

For example, churches conduct worship services, the Red Cross provides on-the-scene disaster relief, the symphony hosts concerts, and the soup kitchen feeds needy people. A think tank's mission may be to advance sound public policy, but its activities involve studying and communicating policy ideas, not enacting policy itself.

Think tanks are rarely powerhouse lobbyists, they don't fund political campaigns, and they don't vote in the legislature. So how do think tanks achieve their mission of advancing sound policy if they aren't directly involved with lawmaking?

The answer lies in understanding that legislation does not spring into being at the whim of lawmakers. Rather, legislative change rests on foundations of political and social change. Far from the legislative arena, social change gives rise to political change, which ultimately gives rise to legislative, or policy, change. Policy change that does not flow ultimately from social change is not likely to be durable policy change.

To illustrate, consider some important social movements and the durable policy changes they produced. Abolition of slavery. Civil rights. Trade unionism. Women's suffrage. Environmentalism. Temperance was another important social movement, but it did not produce durable policy change. The temperance movement weakened, and Prohibition was repealed.

If social change drives eventual policy change, then how do think tanks create social change? My former colleague, Lawrence (Larry) Reed (now president of the Foundation for Economic Education), used to ask his college economics students what one influence, more than any other, determines what kind of public policy citizens will embrace.

Reponses included the media, the economy, teachers, the unions, big business, one's parents, and a host of others. But none of those was correct. People and the institutions they create, Larry explained, play important roles, but they do not explain fundamentally *why* people behave the way they do. The answer to that question is *ideas*.

The author Victor Hugo famously wrote that ideas are more powerful than all the armies of the world. Ideas create the stage on which all of us perform. Nearly everything that surrounds us, whether it's an object, an institution, or a way of doing things, is the result of someone's idea.

Perhaps the most influential economist of the 20th century, John Maynard Keynes, wrote this in 1936:

... the ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed the world is ruled by little else. Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist. ... Soon or late, it is ideas, not vested interests, which are dangerous for good or evil.

Case Studies in Policy Lasse Lund — Evergreen Freedom Foundation

My career in the world of public-policy think tanks was an unexpected one. I had just resigned from a position in another field and was simply looking for a job. The Evergreen Freedom Foundation originally hired me to work in the administration department, given my organizational skills and OCD-like attention to detail; however, my tenure in that role only lasted a few months.

The higher-ups quickly recognized my people skills and moved me into the position of Citizen Action Network Director. The Citizen Action Network was an outreach and education project designed to equip the grassroots movement in Washington state and was still very much in its infancy. It is also something that not many think tanks had in place, with most being more about research and publishing policy papers than equipping citizens. The Freedom Foundation is a different kind of think tank, though, and realized that the best way to make a difference is to mobilize people and

get them involved. With that goal in mind, I was basically given free reign to grow and develop the program as I saw fit.

Two years and a ton of work later, I look back and see how far my journey with the Freedom Foundation has taken me. The Citizen Action Network has grown from 450 activists to nearly 2,500. We've been able to impact issues like performance audits (a cost-saving program within government), health care, and climate change legislation. More important to me, we've seen hundreds of people get connected to one another, receive valuable training, and take their first steps to defend their freedoms from the tyranny of unchecked government. The best part is seeing people discover that there is hope and that they can make a difference when they join together with others.

The job definitely has its highs and lows. The best example of both is probably found in the planning and

execution of large-scale events. My lowest lows are usually found in the month before a big rally or a large-scale training event. It takes so much thought and effort to pull something like that together and especially in the case of a rally, you have no idea if anyone is even going to attend; it can cause a lot of stress. However, when the day finally arrives and you are standing in front of thousands of people who have gathered to tell their legislators "No New Taxes," it sends a chill down your spine. You go home that night knowing you empowered people, gave them a voice, and helped them find a way to make a difference. Those moments make it all worth it.

Some people spend their early years planning out how they can get into this career field; others, like me, just kind of fall into it. Either way, we end up changing the cultural and political landscape for ourselves, our neighbors, and the generations to come.

So are we simply at the mercy of nameless, faceless intellectual forces? Or is there a way to channel ideas to accomplish the mission of better public policy?

Economist F.A. Hayek understood how ideas shaped society. Hayek advised against involvement in politics alone for those who wanted more liberty. He believed it was the intellectuals who determined how the politicians would ultimately act.

In “The Intellectuals and Socialism,” Hayek called these intellectuals “secondhand dealers in ideas.” He didn’t mean it pejoratively. He merely recognized that very, very few people generate ideas that are truly unique. Almost all of the other intellectuals contribute by developing and communicating the ideas and expanding the influence of those ideas along the way.

In society, ideas move from the idea-initiators—very rare people—to “secondhand dealers” like those in the think tanks and elsewhere, to the culture at large, and finally to the political class.

But new ideas are seldom met with open arms at any stage, especially by those whose livelihoods depend on the old ideas. The ideas that are eventually adopted typically meet with responses that generally progress like this:

- Indifference
- Ridicule
- Rejection
- Attack
- Criticism
- Plausible, or partial, consideration
- Tolerance
- Desirability
- Necessity
- Inevitability
- Acceptance
- “I knew it was a good idea all along.”

Commentator Joshua Treviño has boiled down the political progression of ideas to these six steps:

- Unthinkable
- Radical
- Acceptable
- Sensible
- Popular
- Policy

This may be how ideas flow through the public policy process, but what force drives the ideas through their phases?

Hayek is said to have likened politicians to corks bobbing in the ocean, saying a think tank could be the current. A similar analogy would be that politicians are to think tanks as actors are to script-writers. Both analogies are gross simplifications and even exaggerations, but they help explain the effect of forces that are always there but hidden from view.

A good illustration of how think tanks influence the movement of ideas is called the Overton Window, a term my colleagues and I gave to a theory of change developed by the Mackinac Center's late vice president, Joseph Overton. Joe observed that any collection of public policies within a policy area, such as education, can be arranged in order from more free to less free (or alternatively, from less government intervention to more). To avoid comparison with the left-right political spectrum, he arranged the policies from bottom (less free) to top (more free).

At any one time, some group of adjacent policies along the freedom spectrum fall into a "window of political possibility." Policies inside the window are politically acceptable, meaning officeholders believe they can support those policies and survive the next election. Policies outside the window, either higher or lower, are politically unacceptable at the moment. If you shift the position or size of the window, you change what is politically possible.

Many believe that politicians move the window, but that's actually rare. In our understanding, politicians typically don't determine what is politically acceptable; more often they react to it and validate it. As noted, policy change follows political change, which itself follows social change. The most durable policy changes are undergirded by strong social movements.

When social and political forces bring about change, the window of political possibility shifts up or down the spectrum and can also expand to include more policy options or shrink to include fewer. The window

presents a menu of policy choices to politicians: from their point of view, relatively safe choices are inside the window and politically riskier choices (or bolder ones, if you prefer) are outside.

Lawmakers who support policies outside the window are one of two kinds: true leaders who have the rare ability to shift the window by themselves, and politicians who risk electoral defeat because they are perceived as out of touch.

The Overton Window doesn't describe everything, but it describes one big thing: Politicians will rarely support whatever policy they choose whenever they choose; rather, they will do what they think they can do without risking electoral defeat, given the current political environment shaped by ideas, social movements, and societal sensibilities.

The work of think tanks typically includes analyzing various approaches to public policy, publishing research and commentary, and speaking and conducting educational forums about the policy ideas. Quite often, the ideas are not yet politically feasible. But the Overton Window shows how those ideas can become public policy.

Moments of political opportunity are often times of crisis and rapid change. Another great 20th century economist, Milton Friedman, well understood the role of think tanks and intellectuals. He wrote in 1962:

Only a crisis—actual or perceived—produces real change. When that crisis occurs, the actions that are taken depend on the ideas that are lying around. That, I believe, is our basic function: to develop alternatives to existing policies, to keep them alive and available until the politically impossible becomes the politically inevitable.

The role of a think tank in creating public policy will never be as direct as that of an elected official, but it is no less real and no less important. In fact, think tanks may ultimately be more influential than public officials themselves.

Author John J. Miller wrote this about the influence of think tanks for *Philanthropy Magazine* in 2006:

Think tanks are perhaps best at creating conditions for success, as opposed to being directly responsible for the success itself. The manager of a baseball team ... can make his team's victory or defeat either more or less likely based upon choices he makes before anybody swings a bat. Likewise, it is nearly always impossible to draw a straight line from the product of a think tank to the enactment of a specific policy.

Political actors cannot operate independently of the idea-generators. The better you understand the way think tanks work, the better you will be able to advance worthwhile ideas to fruition through the public policy process.

FURTHER READING

"The Overton Window of Political Possibility," Mackinac Center for Public Policy, 2010, <http://www.mackinac.org/OvertonWindow>.

WHAT SKILLS DO I NEED IN THE POLICY WORLD?

3. Integrity

Lawrence W. Reed, President, Foundation for Economic Education

What's the most important element in forming a successful career? Well, here's one that is so important that without it, *you ain't goin' anywhere*. Some might call it integrity, others might call it character. I use the two terms interchangeably here. No matter which one you prefer, I recommend that you bulk up on it; if you do, you'll be amazed at how most if not all of the other elements of a successful career will eventually fall into place. On frequent occasions, it will more than compensate for mistakes and shortcomings in other areas.

From an employer's perspective, Warren Buffett makes the point plainly: "In looking for someone to hire, you look for three qualities: integrity, intelligence and energy. But the most important is integrity, because if they don't have that, the other two qualities, intelligence and energy, are going to kill you."

Integrity is more important than all the good grades or degrees you've earned, more important than all the management courses you could possibly take, and more important than all the knowledge that you could absorb on any subject. It's something over which every responsible, thinking adult has *total* personal control, and yet millions of people every year sacrifice it for very little. It will not only define and shape your future, but it will also put both a concrete floor under it and an iron ceiling over it. It's what others will more likely remember you for than your looks, your talents, your smarts, or your rhetoric. If you lose it, it will taint everything else you accomplish.

Your character is nothing more and nothing less than the sum of your choices. You can't choose your height or race or other physical traits, but you fine-tune your character every time you decide right from wrong and what you personally are going to do about it. Your character is further defined by how you choose to interact with others and the standards of speech and conduct you practice. Character is often listed as a key leadership quality. I actually think character and leadership are one and the same. If you've got character, others will look upon you as a leader.

When a person spurns his conscience and fails to do what he knows is right, he subtracts from his character. When he evades his responsibilities, succumbs to temptation, foists his problems and burdens on others, acts as though the world owes him a living, or fails to exert self-discipline, he subtracts from his character. When he attempts to reform the world without reforming himself first, he subtracts from his character.

A free society flourishes when people aspire to be models of honor, honesty, and propriety at whatever the cost in material wealth, social status, or popularity. America's founders knew that and wrote about it a lot. Thomas Jefferson's advice was to "Give up money, give up fame, give up science, give up the earth itself and all it contains" before compromising your integrity. He further admonished:

And never suppose, that in any possible situation, or under any circumstances, it is best for you to do a dishonorable thing, however slightly so it may appear to you. Whenever you are to do a thing, though it can never be known but to yourself, ask yourself how you would act were all the world looking at you, and act accordingly.

Encourage all your virtuous dispositions, and exercise them whenever an opportunity arises; being assured that they will gain strength by exercise, as a limb of the body does, and that exercise will make them habitual. From the practice of the purest virtue, you may be assured you will derive the most sublime comforts in every moment of life, and in the moment of death. If ever you find yourself environed with difficulties and perplexing circumstances, out of which you are at a loss how to extricate yourself, do what is right, and be assured that that will extricate you the best out of the worst situations. Though you cannot see, when you take one step, what will be the next, yet follow truth, justice, and plain dealing, and never fear their leading you out of the labyrinth, in the easiest manner possible. The knot which you thought a Gordian one, will untie itself before you.

Nothing is so mistaken as the supposition that a person is to extricate himself from a difficulty by intrigue, by chicanery, by dissimulation, by trimming, by an untruth, by an injustice. This increases the difficulties ten fold; and those who pursue these methods get themselves so involved at length that they can turn no way but their infamy becomes more exposed.

Though I haven't explicitly defined integrity (or character) by the qualities that compose it, I think you had a pretty good idea what those qualities were before you ever saw this essay. That's because you've got a conscience. Most people do, but the problem is, we don't always listen to it. We're tempted to push it away when it seems to be an obstacle to a quick and selfish advance. You know you've got a conscience when an inner voice bothers you when you cut corners on matters of integrity. "Success without honor is an unseasoned dish," says legendary Penn State coach Joe Paterno. "It will satisfy your hunger, but it won't taste good."

Honesty, humility, introspection, patience, fair-dealing, courage, self-discipline, respect for others—these are surely among the core traits of a life of integrity. For that reason, they are the keys to a successful career, a fruitful life, and a clear conscience.

Many years ago, I came across a few sentences by an unknown author, called "What the World Needs." I've since added some related thoughts of my own:

The world needs more men and women who do not have a price at which they can be bought; who do not borrow from integrity to pay for expediency; who have their priorities straight and in proper order; whose handshake is an ironclad contract; who are not afraid of taking risks to advance what is right; and who are as honest in small matters as they are in large ones.

The world needs more men and women whose ambitions are big enough to include others; who know how to win with grace and lose with dignity; who do not believe that shrewdness and cunning and

ruthlessness are the three keys to success; who still have friends they made twenty years ago; who put principle and consistency above politics or personal advancement; and who are not afraid to go against the grain of popular opinion.

The world needs more men and women who do not forsake what is right just to get consensus because it makes them look good; who know how important it is to lead by example, not by barking orders; who would not have you do something they would not do themselves; who work to turn even the most adverse circumstances into opportunities to learn and improve; and who love even those who have done some injustice or unfairness to them. The world, in other words, needs more men and women of character.

You and your parents have expended enormous time, energy, and expense in your education with the hope that it will further your career. You can go far with all those facts and figures you've learned, or you can flush them away. The deciding factor will be your integrity.

4. Why Writing Well Is Key

Matt Mitchell, Research Fellow, Mercatus Center

Everyone writes. Most of us do it poorly. Lamentable though it may be, the fact is, writing is not just for the blogger, the op-ed author, and the novelist. It is also the absolutely indispensable tool of the fundraiser, the recruiter, and the manager.

No doubt you have written something in the last few days. Maybe it was a Facebook post. Maybe it was a thank-you note. Maybe it was a prequel to *Atlas Shrugged* (in which case, it may have taken you a few decades). Think for a second about your last writing. When the reader finished it, did she completely understand your meaning as well as if she were inside your head? Did she get your jokes if you had any? Did she feel like she learned something new? That her time was well-spent? That you weren't insulting her intelligence or attempting in vain to peacock-strut your own IQ? It is either the very rare or the very cocky author who confidently answers "yes" to each of these questions. It is an odd paradox that most people don't take writing seriously enough and that most people don't have fun with it. These are not mutually exclusive goals, and you should aim for both.

In what follows, I hope to give a few helpful tips for those who plan to write professionally—which is everyone in a policy career. What qualifies me to dispense such advice? I am not widely published, and I am not a professional writing coach. I do, however, write a heck of a lot—mostly emails and memos, a few letters of recommendation, occasional op-eds, and an academic piece here and there. Like most, writing does not come naturally to me. But I work at it. And, as importantly, I enjoy it. In short, I am probably not unlike you, dear reader. And so I hope my advice is both helpful and relatable. If it isn't, write me a note about it.

Writing Is Thinking

There is a common notion—reinforced through years of procrastination—that writing is the last step. The idea is that you should think, plan, research, gather data, mull it over, and then finally write. This is backward. As Deirdre McCloskey once put it, "The real problem is the premise that you can split content from style." The fact of the matter is that for most people, the very act of writing helps shape their thoughts. This is because there is a mysterious connection between our brains and our hands. As we type—or better yet, *handwrite*—our brains are activated. You may have noticed when you were in school that if you read over a proof or a rearrangement of an equation in a math textbook, you retained some of the information. But if you took the time to actually write out the equation on your own, something miraculous happened: You comprehended and remembered the lesson much more easily. The same is true of writing. As McCloskey put it, "You do not learn the details of an argument until writing it in detail, and in writing the details you uncover the flaws in the fundamentals." So don't plan and think and ponder. Write.

And write early. Don't wait until the last minute. Start building an outline as early as possible. This will help you understand where you need to do more work, gather more data, or rethink your premise. As

James Buchanan used to tell his graduate students, the key to successful writing is to “apply ass to chair.” You can take breaks every so often (within reason). Try going for a walk or getting a cup of coffee. Psychologists have found that the brain actually works much better when people subconsciously process a question for some time (Smith). But return to the chair and write. As you do this more often, I promise that it will become less painful.

Writing Has Rules

Like it or not, there are certain rules to writing. These rules have emerged as a spontaneous order over centuries. In time, entrepreneurs have changed them. They have adapted the rules to accommodate new mediums such as email, cellphone texts, and Twitter feeds. And they have improved them, allowing obsolete

Case Studies in Policy Lawrence W. Reed — Foundation for Economic Education

I came from a nonpolitical, working-class family. My father quietly voted Republican, and my mother didn't vote at all. When Dad wanted to take my sister and me on a week's winter vacation to Florida in 1963 and our public school principal objected, Dad let him know in exceptionally colorful terms that we were his kids, not the government's, and we were headed south, period. Perhaps that incident planted a seed of anti-authoritarianism in me that sprouted in a darkened theater two years later.

In the summer of 1965, my mother announced that she was taking me to a theater in Pittsburgh, 40 miles from our home, to see a film called “The Sound of Music.” I knew nothing of it other than that a lot of singing was involved, and to my mind, that was a good enough reason to stay home. I went reluctantly—and was enthralled. The music and the scenery were memorable, but it was the plot and message that changed my

life. I was not quite 12 years of age. “The Sound of Music” was a rude awakening. This was much bigger than a school telling me that I couldn't take a vacation. This was a foreign regime (Nazi Germany) absorbing a peaceful neighbor (Austria) and a father facing orders to abandon his family to serve in the military of that very regime he hated. The film sparked a fire inside me, and it has stayed lit ever since. Stories of people yearning for freedom and going to great lengths to secure it captivated me. Socialism, communism, fascism, and all the collectivist “isms” became anathema. They reduced to A pushing B around because A thinks he's got a good idea.

Then came the “Prague Spring” of early 1968. It wasn't Austria, but it was right next door. The news of the stirrings of liberty in communist Czechoslovakia dominated the news. I cheered as the Czechs boldly rattled their Soviet cage. When Moscow

crushed Czech liberties with troops and tanks, I was outraged and eager to say so. I bought a bus ticket to Pittsburgh and joined in a demonstration against the invasion. We burned a Soviet flag. I joined Young Americans for Freedom, which gave its new members a collection of classic works on liberty and free enterprise. The message was simple: If you want to be an effective anticommunist, you had better know something about philosophy and economics.

From there, I went on to earn degrees in economics and history and started teaching at Northwood University. After seven years at that, I went into think tank work, most notably at the Mackinac Center for Public Policy in Michigan and now the Foundation for Economic Education in New York.

Who would have thought a couple hours in a theater would make a life's worth of difference? But that's what happened to me.

phrases to die out and new and improved words and metaphors to abound (have you used “to Google” as a verb today?). But for those of you with a libertarian bent and who think that subjective value reigns and that style is a matter of taste, I have bad news: you risk being misunderstood if you do not follow the rules.

Remember, these rules emerged because they work.

I do not think it is useful for me to list all of the rules here. I can do no better than to simply direct you to what I believe to be the best source, William Strunck and E.B. White’s timeless *The Elements of Style*. You can find it in any bookstore. Read it. Keep it at your fingertips when you write. Then read it again every year or so.

Check your writing closely; little details like “dangling modifiers” and word choices can make a huge difference in meaning and clarity. Similar-sounding but differently spelled words can give even experienced writers trouble (if you don’t know what I am alluding to, maybe you have eluded this mistake). Sometimes, words have been misused for so long that few people even know their original meaning. Have you ever referred to the enormity of something? If you have, you were saying that the thing was monstrously wicked. Hopefully, that is what you intended to convey.

Here again, the best I can do is direct you to Strunck and White. They have a helpful chapter titled “Words and Expressions Commonly Misused.”

Writing Suggestions

In addition to the formal rules of writing, there are a lot of practical suggestions, or rules of thumb, that will make your writing sparkle and cohere.

One suggestion is to read. The more you read good authors, the more you will pick up their habits. For this exercise, you should take your time and notice how each word connects with the others. See what you like and what you don’t like and try to learn from it. Bryan Caplan, Thomas Sowell, and Dave Barry are a few of my favorite nonfiction authors. Pick up something that they have written and study their sentences.

Another trick is to vary the length of your sentences. A long and complicated sentence with many parenthetical clauses and modifiers can be exhausting for the reader. So follow it with a short sentence. It gives the reader a break.

Another suggestion is to express parallel ideas in parallel form. Often, writers mistakenly think that they need to avoid repetition and that they should vary the form of their expressions. But this usually makes the piece harder to follow and less interesting to read. Has government repeatedly intruded on the marketplace? Then when you write about it, repeat some phrase and hit the point home. Consider these phrases:

“We were regulated. We were taxed. We were subsidized. We were poked and prodded and cajoled into doing what the politicians wanted us to do.”

In my mind, the phrasing above is significantly more interesting than:

“We were regulated. The government taxed us. They also subsidized us. Government poked, prodded and cajoled ...”

One of the most common (and commonly ignored) suggestions is to use an “active” voice. What, exactly, does this mean? In short, it means that your verbs should describe the action of the sentence. Consider this sentence:

“I authored this piece.”

This is an active sentence. Grammatically, “authored” is the verb. It is also the action you are trying to describe: writing. Now consider this alternative sentence:

“The piece was authored by me.”

Most readers will get bored with a piece if it has too many passive sentences, such as the one above.

How can you avoid the passive voice? One way, of course, is to learn how to identify the subject and verb in each sentence (if you haven’t done this since third grade, it can be surprisingly difficult). Make sure the subject of the sentence is performing the verb.

Another, exceedingly simple, trick is to read your work out loud. You will be amazed to find that phrases that seemed just fine in your head are in fact gangly and awkward.

You should also run your work by someone else—preferably someone who can give you honest feedback. If and when they do criticize the piece, don’t take it personally and don’t blame them. If they stumble over a phrase, it is your fault, not theirs.

My final suggestion is to keep your writing simple. Don’t embellish or draw things out. You will just waste the time of your reader and tick them off. And don’t use a \$1,000 word when a \$1 word will do—besides, studies show that people actually think less of you when you do that (Oppenheimer).

So get to it. Freedom is a wonderful thing to fight for, and if used properly, words can make powerful weapons.

FURTHER READING

Deirdre McCloskey, *Economical Writing* (Prospect Heights, Ill: Waveland Press, 2000).

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William Strunck and E.B. White, *The Elements of Style* (Ithaca, N.Y.: W.P. Humphrey, 1918).

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5. What Degrees Do I Need?

Eric Alston, Policy Analyst, Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation

Isaac M. Morehouse, Policy Programs Director, Institute for Humane Studies

There is no simple way to determine what level and type of degree is best for you and your budding policy career. Don't fret; you don't have to have the perfect answer.

Here are three broadly applicable considerations:

- Your degree is less important than attributes like hard work, excellent writing, confident and clear communication, relevant knowledge, and internship or work experience.
- The institution is probably more important than the type or level of degree.
- Generic degrees diminish your competitive edge over other candidates, but specialized degrees will limit your opportunities outside of your area of specialization. Specialize only if you are especially passionate about that area.

What are the pros and cons of different degrees when seeking a policy career?

Undergraduate Degree

Economics: As far as undergrad degrees go for policy work, economics is probably the most valuable. Nearly every policy issue involves economic analysis, and economic thinking in general helps one look beyond the obvious effects of policies and see the “unseen.” Employers tend to look more favorably on an economics degree than on other undergrad degrees, but the difference is relatively small. Coursework in quantitative methods or statistics is even more valuable.

Political science: An undergraduate degree in political science may seem like an obvious choice for a career in policy, and in some ways it is. It gives you some theoretical knowledge of political systems and familiarity with policy terminology. However, political science does not necessarily signal a high level of relevant knowledge to policy employers. Many poli-sci undergrads do not have useful knowledge, and many choose the major simply because they don't know what else to do. You'll want a record of published articles, student activity, internships or other experiences to send a clear signal that you are serious about policy.

Philosophy/Liberal arts: Liberal arts or other social science degrees as an undergrad do not signal much of anything to policy employers. This is not to say you should avoid them entirely. If you are passionate about sociology or philosophy, by all means major in it. But be aware that you will need some other way to demonstrate the relevance of your skills and knowledge to the policy world—well-written articles or blog posts, internships, campus clubs, and other extra-curricular activities are key signals to employers that your degree actually means something.

Technical sciences/Hard sciences: Though less easily applied to the policy world, undergrad degrees in a technical field or the hard sciences, when coupled with a strong GPA, do signal logical thinking and work ethic. An undergraduate degree here is not likely to hurt you and may even help you, as employers may be curious why an engineer wants to do policy. If you want to work on related policy issues, your technical expertise may give you an edge over the competition. But again, you'll need some additional experience demonstrating crucial skills in written and oral communication.

Master's Degree

In general when considering an advanced degree, you should weigh all the costs with the expected benefits. While a better salary and empowered jobs are typical of these benefits, this doesn't always mean accruing a large amount of debt and spending two to five years are worth it. Often, candidates with a bachelor's and three years of specialized professional experience are as sought after as candidates fresh out of graduate school.

Economics: A master's in economics is more valuable than a B.A. in economics, but probably not by much. It may signal a more in-depth interest in the subject, which is valuable in the policy world, but it can also signal indecision about going all the way and doing a Ph.D., which is not necessarily an attractive quality. The caliber of the degree-granting institution and supplementary experience combined can make an economics M.A. more valuable, but don't assume that an M.A. automatically makes you sufficiently more attractive than a B.A. to justify the cost. Two caveats: if you have a B.A. or B.S. in a field less relevant to policy and you do not intend to be a professor, an M.A. in economics may be a good next step. An M.A. may also be a good vehicle to acquire quantitative economics training.

Political Science/Philosophy/Liberal arts: A master's in poli-sci, philosophy, or other liberal arts fields are similarly slightly more valuable than a B.A., but not by a huge margin. Pursue these if you love the course work and if you are building good experiences simultaneously.

Public policy/Public administration: Many people assume an M.P.P. or M.P.A. will make them a better prospect for a policy job. Presidents and CEO's of think tanks have told me on several occasions that this is simply not the case. An M.P.P. is not any better than a master's in any other discipline, and an M.P.A. is treated as possibly worse. In the case of the M.P.P., it is questionable to employers why someone would get an advanced degree in such a generic field, versus more specialized training in economics, statistics, or hard science. An M.P.A. often carries a perception of a "bureaucrat in training," which is not the mindset most freedom-oriented policy organizations are looking for. Do not get an M.P.P. or M.P.A. simply because you don't know your next step. Think about an area you have a specific interest in, as this will prove more valuable in the end.

Business: An M.B.A. is not an obvious choice for a policy career and may not help you stand out to employers unless you are applying for a management role within a policy organization. This can be a valuable degree, but it should be coupled with relevant experiences.

Technical sciences/Hard sciences: A master's in a hard science can signal that you are fairly serious about your field, and if that field is not directly relevant to policy (e.g., a biology degree with a focus on public health), employers may be skeptical about your seriousness in pursuit of a policy job.

Ph.D.

Economics: An econ Ph.D. is a fairly well-respected degree (probably more than any other) in the policy world. However, the relevance of your research and publications will carry a lot of weight and show that you are more than just an "ivory tower" academic but are able to apply your knowledge to policy debates. This is a major investment, so unless you are strongly interested in academia or policy as a career, it may not be worth the cost.

Political science/Philosophy/Liberal arts: A Ph.D. gives you the credentials that make your publications for a think tank more attractive, but do not assume that a Ph.D. in the social sciences makes you a shoo-in for a policy job. Employers know that Ph.D.'s demand higher salaries, so you will need to have demonstrated proof of your skill in the policy world, not just your academic credentials. In addition, your research work in these disciplines should have relevance to policy in order for the degree to be attractive.

Technical/hard sciences: If you are very narrowly focused on a policy area that requires a high level of technical know-how (e.g., climate policy), a Ph.D. in the hard sciences can open up job opportunities not available to a less-educated person. However, there are relatively few policy jobs in highly technical areas, and for more general roles, a Ph.D. in the hard sciences may signal that you not only need a high salary, but that you are not entirely focused on policy as a career.

Case Studies in Policy James Hohman — Mackinac Center for Public Policy

Being a policy analyst is an adventure and every day brings new challenges. One day you're tracking down companies that received state assistance and the next you're calling to check on whether North Dakota privatized its fish hatcheries.

It's the perfect job for the intellectually curious. Not only are you thrust against the common wisdom of an issue, but you're constantly developing a better understanding, learning more, and communicating that

knowledge to others.

For instance, Michigan's economy has been struggling, and there have been a number of explanations for its poor performance. Each explanation identifies a problem and implies a policy recommendation for what the state can do to improve. As a fiscal policy analyst, it's my job to get to the bottom of each reform suggestion, identify which ones are real reflections of the state's situation, and show people why bad reforms

are snake oil and good reforms are medicine. Sometimes, this involves busting myths of higher education, other times it means getting to the bottom of the state's institutional framework.

Good policy needs more than votes—it needs people equipped with facts, figures, arguments, and ultimately truth. A policy researcher advances liberty by developing knowledge needed to promote and defend freedom.

J.D.

Law school deserves a special section because it is such a common educational path for aspiring policy experts. Many wannabe policy wonks go to law school, and many corporate lawyers come out.

There's nothing wrong with being a corporate, defense, or other kind of lawyer. But if you are passionate about policy, you should be fully aware that in general, law school limits your options; it does not expand them. The sheer cost of a JD often requires a job with a high salary right out of school to pay off loans. The salaries typical of an entry-level policy organization are nowhere near those of a law firm. Many take the law job with the intention of paying off debt and later returning to policy, but for most of them, it never happens. The reduction in salary when making the switch requires too great a lifestyle change. Unsurprisingly, this means that most law school students end up being lawyers for the rest of their lives.

There are some jobs in public interest law or legal policy that require a law degree, but these are relatively few, especially in comparison with the large number of law school graduates seeking them.

Generally speaking, if you are passionate about a career in policy, avoid law school, at least until you have worked for a few years and have a better idea of exactly how a J.D. would help your career. The worst thing to do, which happens all too often, is to attend law school because you want to do policy but just aren't sure what to do next. The high cost of this path is not worth the limited options afterward.

Finally, one should not seek out a given degree simply because of the perceived financial rewards associated with it. A keen interest in the field of study chosen is perhaps the most important prerequisite to success in graduate school.

6. Being a Policy Generalist

Dr. Jameson Taylor, Director of Research, South Carolina Policy Council

If you are wrestling over whether to specialize in any one field, as opposed to being a policy generalist, chances are you have already answered this question for yourself and just don't realize it. Upon reflection, the answer will likely become clear as you consider the classes you have taken, the papers you have written, and the professional and life experiences you have obtained. Some of these choices, however, might also be just as much a result of circumstance as of preference. For instance, you took that class on Advanced Medicaid Policy, as opposed to Machiavelli, because your ex-girlfriend also had a penchant for Italian political philosophers. Thus, the more important question you should be asking is why you have already chosen the path you are on.

In my own case, it has never been necessary to ask whether I wanted to be a generalist. This certitude, however, may be unique to generalists. It seems natural to us to be interested in everything, to want to know the truth about everything, and to understand how it's all connected. Perhaps the more difficult challenge for the generalist is to harness this innate curiosity and turn it into a career. And that leads me to my first insight.

Insight 1: I didn't plan any of this.

In all honesty, I never quite planned to become a policy analyst. As a true generalist, I'm not sure I could have. That being said, I knew I was interested in politics. It wasn't as if I possessed more than a passing interest (most generalists have a passing interest in everything) in neurobiology or mechanical engineering. Although I wasn't sure how my political interests would translate into a career, I did know what I didn't want to do. I did not want to become an attorney. I did not want to go into politics. I did not want to teach political science.

I had figured out at least this much upon graduating from college. As an undergraduate at a small liberal arts school, I had majored in government, but taken courses in everything from philosophy to Vietnamese to playwriting. In the end, I gravitated toward the study of Middle Eastern politics. This was not, as I realized later, because I wanted to specialize in the Middle East. Rather, I was interested in how Islam had responded to the challenges of modernity, or more broadly speaking, answered for itself what philosophers call the "religio-political question." Thus, even my attempt to focus on one geopolitical region had led to much more general, and far-reaching, interests.

Still, I was only dimly aware of these impulses upon graduation from college. After a year of doing volunteer work that had nothing to do with politics or public policy, I enrolled in the Ph.D. program in politics at the University of Dallas. My intention was not to become an expert in politics, or even to obtain a Ph.D., but simply to learn—about politics, but also philosophy, religion, literature—as much as I possibly could so as to begin to answer life's deepest questions.

As Socrates' example shows us, standing around asking questions all day doesn't pay the bills. Since I was unable to market myself as a full-time philosopher and still not really interested in teaching, my job search

after obtaining my “ABD” (all-but-dissertation) led me to consider working for a public policy think tank. I soon obtained a part-time position as an assistant editor; a post supplemented with a temporary job teaching history and government to junior high students.

Once the school year ended, I confirmed for myself that I didn’t really want to teach. As the summer came to a close, I obtained a full-time policy position with a small publishing house specializing in political news and analysis. While there, I wrote on a wide variety of topics, ranging from U.S.-Vietnamese trade relations to French defense spending to domestic budgetary policy.

And there I might have stayed, had it not been that this particular company suffered from the worst “corporate culture” I have ever toiled under. Thus, after less than a year, I moved to Northern Virginia to accept a position as a writer and researcher with a nonprofit focused on life and family issues.

Although my sphere of research had narrowed somewhat—I was no longer working on all things political—I was still responsible for covering a wide variety of subjects, most of which had broad ethical, religious, and cultural implications. In other words, I was still learning and writing on new and interesting topics every day.

If providence played a role in determining exactly where I was working, a common theme had begun to emerge. I excelled at quickly mastering a topic, writing a concise analysis, and then articulating how this issue was related to more basic social and political phenomena. This realization leads me to my second insight.

Insight 2: I love to learn.

I would wager most policy analysts or researchers love to learn. At bottom, a policy analyst is a problem-solver, and solving new and ever-evolving problems requires a new and ever-evolving knowledge base. The question, then, may not be so much whether you love to learn, but what kind of learning comes naturally. As a generalist, I love to learn something new every day. That is to say, there must be an element of novelty in what I am learning. This may be the result of a certain confidence, or perhaps arrogance, that the essential points of many issues can be grasped rather quickly. I intuit it is also related to a creative streak that becomes somewhat restless at the thought of settling down too long upon any one theme. In any event, this insight is very much related to another.

Insight 3: It’s all connected.

In my view, everything is connected—and connectable. This may be the chief intuition that distinguishes the generalist from the specialist. Given that everything is connected, every subject is ultimately related to every other, and, more importantly, related to some one first principle. Even if the generalist cannot articulate this principle, I would argue it is the organizing impulse in all that he does.

To understand what I mean, let’s imagine a generalist and a specialist are asked to undertake a specific research project—say, on transportation spending. Initially, both the generalist and the specialist may approach the project with the same question: what is the best way to build good roads? The specialist answers this

query by digging deeper, building layer upon layer of knowledge. But the primary question—how to build good roads—remains at the center of his work. By contrast, the generalist approaches the question, and its accompanying answer, as another layer, or rather, perspective, that reflects a deeper question. This question will differ somewhat, depending upon the analyst. Does this policy further good government? Does this policy further human rights? Does this policy respect and cultivate the integrity of the person? For all practical purposes, the answer to this deeper question may also recede into the background—say, owing to time and space considerations. But even if unstated, this primary question will remain as an organizing principle.

This, of course, is not to say the specialist does not also consider these more basic questions. The difference is one of approach. The specialist brackets such questions so as to better concentrate on the subject at hand. For the generalist, these fundamental questions remain front and center, demanding at least an acknowledgement.

Above, we wondered if the generalist suffers from intellectual arrogance. The counter to this hubris is a keen awareness that no matter how much specialized knowledge he acquires, the generalist still has not answered the more basic questions underlying these other inquiries. In the face of such unanswered questions, the generalist cannot help but be distracted from the acquisition of whatever specialized knowledge may be required to finish the project at hand—say, that policy report on transportation. If given proper direction, however, such distractions can be used to great benefit. And this leads to my final insight.

Insight 4: Generalists make better leaders.

It goes without saying that every leader must possess a broad vision that inspires and captivates others. In short, every leader must be a generalist in some fashion or another. The opposite—that every generalist is a leader—is not true. In my own case, I am a reluctant leader. (But this may not be unusual for the policy analyst, as such, who prefers study and research over other pursuits.) Nevertheless, it is precisely my ability to see the big picture, to approach things as a generalist, that qualifies me for the leadership positions I have taken on. As director of research for the South Carolina Policy Council, for instance, one of my primary responsibilities is ensuring that our organization provides a timely response on a wide variety of topics, all of which must ultimately be informed by our core mission. As such, the position directly draws upon my strengths as a generalist: knowledge of a wide array of issues; the ability to quickly refocus on new challenges and ideas; and a clear understanding of what projects are essential to our primary goals. This is not to say that a specialist cannot also be a good leader. But the specialist *qua* specialist is not equipped to lead. Rather, it is only insofar as the specialist is able to communicate—or generalize—his unique knowledge that he is able to lead and educate others.

This latter point, though, speaks to the fact that maintaining a rigid distinction between the generalist and the specialist is somewhat misleading. Especially in small organizations, you will find the same analyst acting in both capacities—perhaps specializing in one policy area but also weighing in more generally on others. Again, the difference is one of approach. Yet reflecting on why you are naturally inclined to one approach over another is vital to attaining that most specialized knowledge of all—finding what will make you happy, not only as a policy analyst, but as a person.

7. Being a Policy Specialist

Andrew Coulson, Director, Center for Educational Freedom at the Cato Institute

The term “social engineer” most often evokes thoughts of “some evil despot attempting to reconstruct society around a warped personal philosophy” (Mark Easton). Borrowing from A.E. Housman, we picture them trying to “make [us] dance as they desire, with jail and gallows and hell-fire.”

In reality, engineers are the perfect model for the way public policy analysts should function: they are servants, not dictators. Far from imposing an agenda of their own, engineers seek to ascertain their clients’ goals and then to meet them as effectively, quickly, and economically as possible. They don’t tell people what they should want, but rather how to get what they do want. Engineers begin by determining if known practices and tools, in use anywhere in the world either now or in the past, can meet specifications. They are loath to reinvent the wheel—to try to solve problems that already have effective solutions—because doing so is time-consuming, expensive, and risky. If no satisfactory solution exists, they seek to adapt an existing technology to fit the new application or criteria. Here again, and for the same reasons, their approach is to invent as little as possible. Most “revolutionary” technological advances are in fact the result of piecing together many incremental innovations. The staggering improvements in technology of the past two centuries are an irrefutable testament to the power of this approach.

So what does it take to become an effective social engineer? As with our mechanical, computer, and structural counterparts, specialization is essential. Those hired to generate electricity from water reservoirs are hydroelectric engineers—they’re the ones who know how to do it. Similarly, no one should care what a policy analyst thinks about school vouchers or charter schools unless he or she has demonstrated a comprehensive knowledge of the relevant evidence. And it is no more feasible to become an expert in every single branch of policy than it is to master every branch of engineering. Humans don’t live long enough (at least until bioengineers make a little more progress on longevity). So while there may be a role for generalists in public policy, perhaps analogous to the role of a GP in medicine, the social engineer must specialize in at least one field in order to have anything valuable to offer.

Within a policy field, however, generalization is invaluable. Social engineers must be able to weigh the relative merits of alternative policies in achieving the public’s desired ends. An analyst whose expertise is limited to curriculum and teaching methods will not be able to effectively weigh reforms in those areas against other, systemic reforms (e.g., those based on increased parental choice and competition between schools). Knowledge of the field’s international and historical context is especially important. Any one nation’s contemporary experience with a particular policy is necessarily limited, so it is typically impossible to satisfactorily evaluate the alternatives using only recent, domestic evidence.

Yet this is a key point of disagreement—particularly in the field of education. It has been argued that political, cultural, and economic factors vary too greatly across time and nations for reliable policy lessons to be drawn from these sources. Certainly it is possible to misapply such evidence, and so a policy specialist

must understand the potential pitfalls of using foreign and historical evidence and learn how to overcome them. To that end, it's useful to study an example of what not to do: the call by many U.S. commentators to emulate the Finnish education system on the grounds that the Finns took first place on a recent international mathematics and science test (PISA) administered to fifteen-year-olds. This advocacy is misguided for a host of reasons.

First, the Finnish curriculum happens to be more closely aligned with the content tested by PISA than is the case for most other developed nations. PISA emphasizes interpretation of and reasoning about "everyday" math and science, rather than the demonstration of higher level mathematical and scientific skills, which happen to be the focus of another international test, TIMSS. The Finns placed 10th in science and 14th in math on the TIMSS a decade ago and have not participated in it since. Over 200 Finnish mathematics professors signed a letter in 2005 lamenting the poor and declining mathematics skills of their entering freshmen and warning against generalizations based on misleading PISA results.

Second, Western nations are typically very diverse, having sizeable sub-populations that underperform the majority population for various reasons, even after controls for socio-economic status (Jensen). By contrast, the Finnish population is extremely homogeneous.

Third, the Finnish labor market is one of the more tightly regulated in the free world, possibly diminishing the appeal of the most demanding and highly skilled private-sector jobs and thereby raising the relative appeal of public-sector careers (including teaching) among ambitious, high-ability college students. If so, this would likely improve Finland's teaching workforce relative to those in other nations. And, finally, Finnish commentators have themselves argued that "teachers ... enjoy a higher status in Finland than in most other advanced liberal countries," which could also lead a larger percentage of high achievers to enter the profession than in other nations.

But if nations differ in these important ways amongst themselves and over time, how are we to draw reliable lessons from foreign and historical data? One particularly effective approach is to systematically review the within-nation evidence on the relative merits of alternative policies. A comparison of state-run schools, state-funded private schools, and tuition-charging private schools within a single nation is not subject to the obfuscating effects of international differences. In fact, if we find that the same pattern of results is manifest within many different nations, it gives us much greater confidence that the observed effect is systemic than if we were to restrict ourselves to observing only our own nation. The greater the differences among the nations involved, the more compelling the consistency of the policy comparisons becomes.

In addition to developing specialized expertise across the breadth of his or her field, the social engineer benefits from a diverse skill set: written and oral communication, research, statistical analysis, foreign language, and computer programming skills can all be of great value. These need not all be acquired in advance of beginning a career in policy analysis, but should be accumulated as time permits and opportunities arise.

Two final attributes that all engineers must cultivate in order to be successful in the long run are humility and the ability to recognize and redress their own errors. The most reliable way to be consistently right on policy is to change your views when the evidence reveals you to be wrong. In Canada, final-year engineering students are invited by a private membership organization to participate in a ceremony called “The Ritual of the Calling of an Engineer.” The ceremony hinges on an oath, written in 1922 by Rudyard Kipling, to perform their duties conscientiously and honorably. Those who choose to take the oath wear a simple hammered Iron Ring on their pinky fingers, as a constant reminder of their responsibilities to the public. Though not a part of the ceremony, part of the myth surrounding it is that the first Iron Rings were fashioned from the remains of the Québec Bridge, which collapsed on August 29, 1907, due to engineer error, killing 76 people.

While they wear no such ring, policy analysts do well to remember the impact that their work can have on the lives of their fellow citizens—for good if performed with care, for ill if not.

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8. How Understanding Economics Helps in Policy

James D. Gwartney, Professor of Economics, Florida State University

For anyone seeking to affect or even evaluate public policy options, economic thinking is crucial. It helps us to avoid some of the worst, and yet most common, errors in the public policy arena. Economic thinking emphasizes the role of incentives and the importance of comparing each potentially favored option with other real and available options, not with perfection. Let's look first at today's discussion of "green jobs" on the one hand, and then turn to reform of the medical care system in the United States.

Jobs are typically used to produce goods and services that we value. But let's not forget that it is the value of the goods produced that is important, and the jobs are merely a means to that end. If people don't keep their eyes on this basic fact, they can be misled to support projects that destroy wealth rather than create it.

Politicians like to talk about the jobs created by their spending programs. Suppose the government spends \$50 billion employing one million workers to install photovoltaic cells to generate electricity for electric utility firms to distribute to customers. Supporters of projects like this often argue that they should be undertaken because they will create a huge number of jobs. Is this a sound argument? To answer this question, consider the following two points. First, the government will have to use either taxes or borrowing to finance the project. Taxes of \$50 billion will reduce consumer spending and private savings by this amount, and this will diminish employment in other sectors by a magnitude similar to the employment created by the spending on the project. Alternatively, if the project is financed by debt, the additional borrowing will lead to higher interest rates and future taxes to cover interest payments. This will also divert funds away from other projects, both private and public. Thus, the net impact will be primarily a reshuffling of jobs rather than job creation.

Second, what really matters is the value of what is produced, not jobs. If jobs were the key to high incomes, we could easily create as many as we wanted. For example, the government could pay attractive wages hiring the unemployed to dig holes one day and fill them up the next. The program would create jobs, but as a nation, we would also be poorer because such jobs would not generate goods and services that people value. Job creation, either real or imagined, is not a sound reason to support a program. Instead, the proper test is opportunity cost—the value of what is produced relative to the value of what is given up. If people value the output generated by the government spending program more than the production it crowds out, it will increase our incomes and living standards. If the opposite is the case, then the additional spending will make us worse off. Economic thinking helps a careful analyst see how to advise allies and to expose the errors of opponents, when policy errors like this become real threats.

Health care gives us more examples. Government health policies have generated perverse incentives that have led to undesirable outcomes. In a normal market, consumers pay for the service and choose from whom to buy. Sellers in a true, more open market are compensated by their customers. Competition from rivals provides sellers with a strong incentive to keep costs and prices low. Sellers thus have a strong incentive to serve consumers' interests: if they do not, consumers will buy from competitors who do that better.

Key relationships that make real markets work have been eroded by U.S. health care policies that evolved over the previous six decades and more. The structure of the health care market is now permeated with perverse incentives that encourage people to engage in actions using resources inefficiently and imposing those costs on others. These incentives underlie both the poor performance of the industry and the rising health care costs we all know about. Examining the incentives helps us see what can be done to improve outcomes.

We turn now to the four major reasons for the poor performance of the health care industry. First, the structure of today's government programs relies on third-party payments that erode the incentive to economize. Very little health care is purchased directly by consumers. Most is paid for indirectly through taxes or insurance premiums. When someone else is paying the bill, the patient has little reason to conserve on the use of the resource and the provider has little incentive to keep costs low.

Second, the huge tax advantage providing for the purchase of health insurance through one's employer undermines competition and makes it very costly for individuals or families themselves to purchase a health insurance policy that fits their preferences. Rather than allowing consumers to choose, government subsidies and regulations push them into standardized and controlled group plans provided through employers. Moreover, under this system, losing your job means also losing your health insurance. People do not generally buy auto, life, or homeowner insurance through their employers. Why do so many buy health insurance this way? Answer: The tax system subsidizes them to do so and punishes them with higher personal costs if they do not.

Third, state regulations that force insurers operating in the state to cover numerous services like in vitro fertilization, drug rehabilitation, marriage counseling, acupuncture, and massage therapy also drive up costs and make it still more difficult for consumers to purchase a policy that fits their preferences. Interestingly, the political pressure for this coverage does not come from consumers but rather from suppliers wanting taxpayers to subsidize their operation.

Fourth, regulations prevent consumers from purchasing a health insurance plan offered in another state. Thus, if you would like to purchase insurance that would provide you with inexpensive basic coverage at a low cost, but you happen to live in a state that has adopted many of the expensive mandates, you are out of luck. Essentially, the government has organized the health insurance business into separate cartels that operate in each of the 50 states. You can buy nearly everything ranging from groceries and automobiles to life and auto insurance from providers in other states, but not health insurance.

Economic thinking allows policy professionals to ask the right questions, thus helping good thinking to overcome some tempting policy errors that are made every day.

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9. How Understanding Politics Helps in Policy

Eric O'Keefe, Chairman and CEO, Sam Adams Alliance

This is the most dynamic time since the Founding for political reformers in America. Millions of Americans have awakened to government threats to our basic liberties. But what should they do? How can they engage effectively to change the system?

We have regular elections, but do we have representative government? Rasmussen Reports tells us that only 11 percent of voters believe Congress is doing a good job, and just 21 percent think the federal government has the consent of the governed!

Both parties have participated in a binge of government expansion. What's a voter to do? What is a reformer to do? How can people drive positive change given our current system? That is a much bigger question than policy questions about health care, climate change, or tax law.

The first requirement for a reformer is to understand the system as it is. And when we take a look, we find that incumbents and other government employees are thriving. For them, these are boom times in income and influence. So why should they change anything? Unless we change their incentives, they will not change their behavior.

Millions of frustrated Americans are demanding answers to basic questions; there has never been more hunger for explanations about how our system really works and how we can change it.

There are direct and indirect approaches to policy reform. Broadly speaking, we can:

- Change incentives to alter how the system works. (For example, organize to hold politicians accountable with citizen engagement and primary election challenges.)
- Protect people who are circumventing the system. (For example, the Institute for Justice's efforts to use constitutional litigation and block attempts to regulate homeschooling.)
- Legislate improved policies. (For example, enact lower taxes and health care reform that increases consumer choice.)

I have tried many approaches to promoting liberty in the last 30 years, including working for a third political party, initiating term limits and spending limits, and promoting school choice in state legislatures.

The third party effort failed because our winner-take-all elections drive us to having only two major parties, and the names of those parties are now cemented into numerous state and federal laws. And while the Republican and Democratic labels do not convey anything consistent today, political reformers can run under either label and bring new life and principles to those labels. Had I first studied the history and details of our political system, I would not have spent three years working for a third party.

Case Studies in Policy Francisco Gonzalez — James Madison Institute

It's really hard to write about "a day in the life" that deals with my job as director of development of the James Madison Institute (JMI). My tasks vary from day to day, but they are all aimed at one goal: finding sources of support to help JMI grow and advance our mission to limit government and provide practical free-market solutions in Florida's public policy arena. As Morton Blackwell once famously said, "You can't save the world if you can't pay the rent." This is what makes being in development so important. If you don't have water, it's hard to put out a fire.

On the surface level, it seems easy to pinpoint my responsibilities: raise money, find new members, and advance the capacities of the Institute. That involves things like writing grant proposals to foundations, thanking donors when their support comes in, making sure our staff follows through with the programs and initiatives we get support for, and then following up with foundations and other donors with reports on how we've used their funds. On another level, my job involves going out and meeting with individual donors all across the state of Florida, asking them for support, but more often simply visiting with them to provide a personal report on what we're doing with their donations and what's ahead for the Institute.

My job also involves working with my colleagues to put together meaningful events across the state (and it's a big and very diverse state!). Many of these events involve membership luncheons, which start with deciding whom to invite, putting together lists of existing donors and prospects, advertising the event locally, and bringing in dynamic speakers to address us on a particular subjects. This really gets to some of the exciting parts of the job, where I've been able to interact personally with people like John Fund, Larry Reed, and Marco Rubio, and meet superstars like Jeb Bush and John Stossel, among many others.

As I have worked in this movement, I've come across so many interesting people—whether they be celebrities or simply donors with amazing life stories. It's astonishing how many millionaires I've met that on the surface wouldn't appear to me to be millionaires. I don't think I've met a single wealthy person that donates to JMI that didn't personally create their own wealth through their own work. I've heard story after story of entrepreneurs turned millionaires—and I've learned that's often why they donate to organizations like JMI. They recognize the opportunities given to them in a free-market economy and they want others to

have the same opportunities.

This week, I traveled to West Palm Beach, Orlando, and Jacksonville, before making my way back to JMI's headquarters in Tallahassee. We put on a "Madison Day" civics education event in West Palm Beach, introducing hundreds of high school students to the life and thought of James Madison through a professional "James Madison" re-enactor. In Orlando and Jacksonville, we had meetings with two select groups of JMI members, and had Larry Reed, president of the Foundation for Economic Education, give talks to both groups. I was lucky enough to spend some quality time with Larry during and between these events and learn from his own life experiences and quality scholarship.

Right now, I have a stack of thank-you calls to make—to new and existing members that responded to our most recent direct mail campaign, so I'll quickly attach this email (among my many others) and get back to work. In an hour, I have to attend a meeting of Florida's Center Right Coalition and hear directly from a few of our state's top elected officials. I hope you can see this job is never boring—and if you do it right, you'll be having such a blast, you'll forget you're at "work." Speaking of which, I've got to go.

Spending limit initiatives ran into a buzzsaw of hostility from the tax-eating forces, and they used obstruction, lies, and litigation to kill this baby in the cradle.

And efforts to legislate broad school choice legislation have faced persistent opposition from the many moneyed interests that benefit from the current failed system. The employees of the current system, the builders of expensive school buildings, and of course the politicians all enjoy this profligate system. If educating children were the real goal of public education, we would not have government managing the schools.

Good ideas do not win on their own. Good ideas do not necessarily prevail even after gaining wide support among opinion leaders. Bad policies persist because powerful people benefit from those bad policies. This insight is at the heart of public choice theory, a field that uses economic analysis to study the behavior of actors in the political sphere. To understand why changing government institutions is so difficult, an understanding of public choice is key. Actually changing those institutions is another story.

Fortunately, most paths to progress do not go through a government agency. The postal monopoly was never repealed, but because of FedEx, UPS, and email, our economy has been able to work around this obstacle. Broad school choice reform has failed in legislatures, but 1.5 million children have exited the system because of parents who chose homeschooling over government schooling.

Human history is full of examples of people increasing liberty by exiting a system or inventing a way around it. America was settled by Europeans exiting religious and economic oppression. Public policy reform is not limited to legislating for liberty. It should start with a thorough assessment of the system—how it works, why it leads to certain outcomes, and why it resists most reforms.

We may find that we can change incentives and outcomes without any legislation. For example, in the 19th century, private political parties enforced rotation in office through their convention nominations, and the average stay in Congress was under two terms. Then the Progressives ended private nominations with the direct primary. This escape from accountability set the stage for a century-long surge in the size of government.

Incumbents act like they own their offices, because functionally, most of them do. And we know that “power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely,” per Lord Acton. Incumbents almost never lose. Most districts are one-party districts, so most incumbents are entrenched in office. Political organizers have failed to respond to this situation with routine primary challenges—but those can be created without legislation, by political organizing, and that might restore the accountability that held government in check during the 19th century. Grassroots activists and organizers show great promise of seeing the wisdom of organizing outside the political parties to set the standard and hold politicians accountable.

There will always be people struggling for freedom with creative efforts to serve others and make a living. The Institute for Justice finds great examples of these people and uses constitutional arguments to protect

them from regulatory abuse. Litigating for liberty can create policy reform by snuffing local regulations that violate state and federal constitutions.

In a complex and dynamic country with over 300 million people, we need experts and allies working in all policy areas.

But look carefully before you leap. If you get into part of the system that is thriving on the status quo, you may become very frustrated. If you advocate reforms before understanding who benefits from the current system, you may end up giving bad advice to your allies.

For maximum leverage, look past those who are just trying to support politicians or win elections. Look for people driving for long-term systemic change. There are a growing number of people and organizations working outside the system and looking for ideas and energy to revive liberty in this time of peril. They need your help.

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Case Studies in Policy Chris Moody — The Daily Caller

As I like to tell people who are interested in coming to Washington to work for the first time, I showed up here fresh out of college with two suitcases, no job, and nowhere to live but a friend's couch to sleep on for a few weeks.

This is a line you will hear from almost everyone who works in this town. Most of us just showed up, slept on a couch, and worked for free when we got started.

After a year of travelling around the world after college, I decided to get serious and look for that first job. My background was in journalism and political science, so I arrived in Washington looking for freelance writing work, which would hopefully help me get a full-time job.

But everywhere I turned, the signs did not look good.

Newspaper headlines warned of a coming recession, potential employers were telling job-seekers to come another year, and competition for any job in Washington was as fierce as ever. I found myself competing with Ivy League graduates with 4.0 GPA's and talented professionals with full résumés who were twice my age.

Friends who had worked in Washington told me that I couldn't just rely on my résumé and hope that employers would call. They advised that the best way to find a job would be for me to hit the D.C. social circuit and start

shaking hands with people. In short, my résumé needed a face to go with the paper.

Following their advice, I went to Kinko's and printed 500 personal name cards. I took my blue blazer to the dry cleaner and paid to have my pants pressed. Armed with my new cards, a clean suit and sheer will, I went to every function, forum, happy hour, bar night, and D.C. gathering I could find.

When you're alone, it's never easy walking into a room full of people you've never met. You have to take yourself well beyond your comfort zone, shake hands with strangers, and without seeming desperate, find new opportunities. I took a deep breath and tried to meet as many people as possible. I would make conversation with new faces and share my business card. At night I would go back to my temporary home (a friend's couch), try to remember everyone I had met, and follow up the next day. Over time, I started making friends.

It wasn't a week before I started getting interviews. Within three weeks I had a job offer, and only a month after I first arrived in Washington with my worn-out suitcases, I started working in a full-time position. With my last few dollars left over, I rented a room in the city and even bought a bed. This was the beginning of my

career in Washington, D.C.

For the past two years, I have worked on new media projects for a think tank in Washington, D.C. I edit the blog, run the online social networks, and try to create a buzz around the research my colleagues produce. Working with the communications department, I find new and innovative ways to get our work to the public. I collaborate with bloggers, researchers, writers, policy analysts, and activists.

The work that I do is exciting, fast-paced and revolves around national-level news and events. Every day, I work with people who are regulars on the major news shows and people who publish their ideas in national magazines and newspapers.

This is a city where people come to work, so it's full of energetic and ambitious young people who are interested in making change and shaping policy on a national level.

If that sounds like the place for you, then pack your two suitcases, find a couch, and make your start along the Potomac. The good news is that there are networks like the Institute for Humane Studies here to help. They can help you get started, find a great job, and meet the movers and shakers of this generation. And you never know. You just might be one of them.

10. The Use (Not Abuse) of Statistics

Lynn Scarlett, Former Executive Director, Reason Public Policy Institute

Economist Thomas Sowell quipped in his book *Knowledge and Decisions* that information is everywhere, but knowledge is rare. Sowell may have had in mind the welter of statistical data that accompanies so many public policy discussions. No matter what the issue, no matter what the philosophical or political perspective, combatants in policy debates arm themselves with data.

Data constitute information; they do not constitute knowledge. Knowledge results from organizing data and other information into useful sets and situating that information into a broader interpretive context. Statistical analysis is a tool for finding patterns amid informational “noise.” How meaningful those patterns are and whether the purported patterns actually exist depend on the methodological care with which an analyst proceeds. Data can be diced, sliced, merged, correlated, averaged, and extrapolated in endless ways. Not all these efforts are equally illuminating.

Statistical data are seductive. They lend an aura of credibility to what would otherwise appear as simple matters of opinion. But statistics can mislead. Even casual observers of public policy debates need to be wary of the perils that lurk behind numbers. Six perils stand out.

Beware the Timeframe.

Policy analysts often proclaim success or failure of public policies, or point to the emergence over time of new problems. These proclamations require showing how circumstances have changed from one moment in time to another. We see claims that things are getting worse—illegitimate births are increasing, the weather is hotter, students are performing worse than a generation ago. Or, we see claims that some policy has made things worse or better. Comparison of circumstances across time is a legitimate exercise. But not any old timeframe will do. Which timeframe is appropriate depends upon the topic.

Ten years of data may be an acceptable timeframe for assessing whether California’s mandatory class-size reduction has improved student performance. A month, six months, or even a year all present timeframes too short to draw any conclusions about class size and student performance. But a year may be an appropriate timeframe for discerning whether, say, privatizing waste collection systems is increasing or decreasing program costs. Seemingly impressive statistics can quickly become misleading or meaningless if the data cover a timespan unsuited to distinguishing real from spurious patterns.

Beware of Apples and Oranges.

How many times have we heard the “apples and oranges” caveat? Yet would-be pundits often ignore it, rushing to find meaning by comparing unlike situations. We often see this sleight of hand. Student test scores are getting worse, say pundits comparing SAT scores of the 1980s with those of the 1950s. But are

we talking about comparable sets of students? A much larger percentage of students take SATs today than 30 years ago. Perhaps only those most likely to do well took the test 30 years ago. If so, mean test scores would be higher than today, even if “average” student performance was no better than today. Students may, on average, be performing worse today than 30 years ago, but reporting aggregate SAT scores, with no adjustment to compare matched groups of students, cannot confirm this conclusion.

Beware of Total Context, or Confounding Variables.

In a world of so much specialization, scientists often “know” a great deal about a narrow set of phenomena. They may be excellent scientists; they may control for many variables that they can conceive might be important. But their scope of knowledge may exclude critical factors. An air chemist may know little about astrophysics; a biologist may know little about nuclear physics; a meteorologist may know nothing about biology. This challenge is especially important when observed correlations among different phenomena are, though statistically significant, still rather weak. What else is going on? The problem of confounding variables can haunt even fairly simple problems. Does the advent of mandated recycling account for recent reductions in per capita waste disposal? Or are reductions the consequence of ever-improved use of materials that cut down on the amount of stuff used per item consumed? Perhaps introduction of user fees or waste education programs account for the decline. Well done studies attempt to account for different possible explanations of perceived events.

Beware: Correlation Is Not Causation.

Incidence of heat stroke correlates highly with ice cream consumption. The higher the consumption, the more cases of heat stroke. Ice cream consumption also correlates with outdoor temperature—the greater the consumption, the higher the temperature. So, does eating ice cream cause heat stroke or high temperatures? Silly example. We know these correlations of different phenomena do not mean the one caused the other. Maybe they did; maybe not. Maybe causation is in the opposite direction: high temperatures may cause people to want more ice cream. In fact, these correlations simply cannot tell us anything about causation.

Yet, in less obvious contexts, we see observations of correlation translated into statements of causation all the time. Raising speed limits may be correlated with fewer accidents, but did the higher speeds cause the improved safety? Or was it drunk-driving pullover programs? Better driving habits? Improved roads? Citing a single correlative relationship is insufficient to draw conclusions about cause and effect.

Beware the Relativity Problem.

How many times do we see pundits announce that Town X privatized its trash collection system and saved \$750,000, or \$1 million, or whatever? Great data? Interesting data? Important data? I don't know. These pronouncements give me no context. The \$750,000 might be a lot; it might represent minimal savings.

Unless I know how much was previously spent on the trash system, I have no idea whether \$750,000 is a 1 percent savings, a 10 percent savings, or a 90 percent savings. And unless I have some idea of savings ranges achieved by other practices or for other services, I don't even know if a 1 percent savings is noteworthy or not.

There is, of course, another "relativity" problem. We repeatedly see announcements that "Study Y found a 3 percent (or 4, 8, or whatever percent) increase in tumors among frogs (for example) exposed to some chemical." Sounds impressive, but is it a statistically significant finding? Without more information, we don't know. We need to know the size of the population tested; we need to know how much random variation in tumors occurs in given frog populations.

Beware the Effects of Dynamism.

Policy pundits often warn, "if present trends continue," some outcome will ensue. Human population will explode to the point of crisis; traffic congestion will snarl city roads, slowing us to perpetual jams in which we move along at five miles per hour. Extrapolating from present trends to future outcomes is tantalizing and often produces specters of future disaster. But, of course, present trends often don't continue. In modern bumper sticker parlance, "stuff happens." Birth rates fall; people move, change their driving hours, hop on a train, carpool, telecommunicate—they react and respond, and trends alter. Thus, a challenge for the analyst is to recognize the pitfalls of extrapolation.

Think Strategically.

Data are seductive. Policy analysis requires careful acquisition and review of data. But data are not knowledge, and all uses of data are not equally illuminating. Indeed, facts and figures sometimes deceive. Many data perils challenge us. But there is an even larger consideration for analysts. Jane Jacobs, author of a path-breaking critique of city planning, *The Death and Life of American Cities*, said: "one of the main things to know is what kind of problem cities pose, for all problems cannot be thought about in the same way." Jacobs added, "Which avenues of thinking are apt to be useful or to help yield truth depend not on how we might prefer to think about a subject, but rather on the inherent nature of the subject itself." Mental methods or strategies for thinking are, she concluded, central.

Jacobs pointed to three kinds of problems: 1) problems of simplicity; 2) problems of disorganized complexity; and 3) problems of organized complexity. The first are two-variable problems: gas pressure, for example, depends mainly on gas volume. "The essential character of these problems rests in the fact that ... the behavior of the first quality can be described to a useful degree of accuracy by taking into account only its dependence upon the second quality and by neglecting the minimal influence of other factors."

Problems of disorganized complexity involve billions of variables, as Jacobs noted. Predicting motion of a single billiard ball on a table may be a simple problem, but analyzing ten or fifteen balls on the table at once quickly becomes intractable. However, what one can do is ask "on average" types of questions: on average,

how many balls will hit the rail at any particular moment; on average, how far does a ball move before being hit; and so on. This kind of problem can be seen as one of disorganized complexity. Individual variables may be impossible to analyze, but the system can nonetheless be characterized in ways that make some analysis possible. Probability theory and statistical mechanics become useful tools of “truth-searching,” albeit constrained by many methodological caveats.

But not all problems are suitable subjects for probability theory. A third category, problems of organized complexity, carries a fundamental challenge in that it is not the sheer number of variables but the degree of interdependence among variables that poses analytical difficulties. Jane Jacobs saw the “problem” of understanding how cities function as just this sort of problem of organized complexity. Dozens of factors in the city are all “varying simultaneously and in subtly connected ways.”

Jacobs viewed problems of organized complexity as requiring three different “habits of thought.” Illumination of these problems necessitates, she proposed, thinking about processes; working inductively from the details or particulars to the general; and seeking “unaverage” clues involving very small quantities, which reveal the way larger and more “average” qualities operate. These “unaverage clues” are akin to what Nobel laureate economist F.A. Hayek referred to as the knowledge of time, place, and circumstance.

Cities are just one example of organized complexity. Many human actions and human institutions involve matters of organized complexity where feedback loops and interconnections produce complex order. Acting as if these problems are matters of disorganized complexity, involving large numbers of randomly acting variables, will mislead the analyst into thinking, as Jacobs puts it, that “any specific malfunction [of a city] could be corrected by opening or filling a new file drawer”—for example, a new housing program or a new recreation program.

Knowledge requires dissecting, first and foremost, what kind of problem we are analyzing so that we apply appropriate analytical tools. Statistical analysis may be enormously useful in helping us understand questions of disorganized complexity; process analysis, induction, and knowledge of specifics—“unaverage clues”—may be more illuminating tools for understanding matters of organized complexity.

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11. Persuasion and Issue-Framing

Fred Smith, President and Founder, Competitive Enterprise Institute

Free-market advocates often seek to convert others to our way of thinking with a quasi-religious fervor. America's strength, however, lies in its diversity of values. If free-market policies are to gain support, we cannot focus on communicating only to those who value liberty above all. We must also reach out to constituencies who place greater stock in other values.

Too often, we neglect to explain that free-market policies not only promote liberty, but also are effective in securing other values. We must persuade others! Note that to some liberals, freedom is just another word for nothing more to lose. And while many conservatives champion freedom, they are often more concerned with security, stability, and preserving traditional institutions. We should persuade these groups that our focus on liberty does not mean we ignore other values. Rather, we believe the institutions of liberty are an effective means of promoting other values as well.

To advance free-market policies, we need not converts but rather supporters for specific reform policies. Persuasion requires that we recognize America's diversity and frame our issues to appeal to alternate values. We need to avoid the purist's refrain: Oh no, you're agreeing with me for the wrong reason! Our ultimate goal is a world in which freedom is secure. We do not need everyone to share our convictions to achieve that.

Consider the religious disputes that plagued Europe for centuries. Catholics and Protestants each held that their relatively small differences were of critical importance. After all, the immortal souls of those failing to follow God's dictates were at stake. Each side was willing to use force to bring the others to truth—and often did. In the name of God, wars raged throughout Europe for centuries.

In America, a new course was crafted. Religious disputes were moved out of the political sphere and into the private one. Doctrinal disputes became matters of persuasion rather than forced conversion. Different denominations established their own places of worship, where they were free to persuade others—but were denied the ability to use coercion to that end.

America achieved religious tolerance as a land of disparate religious communities. That heterogeneity increased support for the separation of church and state—a doctrine which not only reduced violence, but also strengthened religion, as different faiths had to compete to attract adherents.

Persuasion is an effective strategy for reaching a broader audience and for preserving the diversity of our country. But in seeking to persuade, we face a serious challenge. Few people find it reasonable to educate themselves about policies about which they can do little. This is known as rational ignorance. Too often, we in the policy community seek to “educate” the public about the “facts” of a policy, failing to understand that this rational approach is irrelevant to individuals who suffer from information overload and feel that they lack the means to influence policy.

Case Studies in Policy Nathan Benefield — Commonwealth Foundation

A typical day for me starts about 8:30. First thing is going through my email and checking my favorite blog post (I like Google Reader for this). Of course I repeat this, along with checking Twitter, periodically throughout the day. There are a few things I'm looking for: important and breaking news stories and developments within the state, some relevant news or commentaries nationally, or some good studies from other think tanks worth replicating or noting implications or lessons learned.

Typically, I try to do a couple of blog posts throughout the day—either commenting on legislation, highlighting a recent study or news story that has applications for Pennsylvania, or maybe presenting some short research. For instance, a good post might simply outline the growth in the number of school employees vs. enrollment in the past few years.

Many days, I'll field calls from the media, either for a quote on a story, or perhaps some info they need. Sometimes, this takes a bit of background research. Occasionally, these opportunities will be to appear on a talk radio show or doing a clip for local TV news. On very rare occasions, I will sit in as one of the "pundits" talking about state politics and policy issues—such as a couple of appearances on PCN's (the CSPAN for

Pennsylvania) hour-long "Journalist Roundtable."

Much of my time will be spent doing research and writing. A lot of the research entails organizing and analyzing data that is already available—for instance, state spending or education performance—or reading through reports or case studies. The research we produce varies from op-eds, which are targeted to media and the general public, to research reports or short bullet-point summaries of policy issues, where the target audience is lawmakers. The goal is to produce something that is easily understood and very readable (as say, compared to academic research).

A lot of time is spent editing. I typically edit my own writing a few times before showing it to anyone else, and will take some time to proof and edit commentaries or policy reports written by others. The editing includes not just looking for typos and errors, but also trying to find the most concise way of saying things, determining the most precise word in every case, and putting together sentences or phrases that are memorable and quotable.

Some days, I may have a speaking engagement or one to prepare for. This varies from giving presentations on issues like government pensions to speaking at Tea Party

rallies. I tend to be an over-preparer for these, typically thinking carefully about everything that I plan to say. A few times per year, I get the opportunity to testify before state legislative committees. This usually entails summarizing our previous research into something that can be read (I always read my testimony) in anywhere from 5 to 15 minutes, and being sure to have plenty of other information prepared for questions—though in my experience, lawmakers often prefer to comment rather than ask specific questions.

I spend some time supervising our interns and junior research staff. This includes doling out assignments and giving some guidance into the goals for projects, answering questions about policy issues or background where I have a bit more experience, or teaching some of the tools—from statistics to technology—that we use at a think tank.

Promoting our research is another part of my job, which entails posting to Twitter and Facebook, as well as sending almost daily emails to our supporters, the media, and lawmakers.

I typically leave the office around 6:30 or 7, but on my BlackBerry or home computer I regularly check email throughout the evening.

We should recognize that most citizens find it foolish to spend time sorting out the complex claims of policy battles. As I've often noted:

In the political world, people aren't stupid because they're stupid.
They're stupid because they're smart.
And if we try to make them smart, we're being stupid!

But if information doesn't determine opinion, what does? Something, certainly, for opinion polls consistently find that people hold opinions about most policy issues. The question is, what explains the views people hold on issues they haven't thought about?

A wide body of literature suggests that people derive their opinions of complex issues from their core values. Effective persuasion requires that we frame our policies in ways that convey understanding and sympathy for their values.

Intellectual arguments come into play only after we've succeeded in opening a communication link. We must first give them a reason to listen. In other words, people don't care what we know, until they know that we care!

We must develop policy marketing skills if we are to engage the citizenry and thus overcome their rational inclination to ignore our policy arguments and simply default to their typical views (liberals favoring regulations, conservatives rejecting change). Carefully selecting the appropriate message and messenger is a crucial step.

Our focus on winning the war of ideas has been important, but it has led us to neglect this marketing challenge. Free-market advocates often feel frustrated: just because we're right, do we have to lose? Of course we don't, but success will require that we recognize that rationally ignorant citizens base their policy opinions on mental shortcuts.

Which communication techniques can we employ to ensure that people come to see the policies of liberty as compatible with their values? How can we persuade them to listen? And most importantly, how can we reach beyond those already favoring liberty?

A values-based communication (VBC) approach is an effective solution to our persuasion challenge. This technique first emerged from the work of the late duo Aaron Wildavsky (a political scientist) and Mary Douglas (a cultural anthropologist). In a number of works, they suggested that individuals generally hold one of four core values. Three of these are clearly evident in our political system today: individualism, hierarchy, and egalitarianism. (The fourth, fatalism, is less politically relevant.)

Much of the cultural diversity within societies is captured by these core beliefs. We must find ways of communicating and persuading each value group:

- Individualists place great weight on freedom and choice. They make up our primary constituency. However, many individualists fear Big Business as much as Big Government. And, of course, when Big Business and Big Government join forces, they do suppress freedom and competition to a much greater degree than either could alone. Thus, public choice arguments that emphasize political rent-seeking and moral arguments that champion freedom can be effective in reaching this group.
- Hierarchists often view government as an alternative path to achieving desirable social goals. Arguments based on the comparative effectiveness of free markets and appeals to authority, all backed with empirical evidence, can be especially useful here.
- Egalitarians are the most difficult group for free-marketeers to persuade. When reaching out to this group, we need to focus on the unintended, harmful consequences of statist policies on the poor and disadvantaged.

VBC suggests that if we hope to win the policy debate, we cannot simply harp on why our policies advance liberty. To persuade, we must gain greater cultural understanding of liberty's role in advancing other cultural values. In essence, our goal is to make freedom popular, encourage free-market public policies, reduce government intrusions on society, and ultimately enhance the quality of life for all.

When making economic arguments, we achieve more by not focusing exclusively on economic efficiency and freedom of choice. We must show that market-based economics also advances other important values, such as fairness and security. Indeed, in many debates, we are more likely to win by putting forth arguments that show how markets reduce the suffering associated with poverty, that richer is healthier, and that freedom of exchange promotes more equitable social arrangements.

We need to show that governmental programs not only undermine individual choice and initiative—an argument that appeals to individualists—but also unfairly serve the politically organized at the expense of everyone else—which appeals to egalitarians—and are often mismanaged and bureaucratic—which appeals to hierarchists.

An example involves the pesticide DDT. Environmental activists managed to get it banned in various countries around the world in the 1970s based on largely unfounded claims about human health risks. In reality, DDT has had no measurable adverse impact on human health. But the bans have contributed to the deaths of millions of African children because bans prevented its use to kill malaria-causing mosquitoes.

Rather than work solely to educate people about the science, free-market groups were able to prevent an international ban and reverse some national bans by highlighting the plight of those poor children. We rightly appealed to those who value fairness and justice, and showed how the liberty to employ such public health tools is essential to human well-being. As a result, even otherwise left-leaning health advocates, including some prominent public health officials, changed their view of DDT and supported its limited use to curb the spread of malaria.

Winning in the world of ideas is a lot like winning souls. It is better done by persuasion than by forced conversion. Like Catholics and Protestants, libertarians, egalitarians, and hierarchists can coexist and mutually benefit from a free society. Our job is to persuade our fellow citizens of that fact, showing how a freer society can also be a fairer, more orderly, and more secure one.

FURTHER READING

Fred Smith, *Field Guide for Effective Communication* (Washington, D.C.: Competitive Enterprise Institute, 2004).

12. Public Speaking

Scott Hamilton, Director, European Connection

Faced with the prospect of speaking in front of an audience, normally confident and well-balanced people have been known to have a panic attack. Yet not only is it a skill that practically anyone can pick up, it is one that well serves all forms of personal communication. If you can improve the way you speak to a group of people, you'll usually find that you've improved at a one-on-one level too.

If you've not had much experience—or perhaps have unwisely decided after a couple of bad experiences that you are 'no good' at public speaking—remember that this is a skill that is very rarely inherent and is almost always learnt. Even the very few who have a natural confidence and a way with words will benefit from some tips on how to get the best out of preparation and delivery. And all speakers, even the more experienced, will improve with practice.

Nevertheless, the point of departure should be as long as possible before you actually get up to speak. First-class *preparation* is vital: without it, the inexperienced become (deservedly) nervous and the experienced are simply boring. No matter how often you might speak on the same subject, it is always better to try to find a new approach to what you want to say—and never misuse old notes as a quick substitute. After all, if you cannot get interested, let alone enthusiastic, about your subject matter, then think how that is going to come across to your audience.

So there you are, sitting at your desk with a pile of blank paper in front of you. Where do you start?

The first step is easy. Think very carefully about to whom you will be talking and exactly what you want to get across to them. Then jot down all your ideas, however random or incoherent they may be. Let your mind drift and reach out to all the possible points that you might want to make. If you're at all creative, interested, or passionate about your subject, this really is the fun part of the exercise.

The second step, of course, is far more difficult. You need to pull this material together in a way that ensures a logical delivery with a beginning, body, and conclusion. As you do so, you must be ruthless in discarding any points that simply do not fit.

Start with the *body*. Sort out your ideas under appropriate headings. The key here is that you have to keep your audience with you. Don't distract them with lines of argumentation that will only confuse them. Only when you've outlined the body should you work out the *beginning*. Here, the aim is to create interest so the audience genuinely wants to hear the rest of what you have to say. Finally, work out a good *ending* to leave them with a clear conclusion that they can take away with them.

Many books on public speaking have a very simple test as a key to a successful speech: Tell them what you are going to say, say it, and then remind them of what you said.

As you work out what to say, remember a few caveats:

- Do not be over-ambitious. It really is pointless writing a beautiful speech if you are unable to deliver it beautifully. So don't waste your time carefully crafting every sentence with just the right adjectives and adverbs.
- Avoid clichés and long, wordy phrases. Simplicity pays; just use ordinary everyday language. Even if your audience knows the subject well, there is a big difference between reading an article and listening to someone speak. Make it easier for them—and yourself.
- Beware of humor. What might seem very funny to you late at night in your own room could fall flat on your audience. That will leave both you and them feeling awkward. If you have them and feel comfortable using them, amusing anecdotes can work well. But you certainly do not have to be funny to be good.

When you have got your ideas sorted and feel prepared, there are two more exercises before you finish.

Firstly, time-keeping is essential. Run through what you have prepared and be certain that it falls just short of your allotted time. Even setting aside the concerns of the moderator or chairman, it is always better to leave an audience hungering for more rather than fidgeting and looking at their watches.

Secondly, you are not going to stand in front of an audience—with or without a lectern—with your entire presentation written out in full (see my comments about eye contact below). Until you are elected president, you can be fairly relaxed about the media hanging on your every word. So you need to put all this preparation into note form—preferably a few words that can be easily viewed on one side of index cards. But please don't do what one student memorably did for me and arrive for a 5-minute presentation with 35 cards in his hand!

Finally, why not rehearse? Get accustomed to what you have to say and how you are going to deliver it. You can do that in the privacy of your own room in front of a mirror or in front of a friend or family member. You will not be the first to do so; some of the best speakers do just that.

After preparation, the issue becomes one of *delivery*. This is difficult to put in writing since we are all so different. A hand gesture on one person can work just fine, while on another it might irritate or distract.

To misquote, the essence of speaking in public is to maximize your benefits and minimize your liabilities! Here is just a bare checklist to remember:

- 1) If you are feeling nervous, just keep rehearsing your carefully prepared opening in your mind while you are waiting to be called.
- 2) When you get up to speak, note the time and keep within your allotted period.
- 3) Before you start speaking, look at your audience. If it feels natural, then smile. Believe me, not only does

it help you to bond with your audience, it helps relax you too.

- 4) Possibly the single most important key to speaking successfully in public is eye contact. Don't look away from your audience (except for an occasional reference to your note cards), and when you need inspiration, find it between a pair of shoulders. It is impossible not to overstate the importance of this. If you do not look at your audience, your audience will not listen to you. And if they do not listen to you, you are wasting your time.
- 5) Of course, you must be heard. Look at the back to make sure they're not frowning. And those mouthing advocates need to look at the front to make sure they're not overpowering!
- 6) Speak slowly and remember to pause. There's no point in talking too fast without a break; your audience will not keep up with you without one.
- 7) The hands are like the bold and underlining of Word script. Used well, they serve to emphasize; used badly, they are at best a lost opportunity, or at worst, an irritating distraction.
- 8) Whether or not you have a lectern, find a comfortable standing position with your feet planted firmly on the floor. Not only will you look good, but it will be one less issue for your mind to worry about.

And please *do not use visual aids!* They are the prop of the weak public speaker. They are either an unnecessary distraction or they contain too much information. Most importantly, they break the bond between speaker and audience that only comes through good eye contact. If you have complicated data to share, circulate it in written form after you have spoken.

Here's a final tip. No matter how well we might have prepared for an occasion or however experienced we become, we all have off days. You never want to be in a position where you are standing in front of an audience and you simply cannot remember what you want to say next. The act of picking up a glass of water, sipping it and replacing it looks entirely natural. And it gives you the time you need to move on without apparent effort. Make sure that glass of water is always there.

However good a writer you may be, personal communication skills can be the most personally rewarding way of sharing your views. With determination—and practice—everyone can more or less get it right. And wouldn't that make for a more interesting world?

ROLES WITHIN A THINK TANK

13. Policy Analyst

Joe Coletti, Director of Health and Fiscal Policy Studies, John Locke Foundation

The policy analyst makes a think tank a think tank. Without the analyst, the organization could be a 501(c)3 blog, newspaper, event producer, or political group. It would not, however, be a policy research institute. Policy analysis and recommendations are the essence of a think tank.

Policy analysts work on their own or in a team to track national trends, academic research, political currents, and the arcane details of laws and regulations. This also includes following the money and understanding what the budgeted funds buy. Determining the effectiveness of government programs can require another level of investigation. Some analysts undertake this themselves, while others wait for government agencies or academic researchers to do this.

The main focus for a policy analyst is crafting policy papers that critique current policy proposals, examine existing policies, and offer alternatives. In many think tanks, however, the policy analyst is in charge of marketing his or her ideas in other formats. This may involve scheduling events, bringing in speakers, being interviewed by media, writing opinion pieces for newspapers, writing in national publications, answering questions from legislators and staff, and speaking to activist or community groups.

At times, the policy analyst may also testify before elected bodies—town councils, county commissions, school boards, or legislative committees. In these situations, the analyst is expected to serve as an outside expert, though the degree of formality can differ based on the speaker and the audience. In general, some written version of the comments, whether the presentation used or a planned speech, is useful to complement the talk itself.

Part of the job each day is reading news, journals, blogs, and policy reports from other organizations. At many think tanks, the analyst will also be expected to turn this information into blog posts to share insights or links to previous publications and outside sources. A growing number of analysts and think tanks also post their comments on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, or use del.icio.us to track and share relevant links.

A final aspect of the job is fundraising. Every person who works at a think tank is responsible for developing the resources that will help the organization continue its work. Sometimes, this role is explicit and the policy analyst is given a budget and a fundraising target. Organizational culture and the analyst's own strengths and weaknesses more often will determine what role, if any, the analyst has in this process.

That is a summary of what policy analysts do. Summarizing what it takes to be a policy analyst is a bit trickier. Besides having an interest in policy and supporting free-market principles, there are not many similarities among policy analysts. Regardless, here are a few common qualities that help policy analysts excel.

Budgets

The ability to think critically about policy is important. Good policy analysis requires deciphering government budgets and financial statements, which differ in significant ways from similar documents in the private sector.

Journals

Once you have deciphered where the dollars come from and where they go, you still need to understand what effect they have. Because governments often measure programs by inputs instead of outputs, a policy analyst has to be able to understand specialist literature in legal or academic journals.

Spreadsheets

In most policy areas, the analyst will also need to be proficient in interpreting data sources and working with them in spreadsheets to perform calculations and create new tables or graphs. Visual representation of data is becoming a very important explanatory tool, in print and especially online.

Writing

The most common way to communicate ideas is with words. Whether that is 140 characters on Twitter, a wall post on Facebook, a status update on LinkedIn, an op-ed, a research paper, or a book, the policy analyst needs to be able to write. Writing with style, humor, and precision are helpful, but it is important to know the audience and the format. Humor does not always translate, nor is it always appropriate. Translating complex topics and months of research into something others can understand takes effort and talent. Some of us rely more on effort, but it is essential to have a working knowledge of the English language as a starting point.

Speaking

Public speaking generally requires less precision with the rules of English than writing does. Speaking does, however, require more comfort with the subject, more knowledge of the audience, and greater ability to translate thoughts into words quickly.

Flexibility

Legislation can gain momentum overnight. Unexpected events can change the dynamics of a debate. Even ideas that languished for a century and seemed dead can come back like another Freddie Krueger movie. Policy analysts have to be able to switch gears, adapt their priorities, and respond, especially during the legislative session.

Time Management

With so many changing demands on the policy analyst's time, a valuable skill is the ability to manage one's day without a lot of supervision. Know what is important. Know what can be delayed. Know how long it takes to write 250 words. Plan for the unexpected, and keep track of deadlines.

Political Sense

It is important to understand what will work politically. This does not mean the policy analyst will only write or recommend what is politically viable, but it is important to know which recommendations will not go far. Sometimes, allies can be found in unexpected places if a policy is phrased the right way at the right time. Other times, the best policy idea peddled in overly adversarial terms can alienate natural supporters. Public choice theory is a good foundation for developing political sense.

Humor

One way to defuse a bad situation or disarm critics is with humor. Laughter and smiles make people more willing to accept challenging ideas. It breaks down their defenses. As defenders of liberty and promoters of small government, policy analysts in the movement are going to experience more defeats than victories. A sense of humor will offset the some of the inherent disappointments.

Faith

The people who survived prisoner of war camps and other difficulties were not the wild-eyed optimists who expected to be released by Christmas, nor the pessimists who thought they would never get out. They were the ones who had faith that they would get out eventually. Freedom and liberty are hard work. Have faith that others treasure it enough to join you in that work.

14. Policy ‘Outside the Box’

Tyler Grimm, Director of Research, Public Notice

Let’s say you don’t have a Ph.D. from a top ten program, haven’t worked on Capitol Hill for 20 years, and don’t consider yourself an expert in a particular area of public policy. Can you still toil in the industry of ideas without being a research assistant for life?

The answer may surprise you.

Here is a textbook definition of policy analysis: “determining which of various alternative policies will most achieve a given set of goals in light of the relations between the policies and the goals” (Stuart S. Nagel, *Policy Analysis Methods*, 1999).

The reality, however, is far more multifaceted than this vanilla description lets on.

The day-to-day happenings of a policy analyst—or anyone working in policy, for that matter—consist largely of activities related to the following: conducting research for future reports and studies, giving testimony before legislative bodies, writing op-eds, blogging, giving media interviews, and participating in forums and events.

At the end of the day, the goal is to influence public discourse toward what you believe to be the proper way for society to be organized (or disorganized). Bias is inherent in the process, which provides for a rather healthy form of competition through which the best ideas (hopefully, but not often) come to fruition.

But injecting perspective into a debate is a complicated production process and requires many different types of players. It is not a task solely for pocket-protector-wearing, chart-drawing, number-crunching, multiple-degree-holding think tank wonks.

There are varying degrees of seriousness for organizations that do policy work. Some groups are very serious-minded legacy institutions such as the Brookings Institution, the Cato Institute, the Heritage Foundation, and others that take pride in the number of Ph.D.’s and former high-ranking officials they keep on staff. Subjecting their work to intellectual rigor is a must, and their work-process is typically very rigid. These groups would like to consider themselves very academic; some describe them as universities without students.

But once you look beyond stereotypical careers at established organizations, you’ll find a surfeit of opportunities.

A more exciting incarnation of policy work is advocacy. Many groups focused on “getting the message out” rely heavily on people who can articulate and debate policy in a way that delivers it to a mainstream audience. These kinds of organizations are mostly inhabited by motivated, smart individuals who can own an

issue, have a strong delivery in messaging and are determined to change the minds of those in the court of public opinion.

In many ways, these roles are just as important as the raw research. We can have the greatest ideas ever conceived, but without a trajectory for implementation, they are worthless.

Furthermore, what good is research if no one can understand it?

The group I work for, Public Notice, is dedicated to distilling complex issues into digestible facts. Average Americans (and even average journalists) do not have time to become well-versed in economic policy, though it is a central force driving how society functions. Such a resource allows people who aren't experts to cut through the clutter and make decisions on their own.

Other groups focus on outreach to Capitol Hill. This field of policy work is more about persuasion than research. Usually, this involves a thorough understanding of policy research, but not necessarily the ability to produce it. Those who excel in this field have superb interpersonal skills, something often lacking in the world of policy work.

It is also worth mentioning that "outside the box" policy analysis could include public-sector work, working someplace like the Office of Management and Budget or Department of Education. Some bemoan government work (with good reason), but it is a decent way to quickly get acquainted with a policy area and often requires little credentials for entry-level positions. The vast majority of people working at these institutions did not study the budgetary research or learn how to cross-reference fifty different educational standards. Nearly all of it came from on-the-job training.

If you are serious about policy work, it's up to you to figure out where you best fit into the process to then begin honing your skills. If you are worried you don't have the chops for any policy work, you are probably wrong (if you're right, you'll figure it out pretty quickly). This line of work is 80 percent passion. A commitment to finding better solutions to problems and winning important debates goes a long way.

Not all jobs in policy are a fast track to the fame associated with cable television appearances and conference speeches. However, being able to influence how we are governed is a never dull and often rewarding career choice for those with sufficient fire in their bellies.

15. Communications

Bob Ewing, Assistant Director of Communications, Institute for Justice

In 1996, a little-known lawsuit was working its way through the New Jersey courts. It caught the attention of a relatively new libertarian public interest law firm called the Institute for Justice. The case dealt with a complex legal concept virtually unknown to the general public: eminent domain.

The law firm got involved in the case and began a national public relations campaign. Soon it was making headlines in media outlets all across the country. The New York Times, The Economist, 20/20 and countless others were generating widespread public outrage by reporting on the New Jersey case involving an elderly grandmother who was in danger of having her house bulldozed so that Donald Trump could expand his limousine parking lot.

The Institute for Justice won the case, and over the next decade turned eminent domain into one of the

Case Studies in Policy Paul Gessing — Rio Grande Foundation

Running a small, state-based think tank is a very interesting job, and no two days are the same. First and foremost, I work out of the home. It saves money for my organization, and I think it helps me get more done. Plus, my wife and I have a little baby, so I can help with child care.

A “typical” day starts around 8:30 a.m., when I walk into my home office and sit down at my computer. I work my way through my emails for about an hour.

Once I’m caught up to speed, I turn to other projects for the day. Typically, I have some type of list ready to remind me of what tasks I need to achieve for the day. This includes a calendar of all appointments, speaking engagements, and other Foundation-related activities.

Perhaps I’ll work on a press release or an opinion piece. Some days, my focus is on writing a fundraising let-

ter, dealing with the organization budget, or working with the Foundation’s treasurer to process payroll. I also touch base with my three employees who also work out of their homes to help keep them on task. Right now, I am also coordinating an employee search.

I also try to post at least one blog at our site www.errorsofenchantment.com. Blogging is a great way to get the word out to your supporters and the media on a regular basis.

I frequently attend or speak at meetings. I attend and speak regularly at Albuquerque’s “Center-Right” meeting, the local version of Grover Norquist’s Wednesday meeting. I also work closely with Tea Parties around the state. This sometimes involves traveling long distances around New Mexico, but it can also mean just a short drive to lead an activist training session.

Frequently, but not always, my days also involve working with the media. This could mean a short radio interview, answering questions from a reporter, going over to a television station to do an on-camera interview, or simply emailing them a press release informing them of the latest Rio Grande Foundation study. We are a small organization, so the work is literally never completed!

Typically, unless I am at a lunch meeting of some sort, I eat lunch at home and enjoy the latest DVR’d TV show while I eat. I might leave the “office” early and go to the gym or take the dogs for a walk or to the dog park, but my creative juices typically kick in during the evening, so I write and answer emails for an hour or so in the evening before I go to bed.

Just another “typical” day saving the world!

hottest topics in the court of public opinion. Less than ten years after the victory in New Jersey, IJ found itself arguing a similar case before the U.S. Supreme Court, called *Kelo v. City of New London*.

This time the court ruled against the property owners, but the decision sparked nationwide outrage that ushered in a new era of protection for property rights. Less than three years after the disastrous Supreme Court ruling in *Kelo*, 43 states changed their laws to provide greater protection to private property rights.

Kelo became a textbook example of the important role a communications team plays within an organization. IJ lost the battle—the lawsuit—but thanks to power of the court of public opinion, they ended up in large part winning the war, encouraging nationwide eminent domain reform.

Simply put, the media can do a tremendous job of helping an organization achieve success. Support from the court of public opinion is often essential in order to win a fight or advance a cause. What good is a white paper if nobody reads it? A video if nobody sees it? What will be the result of a bad law if nobody knows to stop it?

Abe Lincoln once said, “With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it nothing can succeed.” Public relations is especially important for libertarian groups that are likely dealing with complex concepts or points of view that may not be initially accepted by a majority of the public.

Working on the media team, you define and maintain the terms of debate. You explain complex ideas in a way that people can understand them. For example, eminent domain is not about some weird-sounding technical legal term, it’s about a little old lady and the fact that her home shouldn’t be bulldozed to build a bigger parking lot for Donald Trump.

A communicator is an expert at networking. You get to know key journalists, reporters, bloggers, and producers. You build relationships with them. In many instances, you become friends. You’ll likely travel to various conferences attended by the media to network, build relationships, and promote your organization.

The media allows you to find common allies. You may write a joint press release or issue a joint op-ed with a person or organization that you never imagined you’d work with. You’ll be on the lookout for non-traditional alliances, working together to advance a common goal.

You will create effective spokespeople. Every organization needs talented, passionate, and trained advocates. Many of the people working to advance liberty—be they scholars, lawyers, bloggers, researchers, activists, etc.—are initially uncomfortable working with the press. In fact, media relations is inherently scary. Mother Teresa once said that “facing the press is more difficult than bathing a leper.” She captures a common sentiment. Media relations is a learned skill. It is unnatural to interact with the press, so spokespeople must prepare. With your counsel, spokespeople can transform from terrified and terrible into confident and successful.

You will help train people outside of your organization as well. There are grassroots activists all across the country that you can empower. Depending on your organization and mission, you may help a poor mother

before she walks the halls of Congress to demand the freedom to send her children to the school of her choice. You may work with college students to effectively advance a libertarian goal on campus. You may help lead a rally of taxi drivers that demand market reforms, getting TV cameras and reporters to their event, and also preparing them to explain their story in a way that resonates.

On the media team, you hold the bad guys accountable. Bureaucrats, politicians, and big-government special interest groups are often arrogant and unapologetic for their actions. By their very nature, they often work to increase their power at the expense of the little guy. But a funny thing happens when you shine the media spotlight on them. When the community discovers what the local bureaucrat is up to, when the bad guy gets singled out and exposed, he often folds. You will always have a deep sense of satisfaction—and get a big smile on your face—every time you expose a bad guy and force him to change his tune.

There are five qualities that are essential to being an effective communicator.

First and foremost, you have to be accurate. You must always be truthful and build a reputation with the media as someone they can trust. The quality of the information you provide can never be compromised, because reporters will take the information you give them and make it their own.

Reporters, journalists, producers, and bloggers often work under intense pressure and on difficult deadlines. They need information by a certain time or it may no longer be useful to them. You must be sensitive to the deadline pressures they face and do everything you can to work with them in a timely fashion. The best way to get ahead of a story is to set the terms of debate from the very beginning. Get out in front of a story and define it on your terms. When possible, prepare your statements and even press releases, op-eds, videos, white papers, or other materials in advance.

Be a happy warrior. Public policy organizations of all types are often found complaining about something. Don't join them. Dale Carnegie once wrote that "any fool can criticize, condemn, and complain—and most fools do." You will be much more successful and respected if you remain optimistic and confident. Develop a reputation of being someone who, regardless of his situation, is always positive and a pleasure to work with.

Be thorough. Understand your issues better than anyone else, especially the people that you're up against. Be prepared by reading, reviewing, and preparing all necessary materials in advance. Your goal is to provide every reporter with enough information to write a complete story. Anticipate their questions and their desires.

Be honest and open. Do not hide information or manipulate the truth. And don't work for an organization that does. Always be honest and see that your mission and objectives are transparent. In 1934, the NAACP made it clear in their annual report that they were engaging in a long-term plan to end segregation in public schools. And that a fundamental part of their campaign was to set the terms of debate and win over public opinion. It was quite a lofty goal for the 1930s. And yet they were honest and open—and wildly successful. It took 20 years, but in 1954 they successfully turned their dream into a reality.

In a nutshell, you must be accurate, timely, positive, thorough, and honest. No exceptions.

The liberty movement needs effective communicators. As Thomas Jefferson wrote, “The force of public opinion cannot be resisted when permitted freely to be expressed. The agitation it produces must be submitted to.”

Become a communications expert and you will set the terms of debate that sway public opinion and effectively advance liberty. You can, in a very real sense, change the world.

16. Investigative Journalism

Jason Stverak, President, Franklin Center for Government and Public Integrity

As each new day brings another story of corrupt politicians, unprincipled officials, and government boondoggles, there remains one strong and effective way to fight back: a free and vocal press.

Investigative journalism, the most effective weapon of the press, has all but disappeared from newsrooms. This comes as a result of the struggling newspaper industry that can no longer afford to invest the time and resources into delving into the story and uncovering the details that could be easily overlooked.

The disappearance of the investigative reporter has left many wondering, how is corruption supposed to be caught? Who is delving into the mountains of paperwork to find a misuse of taxpayer funds at the mayor's office? Who is protecting the public from fraud, abuse, and exploitation?

The answer to those questions is: reporters who are seeking employment with think tanks. These think tanks provide journalists from all over the nation an opportunity to investigate and report on the stories that matter. At think tanks, reporters get the opportunity to re-emerge as hard-news reporters of yesteryear who investigate stories traditional media now cannot or will not cover. Think tanks also provide young journalists with the unique opportunity to learn what journalism truly is by doing instead of merely watching.

The rise of think tank investigative journalism stems from not only the decline of resources at newspapers around the nation, but also the growing vacuum in state-based coverage on numerous topics. Many traditional newsrooms no longer have the financial resources to retain a capitol news reporter on staff. In fact, an American Journalism Review study found that only 355 full-time newspaper reporters are still based in the nation's state capitals and that 44 statehouses have fewer full-time reporters than they did six years ago.

The success of investigative reporters at think tanks is being felt in every state around the nation. Think tank investigative journalists have reported on everything from national security to health care. From misuse of taxpayer money in Nebraska to voter fraud in Ohio, think tank reporters are investigating the stories that the traditional media is overlooking. This type of journalism is not just fulfilling the role of small-market media. In some cases, it is drawing audiences away from traditional media outlets.

Kathy Hoekstra, a think tank reporter in Michigan, found herself investigating a union day-care scandal when her organization, the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, sued Michigan's Department of Human Services. The lawsuit stemmed from two home day-care owners receiving notification that they were members of a union, and that dues would be taken out of the subsidy checks they receive on behalf of low-income parents who qualify for aid. The lawsuit alleged that these home day-care providers are business owners, not government employees, and therefore it is illegal to siphon union dues from government subsidy checks. Weeks of investigating the details of this case paid off when Kathy's article was welcomed with open arms in all the major news outlets in Michigan, exposing this story to millions of readers.

Although many of the think tank journalists are local in focus, on several occasions, one reporter's local discovery has led to a major national news story. In November 2009, Jim Scarantino from the Rio Grande Foundation was doing research on Recovery.gov when he noticed that a few of the congressional districts that received stimulus funding in New Mexico did not exist. The story he wrote about that obvious error prompted a number of other think tank reporters in other states to look into their own states' information.

As more and more reporters looked into their own state's data on Recovery.gov, more congressional districts proved to be fabricated. What came to be known as the "Phantom Congressional District Scandal" led to the discovery of more than 440 phantom congressional districts nationwide and hearings on Capitol Hill. The Colbert Report even refashioned its popular "Better Known as a District" into a new segment, "Know Your Made-Up District."

By utilizing technology and the internet, think tanks have the potential to extend their audience reach and create a community of loyal readers. With local focuses, specific targets, commitment to using highly trained and professional journalists, and a strategic approach to using and distributing resources, think tank investigative reporting is the future of journalism.

17. New Media

Robert B. Bluey, Director, Center for Media and Public Policy at the Heritage Foundation

Shortly after arriving at the Heritage Foundation in 2007, I was confronted with a cruel reality. My job as the think tank's "new media guru" was to make sure we were on the cutting edge of communicating our ideas in the digital world, yet we lacked the online tools to do it.

Heritage didn't have a blog. There was no active policy-focused email newsletter. Twitter wasn't on anyone's radar. Our YouTube videos lacked pizzazz. And Facebook had only recently opened registration to everyone.

It's amazing to think how far we've come. Digital media provide a powerful way to advance Heritage's policy objectives. They allow us to bypass the traditional gatekeepers regulating the flow of information. No longer does Heritage have to rely exclusively on a newspaper editor to run an op-ed or a TV producer to book a policy expert. Today it's possible to get our message directly to millions of Americans with just a few clicks.

Getting there wasn't easy. In fact, as we began to experiment, not everyone in the building was sold on our new means of communication. For a scholarly think tank that cherishes tradition, blogging wasn't exactly viewed as a noble profession. Nor was having an active presence on YouTube, Facebook, or Twitter—networks that initially got a bad rap before becoming staples of American life.

The early challenges didn't stop us from trying new things, however. And we persevered, creating an active blog, building a large email list, delivering frequent video updates, and growing our social media networks. As a result, Heritage today is viewed as a leading online success story.

So how did it happen?

Having a sound strategy, support from our leadership team, and a willingness to experiment were the keys to attracting a large online following among our supporters. As more of our policy experts saw the impact of blogging, they wrote more often. When they realized the power of videos, they clamored to get in the studio. And when they saw the level of engagement on social media, they wanted to be a part of it.

Of course, there were bumps along the way. Some of the things we tried didn't work as we had hoped. But that didn't stop us from experimenting. And, after all, how do you stay on the cutting edge of new media if you're not willing to take a risk?

These risks can pay off in profound ways. Consider our daily Morning Bell e-newsletter. We launched it in early 2008 to communicate the most important message of the day. We had no idea it would also become an important online fundraising vehicle for Heritage. Launching an e-newsletter from scratch was certainly a risk in terms of the investment and resources, but now it's one of our signature products and has the added benefit of recruiting new supporters. More importantly, it's how we advance our policy objectives in the context of current events.

It didn't take a rocket scientist to figure out Heritage was missing this valuable tool to communicate. We just needed a vision and a strategy to execute it. Email might not be hip and cool, but it is the one thing people read religiously every day. My point is this: If you're doing your job well as an online strategist or new media manager, you won't just focus on the flashy and cool toys. Examine how you can do a better job with some of the basic tools first.

So where do you start?

Take an audit of all that your organization does online, and then evaluate if there are ways to improve, alter, or enhance your communication tactics. This is important for a couple of reasons: It allows you to have a full inventory of what's out there, and it helps you determine the areas where your organization might be missing something or be redundant.

Once you've done an audit, you can begin to develop your strategy. Set goals—both professional and personal—for what you'd like to accomplish on behalf of the organization and the skill set you'll need to do it. If you're managing a staff, define targets for them to reach. In a world where people and organizations are measured by the number of Facebook fans and Twitter followers, it's essential to track your progress.

Yet don't confuse this growth with success. Our mission at Heritage is to formulate and promote conservative public policy. Just because we have more Facebook fans today than yesterday doesn't necessarily mean we've effected policy change. As our president, Ed Feulner, says, there's a difference between outputs and outcomes.

Keep this in mind when selling your strategy internally. Your colleagues need to understand how a new-media campaign is advancing the organization's underlying mission. An effective online strategy will not succeed in a vacuum, so having their support is critical to your success.

Promoting your organization's strategic goals online will demonstrate to the leaders of your organization that it's a worthwhile investment in talent and resources. And while it might be easier to sell them on the significance of having an op-ed in *The Wall Street Journal* or an interview on Fox News Channel, online communication channels can have just as big of an impact, particularly when you have good content, a compelling message, and a call to action.

In a world that's becoming more technologically advanced each and every day, our institutions must find ways to adapt in order to advance the principles that guide our work.

18. Development

Lisa Hazlett, President, Hazlitt Consulting

America's charitable community plays an indispensable role in improving communities across the country. Whether caring for victims of natural disasters, stimulating creativity in the arts and sciences, protecting free speech, or supporting the vulnerable and needy, nonprofit organizations are critically important to our nation's wellbeing. And regardless of their mission, fundraising is their lifeblood.

The process of fundraising used to be fairly simple. A person with a cause asked a person of concern to share in responding to a human or social need. There were no formal procedures or guidelines, nor were there any controls or regulations. Today, the plaintive cry of harassed nonprofit executives straining to match inadequate income to expanding budget requirements is a frequent encounter of boards of directors, donors, and staff. Philanthropic fundraising has become a sophisticated profession, and the need for fundraisers has increased considerably. The liberty movement is no exception to that, as there are typically more job vacancies than qualified and experienced people to fill them.

While a policy expert typically focuses on just a few issues, fundraisers for policy groups have a responsibility to be informed and think critically about a variety of issues. In addition to being an advocate for their organization, they are the bridge that connects the resources and turns thinking into action. While it is not the primary focus of their responsibility, many fundraisers participate in policy debates and teach colleagues and donors about the issues.

In recent years, donors have increased their expectation from reading a copy of the publication they supported to receiving a report of its impact. This can be tough because it is very difficult, and sometimes impossible, to measure success in a universe of ideas.

Ironically, the most measurable success of an idea-focused organization is its ability to meet revenue goals. This success, of course, is dependent upon a successful fundraiser. So how does one raise money without commitments to significant tangible and measureable results?

There is a discipline to fundraising that progresses in logical order from preparation to planning to execution to control. This sequence is about as close to a science as one can get and can serve as an effective roadmap for fundraising. But even with perfect processes and controls, the bottom line is that the most critical component of the fundraising process is building relationships.

This is what makes fundraising so unique. While there are certainly techniques and tricks of the trade that fundraisers use, the most valuable skills that a fundraiser possesses are not learned in a college class. Successful fundraisers are passionate about their beliefs and have a true desire to correct a problem. And they have the ability to passionately convey that problem and its solution to someone who can invest the financial resources to make it happen.

This shared conviction between fundraiser and donor becomes the foundation from which they will build a long-lasting relationship that will be sustained through their mutual interests and desire to correct a problem. This knowledge is both powerful and enabling, and the insights that donors share with fundraisers create opportunities for stronger relationships. In turn, these relationships provide donors with the confidence to continue investing in the solution.

As it has been for a very long time, the frantic search continues for that dreamy fundraising ideal—an abundance of gifts to meet budget requirements with a minimum investment of time, talent, and energy. And despite lofty efforts to harness it, no magic formula has ever been devised to transform a fervent, even desperate, wish into instant results. But new technologies are enabling fundraisers to continuously rethink the ways in which they communicate with donors, and the sky is the limit.

Fundraising in the world of ideas is an exciting and meaningful career. No other position within a nonprofit organization offers the diversity, responsibility, and immediate satisfaction that successful fundraisers experience. Fundraisers in the liberty movement have the additional benefit of being actively engaged in protecting and advancing freedom and the pleasure of fostering and building relationships with those who can and do make a difference through their generosity.

19. Management

Chad Thevenot, Chief Operating Officer, Institute for Humane Studies

Serving in a management role in the nonprofit sector is intellectually rewarding and relatively lucrative (compared to many other nonprofit roles). But, from my experience, most folks in nonprofit management roles end up there by accident—some for the better, some for the worse. Perhaps this is largely because many people starting out on their career path do not know what nonprofit managers do exactly, and even if they do, they don't know how to navigate their way into such a role. In this section, I try to shed some light on these two questions.

What is nonprofit management?

At a meta level, management—in the nonprofit sector or otherwise—is about creating and maintaining an environment in which limited resources are deployed to create as much value as possible—that is, creating an environment in which people can “mix their labor” with resources (software, desks, etc.) to succeed in creating something of value. In the nonprofit sector, the value being created is generally a social outcome, such as a more-informed public. Creating a productive environment generally involves:

- 1) Obtaining and developing resources—this includes fundraising, obtaining equipment and technology, hiring staff, training, contracting with vendors, etc.
- 2) Setting and aligning expectations—making sure each person on the team knows exactly what outcomes they're trying to achieve, giving them a roadmap for how to achieve those outcomes, clarifying what resources and decisions they have discretion over, and aligning their incentives to pursue those outcomes.
- 3) Facilitating good communications and integration of efforts—in most, if not all, operations, it's absolutely critical for staff to share relevant information with others in a timely manner; this helps avoid problems caused by lack of communication or miscommunication, and it improves the ability of the team to understand and leverage each other's efforts.
- 4) Providing “leadership”—without stepping into the longstanding debate about the meaning of this term, I can say confidently that managers must help develop and articulate a clear vision and strategy that staff genuinely believe in and thus pursue doggedly. The manager also helps to shape the organizational culture by communicating and living the values of the organization and making sure that organizational policies and processes are consistent with those values.
- 5) Making decisions—decisions should be made throughout all corners of an organization. But managers tend to have discretion over many relatively complex, important decisions.

So, how do these somewhat abstract responsibilities translate into day-to-day activities? That is, what is the job like at a more tactile level? Here is a non-exhaustive list of some of the everyday activities of a nonprofit manager:

- 1) Lots of meetings—with department heads to engage in day-to-day problem solving, provide guidance, and share information; with current and potential donors; with senior managers to discuss strategy; with allies to leverage or facilitate their efforts; and more. (Done right, such meetings aren't drudgery; they can actually be very interesting and productive.)
- 2) Conceptualizing, strategizing, and writing—this includes thinking about and creating multiple iterations of strategic plans, budgets, reports, and proposals. (It's worth noting that drafting proposals is surprisingly productive in helping to conceptualize your vision and strategy, so it's not just the rote activity of putting words to paper.)
- 3) Hiring—vetting applications, interviewing candidates, and making hiring decisions. Getting the right people into the right roles is one of the most important things you do as a manager, because the difference between an average performer and an A+ performer is not small; it's an order of magnitude difference that drives organizational success and makes your life easier.
- 4) Individualized coaching and mentoring—talking with individual staff as needed to understand their needs, act as a sounding board for their ideas, help solve problems, etc. (Your goal is to help them succeed, because their success is your success.)

Of course, there are some real challenges and frustrations with being a manager, including:

- 1) Nonprofit metrics—because you don't have "profits" in the financial sense of the word, it is difficult to know what's working and what's not. Of course, you can and should come up with other metrics that inform your decision-making. Generally, nonprofit work results in longer-term results, so you have to have patience to see whether you are having any impact.
- 2) Personnel management—although this is certainly one of the most rewarding areas of management, it's also one of the most challenging. Understandably, many new managers find personnel management awkward and even painful, especially having to give someone critical feedback. It's important to note that it is completely ineffective and inappropriate to try to "boss people around." It just doesn't work. You have to understand each individual's needs and talents, and then engage them accordingly. You have to earn their trust, and not just once, but every day.
- 3) A dynamic environment—this challenge is also a good one, but it does create some frustration at times. Management is like doing a puzzle, except the puzzle is constantly morphing, so can you never complete it. There's always a new opportunity, new problem, or better way of doing something. So you cannot rest for long.
- 4) Imperfect information—as mentioned above, a key component of management is making decisions—often ones that can have a real impact on someone's career or on the organization's health. And you have to make those decisions with imperfect information—it's rarely black or white; it's usually shades of gray. Because of this, you have to develop a discipline for knowing when the cost of trying to obtain better information will exceed the potential benefit of it.

How Do I Become a Nonprofit Manager?

If you've read this far, then perhaps a role as a nonprofit manager is right for you. So now the question is, what's the best way to pursue such a role? As you might expect, there are many paths and none of them is necessarily right; it really depends on each individual's interests and talents, and the specific opportunities available. However, there are some timeless truths for managers. Many of these are described at length in other sections of this guide, so I will only give details for those that are not covered elsewhere. In no particular order:

- Who you know matters. (See Networking section)
- A graduate degree can help, but is not required. (See Degrees section)
- Strong writing is a must. (See Writing section)
- Personnel management is usually required. There is a huge difference between project/program management and personnel management. The latter, as mentioned above, is much more challenging, and many folks are not good at it. If you have experience and skills with managing people, you are in a much better position to earn a management role and command a higher salary. If you don't have such experience, try to take on a project in which you will have to supervise an intern or an assistant. That is a good start.
- Be someone who gets things done. (See Working Your Way Up section)
- Be entrepreneurial. Don't just talk and gripe. Instead, take action, seize opportunities, and solve problems. Being entrepreneurial is how you get things done. So, for example, when you run into a problem, don't just go to your boss with your hands in the air (doing so exports your work to your boss—which is not good). Instead, when you have a problem, go to your boss with a clear understanding of the problem, an analysis of ways to potentially solve the problem, and your recommendation. Then, your boss can simply react to your analysis and recommendation, and you win points for being entrepreneurial and getting things done.
- Communicate well. (See Speaking section)
- Keep your integrity. (See Integrity section)
- Don't be a mercenary. Both growing within a single organization and moving around a bit have their advantages. Of course, it's fine to change jobs when the right opportunity comes around. But you don't want to be (or earn a reputation as) a job-hopper who can't commit, doesn't know what she wants, and/or can't live up to her obligations.
- Be humble.

Parting Thoughts

What is your definition of the good life? Is it just satisfying conventional concerns regarding money and status, or do you have a calling?

We live in a time and place in which there's tremendous opportunities and relatively small risks (the vast majority of us will never have to worry about basic things like food or shelter). Because of this, I would argue that not pursuing what you love is a life wasted. So, when evaluating a potential career, make sure it is what you really want to do and that, by doing it, you'll be able to create (not steal or "redistribute") value for yourself, for your family and friends, and for society. And, here's the secret: by doing what you love and being a person who gets things done, you can almost always make a good living, too.

20. Academics at Think Tanks

John Blundell, Distinguished Senior Fellow, the Institute of Economic Affairs

The interface between academics and wannabe academics and the think tank world is both potentially very rich and potentially hugely problematic.

Our typical academic goes from grade school through the undergraduate and graduate school years, maybe a post-doc, and then the tenure process and finally the full professorship. It can—it does—take a couple of decades, and at each stage the potential synergies change. Let's take a walk through each stage.

Undergraduate: Opportunities start to open up for you as an undergraduate. In my two decades as head of one of the leading think tanks in the world, London's Institute of Economic Affairs, I accumulated many memories of really stellar young students. Intern, write, learn about the ideas, prepare yourself for grad school. Other sections in this guide can give you more advice in these areas.

Graduate School: Here the dynamics start to change. Now you are very firmly on possibly several professorial radar screens. I have knowledge of departments that have made life unbearable for graduate students who have been working for or published by free-market-leaning think tanks. Equally, I know of departments that positively welcome, encourage, and even reward such involvement. And I've known departments which are ideologically neutered or maybe balanced: neutered in the sense there is no pervading climate of opinion—balanced in the sense they have one of every "ism."

So the choice of program starts to influence what's on and what's not.

This is also the point at which your choice of dissertation will hugely affect your usefulness (or otherwise) to the policy community. I think I can safely say that an economist with some tax and growth model will be more in demand than an archaeologist—even though I know of one of the latter who writes great stuff about why digs do better when privately as opposed to publicly funded.

And then you need to think about where the dissertation will appear: as a bunch of journal articles, as a university press book, as a trade book, or as a think tank book. That list goes in descending order of importance for most wannabe academics! In some "academic" circles, think tanks are equal to vanity publishers—as in paid-for and therefore not worth a darn thing. I once heard a professor call think tanks a cancer on the academy.

Tenure Track: This is very similar to graduate school—it really does depend on what the department wants from you. If they want publications in the top twenty journals, teaching, and departmental service, then your brilliant policy paper for some think tank won't win brownie points. It will probably even lose you some votes. Be careful.

Tenure: So now you are tenured. It is interesting to note how many professors on gaining tenure feel themselves much freer to go into more policy and think tank type areas. In the life of the classical liberal

academic, there is often a dip in think tank interest as they navigate the final stages of the Ph.D. and tenure and then a surge as they reach the latter.

So what is going on? I think the two main broad veins are these:

- Academics address tiny audiences; by publishing the “accessible to the layman” popular version of their work I risked being hugged and told, “You made me famous!” as I was on several occasions.
- On the other hand, think tank entrepreneurs like me know a great deal about who is doing what and are able to write immediately for the less academic, more popular and accessible market, and we can thus step in and shortcut matters; we can propel an academic to the forefront of debate because we have one foot in academia and the other in the policy world. We act as a bridge. We platform the academic. We are the springboard into a much wider, more prominent role.

One final point: Not all think tanks are the same as to where they position themselves in the war of ideas. Some are much more “academic,” while others are much closer to the coalface of politics. Some target the intellectuals who create the climate of opinion, believing like Hayek and Keynes that the politicians will follow. Some write books and monographs; others do shorter papers. Some use outside academics to review manuscripts, while others do not.

This last observation is quite important. At the IEA, we use a double-blind outside review process, and all manuscripts go to at least two experts. The author is not told their names, and the experts are not told who the author is. This means the IEA monograph can appear under the heading of “Refereed Publications” on the CV. And the refereeing process does improve the product.

I have worked with thousands of academics and hundreds of think tanks all over the world. To close this article I asked myself who has done the best job of combining a serious academic career with think-tankery. Many great names came to mind from Milton Friedman and George Stigler, whose “Roofs or Ceilings?” was published by the Foundation for Economic Education in September 1946, to F.A. Hayek, James Buchanan, Gordon Tullock, and Axel Leijonhufvud’s classic IEA papers of the ‘60s, ‘70s and ‘80s. But I kept coming back to Dr. James , who is the professor of education policy in the Department of Education at the U.K.’s Newcastle University. Over the past two decades, he has flawlessly built a great academic career, a serious list of think tank publications, and even his own think tank, the E.G. West Centre.

He has won huge international prizes and acclaim and done very serious media work. His IEA monograph *The Global Education Industry* became the Cato Institute’s *The Beautiful Tree*. Penguin then picked up the rights, and *The Beautiful Tree* went to number one on the nonfiction bestseller list in India and won the 2010 Sir Antony Fisher Memorial Award from the Atlas Economic Research Foundation. *The Beautiful Tree* really is the model for any ideas-oriented young person to read: it is original, beautifully written, insightful, exciting, jaw-dropping, scholarly yet accessible, eye-opening and mind-changing. Buy it, read it, study it, and learn from it.

FURTHER READING

Lionel Lewis, *Scaling the Ivory Tower* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975).

I WANT TO WORK FOR A THINK TANK—WHAT DO I DO?

21. Preparing Your Résumé and Cover Letter

Claire Kittle, Executive Director, Talent Market

“A date is a job interview that lasts all night. The only difference between a date and a job interview is that there are not many job interviews where there’s a chance you’ll end up naked at the end of it.”

-Jerry Seinfeld

Anyone who has known me for long knows I compare work—especially applying for a job—to dating. After all, the comparisons are many.

And frankly, thinking of the application process (writing your résumé and creating your cover letter) like dating is actually quite useful.

While the end goal of dating is a prosperous relationship, the end goal of the application process is for you to land a job. And the rules to follow are quite the same:

- Always tell the truth
- Be straightforward and don’t play games
- Show off your best attributes
- Just be YOU!

Keep these simple rules in mind as you move forward and you will be on your way to a job offer—and a stellar dating life.

The Résumé

They say you never get a second chance to make a first impression. And so it goes with dating and résumés. You have about 10 seconds—30 if you’re really lucky—to convince a hiring manager that you are worth considering for the job. So let’s talk about how to make those precious seconds count.

The layout of your résumé should be inviting and easy to understand.

10 Résumé Tips

1. Keep it to one page
2. Use a clean, simple layout with ample white space
3. Include Experience and Education
4. Do not include an “Objective”
5. Double-check spelling and ~~grammar~~ grammar
6. Avoid using tables, photos, **color**, and multiple typefaces
7. Include dates (month/year) for college degrees and employment
8. Use bulleted, succinct statements instead of rambling paragraphs
9. Use descriptive, sexy verbs
10. Do not include personal information

Your résumé should have a clean format with as much white space as possible. You should use one simple typeface and avoid superfluous items, such as photos, colors, and tables. As a general rule, your résumé should be no longer than one page, unless you are an academic, public speaker, or prolific author, in which case more pages may be necessary to list your publications and presentations.

With respect to content, there are two essential items for a résumé: *education* and *experience*. Everything else is subject to a good arm-wrestling match.

For *education*, which I suggest you put at the top of your résumé, you should include:

- University
- Degree
- Major
- Date of graduation
- G.P.A. (if it's good—3.5 or above)
- City and state of the university (Did you know there are at least three Notre Dames in three different states?)
- Any notable highlights, such as student body president, student union board, athletic participation, major scholarships, etc.

For *experience*, which should come right below *education*, you should list all full-time jobs and relevant internships. As you move along in your career, you'll want to drop internships as your work experience grows. For each role, you should include:

- Employer
- Job title
- City and state
- Dates of employment (Month, Year)
- Bulleted list of responsibilities and accomplishments that start with informative and what I like to call “sexy” verbs, such as build, create, manage, oversee, develop, analyze, author, strategize, etc.

Other good sections to include if you so desire are *civic participation* (volunteering, political involvement, college alumni groups, etc.) and *special skills* (language, computer skills, and relevant certifications).

Now, for the sections I think you ought to leave behind like high-waisted Mom jeans: *objective*, *accomplishments*, *qualifications*, and *personal*. Let's start with my favorite, the *objective*. In the thousands of résumés I've reviewed over the years, I can tell you no *objective* statement has ever moved me to think more favorably about a candidate. However, I cannot tell you how many times an *objective* statement has moved me to think less favorably about a candidate—especially when the candidate wants to work for the wrong organization or achieve a lofty goal, such as world peace. The rightful place for stating one's objective is the cover letter—let's just keep it there.

Accomplishments and *qualifications* are two sections I've seen creeping—like bad government policy—into résumés as of late. All of the information contained in sections like these should already appear in other parts of your résumé; your accomplishments should appear under each job, and your qualifications should appear under each job or under the education section. Therefore, by inserting these sections, you are essentially repeating yourself or creating more work for the hiring manager by making them flip between sections to understand the context for the accomplishments or qualifications. Make everyone's life easier by leaving these sections out of your résumé.

Finally, there's the *personal* section of résumés. In one word—don't do it. Not only is the section a gold-leafed invitation to provide information that could get a hiring manager into legal trouble (your marital status, whether you have children, your religion, etc.), it's simply not relevant. (I'm impressed you like to mountain bike and shoot skeet, but what in the Sam Hill does that have to do with a tax policy analyst position?) Save your personal revelations for happy hour with co-workers after you get the job.

The Cover Letter

Let's get back to dating for a minute. Have you ever met someone you were attracted to and it sparked an internal monologue about why this person should want to date you? "Hey there, hot stuff. We should go out. I'm smart, witty, have great personal hygiene, and I can quote *Dodgeball* from start to finish."

Think of your cover letter as a similar pitch—only in your out-loud voice and not related to *Dodgeball*. You're trying to convince the hiring manager that you should be considered for the job.

Your cover letter should be no longer than one page and contain four basic elements, preferably in this order:

- A mention of the job for which you are applying

10 Cover Letter Tips

1. Keep it to one page
2. Address the letter to the correct person
3. Mention the correct job and organization
4. Explain your interest in the organization's mission
5. Double-check spelling and grammar
6. Do not send generic cover letters
7. Include all information requested in the job posting
8. Use the cover letter to explain items not appropriate for the résumé
9. It's not all about you!
10. Use business format for the letter

- An explanation of why you are interested (especially how you are philosophically aligned with the organization's mission)
- A brief summary of why you are qualified (no need to rehash your entire résumé—just hit on the high points)
- Anything else the job posting asks for (such as salary history, etc.)

You can also use the cover letter to explain things that do not belong in a résumé, such as why you are on the job market (e.g., your organization is expecting layoffs, the campaign will be ending in November, etc.), why you had a gap in your résumé, whether you are willing to relocate, etc.

Your cover letter should reflect the fact that you have done your homework about the opening and the organization; sending a formulaic, generic cover letter won't work in your favor and may well work against you. Take the time to write a thoughtful, business formatted letter tailored to the specific position; and it will be evident to the hiring manager.

Apply these simple rules and you may land yourself a job—and a second date!

22. Internships

Scott Barton, Director of Communicators Programs, Institute for Humane Studies

An internship is a temporary (8 to 16 weeks) position that offers on-the-job training. Most interns are college students or recent graduates, although some internships allow high school students or older adults. Internships provide employers with cheap or free labor for low-level tasks and the prospect of interns returning as employees. For many careers, but especially public policy, getting an internship is an essential first step to starting a career.

First of all, an internship allows you to explore whether a policy career is a good choice for a full-time career. You can also explore what kind of role is right for you, whether it's policy research, communications, marketing, etc. Think about what roles you would consider for a career and then look for internships where you can begin to explore and build skills in those areas.

An internship also allows you to learn more about specific organizations where you may want to work in the future. By interning in that organization's office for a few weeks, you will learn about the office environment and culture before you decide to apply for a permanent position.

Internships are a particularly good way to start building a network of contacts in the policy world. At your organization, you will get to know your immediate colleagues very well. They will (hopefully) think of you as an excellent, productive worker and will be willing to offer positive references to potential employers. In addition, you will have the opportunity to meet professionals and interns at other policy organizations who are doing similar work.

There are also bad reasons to get an internship. I frequently see applicants who only want to add a line to their résumé that looks prestigious or exciting. If this is your reason for wanting a policy internship, you are better off finding another kind of experience. Not only will your application be less persuasive, but even if you are accepted, you will not be totally committed to the experience and your colleagues will know it.

Finding the Right Type of Internship

After thinking about your specific career interests, the next step is to select the ideal internship role that will advance those goals. Are you interested in researching health care policy, or do you want experience in fundraising? Perhaps you'd like a role that does a little of both? If your career interests are broad, try to find a role that includes a wide range of duties, giving you exposure to several different career paths.

Large think tanks usually run well-established internship programs that host many interns in specialized roles, with each intern assigned to a different supervisor. These organizations are a good choice if your career interests are very specific. Because the organization is large, each policy scholar may have a dedicated research intern, and supporting departments may have dedicated interns as well. In particular, large think tanks are more likely to cover niche policy issues, like technology or foreign policy.

A smaller think tank will likely host fewer interns, who have the opportunity to work on multiple projects. If you'd like to explore policy research as well as some other think tank roles, a small organization's internship might be the best fit. Smaller organizations may also offer more opportunities for publishing research in your own name.

Many policy organizations are located in the Washington, D.C., area, but prospective interns should consider organizations focusing on state policy as well. Politics and policy tend to be more accessible at the state level, so interns at state-based organizations may have more access to the political process than at national organizations. At state organizations, there is a higher potential that interns will see results of their efforts in policy success.

Some organizations allow interns to telecommute, but this should be avoided. Telecommuting interns may only interact with one or two people at the organization and thus miss out on the important social and networking aspects of working in the office.

To find particular organizations that match your interests, visit www.PolicyExperts.org, a directory of conservative and libertarian policy organizations. For organizations outside of D.C., look at the directory of State Policy Network organizations. Also visit the major liberty-oriented job banks to find intern positions.

In addition to scouting for an internship yourself, you can also apply to internship programs that offer placements at several policy organizations, along with other educational benefits. To maximize your chances of securing an internship, you can apply to these programs and pursue individual positions at the same time.

Applying and Getting Accepted

Application materials should be 100 percent professional: your résumé, cover letter, and any other materials should be polished and error-free. In addition, your materials should be well-informed and reflect good knowledge of the organization, its mission and activities, and the skills they are seeking. (See the previous section for more on résumés and cover letters.)

An internship may or may not indicate an application deadline, but regardless, there is an advantage to applying early. Early applicants usually have a better chance of success, plus the internship may already have been filled if you wait to apply. For a summer internship, the best time to scout for positions and apply is during the winter holidays.

During the application process, avoid asking questions unless you must. Internship program administrators receive more inquiries than they prefer, most of which are easily answered by examining the organization's website. One exception: if you receive an internship offer, but would prefer another that you have not heard from, you should let the latter organization know about your situation and request an update on your application's status.

Above all, be honest in your materials. Sometimes, you may be tempted to stretch the truth about your skills or interests in order to get the internship, but this strategy usually ends poorly. Lies tend to be obvious, but even if this results in an acceptance letter, the opportunity will probably not be a good fit with you who *really* are.

Making the Most of the Internship Experience

Before the internship starts, contact your supervisor and obtain more details about the work you'll be doing. Find out about any preparation you can do in advance, such as background reading. Also get details about office policies, such as working hours, dress code, etc. The people at your organization may also be able to point you in the direction of convenient housing, although craigslist.org remains the best housing source in large cities.

During the internship, you must focus on creating value for your organization. At a basic level, this means doing an excellent job at the tasks you are assigned. Your work should be high-quality, thorough, and delivered on-time. If you're not sure about the quality of your work, ask your supervisor for candid feedback about your performance. Excellent workers are noticed by their colleagues and are rewarded with good recommendations and access to an organization's connections.

A common intern complaint is not having enough work to fill a 40-hour week. If this happens, ask your supervisor for additional tasks rather than waiting for him or her to notice you're waiting. Better yet, think about what tasks might be valuable for that organization and ask your supervisor for permission to proceed. Be entrepreneurial: try to find new ways that you can contribute to the organization. At the same time, keep in mind that intern tasks will and should be low-level; you're not in a position to change the organization or start a brand-new initiative. However, you can create value in small ways by looking for small tasks within your capabilities that will make the lives of your colleagues easier.

In addition to delivering high-quality work, be social with your colleagues. Your goal is to make people aware of your presence and sparkling personality, without being overbearing. For instance, you should accept opportunities to attend lunch or happy hours with the people at your organization. You should also attend events hosted by other organizations; these are great opportunities to meet people outside your organization.

You should also pursue one-on-one advice and mentoring from established professionals. First, identify scholars or other professionals who can offer you advice from their experience. Then ask if you can meet with them, perhaps for lunch. These people are busy, so they may politely turn you down. If your invitation is accepted, make sure to develop questions in advance, so you always have something to talk about.

23. Networking

Dr. Nigel Ashford, Senior Program Officer, Institute for Humane Studies

Why Network?

Networks are people communicating with each other, sharing ideas, information, and resources.

Why do so many resist the idea of networking? First, some think it is unethical, that somehow you are using other people for your own ends. There is nothing wrong with pursuing your own self-interest, providing it does not harm others. But networking is also about helping others as well as yourself. It is not a zero-sum game; it should be a positive-sum game, where all involved may benefit. The second objection is that many people find it difficult; they feel they lack the personality to be successful at it. They may be shy. But almost everyone finds networking difficult when they begin. We all find it difficult to interact with total strangers. But it is a skill you can learn by practice. Later on, we shall suggest some very specific tips on how to deal with social occasions.

Why should you network? First, it is an important means to achieving success in life, however you want to describe success. Second, it can be mutually beneficial, as the people you engage with can benefit from your knowledge and skills. It is not a one-way street. Third, it helps to build your community. We are not “isolated atomistic individuals” as we are sometimes portrayed. Everyone needs a sense of community, of belonging to something bigger than ourselves. Finally, networking can be fun. Think of all those interesting people out there that you have not (yet) met and did not know even existed.

Goals of Networking

You have to decide what your goals are in networking, which may depend on where you are in life. Of course you will have multiple goals, the importance of which may vary with the event, from finding a job to finding a partner. Here are some possible goals. What are your primary goals today?

- 1) Get a job. You may be on the job search or thinking about it. You may be graduating from undergraduate or graduate school, in an internship, or looking to move to another work challenge. Studies show that over half of jobs are found through personal connections, and that figure is probably higher for the policy world.
- 2) Improve your ideas and work. We should always want to improve our understanding of the world and seek to be challenged so we can work out the very best of ideas. We are all wrong about something, but we do not know what it is until we have clearly articulated our ideas and then faced criticisms.
- 3) Promote your ideas. If you believe that your ideas of limited government are better than the prevailing wisdom, you should seek to find appropriate locations to express those ideas. If you do not always convince others, you do open them up to alternative views. Initially, people are resistant to new ideas

(as they should be), but later they may repeat your arguments to others after reflecting on them. Do not expect instant converts.

- 4) Establish a good reputation. Be someone that others want to associate with. Don't be a "lunch tax," the person that people want to avoid because you only talk about yourself, or are always miserable. Gossip can be unhealthy if not based on knowledge and information. But talking about others is inevitable as humans are always interested in their fellow human beings. You want the gossip about you to be positive, that she works hard, that she is creative, that he is reliable.
- 5) Receive invitations to write and speak. In public policy you want to spread your ideas to others. The predominant way to do that is by writing and speaking. So you should be looking out for opportunities to express your ideas in written or verbal form. Conversations at events can lead to invitations to write something or speak.
- 6) Get published. How do you get published? You can send in articles blind, and they may be accepted, but publications usually receive many more submissions than they can accept. They are more likely to give attention to submissions from people they have met, or are recommended by people they know. A friend once said that he wanted no unpublished thought. I corrected him that he should want no "good" unpublished thought, so do think carefully before submitting anything.
- 7) Obtain letters of recommendation. You need people to provide you with letters of reference. While people who know you well are necessary, it can also help to have a letter of recommendation from someone who may not know you that well, but is well-known to the person to whom you are applying. In any job or internship, you should be thinking who would be a good reference.
- 8) Understand the culture. Being a student and working in public policy are very different worlds. Flip-flops and t-shirts will not be the dress code. One policy institution may be very different from another. For example, some are very deferential to the management, while in others, the relationship is more flat. In one, the dress code is very important and strict and is more relaxed in another. You need to know what is appropriate for whatever scene you are in.
- 9) Obtain intellectual stimulation. One of the reasons you have chosen the path of the policy world is that you have a strong interest in ideas and their consequences. If not, why are you considering this as a career? Networking is the place to come across new ideas that will stimulate your brain cells more than any illegal drug.
- 10) Create your community. Some of the people with whom you network will become your friends, your community, your "family," but you do not know who they will be until you meet them.

Key Concepts

There is an extensive literature on networking and you can find some references to read at the end of this section. Being aware of these concepts might help you to appreciate what is going on when you network.

- 1) Dispersed knowledge. F.A. Hayek is the thinker most associated with the idea of the knowledge

problem—that we all suffer from limited knowledge. He notes that knowledge is widely dispersed. This is why central planning cannot work. This means that everyone you meet has some knowledge that could have value or interest to you. Your goal is to find out what that knowledge is. Dispersed knowledge is spread in everyone's hands, so do not waste too much time talking to someone who is unwilling or unable to share their knowledge.

- 2) The strength of weak ties. It is people you barely know who may be of the greatest value to you. More than 80 percent of those who say they got a job through personal connections say that person was an acquaintance, not a friend, when a friend is defined as someone you see at least once a month. Studies suggest that most people get their jobs through weak ties, such as a friend of a friend or a distant family member.
- 3) Reciprocity. Successful networkers are those who give as well as those who benefit. International studies on why fellow workers cooperate with each other show very different styles. For Americans, the principle is reciprocity, the belief that the other person would help them if asked. In China, cooperation depended on orders from an authority figure. The Spanish help those they like. Germans cooperate if it conforms to the rules. In America, reciprocity is the key ingredient. Avoid people who are takers but not givers.
- 4) Structural holes. Filling in structural holes is the term for when one connects people who should know each other but do not. You should connect people with common interests, e.g., in health care or Africa.
- 5) Articulate commonalities. What do you say when you meet a total stranger? You should try to identify things you have in common. It might be your college, state, sport, policy interest, etc. So when introducing yourself, give your full name, and something about you that might lead to a connection. "I am a student at x university." "I intern at the Cato Institute."
- 6) Connectors, mavens, and salesmen. Malcolm Gladwell identifies three different types of people. Connectors bring people together. Mavens collect knowledge and information. Salesmen are good at promotion. Ideally, you should have all three qualities, but that is difficult, so identify your strengths. Make sure you surround yourself with people with a variety of strengths.

Events

Events like receptions, lectures, and conferences are the best places to network. Here are some ideas on how to successfully network there:

- 1) Attend as many events as possible, as early as possible.
- 2) Decide which are of most value to you.
- 3) Identify who you want to meet there.
- 4) Ask a question, give your name, and talk to speakers. Ask a question that will be of interest to others in the audience, and don't just give a long diatribe about your favorite hobbyhorse.
- 5) Socialize. Attend any reception before or after the event. Introduce yourself and others. Do not just hang around with the people you already know.

- 6) Organize your own event, such as a reading group, a lecture, or a dinner party.
- 7) Do a post-event follow-up, contacting people that might be of value.

Tips

- 1) Have a 30-second elevator speech to introduce yourself briefly to a stranger.
- 2) Carry business cards. If you do not have them, get them. You can get them free from www.vistaprint.com. That includes students!
- 3) Wear your name badge on the right, where it is more visible.
- 4) Smile. ☺
- 5) Introduce yourself to strangers, starting with those talking with people you already know.
- 6) Give others your undivided attention. Do not give the impression you are more interested in someone else in the room (even when you are).
- 7) Give sincere praise when appropriate.
- 8) Share information about events with fellow students, interns, and workers.
- 9) Listen and understand what the other person is saying before you respond.
- 10) Do not interrupt, even if you know what is coming next.
- 11) Ask open questions, without taking a stance. Use a follow-up if you want to disagree.
- 12) Introduce individuals to each other.
- 13) Ask others about themselves. Where do you go to school? How did you come to work here?
- 14) Maintain good eye contact. Looking at the ground or behind the person indicates lack of interest.
- 15) Do not fold your arms. That is body language for boredom.

Resources

Think about what resources exist to help you.

- 1) IHS has staff to assist lovers of liberty to pursue careers in liberty, such as public policy. Contact them for advice.
- 2) Co-workers.
- 3) Fellow students and alumni. Check if there is an alumni group in your town.
- 4) Websites (Cato, AEI, Heritage, state think tanks, etc.) can tell you about events.
- 5) America's Future Foundation (www.americasfuture.org) networks young libertarians and conservatives, has active branches in Washington, D.C., and around the country, and has a career center.

- 6) Mentors who have knowledge in an area and will share it with you.
- 7) Friends and acquaintances.

Conclusion

Go forth and network! Party with a purpose.

FURTHER READING

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24. Starting at the Bottom and Working Your Way Up

Tom Palmer, Vice President for International Programs, Atlas Economic Research Foundation; Senior Fellow, Cato Institute

So you want to be influential? Right. Start at the top! But that may be a bit hard to do. So maybe you could start at the bottom, instead. I suppose that's where I started. And I learned a few things on the way "up."

I've worked for liberty as a student activist, an author, an editor, a petitioner, a campaign manager, a public relations agent, a rabble-rouser, a seminar organizer, a think tank officer, a journalist, a public speaker, a teacher, and a lobbyist. I've promoted libertarian ideas in academic lectures and seminars, on talk shows, on national television, in debates, in one-on-one conversations, in parliamentary and congressional testimony, in scholarly papers and books, in op-eds in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and other papers in the United States, and in papers abroad, such as *Die Welt*, *Caijing*, *Al Hayat*, and *The Spectator* of London. I've done so in Baghdad, Kabul, Moscow, Cairo, Beijing, London, Accra, Jakarta, Berlin, Istanbul, Nairobi, Sao Paulo, Shanghai, and even in hostile territory, such as Washington, D.C. I've set up libertarian projects in fourteen languages. You name the job, and chances are I've gotten some experience at it. I was an intern at the Cato Institute and ended up as vice president for international programs there. (I'm now a senior fellow at Cato and vice president for international programs at the Atlas Economic Research Foundation, to which we transferred Cato's international programs.)

So, what did I learn? I've come up with seven things *I think* I've learned and that I think you may be able to put to work to become a more influential and successful promoter of liberty.

First, be the person on whom others can rely to get the job done. If you develop a reputation for making things happen (and not just talking about how great it would be if something were to happen), people will look to you for leadership, as well. Projects don't just happen. They are projected and implemented by someone. Be that person. (There's some irony in writing that, when my submission of this essay was after the deadline, but I was busy! My only excuse is to cite an adage that I've generally found to be true: "If you want something done, ask a busy person.")

It's good not to be known as a clockwatcher. The best way not to be *known* as a clockwatcher is not to *be* a clockwatcher. I generally find that the project, not the clock, dictates the schedule of a successful person. And, on a related note, don't be seen as the person who finishes a job and then goofs off. Finish your work and then—if you have the time—ask your colleagues what else needs to be done.

Second, before doing something, ask yourself why you are doing it. What is your rational purpose? What do you hope to accomplish? If you are successful, in what way or ways will the world be different? Write that down. Then assemble your tools, whether arguments, assets, team members, or whatever.

I'll digress for a moment to recommend some philosophy to you, not merely so you'll be better read, but

so you might help yourself to focus and be more successful. As a youth and then again as a young man, I read and learned from the Stoic philosophers, notably Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. Their main works are short, and you could read them in a few hours. (I'd start with Marcus's *Meditations* and then read Epictetus's *Handbook* [sometimes cited with the Greek name, *Enchiridion*]; there's more from Epictetus if you'd like, but that short book may be good enough.) They teach that one should know what one's rational purpose is, and go where one chooses to go, rather than where one is carried. That also applies to writing an essay, an op-ed, a blog post, or a book: rather than starting with a blank computer screen and diving into writing, you should start by outlining or listing your purposes, your arguments, and your evidence, and then building your essay around those elements.

Third, become a knowledgeable person, rather than merely an opinionated person. If you know something, rather than merely opine a lot, people will come to you for your opinion. And here's something I've learned the hard way: if you go around correcting mistakes made by others without being asked—that is, if you are aggressively opinionated—they will (amazing!) resent you and find you irritating. It's better if you demonstrate your knowledge in a less aggressive way, after which you're likely to find them asking for your opinion. I'm not against vigorous argument, but I recommend avoiding being a pest.

Understanding a topic and being able to organize your thoughts and express them coherently will put you head and shoulders above most people. If you can express them not only coherently, but in a way that is not painful to read, you will be on your way to success.

As a corollary, I recommend introducing yourself to the *art of rhetoric*. Learning how to approach audiences in a friendly way and how to arrange your evidence and arguments will help you enormously. As Aristotle noted in his *Rhetoric*, “all people, up to a certain point, endeavor to criticize or uphold an argument, to defend themselves or to accuse. Now, the majority of people do this either at random or with a familiarity arising from habit. But since both these ways are possible, it is clear that matters can be reduced to a system, for it is possible to examine the reason why some attain their end by familiarity and others by chance; and such an examination all would at once admit to be the function of an art.” That's a fancy way of saying that some people are good at making arguments, defending themselves or criticizing others, and that we can study how they do it and learn to be better at it ourselves. Since you're considering a career involved in making the world a more just, more free, and more prosperous place, you need to know how to persuade people not only that your views are correct, but that they should help you in your noble endeavor.

Two good places to start (I don't recommend Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, which is very theoretical) are George Orwell's short essay, available online and in many books, “Politics and the English Language,” and Marcus Tullius Cicero's “De Inventione.” (The latter is a lot easier to read than it sounds.) You will improve your ability to write, to speak, and to lead.

Fourth, look the part and maintain a professional comportment. If you want to be a leader, don't look like a slob. Of course, that doesn't mean fancy business clothes at all times, but it does mean thinking about how you will be perceived in various circumstances. I won't go into detail on what color of tie to wear or whether

to wear big jewelry, but I do think that attention to appearances counts. When I mention “look the part,” I’m not referring only to how you clothe yourself, but to how you present yourself generally. If you write a letter of introduction or an application for a job and it’s full of typographical errors, spelling mistakes, or bad grammar, you will make a bad impression. Remember that people judge you by how they perceive you.

Fifth, work with colleagues, not underlings; I learned a long time ago that it’s a lot better to introduce the people whose work you supervise as colleagues, not as “assistants” or “interns” or “helpers.” It’s OK to say that so-and-so “is my colleague here, working as an intern on…” but it’s bad form to introduce a person as an underling. If you respect your younger or “more junior” colleagues and treat them with respect, you will help to create a better working relationship.

Sixth, be careful about giving credit and not seeming to take credit for the work of others. That said, it’s worth making sure that people know what you in fact have accomplished. There may seem at times a fine line between bragging and just getting credit, but if you’re responsible for getting something done, be sure that you let the right people know that, and that you acknowledge the contributions of others.

Seventh and finally, be ready to adjust your strategies as circumstances warrant.

Work hard. And keep your ear to the ground. And your nose to the grindstone. Now try to get some work done in that position!

25. How to Succeed in a Nonprofit

Brian Hooks, Chief Operating Officer, Mercatus Center

There's so much bad advice out there on the topic that my first goal has to be not to add to it. So I'll do my best to dispel some of the more prominent myths and then, like any good multi-tasker, I'll make a list.

First, a disclaimer: I don't know the answer. I have, however, learned a few things in almost ten years at the Mercatus Center that might be helpful. During my time here, I've had five jobs, three bosses, and dozens of unbelievably accomplished colleagues. Some of the most important lessons for my current role as chief operating officer I learned just months out of college in my first role as program assistant.

Another disclaimer: My scope is fairly limited. These may be terrible lessons for an investment banker. But presumably you're reading this because you've made the ever-so-important decision to do what you love and work for a cause you believe in. If that sounds cheesy, you need to reconsider this choice. Go be an investment banker. This love of, and belief in, your cause is what will get you through the long days and nights and, for most of your career, relatively thin paychecks.

Which brings me to the list.

Lesson 1

Love what you do. The nonprofit that you choose is a mission-driven organization. How do you feel about that mission? It probably shows. I have not read a good book on nonprofit management, which means that I've had to learn whatever I know about it from experience. And—though this will be disappointing to those who thought a 700-word essay would provide all the answers—so will you. This means you'll have to put in a lot of time working through problems, making mistakes, and figuring out how to do things better with less information than your counterparts in business. That's a lot of work and it will be unbearable if you don't really believe in the reason you're doing it.

Lesson 2

Learn your limitations. You're not going to be great at everything. But you'll be much better at what you're good at if you know what you don't do well and act on that knowledge. This is a good thing to keep in mind as you take on your first few roles at an organization.

Lesson 3

Don't think too much about it. Don't let your career goals distract you from the job you're there to do. In my limited experience, climbers tend to fall. Maybe not immediately, but eventually. I'm not a big believer in the

five-year plan. That's not to say that people who have their act together and a clear vision of where they're going can't succeed. But sometimes you can focus too much on the map and miss the road ahead.

Do the job that you have well. Or to put it in "Career Guide" terms, don't dress for the job you wish you had, dress for your day.

These are qualities that are largely within your control. But all the self-awareness in the world won't be enough to get you there. The rules within which you work will have a lot to do with how well, or poorly, your efforts are rewarded.

A few things that we have at Mercatus that I couldn't do without (these make for good questions to ask about where you work now or where you want to work, to help determine if you have to move out to move up):

The culture of the organization. Is the place you work the sort of place that rewards ideas and performance, or do you need a fancy title or a hefty résumé to go with that (or in place of it)?

Mentors. I've been fortunate to work for brilliant people who took the time to work with me. Much of the way I approach a problem—whether it's public policy or personnel—has been shaped by what I learned from them. Do you respect the people you work for enough to learn from them, or are you more inclined to snark and resent the weekly team meeting where your boss drones on and on?

Know-How. There are some skills that are particularly scarce, and picking them up along the way can make you a good candidate for more responsibility. Things like project management, personnel management, and judgment. The way to pick these up is to dig into each job you have. You need to be "that guy that gets things done" no matter what things need to get done.

Measure your success by the level of responsibility your organization entrusts to you. This should increase over time, even if the size of your office doesn't. One big mistake people make is to treat their first position as a formality, to think that they only have to put in their time at the entry level before moving up to where they really belong. If that's you, you'll probably end up putting in your fair share of time—and a lot of it. Understand how the role you have, no matter what it is, contributes to the goals of the organization and what you need to do to do it well.

POLICY OUTSIDE THE THINK TANK

26. Changing Policy in the Public Sector

Carl L. Oberg, Executive Director, Foundation for Economic Education (previously a contractor at the U.S. Department of Defense and a civil servant at the U.S. Department of Commerce)

Does anyone think you can advance liberty from within the public sector? My colleagues seem to think it is very unlikely. One graduate school friend jokingly estimated that you have a one-in-one-million chance of actually increasing the amount of liberty in the world while being paid directly by taxpayers. That is certainly not very encouraging.

Another friend emphasized the goals of the Founders and the power-limiting nature of our Constitution. Given our system of checks and balances, any government job that is acting within constitutional constraints must not be that bad, right? Unless you believe that the government has been allowed to grow beyond its proper bounds.

A third friend told me, “You did it for over six years, so you should know.” I think my friend was being generous. I certainly did not promote freedom during every moment of my career at the U.S. Department of Commerce. Instead, I made a concerted effort to contribute to freer trade that gave new economic opportunities to millions of people. Within the sometimes heavy constraints of government work, I consider that a victory for freedom.

Eyes wide open, well aware of what you are endeavoring to do: that is how any liberty-advocate must enter a career in government. While there are some opportunities for you to expand freedom within government, especially outside of the United States in the diplomatic service, they are not easily found. Once found, the bureaucratic entropy you will encounter may just be too strong. If not careful, you can find yourself in a lucrative but disappointing career that pits you against your own ideals.

Look for jobs that increase trade but don’t rely on subsidies. This is where I spent the majority of my time in government, confident that I was expanding trade and increasing opportunities for Americans and others alike. Foreign policy and diplomacy are constitutionally legitimate functions of government and provide a way for classical liberals to represent their country abroad and educate people on the value of limited government (as long as the country is not infringing on rights abroad, of course).

Working for a state or local government can be less of a philosophical problem. After all, “the powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.” But just because a state or local government has the power or the legal ability to conduct an action doesn’t mean it should. Something as mundane as zoning policy can have profound implications for individuals. Think about the consequences of your work and how they impact businesses and people.

How should you react when your supervisor or an elected executive for whom you work wants to conduct an action with which you disagree? How do you react now? Most likely you agree to disagree, make your peace with it, and move on. If the decision is important enough, you may make a stand and refuse to budge, threatening your career position. You have that choice. But when working for the government, you must also consider that your choice will have impacts on countless others who may not have the option to choose principled disagreement.

This is serious stuff. That is why I cannot implore you enough to fully realize the consequences of your choice when you enter the government as a classical liberal.

Let's assume you've made your decision and you are starting your new career. Remember that decisions are being made not to serve the bottom-line profit, but to accomplish a mission as defined by the leadership, similar to a nonprofit. As with any career, you need to believe in that mission. If you do not believe in it, you should not be there.

Bureaucracy is king. Understand the motives and vision of your co-workers and the leadership. Realize that all the good intentions and hard work in the world are sometimes not enough to change the bureaucracy's direction. Ultimately, the person at the top has the final say, and he is likely a political appointee or an elected official. His motivations are not necessarily perfectly aligned with the mission of the government agency. There may be political points to be made. So you must be careful to pick your battles. Choose fights you have a reasonable chance of winning.

Finally, what about the possibility of changing the system from inside? The possibility of being a "mole for liberty" is certainly attractive. While the rest of the classical liberal community labors incessantly to slowly change society through a combination of political action and public education, you could be the hero and end the erosion of liberty by smuggling a government-shrinking memo through the bureaucracy! This is not likely. But there is need for people to commit themselves to educating civil servants on the value of liberty. Perhaps that would effect change and contribute to the liberty-advancing effort. Again, be aware of the perverse political incentives and mountain of bureaucratic procedures standing in your way. Always keep your eyes open.

I have not laid out an easy path. Being a classical liberal in the public sector can be a mind-numbing, frustrating experience. But with the right job and the right mission and largely unencumbered by everyday political concerns, you can make a difference. When I entered public service, the people of the United States had to navigate thousands of regulations and high tariff barriers if they wanted to trade with the people of Jordan, Morocco, Bahrain, and Oman. But with the right political incentives and diligent teamwork, I was able to contribute to an effort that tore down those regulations and lowered tariffs to almost zero. America now has free-trade agreements with those countries. Individuals across the globe are able to trade freely thanks in part to my efforts.

I call that a win for liberty.

27. Changing Policy As a Politician

Leon Drolet, Chair of the Michigan Taxpayers Alliance, former Michigan State Representative

Note: In this article, I will use the terms “libertarian,” “classical liberal,” and similar terms interchangeably to define someone who supports limited government.

Becoming an elected official may seem, to many, to be the most direct and efficient way to quickly move society in a pro-liberty direction. Politicians vote on laws and budgets and have access to media. They exercise these powers to direct resources and impact the direction of society. Politicians have been adept at diminishing our freedoms, so why shouldn't pro-liberty individuals use those same advantages for the cause of liberty?

The answer is that elected officials can advance the cause of liberty, but libertarians are very rarely adept at success in this arena. Principled limited-government candidates rarely get elected, and the very few that do win elections are rarely actually effective in their positions at accomplishing pro-liberty results. Influential elected libertarians are so rare that most people can name only a few such politicians from the modern era. Why?

The primary reason that classical liberals fail as candidates for public office (whether they run as Republicans, Democrats, third-party, or independents) is that they fail to understand the job of a candidate. Liberty-advocates, by their nature, are principled individuals who are passionate about issues of right and wrong, economic policy, and social liberty. Many libertarians are so consumed with these policy and philosophic ideas that they become deluded into thinking that being “correct” on such matters is somehow an asset in running for public office. In fact, some feel so passionately about liberty that they feel a righteous obligation to advance freedom in the sphere of elective politics.

Armed with the smug determination that they are absolutely right on very important matters of principle and policy, these idealistic champions of freedom dutifully file for public office and then proceed to run campaigns that fail—usually miserably. The rare few that either possess adequate campaign skills or just somehow get lucky and win are often then ineffective in the political environment of elected officeholders. Odds are that these rare survivors either become frustrated loners in the legislative body they serve in or end up being captured by the political environment in which they are immersed.

Want to beat the odds?

Being a Candidate

The first thing libertarian candidates have to overcome is the fallacy that being “right on issues” is a ticket to winning elections. Being a good libertarian has nothing to do with being a good candidate. Being a good candidate requires learning a completely unique set of skills that require dedication and discipline to master.

Imagine if history's greatest writers for liberty had such poor grammar skills that they were unable to construct a comprehensible sentence. These "writers" may have had great stories to tell and ambition to communicate them, but they would have been worthless failures without decent basic literary skills. Such is the libertarian "candidate" who hasn't a clue how to target voters, allocate campaign resources, or raise money. Candidacy is a job with a very distinct set of skills. Mastering these skills has almost nothing to do with the candidate's philosophy or ideas—it has to do with understanding campaign resource allocation and comprehending the intense level of commitment that a real campaign usually requires. Having inadequate knowledge of either usually dooms candidates.

Teaching campaign tactics falls outside the scope of this essay, so I would encourage potential candidates to take a very scientific approach to learning campaign skills. There are numerous campaign schools taught by political parties and interest groups where professionals share the secrets and science of winning elections. Many books, magazines, and published research also have exhaustive information on the subject of campaign science.

Future candidates for office should first gain on-the-ground, real-life experience by participating in a hotly contested political campaign or two as a volunteer or paid staffer. Because you have limited time, it is important that you select the campaign that you volunteer for by using the "Goldilocks approach"—the campaign must be big enough to employ sophisticated campaign strategies yet small enough that you will have opportunities to observe and participate in higher-level campaign operations.

Don't waste time on a presidential or U.S. senate campaign. These campaigns are very exciting and high-profile, but are such large operations that you will be relegated to the most insignificant envelope-stuffer or footsoldier. You will experience little or nothing when it comes to campaign strategy decisions or resource allocation. Also, don't waste time by volunteering on a campaign for a candidate who faces nominal competition or who is running for an insignificant office. Campaigns for state legislature or county offices are frequently "just right" for learning how to be a candidate.

Note that I have said nothing about issues. The good news is that issues come naturally to classical liberals and policy ideas are abundantly researched. But issues have little to do with broad campaign strategy or campaign skills. Do not try to use a campaign to educate voters on issues. If your passion is educating citizens on libertarian ideas, then please choose to become a writer, teacher, or think tank communications specialist, not a candidate. Issues are very important to a campaign, but the campaign's decisions are how to choose and present issues, not how to educate people on issues using extremely limited time and campaign resources.

The decision principled candidates must make is choosing which elements of their approach to public policy that they should feature in a campaign, and how to present those elements. Most voters agree with libertarians on many key issues and, at the same time, agree with statist on many key issues. In fact, voters seem perfectly capable of holding two contradictory views on any one issue, giving both libertarians and big-government collectivists opportunities to communicate well-crafted appeals to voters' already conceived notions on those issues.

The job of the campaign is to pick issues that the candidate supports that will appeal best to voters, and to do a better job of delivering messages on those issues than opponents.

Being a Politician

Once you have become a highly skilled candidate and won public office, the next step is learning how to be an effective advocate for liberty as an elected official. First, the bad news: few of your fellow elected colleagues will care about public policy. Now the good news: few of your elected colleagues will care about public policy.

The vast majority of individuals that choose to seek public office are motivated by their egos and not by a set of ideas or principles. That's not to say they don't have ideas or principles—only that those notions are not the motivation for most people who seek public office. People who decide to run for office are usually motivated by their highly competitive nature and their desire to be recognized and acclaimed as valuable and respected. In short, ego drives most people who seek personal validation in elections. Public policy ideas are like “things” these egoists encounter in their quest for public office—sometimes these idea “things” are useful to these candidates as tools to help their quests, and sometimes policy ideas are impediments in their endeavors. But for most politicians, public policy ideas are monitored for election and career-maintenance uses, but otherwise ignored.

This limited interest in policy is frustrating to many first-time elected libertarians who assume that politicians either truly seek to solve societal problems or are somehow motivated by policy ideas. These frustrated individuals must immediately learn the basics of public choice theory. In fact, no libertarian should ever consider running for office or even being involved with any politician until he or she has a complete and full understanding of public choice theory. This must be said one last time: read and understand public choice theory.

After aspiring libertarian candidates understand public choice theory, they need to recognize that only 20 percent of elected officials are truly ideological. Most politicians will position themselves ideologically in order to fit their districts, but such positioning is for show. The 20 percent of politicians who are actually ideological are potential allies and potential enemies in the libertarian's quest to advance pro-freedom policies and (much more often) stop bad legislation that expands government. But understanding these 20 percent of politicians is the easiest part of understanding the political landscape, because they usually wear their ideology on their sleeves and are simply either with or against you, depending on how your ideas fit their ideology. The secret to being an effective libertarian in the environment of elected office is not really focusing on the ideological 20 percent of the legislative body—it is understanding the remaining 80 percent.

The remaining 80 percent of politicians have two things that are very well-known to every lobbyist: a vote and a desire to be reelected. Good lobbyists try to get the vote they desire out of politicians by marketing their desired agenda as the best way to get reelected. Sometimes they do this by dangling financial campaign support in front of the politician, and sometimes they dangle blocks of votes. Sometimes they imply that

opposing a particular agenda of a lobbyist will result in campaign support going to a politician's opponents. To be successful in public office, one must think like the lobbyists by understanding and playing to the motivations of the 80 percent.

A good liberty-loving politician wastes little time trying to appeal to philosophy, economics or ethics with the 80 percent. Instead he or she markets policy ideas as the best way to gain support and win elections. When Texas congressman Ron Paul tries to reason with his congressional colleagues, they ignore or humor him. When Paul raises a substantial sum of campaign cash with a "money bomb," those same colleagues become more and more interested in what he has to say.

A good libertarian elected official will work hard to present his or her views on issues as important for the reelection chances of his or her colleagues. This official must become a lobbyist—pointing out polls that show people support positions of limited government and free markets, talking about appealing to campaign donors that support those positions, and making the case that "freedom is popular."

Of course, the elected freedom-fighter rarely has good opportunities to sell his or her entire philosophy to colleagues. Instead, he or she grabs the libertarian position on issues that are most politically salient at the time: taxes, spending, debt, the drug war, whatever. A libertarian who becomes a good lobbyist by convincing colleagues that a vote on an issue will be in their interest is an effective player in a political body.

There is one other thing that an effective libertarian officeholder should learn from lobbyists: to socialize with fellow lawmakers. Politicians are usually very social and also want to be the center of attention. That's why lobbyists laugh at every politician's joke and express keen interest in politicians' family, friends, and hobbies. It is amazing what a person can learn about a politician's ideas, thoughts, concerns, and challenges over a few drinks. If one genuinely learns to enjoy the company of one's elected colleagues, it will be noticed and appreciated. The libertarian shouldn't be fake about this—a true effort to get to know colleagues as fellow human beings should be made. Politicians are not stupid—they will listen to someone that they sense cares about them as a person and who has some genuine thoughts on how ideas can advance their careers.

Before any classical liberal decides to try to effect change through elective office, he or she needs to understand that a liberty-advancing politician has three jobs and not one.

The first job is to be a good libertarian—understand philosophy, economics, morality, history, and all the components of liberty. This is the fun job, and it is mastered in the head, heart, and soul. And a libertarian will need all the strength of his or her head and heart in order to protect the soul in the political environment.

The other two jobs are being a great candidate and being a great politician. Those jobs are accomplished with the brain, of course, but mastering them is akin to acquiring legs in politics: you need both of them working in unison to get anywhere.

I am firmly convinced that being an effective politician for liberty is harder than being an effective think tank careerist, journalist, lawyer, or educator for liberty. Good libertarian politicians are very few and far between, because few principled people are willing to master the needed skills to survive the journey through the campaigns and flourish in a legislative body while maintaining their principles.

The journey is not for everyone.

28. Out of Politics and into Ideas

Jack McHugh, Senior Legislative Analyst, Mackinac Center for Public Policy

I've always been a "political" person, but came late to politics as a professional matter. I did so by diving in as a full-time volunteer for the campaign of an inspirational state legislative candidate who was actually a world-class libertarian economist, the late Stephen Dresch. As dean of the economics department at Michigan Tech University, Dresch exposed and reformed some extremely shady practices the institution was engaged in, and in the process became an "accidental" politician.

The 1994 special election campaign I was involved in turned into an epic one as the race took on statewide implications (it would decide the state House majority under then-Governor John Engler). Although we came up 97 votes short, I made connections on that campaign that eventually led to a staff position with state Rep. Greg Kaza, a libertarian Republican, and that's where this story really begins.

The Dresch campaign was then my only experience in electoral politics, and it was a highly idealistic and purely amateur effort. The campaign's Upper Peninsula stalwarts were salt-of-the-earth working people who were passionate about limited-government principles that directly affected their lives—mostly property rights and the Second Amendment. There were no party apparatchiks or political hacks involved.

Therefore, my arrival in the state Capitol was a political culture shock. On the first day, I and three other newcomers spent an hour with the nonpartisan human resources staff going over all the staff job's fringe benefits. My new colleagues were full of questions, but I was appalled: Benefits? I was there to change the world! Yet to these people, this was just another white-collar administrative job.

Those who have worked in this arena will chuckle at my naïveté, but I arrived expecting an intellectually stimulating workplace filled with others like myself who were interested in principles and ideas. Here's what I found. Half my fellow staffers were ideologically unengaged "housewives" adding a second paycheck to their family income. The other half were political careerists, most of whom cared little or nothing about ideas and principles. Out of more than 600 full-time political staff working for 148 state legislators, there were only a handful primarily motivated by and passionate about limited-government principles.

That was 15 years ago, and nothing has changed. While today I'm infinitely more knowledgeable about politics and state policy, I still find this reality shocking. So maybe I'm still naïve.

Although there's plenty of drudgery at the lowest levels of legislative staff, capable individuals advance quickly, and working there soon becomes a heady experience. You feel like you're at the center of important events and that what you do matters. You're surrounded by lobbyists and other petitioners who all appear to really like you and think you matter. You feel clever operating the instruments of political manipulation, including crafting "spin," fine-tuning ideological "position-taking," drafting district-wide communications, and devising campaign strategies.

On rare occasions, your office even gets to feel effective, perhaps helping to make an obnoxious bill slightly less so. More rarely, and never in uncompromised form, you may even help advance some modestly beneficial policy. These events always feel like bigger deals than they really are—most of the time they're just "inside baseball" details that no normal person will ever know or have reason to care about.

Nevertheless, everyone involved in the enterprise rides on an undercurrent of excitement and self-importance. However, and most importantly, it's all meaningless in the context of bringing about real change and reform. The reality is, legislatures don't lead, they follow.

If, like me, you are motivated by limited-government principles, from time to time you look up and realize that you're engaged in a fundamentally corrupt enterprise, because inseparably interwoven into everything full-time legislators and their staff do in the Capitol is election campaigning. When legislators say they're "working back in the district," it means they're campaigning.

Frankly, it's a lonely existence for idealists, and limited-government ideologues are nothing if not idealists.

I spent six years in that environment, and became very good at it. But for luck, I might still be there. I had established a relationship with Michigan's Mackinac Center for Public Policy. It was starting a new website that needed a "movement" person who could translate the complex, often opaque and misleading language of bills and votes into plain-English and objective (but brutally honest) descriptions of what they really do. This had my name written all over it, and it's still my main job at the Center—creating content for the MichiganVotes.org website. Having described some 15,000 bills and nearly that many votes over nine years, it's also my legitimate claim to being a think tank "expert."

Following all those legislative details gives me the knowledge to do other things for the Center, mostly writing articles that connect the dots between free-market principles the legislation flowing from the belly of the big-government beast. From this experience I will offer my one bit of commentary on the transition from legislature to think tank:

The standards are different. Political writing and communications are intellectually sloppy. Rigorous adherence to the truth is neither expected nor required. That doesn't mean you lie, although many do. But you're allowed to play fast and loose and with the facts. Frankly, it's fun and "liberating." That it's also potentially corrupting should be obvious.

Perhaps even worse, granting the presumption of good will to the opposition is not only optional, it's discouraged. The other party doesn't oppose your preferred policies because they're misguided; they oppose them because they don't care about the bad outcomes. True partisan hacks go even further: The opposition *wants* bad things to happen to good people.

It should go without saying that the standards in the think tank world are very different. Truth and correct facts are the currency of the realm, and passing counterfeits leads to permanent banishment for individuals

and institutions. That means meticulous caution is the watchword, requiring sometimes irritatingly intense care regarding miniscule details. It's a sobering change for those who come from the loosey-goosey political world.

If a person is able to overcome those sloppy political habits, think tanks benefit from having individuals with experience in the legislative arena. I described my own idealist's shock at encountering the realities of the professional political world. My scholarly think tank colleagues who haven't been there find that world hard to comprehend. Like most people, they tend to believe that legislators really care about public policy, and initially resist the idea that the majority do not. Once exposed to the evidence, they find the conclusion hard to reject, however, and it has implications for how think tanks should operate.

Which means that individuals with a legislative background can have a real impact on a think tank's orientation. The temptation for these institutions is always to address their work to policymakers, primarily legislators. Largely due the influence of myself and a couple of colleagues with similar backgrounds, our think tank is now aiming much more of its work at the public, which actually conforms more closely to our proper role of education.

To repeat, legislatures and legislators follow—not lead. Real revolutions in policy don't originate in marbled capitol buildings but with changes in the climate of public opinion. That's the field on which think tanks engage, and while they are just one player there, for idealists who want to change the world it's the only field truly worth playing on.

29. Changing Policy in the For-Profit Sector

Tony Woodlief, Vice President for Academic Programs, Market-Based Management Institute

Maybe the simple truth, after you've considered what you're good at and what you enjoy doing, is that you don't really want a job in the nonprofit world. You believe in liberty, you admire the work of effective think tanks, you enjoy reading about policy and economics. But living that life just doesn't excite you. That's okay. You should be passionate about whatever you're going to spend the majority of your waking hours doing.

There are plenty of good reasons to pursue a private-sector career. Some of the more compelling ones are income, the pleasure of delivering something tangible and useful to people, and the validation that comes from earning a profit and thereby knowing that you have created value in the world. The creation of value from resources in the marketplace is one of the key activities your allies in the policy community want to protect. So who could frown on you for entering the business world?

Don't think, however, that a private-sector career means you have to forsake your commitment to liberty, or that these need be separate pursuits. Your commitment to liberty should remain quite relevant to your life, starting with where you choose to work. At the very least, you shouldn't work for an organization that actively seeks to undermine liberty.

That admonition raises plenty of potential discussions we'll not get into here—the role of business subsidies, for example, or whether companies that sell products to anti-liberty organizations or governments are thereby undermining liberty themselves. Suffice to say that if your prospective employer doesn't profit primarily by delivering value to people who voluntarily pay for its services, you might be putting your labor at odds with your principles.

Working for a company that isn't working to destroy liberty is a minimum, and you might benefit from looking for positive qualities beyond that. Perhaps you'd like to work in an industry, for example, that delivers products or services especially critical to the success of liberty-advancing organizations. Several Internet and communication technologies, for example, have been invaluable to individuals struggling against totalitarian regimes worldwide. Closer to home, top-notch fundraising and event-planning operations deliver considerable value to liberty-oriented nonprofits, freeing them to focus on their comparative advantages in policy analysis and education.

But suppose you don't want to work even that closely with the liberty movement. Say you want to design clothes, or sell insurance, or do financial analysis. Even in those cases, your recognition of the importance of liberty can serve you well. Businesses, after all, can be run in a variety of fashions. Some are run like the former Soviet Union, with no tolerance for dissent, no reward for useful innovation, and no clear internal data about what is producing or destroying value. Others are run more like marketplaces, such that rewards are apportioned according to value creation, productive challenges are encouraged, and advancement is determined by one's track record at delivering positive results, rather than tenure.

Wouldn't you rather work in the latter kind of organization? Even if you want to be an accountant, your understanding of liberty can still be a useful guide to your career choices. Don't waste your life in an organization that stifles your creativity and entrepreneurialism while simultaneously fostering in you a bureaucratic, political mindset. We've all met that guy. Don't become that guy.

Aside from pursuing employment in light of your skills and interests, in the most liberty- and market-affirming organization possible, there are other ways you can help advance liberty without directly working for a nonprofit. The most obvious, of course, is through your financial support. You've chosen to pursue a career in the profit-making world, so spread some of that profit around!

But don't hand out money willy-nilly. Think of your charitable giving as an investment portfolio: put your dollars to work in organizations that you believe will generate significant change in the attitudes, beliefs, and actions of opinion leaders. Just as you don't put your retirement funds into a company just because its CEO has appeared on the front page of *Fortune*, don't invest your charitable dollars in a nonprofit just because it's popular. Scrutinize its social change model and results just as you would the business model and financial returns of a company. And invest some of your profits in liberty.

Beyond that, once you've achieved some wealth, status, and connections, why not offer to host an event for your favorite nonprofits? Introduce your friends to these "investment opportunities." Successful nonprofits are always networking and looking to establish relationships with potential givers. Your positive influence there, insofar as you are a vocal advocate and salesperson for them, can go well beyond the value of your individual financial contributions.

If you're successful in your business career, you'll accumulate not just cash but valuable experience—about how to manage projects and people, what makes for effective strategy, and how to foster organizational excellence. This is, if you think about it, another kind of "profit" that you can invest in liberty-minded organizations. Once you've become a grizzled business veteran, spend a little time developing relationships with managers in nonprofits you want to help excel. If you've been giving consistently and generously, you'll already be on a first-name basis with their leadership. Why not spend some time with them as a consultant, asking them about the challenges they face, building a rapport, and making yourself available to them as a sounding board or even a mentor? Who knows, you might even be asked to join a board or two, where you can really effect change by helping nonprofit leaders develop strategies that will lead to success.

One of the problems facing those who love liberty, if you think about it, is that so many of our fellow citizens have abdicated all responsibility for maintaining it to other people. They imagine their courts and elected officials will do the job. We've seen what disastrous results that's produced. Those of us in the liberty movement should not make the same mistake. By all means, pursue a career that best suits your skills and passions. But don't make the mistake of thinking that only those who work directly for nonprofits are in the fight for liberty. You can do a lot more for the cause than you think.

FURTHER READING

Charles G. Koch, *The Science of Success* (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2007).

30. Changing Policy As a Professor

Lee Alston, Professor of Economics and Environmental Studies, University of Colorado, Boulder

The incentive structure for active academics is to publish in top academic journals. Many economists think that this may be inconsistent with academic work that has policy implications. However, academics are increasingly addressing policy issues of importance at the local, state, national, and international levels. I started my career as an economic historian, but always had a concern for the lessons that we can learn from history that are relevant for today.

My first foray into lessons for “today” came in the wake of the tightening of monetary policy by the Federal Reserve in the early 1980s. The natural result was a rise in real interest rates, which hurt debtors. One group particularly affected was farmers. As a result, several state legislatures proposed bills to prevent creditors from foreclosing on delinquent farm debtors. In Iowa, the governor issued a temporary executive order halting foreclosures. I had recalled that there was a precedent for moratoriums on farm foreclosures in Minnesota in the 1930s. Indeed, the legislation in Minnesota became a prominent Supreme Court decision, *Home Building and Loan vs. Blaisell*. In a 5-4 decision, the court upheld the moratorium in Minnesota. Following the decision of the Supreme Court, numerous other states passed moratoriums. In total, 25 states passed such legislation for varying lengths of time. I saw this as a natural experiment. Did creditors in states with moratoriums behave differently than in states without moratoriums? I tested whether creditors in states with moratoriums raised interest rates or rationed credit relative to creditors in states without moratoriums. I found that there was clear evidence that creditors rationed credit in states that had moratoriums and that this hurt prospective farmers. The policy lesson was clear: there is no free lunch in interfering with contracts. This research was published in the *American Economic Review* (1984), the top journal in economics. This demonstrated to me that policy advice does not have to come by sacrificing academic rigor. Given the present day rise in foreclosures, this article has been highly cited recently.

Over time I have found research in economic history and economic development to be complementary. My foray into economic development began in 1990 with a call from someone in the research division at the World Bank. He invited me to take on a research project on property rights on any natural resource anywhere in the world. He said that the World Bank lacked anyone with expertise in property rights and the emerging New Institutional Economics approach. It was an exciting opportunity, so I called Gary Libecap, a fellow economic historian who had worked on property rights, and asked if he wanted to collaborate. As a result, we flew to Washington, D.C., and consulted for several days with people across country groups. Deforestation and the role of titling emerged as our issue, and Brazil our country of focus because it had and still has the largest stock of tropical hardwoods in the world.

Brazil has a mix of private, state, and federal ownership of forests. Squatters can also settle on the public domain, and after a year of residency and work, they have the right to a title. We began our research to determine whether having a title to land compared to squatting affected deforestation. To our initial surprise,

titling did not have a direct impact on deforestation. So we probed more deeply to determine the role of titles on land use for small landholders in the Amazon and found that having a secure title versus squatting on the land dramatically increased land values both directly because of a broadening of the market and indirectly by increasing permanent investment in the land. This work has been an input into the policy advice of the World Bank and has been cited in titling work around the globe. In the past year, I was contacted by an attorney in Uganda who is working to make land rights more secure and used our work on the Amazon as definitively showing the value of titles and secure land rights for more optimal land use.

My earlier work in the Amazon on titles led to an exploration as to why Brazil still has numerous land conflicts. Paradoxically, land reform policy in Brazil leads to more land conflicts. The federal government is now a relatively passive player in land reform. We recently have researched the impact of land conflict on land rentals in Brazil. We found that land conflict results in fewer land rentals and sharecrop units and thus blocks an avenue of socio-economic advancement for would-be renters. The lack of rentals and sharecropping also implies that the farming units are not optimal in size and thereby have a negative impact on productivity. The “missing market” has a further negative impact because it causes some landless to move to the frontier, deforest land, and engage in self-sufficient agriculture in order to have a livelihood. Akin to our earlier work, this research has strong policy implications on how to better structure land reform in Brazil, a country with one of the world’s highest land inequality measures.

The defining feature of my research over the years is that I take on issues that I see as important and puzzling. Once you understand the issue and solve the puzzle, policy implications directly emerge. But do not start with trying to change policy. This is backward; understanding an issue comes first, and then proper policy prescriptions follow.

APPENDIX

31. Continuing Your Classical Liberal Education

Dr. Stephen Davies, Program Director, Institute of Economic Affairs

So, you have gotten that position you've been working toward. You are now safely ensconced in a think tank, policy analysis firm or public policy research organization. Surely now school is behind you and you can do what most graduates do when they finally complete and get a post: put their books to one side and draw a line under their education? Not at all. This would be a mistake in a number of ways, as well as being bad in itself. You should now be thinking of how to continue your education in classical liberal ideas and arguments and look upon it as a long-term project that you carry on alongside your regular job. Fortunately, it has never been easier to do this, and it's a lot of fun, as well as helps you in your new career in policy.

Why though should you do this? Obviously, one basic reason is that learning and knowledge are good in and of themselves. However, there are lots of practical reasons why you should not stop your education once you graduate. In the first place, there is still so much to learn, much of it directly relevant to the work you are now doing. In the whole of your time as an undergraduate and at graduate school, you will have only touched on part of the rich and varied continent of classical liberal ideas. Suppose you have specialized in economics. There will still be many aspects of economic thinking that you hardly know even after that. There will be even more opportunity to learn new things in other areas, such as political science, international relations, philosophy, and history. All of this is a source of arguments, information, and explanatory analysis that you can bring to bear in your career in public policy. Why let it lie fallow and unexplored?

Moreover, the sum of classical liberal knowledge and argument (or indeed intellectual and scholarly argument in general) is not fixed and unchanging. Scholars are constantly producing new theses and undermining old ones, discovering new things and looking at established and known facts in a new way. You need to keep up with these developments, both because they are interesting in themselves and because they will often have a direct bearing on the kind of more practical policy-oriented research that you are now doing. If you are looking at criminal justice policy for example, new findings in sociology or psychology will have direct relevance for you; they may lead you to rethink your line of argument or the kind of policy recommendations that you make.

In addition to these practical benefits of continuing your education, there are more fundamental reasons for doing this and making it a life project. These have to do with the kind of person that you want to be or become. If you stop learning and exploring the ideas you believe in and are committed to, you will eventually forget why you got into this business in the first place. You will become concerned only with the process of politics and public policy and lose sight of the goal, the ideal you had that shaped your choices and that you went into the policy world to help realize or defend. You will become a technician and stop being an idealist. One result is that your mental horizons will shrink, you will lose the vision you once had, which helped you to think in original ways. Increasingly, you won't ask fundamental questions. Instead, you will only look at the practical mechanics of policy and lose sight of the deeper questions.

You will also lose an important part of what makes you a more rounded person in general. This is a major problem in contemporary politics and the associated world of policy research and analysis. The British politician Dennis Healy argued that all politicians needed what he called a hinterland. That is a set of interests and avocations that are independent of their political career or at least not directly connected to it. He himself had a great interest in both music and literature. This gives the politician or analyst the vital quality of perspective and makes him or her a more three-dimensional person rather than a flat two-dimensional figure who knows and cares only about one narrow thing.

Washington, D.C., and state capitals are full of people who know all about the details of the latest hot policy topic or the bills going through the legislature, but have lost or never developed their hinterland. They no longer have a framework they can fit all this technical information into, a larger picture that gives it meaning. They have forgotten most of what they learned at school and haven't learned anything new. They may look sleek in their sharp suits, but intellectually they are flabby. They can't bring new thinking and insights to bear; they are responsive rather than creative. Eventually, the tide of ideas sweeping past them outside their bubble will sweep them away and leave them stranded. At some point, they will realize this and wonder why they are doing this and what happened to that intellectual curiosity and idealism they felt when they started out. Don't be like that!

So all this is well and good, but what should you do? The good news is that continuing your education and keeping up with scholarship has never been easier. At one time you would have had to go back to school or take part-time or evening classes if you wanted to do this. Now though, there has been a revolution in the world of ideas, and it is easier than at any time since the 1880s to be an intellectual, a student, or even a scholar without being in full- or even part-time education. The basic point is to make your education a part of your life and a continuing project. The main thing therefore is to make time for it. There are a number of things you can do. The basic thing is to do this in a structured way. Give yourself a manageable intellectual project on a subject that interests you, the equivalent in terms of time commitment of a full-credit class. So you might decide to learn about the intellectual and political history of the Progressive Era, or the philosophy of crime and punishment, or the economics of an area you haven't really studied before.

The most obvious thing to do is to read regularly and systematically. Compile a list of books on a topic or subject area that you want to look at and go through it. One way of doing this is to look at the lists produced by institutions such as IHS or Liberty Fund (whose own publications list is a great resource—even better are their online resources at www.econlib.org and <http://oll.libertyfund.org>). Don't just read books that are clearly policy-relevant, read pure academic ones. Also, start to explore ones in areas you didn't study in college. One good resource is the Amazon list of related books for any particular one you're reading. It isn't just books either; if you're lucky, your school will give you access to things such as JSTOR so you will be able to keep up with journals as well. As well as reading books, take out subscriptions to magazines. Not the obvious polemical ones but the more scholarly ones that are not purely academic but halfway between the academic and the popular. Think of titles like *Independent Review*, *Foreign Policy*, *National Interest*, *American Interest*, *Reason*, and *Dissent*.

As well as reading regularly, look out for public lectures in your area given by universities and other organizations, such as the National Endowment for the Humanities. Accept invitations to events put on by nonprofits and other think tanks that have an intellectual element, even (or especially) when they are in an area that isn't directly to do with the one you're an expert in for policy.

There are now a wealth of other ways to educate yourself. You can subscribe to and get regular updates from many sites. Among the thousands of blogs are some that are seriously scholarly and either tell you a lot, or even better, direct you to other resources. Many older books are now available online at Project Gutenberg and other sites. There are also excellent courses on CD or DVD on a wide range of subjects, put out by The Teaching Company and other firms, usually of a very high quality and sometimes with a distinct classical liberal twist or interpretation.

Don't feel that this continued education need be a solitary exercise. You can join or help set up reading and discussion groups either online or preferably where you meet for lunch or a social event as well as to discuss what you've read or seen. Also, it is very important to not only read what is ideologically congenial to you (hence the reference to *Dissent* earlier). You don't want to suffer from confirmation bias. Rather, you want to be exposed to the best arguments the other side has to offer, as this will sharpen your own thinking and keep you on your toes. Just as the best teams want to match themselves against the strongest opposition, so you should want to engage and debate with the strongest critiques of your own beliefs so that your own arguments are as strong and well-informed as possible. (Of course, you may actually learn something or even change your mind on something, which is not a bad thing if that's where the evidence and argument leads.)

Getting that policy position is not the conclusion of your academic career. Far from it—for all sorts of reasons, you should look to continue it, and if you do, you will gain a lot for yourself and also be more effective in the fight you are committed to for things you believe in.

32. Author Biographies

Eric Alston

Eric Alston is a policy analyst at the Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation, focused on issues related to social movements, and more broadly, historical studies of societal change. He has worked previously with the Political Economy Research Institute in Raleigh, N.C., received his dual bachelor's degree in economics and Spanish from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, and his master's in economics from the University of Maryland College Park. Previously, he has researched the relationship between income and levels of environmental pollution, the development of electoral institutions in the United States that led to the convergence to a two-party system, and the interaction of local and national government interests that shaped the development of property rights in the frontier United States.

Lee Alston

Lee Alston is professor of economics and environmental studies and is currently the director of the Program on Environment and Society at the University of Colorado. Alston is a research associate at the National Bureau of Economic Research. He was recently president of the International Society for the New Institutional Economics from 2006 to 2007. Alston's honors include serving as a Rockefeller Fellow at the Bellagio Study and Conference Center and serving as visiting fellow/research scholar at Australian National University; Claremont-McKenna College; Princeton University; The Sorbonne, University of Paris; Stockholm School of Economics; and University of California, Davis. Alston has focused his research in two broad areas: 1) the role of contracts and institutions in shaping agricultural land use in the historical United States and contemporary Brazil; and 2) the important role of institutions in determining economic and political openness. Alston's work has appeared in such journals as the *American Economic Review*; the *Journal of Economic History*; the *Journal of Law, Economics, and Organization*; *Explorations in Economic History*; and others. Alston is the coauthor of *Paternalism and the American Welfare State: 1865-1965* and *Titles, Conflict, and Land Use: Property Rights and Land Reform on the Brazilian Amazon Frontier*. Alston is currently working on book manuscript titled *The Road to an Open Economic and Political Society: Brazil 1985-2010*.

Nigel Ashford

Nigel Ashford is senior program officer at the Institute for Humane Studies, where he lectures at summer seminars and provides guidance to graduate students seeking careers in academia. He joined IHS from the United Kingdom, where he was professor of politics and Jean Monnet Scholar in European Integration at Staffordshire University, England. Dr. Ashford has also directed the Principles for a Free Society Project at the Jarl Hjalmarson Foundation in Sweden, and was a Bradley Resident Scholar at the Heritage Foundation and visiting scholar at the Social and Philosophy Policy Center in Bowling Green. He is a recipient of the International Anthony Fisher Trust Prize for published work that strengthens public understanding of the political economy of the free society.

Scott Barton

Scott Barton is the director of communicators programs at the Institute for Humane Studies, where he oversees talent development programs for aspiring policy analysts, nonprofit leaders, journalists, and filmmakers. Barton directed IHS's Charles G. Koch Summer Fellow Program from 2006 to 2009. Prior working at IHS, he was a 2003 Koch Summer Fellow at the Washington Legal Foundation, where he researched and wrote papers on contemporary legal issues. Barton graduated from Grinnell College in 2004 with a B.A. in philosophy.

Robert Bluey

Robert B. Bluey directs the Heritage Foundation's Center for Media and Public Policy, where he researches and writes about instances of government malfeasance and corruption, filling a gap opened by the market changes roiling the media industry. The position is a natural fit for Bluey, who spent five years as a reporter and editor in Washington, D.C., before joining Heritage. In addition to promoting investigative journalism and government transparency, he assists with Heritage's Computer-Assisted Investigative Reporting boot camp, a day-long seminar held periodically at the National Press Club. Bluey serves on the board of visitors for the Institute for Political Journalism and frequently speaks about journalism, blogging, and online strategy. *Campaigns & Elections* magazine named him a "Rising Star" in 2008. *Politico* placed Bluey among Washington's "Top 50 Politicos." He resides in Northern Virginia with his wife and son.

John Blundell

John Blundell is the distinguished senior fellow at the Institute of Economic Affairs, where he was director general from 1993 to 2010. He is a past president of the Institute for Humane Studies, the Atlas Economic Research Foundation, and the Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation. He is author of *Waging the War of Ideas* and *Margaret Thatcher: A Portrait of the Iron Lady*. He serves on the boards of IHS and the Atlas Foundation and is writing a book on the 25 women who have done the most for liberty in the history of the United States.

Joseph Coletti

Joseph Coletti is director of health and fiscal policy studies at the John Locke Foundation. In addition to producing the biennial "Freedom Budget," he has authored reports on the state's spend-and-tax budgeting cycle, better ways to fund roads and schools, the earned-income tax credit, business incentives, tax-increment financing, government employee compensation, and an early look (in July 2005) at the infamous feasibility study behind the Randy Parton Theatre in Roanoke Rapids. In health policy, Coletti has examined Medicaid spending and offered ways to fund the state's High Risk Pool without new taxes. His writing has been in such publications as *Health Care News*, *Global Corporate Xpansion*, and the *Leland Tribune*. He has spoken at health care and tax policy conferences, civic groups across North Carolina, and appeared on radio and television, including WUNC's *The State of Things* and CNBC Asia. Coletti received a bachelor's degree

from the University of Michigan and a master's degree from the Johns Hopkins University Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). He lives in Cary, N.C., with his wife and their two children.

Andrew Coulson

Andrew J. Coulson is the director of the Cato Institute's Center for Educational Freedom. Previously, he was senior fellow in education policy at the Mackinac Center for Public Policy. He serves on the advisory council of the E.G. West Centre for Market Solutions in Education at the University of Newcastle, U.K., and has contributed to books published by the Fraser Institute and the Hoover Institution. He is author of *Market Education: The Unknown History*, the only book to address contemporary education policy questions by drawing on case studies from across the entire span of recorded human history. Coulson has written for academic journals, including the *Journal of Research in the Teaching of English*, the *Journal of School Choice*, and the *Education Policy Analysis Archives* and for newspapers such as *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, and Canada's *Globe and Mail*. He has appeared on national television and radio. Prior to studying education policy, Coulson was a computer software engineer.

Steven Davies

Steven Davies is program officer at the Institute for Humane Studies in Arlington, Va. He joined IHS from the U.K., where from 1979 onward he taught in the department of history and economic history at Manchester Metropolitan University. He worked at IHS before, in 1991 and in 1992-93, as well as teaching at many summer seminars and events over the years. He has also been a visiting scholar at the Social Philosophy and Policy Center at Bowling Green, Ohio. In September, he will be taking the position of academic director at the Institute of Economic Affairs in London.

A historian, he graduated from St. Andrews University in Scotland in 1976 and gained his Ph.D. from the same institution in 1984. He was co-editor with Nigel Ashford of *The Dictionary of Conservative and Libertarian Thought* and wrote several entries, including the general introduction, for *The Encyclopedia of Libertarianism*, edited by Ronald Hamowy. He is also the author of *Empiricism and History* and of several articles and essays on topics including the private provision of public goods (including two in the collection *The Voluntary City*, edited by Beito, Gordon, and Tabarrok) and the history of crime and criminal justice. He has recently completed a book on the history of the world since 1250 and the origins of modernity. Among his other interests are science fiction and the fortunes of Manchester City.

Leon Drolet

Leon Drolet is the founder and chair of the Michigan Taxpayers Alliance. From 2000 to 2006, Drolet served in the Michigan House of Representatives. Drolet also served as a Macomb County, Mich., county commissioner from 1999 to 2000 and from 2006 to 2008. In the 2006 election he acted as statewide chair of the successful Michigan Civil Rights Initiative, which placed a state constitutional amendment before voters that prohibits governments in Michigan from discriminating against or giving preferential treatment

to any citizen on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, or national origin. The amendment was approved by 58 percent of voters despite the fact that proponents were heavily outspent. Drolet also co-authored a state constitutional amendment that prohibited eminent domain abuse in Michigan.

In 2008, Drolet served as treasurer of Michigan Recalls and was successful at obtaining the needed signatures to force a recall election against the Speaker of the Michigan House, though court battles delayed the approval of the signatures and prevented the recall from reaching the ballot in time.

Bob Ewing

Like Chris Moody, Bob Ewing arrived in Capitol City with a couple of suitcases and no job, networking by day and sleeping on a buddy's couch by night. He came from the Foundation for Economic Education, where he worked as the Leonard E. Read research fellow. Ewing ended up convincing the Institute for Justice to give him a job and has been a part of IJ's award-winning media team for almost five years.

His writings have been published by outlets including the *Albuquerque Tribune*, *Baltimore Examiner*, BigGovernment.com, *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, *The Daily Caller*, Fee.org, and *The Freeman*. Ewing has secured news coverage in outlets nationwide, including Air America, All Things Considered, *The Atlantic*, *The Economist*, *Forbes*, *Fortune Small Business*, Hannity & Colmes, Marketplace, Marginal Revolution, National Public Radio, *National Law Journal*, *National Review*, *Reason Magazine*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *U.S. News & World Report* and *USA Today*. He lives in Arlington, Va., and enjoys spending his free time running barefoot and rock climbing in West Virginia. He can be reached at bewing@ij.org.

Richard Fink

Dr. Richard Fink is an executive vice president and member of the board of directors of Koch Industries, Inc. Additionally, Fink is chairman of the board and chief executive officer of Koch Companies Public Sector, LLC, which provides legal, government, philanthropy, and community-relations services to Koch companies. He is also a director of Georgia-Pacific and Flint Hills Resources, LLC, a refining and petrochemical company. Fink is the president of the Charles G. Koch and Claude R. Lambe Charitable Foundations and a director of the Fred C. and Mary R. Koch Foundation. Before his employment with Koch Industries, Fink was an executive vice president and an associate economics professor at George Mason University. In 1978, he and Charles Koch founded George Mason's university-based research organization, the Mercatus Center. He is a member of the Mercatus board, which he chaired until 1990. Fink also served on George Mason's board of visitors from 1997 through June 2005. In 1984, Fink co-founded Citizens for a Sound Economy Foundation and its affiliate, Citizens for a Sound Economy. In 2003, the foundation changed its name to Americans for Prosperity Foundation; Fink is a member of the board of directors. Partnering with David Koch and Art Pope, they set up Americans for Prosperity. He serves on the advisory board of the International Foundation for Research and Experimental Economics and is currently a member of the board of directors for the Institute for Humane Studies, Jack Miller Center and The Laffer Center for Global Economic Growth. He previously

served on the board of the American Prosecutors Research Institute, Bill of Rights Institute, George Mason University Foundation, Public Choice Center, and Reason Foundation. He was also a member of the Consumer Advisory Council of the Federal Reserve Board and President Ronald Reagan's Commission on Privatization. Fink earned his Ph.D. from New York University and M.A. from UCLA. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa, magna cum laude with a bachelor's in economics from Rutgers University.

Tyler Grimm

Tyler Grimm is director of research at Public Notice, an independent nonprofit dedicated to providing facts and insight in a nonpartisan way on the economy and how government policy affects Americans' financial well-being. Grimm also serves as research assistant to Stephen Moore, senior economics writer for *The Wall Street Journal* editorial page. He has been published in *The Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy* and *The Wall Street Journal*, among other places. He has also contributed to several studies and books, including Art Laffer, Stephen Moore, and Peter Tanous's *The End of Prosperity*, and Glenn Beck's number one *New York Times* bestseller *Arguing with Idiots*. Grimm received a degree in government and international politics from George Mason University, where he was a member of the policy debate team, and also spent a semester at Oxford University studying postmodernism and contemporary political thought. Grimm hails from a suburb of Pittsburgh, Pa.

James D. Gwartney

James D. Gwartney holds the Gus A. Stavros Eminent Scholar Chair at Florida State University, where he directs the Stavros Center for the Advancement of Free Enterprise and Economic Education. He is the coauthor of *Economics: Private and Public Choice*, (South-Western Press, 2008), a widely used principles of economics text that is now in its 13th edition. He is also the co-author of *Common Sense Economics: What Everyone Should Know About Wealth and Prosperity* (St. Martin's Press, 2005), a primer on economics and personal finance designed for the interested lay person. His publications have appeared in both professional journals and popular media such as *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times*. His Ph.D. in economics is from the University of Washington. His current research focuses on the measurement and determination of factors that influence cross-country differences in income levels and growth rates. In this regard, he is the senior researcher responsible for the preparation of the annual report, Economic Freedom of the World, which provides information on the institutions and policies of 140 countries. During 1999-2000, he served as chief economist of the Joint Economic Committee of the U.S. Congress. In 2004 he was the recipient of the Adam Smith Award of the Association of Private Enterprise Education for his contribution to the advancement of free-market ideals. He is the current president of the Southern Economic Association.

Scott Hamilton

Scott Hamilton is a founding partner in The Westminster Connection and a director of The European Connection, a strategic political management consultancy with associates across the European Union, China, India, Russia, and the United States. He advises boards of both multinational companies and not-for-

profit organizations on their external operating strategy and public profile. Hamilton also advises corporate management and not-for-profit organizations on public communications, including public speaking.

Prior to this, he was the first secretary-general of the International Democrat Union (IDU), the conservative, Christian-democrat and liberal international association founded in 1983 by Ronald Reagan, Jacques Chirac, Helmut Kohl and Margaret Thatcher. As well as heading the secretariat, he managed the coordination of policy between member-parties and represented the IDU at the U.N. and other international forums.

Hamilton was also director of international affairs of the British Conservative Party. As well as managing the party's external relations and briefing visiting government and party officials and journalists on British government policy, he acted as a party spokesman overseas.

Born in 1951, Hamilton is a graduate in law from Brunel University, London.

Lisa Hazlett

Lisa Hazlett is the president of Hazlett Consulting. Prior to launching her firm in 2008, Hazlett founded the Montana Policy Institute, served as director of development for the Tax Foundation in Washington, D.C., director of foundation strategy for the Institute for Humane Studies and the Mercatus Center at George Mason University, and vice president for external affairs at the Buckeye Institute in Columbus, Ohio. Hazlett holds a B.A. from the University of North Florida, an M.B.A. from Jacksonville University, and received her fundraising training at the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University.

Brian Hooks

Brian Hooks is chief operating officer at the Mercatus Center at George Mason University. He oversees strategy and all programs and operations for the organization. The Mercatus Center plays a unique role within the academy and within the world of public policy. Hooks' role is to ensure that Mercatus remains a dynamic and effective organization that advances an understanding about how markets work to improve people's lives, and applies that knowledge to solve problems in public policy. Mercatus is also a leading source of new talent for the academy and public policy organizations. Mercatus graduate student programs are at the heart of what Mercatus does, and Hooks works to ensure that Mercatus faculty and staff have the tools they need so these programs continue to provide more and more students with a world-class education in the theory and practice of market-based economics. Mercatus's work is made possible by thousands of committed individuals, foundations, and businesses. As COO, Hooks is responsible for maintaining the trust that Mercatus contributors put into the organization and seeing that Mercatus is always a good steward of these investments. Prior to serving in this role, Hooks was director of the Global Prosperity Initiative, Social Change Project, and Enterprise Africa at Mercatus, three programs he helped to develop. These programs focus on building an academic network to apply a uniquely "Mercatus School" of social science to problems of economic development and social progress both in the United States and overseas. They then work with policymakers in executive agencies and Congress to apply the ideas developed at Mercatus to improve U.S.

policy. A graduate of the University of Michigan, Hooks lives in Washington, D.C., with his wife, Christine.

Claire Kittle

Claire Kittle is the executive director of Talent Market, an organization that provides consulting and executive recruiting services for nonprofits in Washington, D.C., and across the country. Kittle has a decade of experience in the talent development field. She operated her own headhunting firm in Atlanta before transitioning into a career in the nonprofit sector. After moving to Washington, D.C., she joined the Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation, where she served as the program officer for leadership and talent development. While at Koch, Kittle managed the hiring process for the Foundation and launched and managed two talent programs: the Koch Associate Program and the Koch Internship Program. After her time at Koch and before launching Talent Market, Kittle was the vice president and director of research at the Buckeye Institute, a state-based think tank in Ohio. Kittle currently serves on the board of TNReport.com, an independent, not-for-profit news organization in Tennessee. Kittle earned her undergraduate degree from the University of Notre Dame and a master's in public policy from Georgetown University.

Joseph Lehman

Joseph G. Lehman is president of the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, an independent, nonprofit research and educational institute based in Michigan. The Mackinac Center is the largest of more than 50 affiliated think tanks that focus primarily on state economic policy.

Previously, Lehman served as vice president for communications at the Cato Institute in Washington, then as Mackinac's executive vice president before becoming its president in 2008.

Through the Mackinac Center's biannual Leadership Conference, he has trained more than 600 think tank executives from 47 states and 47 countries in strategic planning, communications, and fundraising. He is a director of the Chicago-based Sam Adams Alliance, the Legislative Education Action Drive Foundation, which studies school choice, and USA Votes, a firm that provides public access to legislative data.

Jack McHugh

Jack McHugh is the Mackinac Center for Public Policy's senior legislative analyst and editor of MichiganVotes.org, a website that provides searchable, sortable descriptions of every vote by every member of the state legislature. Since the site was launched in 2001, McHugh has created concise, plain-English descriptions of some 15,000 bills; 11,000 roll call votes; 9,000 amendments; and 2,700 new laws. He entered the Michigan political and public policy scene in 1994, spending six years as a legislative chief of staff in the House of Representatives. Jack McHugh has a bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan and a master's degree in political science from Central Michigan University. His essays on public policy issues frequently appear in Michigan's leading newspapers, and he is also the co-author of a book on Midwest mountain bike trails.

Matt Mitchell

Matt Mitchell is a research fellow at the Mercatus Center at George Mason University, where he researches and writes about economics and policy matters. He earned his Ph.D. and his M.A. in economics from George Mason University and earned degrees in economics and political science from Arizona State University. Mitchell's research focuses on government spending and budgets, especially at the state and local level.

Isaac M. Morehouse

Isaac M. Morehouse is policy programs director at the Institute for Humane Studies. Morehouse previously worked at the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, where he created and directed Students for a Free Economy.

Prior to working at the Center, Morehouse served as a Michigan House legislative aide for three years, finishing his time at the House as chief of staff for a state representative. Morehouse has also helped run a small business involving telecommunications hardware and cable installation.

Morehouse's nonprofit work includes co-founding an organization that trains students for humanitarian trips overseas and serving as president of the Kalamazoo County Taxpayers Association. He holds a master's degree in economics from the University of Detroit Mercy, and he received his bachelor's degree in political science from Western Michigan University.

Morehouse lives in Falls Church, Va., with his wife and kids.

Eric O'Keefe

Eric O'Keefe is chairman and CEO of the Sam Adams Alliance. Under his leadership, the Sam Adams Alliance (SAM) has established some of the most active and respected organizations in the freedom movement, including American Majority and the Franklin Center. SAM has also launched Judgepedia, Ballotpedia, and Sunshine Review, Wikipedia-style websites that have had more than 19 million page views for their 128,000 pages of politically important information. He serves on the board of directors of the Institute for Humane Studies, the Center for Competitive Politics, the Citizens in Charge Foundation, and Wisconsin Club for Growth. He authored the book *Who Rules America*, which won praise from Milton Friedman, and hosts a new podcast series, Engaging Democracy. When not promoting political reform, O'Keefe is a private investor residing in rural Wisconsin with his wife, Leslie Graves.

Carl Oberg

Carl Oberg is the executive director of the Foundation for Economic Education (FEE), one of the oldest free-market organizations in the United States. Oberg spent over a decade in government working on international trade and defense policy before realizing his passion for liberty. Oberg is a graduate of the year-long Koch Associate Program and a former policy associate at Americans for Prosperity. He holds a master's degree in economics from George Mason University.

Tom Palmer

Dr. Tom G. Palmer is the Atlas Economic Research Foundation's vice president for international programs and general director of the Atlas Global Initiative for Free Trade, Peace, and Prosperity. Previously, he was vice president for international programs at the Cato Institute and director of the Center for Promotion of Human Rights. He is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute and director of Cato University, the Institute's educational arm. He was an H.B. Earhart Fellow at Hertford College, Oxford University, and a vice president of the Institute for Humane Studies at George Mason University. He frequently lectures around the world on political science, the economics of institutions, public choice, the history of liberty, and the moral, legal, and historical foundations of individual rights. He is the author of *Realizing Freedom: The Theory, History, and Practice of Liberty*, has contributed essays to books published by Princeton University Press, Routledge, Cambridge University Press, and other publishers, and has published articles and reviews on politics and morality in scholarly journals such as the *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*, *Ethics*, *Critical Review*, and *Constitutional Political Economy*, as well as in publications such as *Slate*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Die Welt*, and *The Spectator* of London. He received his B.A. in liberal arts from St. Johns College in Annapolis, Md., his M.A. in philosophy from The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., and his doctorate in politics from Oxford University.

Lawrence W. Reed

Lawrence W. Reed is president of the Foundation for Economic Education and the founder and president emeritus of the Mackinac Center for Public Policy. Reed holds a B.A. in economics from Grove City College (1975), an M.A. in history from Slippery Rock State University (1978), and was awarded an honorary Doctor of Public Administration from Central Michigan University. He taught economics at Northwood University in Midland, Mich., from 1977 to 1984 and chaired the department of economics from 1982 to 1984. There he founded the annual, highly-acclaimed "Freedom Seminar." In 1982, he was a major party candidate in the general election for the U.S. House of Representatives from Michigan's 4th district. Reed has traveled to 69 countries on six continents and published over a thousand articles in his lifelong effort to spread the ideas of freedom.

Lynn Scarlett

Lynn Scarlett, former deputy secretary and chief operating officer of the U.S. Department of the Interior, is a visiting scholar at Resources for the Future in Washington, D.C., and an environmental advisor working on climate change adaptation, ecosystem services, water, landscape-scale conservation, and science and decision-making. In 2009, she served as a visiting lecturer on climate change at the University of California Bren School of Environmental Science and Management and is co-teaching a course on climate change at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She is a fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration.

From 2005 to January 2009, she served as deputy secretary and chief operating officer of the U.S. Department of the Interior, a post she took on after four years as the Department's assistant secretary

for Policy, Management and Budget. She served as acting secretary of the Department for two months in 2006. Scarlett chaired the Department's Climate Change Task Force and now serves on the national Commission on Climate and Tropical Forests. Scarlett is author of numerous publications on incentive-based environmental policies. Her most recent publication, "Green, Clean, and Dollar Smart," on urban greening, was published in February 2010 by the Environmental Defense Fund. Scarlett serves on the board of the American Hiking Society, the Continental Divide Trail Alliance, and RESOLVE (a nonprofit environmental dispute-resolution organization), and is a trustee emeritus of the Udall Foundation. She received her B.A. and M.A. in political science from the University of California, Santa Barbara, where she also completed her Ph.D. coursework and exams in political science and political economy. She is an avid hiker, canoe enthusiast, and birder.

Fred Smith

Fred Smith is president and founder of the Competitive Enterprise Institute, a classical liberal public policy group now in its 26th year. CEI aims to make good policy good politics by combining analysis and advocacy. As an activist group, CEI engages in litigation and outreach, translating intellectual ammunition into accessible products. Smith is a frequent guest on national TV and radio programs, as well as a prolific writer. He addresses complex policy issues ranging from the environment to corporate governance. As a former policy analyst with the Environmental Protection Agency, Smith can attest to the staggering costs of government regulation.

Jason Stverak

Jason Stverak is the president of the Franklin Center for Government and Public Integrity. An expert in nonprofit journalism, Stverak works to promote social welfare and civil betterment by leading initiatives that advance investigative journalism. His support of nonprofit journalism has played a vital role in exposing corruption in our elected officials and encouraging transparency in government. Through his leadership, the Franklin Center has continued to grow and attract talented journalists. Prior to working with the Franklin Center, he was regional field director for the Sam Adams Alliance, where he worked with state groups and associations committed to promoting free-market policies. Stverak also served as North Dakota executive director for the Rudy Giuliani Presidential Committee and spent six years as the executive director of the North Dakota Republican Party. Stverak is a lifetime member of the association of Investigative Reporters and Editors (IRE). A native of Rapid City, S.D., he received his B.A. in foreign service and Slavic studies from Baylor University in 1996 with a minor in economics.

Chad Thevenot

Chad Thevenot has served as the chief operating officer of the Institute for Humane Studies since October 2004. He is an alumnus of IHS's summer seminar program and was awarded a Humane Studies Fellowship from IHS in 2001 and 2002 while earning a master's degree in communications, culture, and technology from Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. In December 1991, he earned a bachelor's degree in business management from the University of Texas, Austin.

Prior to working with IHS, Thevenot served as the director of grants and outreach for the Marijuana Policy Project (MPP) in Washington, D.C., where he directed the nation's largest marijuana policy reform grant-giving program.

Jameson Taylor

Jameson Taylor is director of research for the South Carolina Policy Council, where his work focuses on constitutional restructuring and free-market reform. Prior to joining the Policy Council, Taylor was director of policy and research at the J.W.P. Civitas Institute. Taylor's work has appeared in a variety of magazines and journals, including *Citizen*, *Clements' International Report*, *Faith & Reason*, and *The Review of Metaphysics*. Taylor holds an A.B. in government from Bowdoin College and a Ph.D. in politics from the University of Dallas, where he wrote his dissertation on Karol Wojtyla's *The Acting Person*. Being an astute observer of political affairs, he has taken up writing a novel on the end times. Contact him at jamesontaylor.com.

Tony Woodlief

Tony Woodlief is vice president for academic programs at the Market-Based Management Institute. Before joining the Institute, Woodlief was president of the Mercatus Center at George Mason University, an organization focused on economic research, education, and outreach. Previously, Woodlief was vice president for education projects at the Charles G. Koch Charitable Foundation, where he worked with university research centers focused on economics, entrepreneurship, and social change, as well as other nonprofits focusing on these areas. Woodlief also spent several years as a consultant and facilitator with the Market-Based Management Team of Koch Industries, where he worked with businesses to improve performance and provided training to employees on topics like economics, decision-making, and personal development. His articles have appeared in *The Wall Street Journal* and *The London Times*. He has a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Michigan.



The Institute for Humane Studies, founded in 1961, is a unique organization that assists undergraduate and graduate students who have a special interest in individual liberty. Each year IHS awards more than \$600,000 in scholarships and sponsors the attendance of hundreds of students at its summer seminars. Through these and many other programs for students, the Institute promotes the study of liberty across a broad range of disciplines, encouraging understanding, open inquiry, rigorous scholarship, and creative problem-solving.

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