

HIGH POINT UNIVERSITY

# The HPU Democracy USA Project

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A Proposal

1/9/2012

A student-centered Project that will inform and engage HPU students through an in-depth look at the 2012 elections. Using an interdisciplinary and experiential method, the Project will distinguish HPU as a University committed to holistic education.



## Why an Inter-disciplinary Project?

Students do not see the same disciplinary lines faculty do – they are unencumbered by the silos in which faculty often work.

Students who want to learn about politics, the 2012 elections, or civic responsibility already know they have to engage a lot of different issues and perspectives. They are not looking for a class that only talks about a little piece of the puzzle. They want to know about the influence of religion on the elections, the effects of media coverage, the history of elections, the role of polling, how various political theories will drive the country, and more...

To enhance the student learning experience, faculty must engage the questions students bring and not simply the areas of specialty faculty have developed. HPU D-USA will bring students and faculty from across the University together so students can get a broad perspective on the 2012 elections, even as they delve deep into a particular aspect of it.

## The HPU Democracy USA Project

High Point University students demand an education that prepares them to be active leaders in their fields and communities. They do not just want to watch social and political events unfold on TV – they want to understand and influence those events.

The HPU Democracy USA Project is an interdisciplinary exercise that engages students and faculty in a collaborative and experiential learning project. It places student learning about the democratic process in the United States at the center of attention and uses the 2012 elections as a unique case study through which students can gain a broader understanding of electoral politics, civic responsibility, voting rights, and other issues in American democracy.

The Project builds on the strengths of the Nido R. Qubein School of Communications and the departments of political science, philosophy, history, anthropology, sociology, and religion. Students from all of the areas will dig deep into their subjects, and then be challenged to share their expertise with students studying other aspects of American democracy. And throughout the process, Communication students will document the exchanges between students, practice reporting on politics, and use their fellow students as experts in the creation of education modules, news shows, and a reality documentary.

The HPU D-USA Project will bring together coursework, interdisciplinary colloquium, co-curricular election events, travel to the conventions, survey research projects, and service learning experiences to provide HPU students with an extraordinary education in the realities of the American democratic process.

# HPU Democracy USA

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## Abstract

The HPU Democracy USA Project will create an interdisciplinary and experiential model for enriching student learning that uses a particular social or political issue as the lure that attracts the collaboration of students and faculty across disciplines and programs. The particular issue at stake in this proposal is the 2012 elections, including its federal, state, and local manifestations. The project includes five key components:

- (1) Teaching up to nine courses across eight different majors that all deal with a different aspect of the 2012 elections. Three of the courses will be designated as Service Learning courses.
- (2) Coordinating three colloquium that pull together the election courses and election-based research to allow students and faculty to share their expertise with each other.
- (3) Organizing several co-curricular activities that draw on the expertise of students and faculty in the election courses and invite the whole campus community to get involved.
- (4) Traveling with students on experiential learning trips to the Democratic and Republican National Conventions.
- (5) Conducting election-based research in conjunction with the HPU Survey Research Center and History Department.

The Project uses the inherently interdisciplinary issue of the 2012 elections to drive students and faculty to think across disciplines. It requires Communications and Arts & Sciences faculty to partner for the benefit of the students. It draws on the expertise of the Service Learning Program, Media Fellows, and the Survey Research Center, and it allows the faculty who are working together to model for the students how we can approach complex problems from multiple perspectives to increase overall understanding.

## Benefits of the Project

The Project offers a number of tangible benefits to HPU and our students:

- (1) **Model for future projects:** It sets up a model for how to do interdisciplinary work outside of HPU's existing Minor structure. And the success of the Project will hopefully encourage more faculty to develop similar problem-centered interdisciplinary projects. For instance, a group of faculty could develop a similar interdisciplinary and experiential program around the issue of poverty in Appalachia or our responses to a natural disaster.
- (2) **Increase HPU's academic visibility:** By partnering with Fox News to cover the Conventions and elections, the Project will showcase the academic abilities of HPU students. The Communication students' products will receive substantive air time, showing the quality of their work. And the Project Website will demonstrate our students' understanding of and engagement in US democracy.
- (3) **Showcase HPU's commitment to forming democratic citizens:** The students involved in service learning will show the local community HPU's commitment to furthering democracy locally. The Reality Show, digital shorts, and scholarly publications that may result from the Project will demonstrate our commitment on a national and international level.
- (4) **Further HPU's commitment to holistic education:** By utilizing a service learning pedagogy, many of the courses will focus on developing citizenship and social responsibility as part of their learning objectives. All of the election courses have an experiential component. And the whole project rejects the silo-based traditional form of disciplinary education in favor of a dynamic, experiential, and interdisciplinary education that better prepares students for life in a rapidly changing global environment.
- (5) **Tangible Educational Products:** The Communication students, in partnership with students in other disciplines, will produce a Reality Show comprised of 6-8 half hour episodes, election coverage in partnership with Fox News, animated videos on the history of elections, and a chair, book, and quilt that include the signatures of all the notable people the students meet at the Conventions. The chair and quilt will be auctioned at the end of the project to raise money for student scholarships. All students will also contribute to a central Project Website that will inform college students across the nation about the elections.
- (6) **Research Data:** The qualitative and quantitative research done by the Survey Research Center and the History Department will involve almost 100 students and be deeply interdisciplinary. It will fund further faculty and student research, be a permanent part of the Survey Research Center's archive of data, receive media attention, and build the University's research capacity and profile.
- (7) **Publishable Research:** The creation of this pedagogical model will open possibilities for faculty research, including the possible creation of a book that highlights the best practices for teaching about the elections from the different disciplinary perspectives involved in the Project.

## What Need Does HPU D-USA Address?

The Project addresses four sets of challenges that must be answered.

The first challenge is the fragmentation of liberal arts education into silos of disciplinary specific methods and questions. This is not a trend unique to HPU. As universities like HPU grow, the level of specialization within disciplines tends to increase as they hire more specialized faculty who teach a wider range of specialized courses. The increased specialization is a great benefit to students who want to push deep into a particular subject, but it must be accompanied by a similar increase in the ability of students and faculty to see across disciplines. The challenges students face after college do not fall neatly into particular disciplines, and effective leaders must be able to take the deep knowledge of a number of disciplines and use it in problem-solving. HPU has a unique opportunity amidst its rapid growth to develop some models for interdisciplinary collaboration as its disciplines are increasing their levels of specialization. If HPU can build a faculty that researches deeply in their specializations and yet also teaches in collaboration with faculty across disciplines, then it will be better suited to offer students the kind of education that will prepare them to answer the complex challenges the globalized world presents.

Right now most interdisciplinary work at HPU goes on within established minors, like Women's Studies or Environmental Studies, or through individual efforts. The Project would offer a model for a wider range of problem-based interdisciplinary projects. One could imagine interdisciplinary projects that focus on problems like natural disasters, hunger or poverty, the American Dream, immigration, and so on. Also on a more practical level, the Project increases the level of cooperation across disciplines so faculty do not duplicate courses, restrict their courses to a small pool of students, cherry-pick students from other disciplines, or under-utilize the expertise of faculty across the disciplines.

The second need the Project addresses is for more rigorous courses that further the University's commitment to experiential learning. It is not enough to tell students they need to be good citizens. It is not enough to have them read about the democracy of Ancient Greece. Students also need to experience the challenges real democracies face.

Every course in the project will include experiential components. Three of the courses are designated Service Learning courses, and they require students to do voter registration and/or work on political campaigns. All of the courses will require experiential elements like attending campaign rallies, going to a National Convention, participating in debates about candidates or issues, working with the Communication students on educational videos, and helping with the election related co-curricular activities that serve the larger HPU community.

The third challenge the Project addresses is the lack of participation in and understanding of democratic citizenship among college age students. The college age volunteer rates are low compared to other generations, and there is a need to develop in college age students the skills and habits of good citizens. Students need to get in the habit of educating themselves before an election, being savvy about the media outlets they use, and actually going to the voting booth on Election Day.

The whole Project intends to teach and model for students healthy habits of democratic citizenship. Students will volunteer with voter registration groups, learn what it takes to run a campaign by working on a campaign, see what goes into a media production about the election by being there when it happens, and more.

Finally, as HPU is raising its reputation as a University that integrates high quality, experiential teaching with rigorous research, the Program offers a signature example of research-based experiential education. The research that the students in each course conduct will be shared during the interdisciplinary colloquiums, and it will offer a foundation for small group conversations and student reflections. Furthermore, the qualitative and quantitative data collected by students in the associated methods courses, the Survey Research Center, and the Oral History Project will be shared with the students in all the courses as well as the wider University community.

The Program's website will showcase the best and most relevant research in order to inform college students in North Carolina, specifically, about the elections. It is hoped that some of the research will make it onto the local Fox News broadcasts and website. The Program will offer a timely and potent demonstration of HPU's research capacity.

## The Five Core Components of HPU D-USA

### 1. The Courses

The courses are the cornerstone of the Program's interdisciplinary and experiential learning experience. The possible nine courses come from eight distinct disciplinary perspectives and offer a range of options to students interested in studying the elections. Three of the courses are Service Learning courses. Though we cannot at this time guarantee all of the courses will be taught because of administrative demands and schedules, the following are the possible courses that could be taught...

The courses that already have the support of their department chairs include:

- (1) REL 3028 SL "Religion in America" taught by Dr. Joe Blosser. The course will study the shape of religion in America by looking specifically to its political implications. Given the religiously charged nature of recent presidential elections, the course will include sections on the politics of liberal Protestantism (Obama's religious tradition), evangelical Christianity, and Mormonism (Mitt Romney's religious tradition). The course will also look at Supreme Court cases that deal with religious issues and lay out a range of religious approaches to politics. Students will be required to attend a number of political events and take note of the way religion is used during them. They will also be engaged in voter registration.
- (2) COM 4443 "Government and Political Affairs Reporting" taught by Carol Davis. Concentrated analysis and reporting in special fields, including coverage of government, public policy issues as well as business, labor, arts and sciences.
- (3) PSC 3332 SL "Campaigns and Elections" taught by Martin Kifer. This course is a practical and service-oriented introduction to US elections that takes students behind the scenes of historic and on-going political campaigns and invites them to explore the role of parties, nonpartisan organizations and citizens in supporting candidates and organizing elections. Students will consider the motivations politicians and other citizens have for participating in politics, the complex relationships between political parties and the governments in which they seek to place their candidates and the ethical challenges of running for public office. They will work with actual campaigns or in election-related organizations to observe how professional politicians build and manage campaign organizations, relate to citizens within and outside their electoral coalitions, develop messages and strategies and promote their candidacies using television and new media.
- (4) IDS 2255/PSC 2055/COM 2267 "Survey Research Center Practicum" taught by Martin Kifer and Sadie Leder. This course will serve as an interdisciplinary introduction to survey research methodology. The primary goal will be to provide students with hands-on experience conducting phone-based surveys as interviewers in High Point University's Survey Research Center. Students will receive training in research ethics and interviewing



skills, as well as obtain experience designing, collecting, and analyzing surveys.

- (5) ANT 3120 “Ethnographic Studies” taught by Joshua Fisher. Good ethnographers produce fine-grained knowledge of sociocultural phenomena through direct observation and experience in the field. Great ethnographers are additionally able to remain conscientious of the big picture, to amplify the importance of fine-grained analysis while remaining focused on what is compelling, relevant to a broader world of knowledge and to current events. In this course, we seek to develop your skills in doing great ethnography by investigating the complexly interwoven relationships between different epistemologies of knowledge, theories, methods, codes of ethics, and media of communication as well as the broader political, social, cultural, and historical contexts in which ethnographic knowledge production is done. We will do so, moreover, by studying the cultural issues at stake in national and local elections.

The class is structured in two parallel components. In the first, we will survey different kinds of ethnographies that identify cultural issues at stake in a elections – democracy, liberty, equality, citizenship, etc. – and that reflect on different methodological approaches to uncovering that information. The second will teach you about doing ethnography through direct experience. You will refine your skills as an ethnographic/qualitative research by working with a fellow group of students to design and conduct an ethnographic research project having to do with an electoral topic of your choosing. You will practice high-quality ethnographic interviews, focus group interviews, participant observation, oral histories, and other staples of ethnographic inquiry. All the while, the challenging task will be to maintain focus on the “big picture” of the context and import of your inquiry.

- (6) HST 3902 “A Lens on History: Five Presidential Elections that Changed American Politics” taught by Paul Ringel. The students will study five presidential elections that changed American politics: 1800, 1828, 1896, 1912, and 1960. Spending three weeks on each election will give the students a more intensive academic experience that will leave them well prepared to discuss the “long term” causes of many of the issues in the current election, including the role of media in shaping presidential elections, the impact of religion on presidential politics, and the appeal of political “insiders” and “outsiders” in presidential elections. Students will produce research papers that they will be able to present at on- and off-campus election related events, and they will team with peers in the Communications School to produce short animated films on historic presidential elections that we hope to screen for a variety of local and internet audiences.
- (7) PHL/PSC 3009 SL “Political Philosophy” taught by Amy MacArthur. This course is a critical examination of the main issues with which political philosophers have been concerned from Plato to the present day. We will begin the course with a topical examination of the most important of these issues, beginning with a defense of political philosophy, then considering the problem of political authority, the debate over the best form of government,

the role of the state in ensuring freedom and justice, and the more contemporary concerns of the state regarding multiculturalism and global justice. After this, we will examine the views of the major political theorists whose ideas have shaped the course of political philosophy throughout history. Included among these theorists are Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Marx and Engels, Mill, Wollstonecraft, Okin, and Rawls and Nozick. Students will conduct voter registration and attend election-related events to see different political philosophies in practice.

Other possible courses include:

- (8) SOC/PSC 2018 “Research Methods in Political Science and Sociology” taught by Paul Namaste. Research in the social sciences has transformed public policy in recent decades, but how can we be confident that this research is yielding valid results rather than just the biased preferences of researchers? This course answers this question by surveying the primary techniques that political scientists and sociologists use to describe and explain individual, group, and national behaviors with a particular focus on the 2012 elections. Course topics will include ethical considerations, project design, hypothesis development and testing, and the reporting of results. The methodologies investigated will include practices such as interviewing and observation, focus groups, survey research, content analysis, and various types of statistical analysis. Students will gain hands-on research experience in exercises and small projects centered around the 2012 elections.
- (9) PSC 2310 “American Politics” taught by TBA. This course surveys the origins, institutions, and culture of the U.S. political system. What kind of democracy did the nation’s founders intend to build? How and why had American democracy changed over time? How can everyday people influence government? Do media and pop culture help or hinder good governance? How well do the nation’s political institutions serve the common good? Do state and local governments advance or inhibit policy innovation? Students will explore these and other enduring questions in order to reach their own conclusions about American democracy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

## 2. Colloquia

All of the courses will gather for three colloquium so they can share their collective knowledge. The purposes of the colloquium are to:

- (1) Showcase the knowledge of students and faculty in different disciplines
- (2) Offer students a chance to be experts in their particular areas
- (3) Expose students to different points of view
- (4) Demonstrate the value of interdisciplinary learning
- (5) Develop a broader understanding of the elections

All three colloquium will follow the same general model. They will take place in the evening in a two-and-a-half hour block of time. The first hour will include presentations by students and faculty from the different courses, then a faculty

member will offer a 30 minute mini-presentation, and the last hour will involve small groups of students from the different courses looking at particular problems related to the elections.

The first colloquium will occur in early October. It will showcase presentations by the students in the Philosophy, Religion, and History courses in order to give the other students a stronger background on the use of religion in politics, the candidates' political philosophies, and the history elections. The students will look at the problem of free speech and the use of religious language in campaigns during the last hour of the colloquium.

The second colloquium will be held just following the elections in early November. It will include presentations by students in the Political Science and methods courses, who will share their survey data, ethnographic studies, and exit polling results. During the last hour of the colloquium, the students will consider the effects on US democracy of the correlations found between demographic groups and the way they vote.

The third colloquium will occur at the beginning of December. It will include presentations by the Communication students who will showcase the videos and parts of the Reality Show they produced. They will also reflect on the biases of the media and the challenges of political reporting. The problem the students will address during the last hour is the current influence of the media on campaigns and elections as well as the media's social responsibility.

As students give presentations to the 150+ students and faculty in attendance, they will hone their ability to present important information to large groups. And as the students facilitate small group discussions during the last hour of the colloquium, they will learn to lead group discussions on difficult topics. The colloquium will push students to think broadly about the elections even as their courses challenge them to think deeply within a particular disciplinary perspective.

Prof. Joe Blosser will coordinate the Colloquium.

### **3. Co-curricular Election Activities**

In cooperation with the Political Science Department, the Politics Club, the Campus Republicans, the Debate Team, and the Campus Democrats, the HPU D-USA Project will coordinate several election related co-curricular activities. The activities will provide a way for the students and faculty who are part of the Project to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with the rest of the University. There are two main types of co-curriculars the Project seeks to support: viewing parties and panel discussions.

The Extraordinary Cinema has been reserved to host viewing parties for the Opening and Closing nights of the Republican and Democratic National Conventions, the Presidential and Vice-Presidential Debates, and Election night. In addition, the Project also hopes to obtain space in The Point Sports Grill so it can have a more interactive atmosphere for the events. The Point would also allow Communications

students, and others, to see the differences in the way different networks cover the elections by airing the different networks on different TVs.

Following one of the debates and during Election Night, the Project will host panel discussions. The panels will be composed of faculty and students participating in the Project. The panels will occur at The Point and offer a vibrant and interactive learning opportunity. They will allow the students who watch the election coverage to hear expert opinions about it and voice their own reflections.

The Project offers a way to bring together the many groups on campus who have an interest in the elections, so we can join efforts instead of duplicating or overlapping each other's events.

Prof. Mark Setzler will direct this portion of the Program.

#### **4. The National Conventions**

A key experiential aspect of the Project will be the chance for many students to attend a National Convention. While at the Conventions, the students will participate in different experiential learning projects, depending on their disciplines. For example, Philosophy, Religion, and History students who take a day trip to the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte will be placed in interview teams. Their tasks will be to interview Convention participants, protesters, and residents about the elections. The data gathered from the interviews will help inform the blogs, tweets, and news coverage that they and the Communications students will produce during the Conventions.

Access to the Conventions has been obtained for the Communications students enrolled in COM 3000 and the Media Fellows who will be embedded with our local Fox News network (WGHP) and will work under real conditions. They will be expected to work alongside professional news staff and their work will be featured on the WGHP and HPU websites. They will gather information for blogs and other reports that present their unique perspective as college students. Prior to attending the Conventions, the students will spend time at WGHP working with Fox personnel, and the WGHP Assistant News Director and Director of Web Strategy will come to HPU to speak to the students.

The Republican National Convention will occur from August 27-30<sup>th</sup> 2012 in Tampa, FL. Given the location of the Convention, the Project would like to offer 47 students and 5 adults the opportunity to attend. The group of 52 would travel by HPU bus to the convention, stay for four full days, and then return.

The Democratic National Convention will occur during the week of September 3<sup>rd</sup> in Charlotte, NC. The close proximity of the Convention means that we will be able to bus 52 people down each morning and back each night, saving a considerable sum of money on housing. It will also allow for more students in the Program to spend at least one day at the Convention, conducting interviews or working with the Fox News team. There is also the possibility that the HPU Ice Cream Truck might make an appearance to help highlight the presence of HPU students at the Convention.

Profs. Carol Davis and Charisse McGhee-Lazarou will direct this portion of the Program.

## 5. Election-Based Research

The Program includes a heavy research component that will help all HPU students and others in our community better understand the elections. In addition to the research students conduct in their individual courses, the Program desires to promote three specific research initiatives: a national poll, an Interactive Voice Response survey in North Carolina, and an oral history project. The research initiatives will involve almost 100 HPU students. Each of the initiatives will also provide a different kind of vital data about the election, and all data will become part of the Survey Research Center's archive, so it can be used for faculty and student research for years to come. The research initiatives will build HPU's capacity to do high-quality quantitative and qualitative research, and they will produce results that can be shared with the wider community to promote HPU's public research profile.

### A. National poll

We would administer a nation-wide poll of approximately 1000 respondents. It would include questions pertaining to the 2012 elections selected by the instructors and students involved in the Project's courses. Questions could include, reasons people voted the way they did, how they feel about the future of the country, how their religion affects their vote, etc. The responses to the questions could be used by instructors to place their own courses in a national context and by students in their research papers and projects.

This presents an opportunity for further interdisciplinary collaboration on research of a national scope. It would be the first national poll fielded by the Survey Research Center at High Point University, and it would present a significant opportunity for HPU to gain national recognition. The High Point University Survey Research Center emphasizes basic elements in its mission: student focus, public service, and provision of resources for faculty. This portion of the project would contribute to all parts of that mission. Students enrolled in academic courses such as the Survey Research Center's practicum as well as paid interviewers would participate in data collection.

The SRC has long emphasized its role in providing technical and practical training in survey research to its interviewers. In this case, student interviewers would have an unprecedented role in collecting nationally representative data that will be reported publically and analyzed by HPU faculty. Briefings for student interviewers would emphasize the distinctive methodological aspects of the particular survey, the media attention generated by the survey, and the professional opportunities available for people who are proficient in this type of survey research. For students enrolled in other courses, this also provides an

unprecedented opportunity to review findings and data collected during their course of study that is directly relevant to the course subject.

#### B. Interactive Voice Response (IVR/robopolls)

In order to gauge public response to the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, we would like to field two Interactive Voice Response polls focused on North Carolinians' reactions to the Convention and their assessments of the political parties and candidates for president. This is a function that might otherwise be fulfilled by live callers through the High Point University Survey Research Center, but the DNC's proximity to the beginning of the school year would make training and administration of the survey difficult. In this case, the Survey Research Center staff would work with the other faculty associated with the HPU D-USA Program and the contractor to ensure that the surveys reflected the goals of the group.

The two IVR surveys would present an opportunity for instructors in the Program to field questions relevant to their particular classes and test the impact of the Convention on the variables they find interesting. For example, classes focused on media could ask about respondent attention to media stories about the DNC and political science courses could focus on the impact on the presidential and other races represented by the DNC. This presents another opportunity for interdisciplinary research that will serve a pedagogical function for HPU students, but also help build the national profile of HPU as a liberal arts college involved in high impact, research-based, experiential and service learning.

Interactive Voice Response (IVR) polls use a computer voice to ask respondents questions. Respondents push buttons on their phone to indicate their choices. IVR generally has lower response rates than live interviewer surveys, but it will be adequate for the task of registering opinions of North Carolinians during this time period. Nationally prominent university survey research centers have in fact used IVR technology for the surveys they publicize and the NC partisan research organizations Civitas (Republican/conservative) and Public Policy Polling (Democrat/progressive) use this technology for polls that receive national attention.

#### C. Oral History Project

The Department of History and the Survey Research Center have established an Oral History Project aimed at preserving the history of our community and making that history accessible to students, community members and scholars. As part of the project, the History Department and Survey Research Center request funds to train interviewers and conduct oral history interviews with local political activists involved with the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte and the Republican National Convention in Tampa, Florida. Though most of the courses and research involved in the HPU D-USA Program deal with traditional politics, the Oral History Project focuses on interviewing activists in order to gain a necessary grassroots perspective on US democracy.

Student interviewers with the assistance of History Department faculty and Survey Research Center staff would:

- (1) identify activists to interview

- (2) perform research on the Conventions and the activists themselves in preparation for each interview
- (3) write relevant interview questions
- (4) conduct the oral history interviews
- (5) archive the necessary materials with the Oral History Project
- (6) complete any required follow up with the interviewees

The opportunity to develop trained oral history interviewers will also allow the History Department and Survey Research Center to pursue other oral history projects after the elections are over.

Profs. Martin Kifer, Sadie Leder, and Paul Ringel will direct this portion of the Program.

## The School of Communication's Deliverables

The COM 3000 course and the Media Fellows will in many ways act as a hub for pulling together the different disciplinary perspectives on the elections. The Communication students will be continually drawing on the knowledge of students in the other courses and pushing those students to express their ideas clearly. Though students in the other courses may be blogging, tweeting, writing on Facebook, and contributing to the HPU D-USA Website, the Communication students will be tasked with creating the most robust media products for the Project.

### The Reality TV Show

The Reality TV show will be produced by placing students in rigorous discussions after they have read faculty supplied material and spent some time in an experiential environment. The goal is to get students to reflect about the subject and reinforce or change their opinions. Taping will begin in January 2012 for all student participants. We expect to tape 8 students at a time and do 2 tapings a month through May 2012. We will then tape again while at the Conventions and on Election Day. We expect to produce 8 half hour episodes of this program.

The half hour program will be produced in 3-4 segments. Each discipline will have a section. There may be a 4<sup>th</sup> segment, depending upon how Communication decides to divide its subject matter. The topic of discussion for the Reality Show will be the same throughout the Project and will be picked by the discipline. For instance, the Communication topic is focused on the American Dream. Each group of 8 students will be composed of 2-4 Communication students, 2 discipline-specific students (depending upon whether it is Political Science or Religion), 1 gender studies/race & ethnicity/popular culture student, 1 Communication graduate student, 1 history student, 1 community activist/politician/advisor/community member, and a faculty member. All discussion will be guided by a faculty member as the producer of the segment.

Our goal is to give the students a rich experience to draw on to encourage vigorous discussion. As an example, a Communication discussion on the American Dream could be based on a reading supplied by a faculty member and a student field trip to the home of a family that is facing foreclosure and talking with the family to understand their circumstances. Each student would be interviewed prior to the 'experience'. The 'experience' and vigorous discussion would be taped. Then each student would be interviewed after the 'experience' to give their reflections and to talk about how/if their outlook has changed and why. In this instance a family member could be included in the 8-person taping session which happens at the family member's home. This process will be repeated at the Conventions with the Convention activities, protests, and so on as the 'experience'. The same holds true for Election Night in November 2012.



As far as distribution goes, the episodes are expected to air in the following markets: United Kingdom (11 million homes, online platform with 200 million unique users) and TV stations in the U.S. (i.e., Detroit, Houston, Chicago, Portland, Virginia Beach, Montana, Louisiana, Florida with more markets to come). There is a possibility that the Reality Show will get an air slot on MTV-U and it will seek time on Fox in High Point and Carolina 14.

### **Working with Fox for the Elections**

Students will be embedded with Fox News (WGHP) during the Conventions and on Election Night. The students will gather information for blogs, help develop reports, and have their ideas featured on the Fox News website.

### **The Chair**

The Chair is an artifact that High Point students will create that will feature the autographs of interview subjects, student participants and faculty participants. The interview subjects come from interviews done during the course of the project. It will be presented to the School of Communication and President Qubein (it's a surprise!). The chair (or other piece of furniture) is upholstered with a textile that is composed of the autographs. The autographs are of high value interview subjects. The interviews are done by students and take place on and off campus, including at the Conventions and on Election Night. A limited series of up to 10 reproductions will be made. Eight can be auctioned to create a scholarship fund. This is done in conjunction with the School of Design.

### **The Quilt**

The Quilt is an artifact that High Point students will create that features hand written stories and some of the autographs. It is truly a fabric worn of the stories of Americans. Designed to hang as art, it will be presented to the School of Communication and President Qubein (it's a surprise!). Quilt swatches will be of varying size depending upon what/how much the writer has said. Stories will come from "The Quilt," the fabric is a textile that is composed of these stories and autographs. The autographs are those mentioned above. The stories are from the service projects that form the basis of the Reality Show and Convention prep process. These stories could come from everyday Americans, politicians, residents of a shelter, elderly citizens, etc. A limited series will be made. They can be sold or auctioned to support a scholarship fund.

### **The Book**

The Book is composed of the original autographs of chair and quilt participants. To form the textiles, all messages and autographs must first be gathered on a piece of paper. We will bind these into a book that is piece of art. A limited series can be made. They can be sold or auctioned to support the scholarship fund. This is done in conjunction with the School of Design.

### **The HPU Democracy USA Website**

Communication students and Media Fellows will be the primary creators and maintainers of the Website, which will act as the central hub for all of the content from different courses. The Website will have a prominent link on the HPU Home Page, and it will focus on helping college students better understand and become committed to being involved in the elections. The Website will feature the Program's research findings, student blogs, and articles on the different election issues and politicians. It will also include reflections from students who are working on campaigns and those who are involved in voter registration. The Website will show HPU students, prospective students, and other college students just how committed HPU is to understanding and making an impact on the elections.

## Why Is This Project a Great Fit For HPU?

The HPU D-USA Project places *STUDENT LEARNING* at the center of its pedagogical approach. From the perspective of the student, the HPU D-USA Project allows for a wide-range of choices in how to study the elections and get involved. For example, the over 180 students who want to delve deep into a particular aspect of the elections have many options from which to choose, and students who do not have time to take a class can participate in the co-curricular events and learn a great deal from the students and professors participating in the Project. The Project also pushes learning beyond the walls of the classroom and into the world. The very nature of the subject of democratic elections demands creative pedagogies.

The HPU D-USA Project will increase the *ACADEMIC REPUTATION* of the University by drawing together experts in different areas of the elections to share their knowledge with each other and a cohort of students. The faculty and students will not only be working intensely together, but they will also be sharing their understanding with a larger audience through the Project's Website, blogs, tweets, video projects, and through the Project's close association with the High Point Fox News affiliate. There should be ample opportunities for our students and faculty to be featured on the News. The Project will also place a large contingent of HPU students in a prominent position at the Conventions, highlighting the University's academic commitment to giving our students a real-world education.

The HPU D-USA Project will enhance *STUDENT LEADERSHIP*. Students will have to take a great deal of initiative throughout the Project. The 180+ students involved in the election courses will all have to present their work to an audience of some 200 faculty and students, and they will be responsible for leading a small group discussion on a topic of their expertise. Many of the students attending the Conventions will also be placed in roles with substantive responsibilities and high demands. They will have to produce high quality video segments and interview information to aid the Fox News station and the Project's own Reality Show creation. Students will also be responsible for organizing some of the co-curricular events. But beyond these leadership roles, many of the courses (especially the Service Learning courses) involved in the Project will have a learning objective that aims to increase the commitment of students to be active participants in the democratic process, both through national elections and local civic participation.

Finally, the HPU D-USA Project will bring *DISTINCTION* to HPU. This kind of large-scale interdisciplinary project is rare. The quality and creativity of the Project will become known through presentations at professional associations, peer-reviewed publications, and the general publicity the Project will receive from Fox News, the Project Website, and the visibility of HPU students (and busses) at the Conventions. It will truly be a Project that furthers the HPU brand of high-quality, real-world, holistic education.

## Assessment

As with all pedagogical experiments, the HPU D-USA Project must undergo critical assessment so the model can be improved. The Project will be assessed using the following four tools:

- (1) All students in the election courses will take a pre-test and post-test that are designed to determine both the students' knowledge about the democratic process and their commitment to being a part of it.
- (2) Standard course evaluations from the courses will help signal places of strength and weakness.
- (3) The participating faculty will conduct a final assessment meeting together in which they discuss the best and worst practices of the Project. They will produce a short self-assessment to guide future work.
- (4) Individual faculty may, of their own initiative, choose to write about the project and/or conduct further research into its effectiveness. The Project aims to set up research opportunities for faculty who are interested in both the teaching of democracy and in general models for Problem-Based Interdisciplinary Pedagogies.

The results of the assessment will contribute to our understanding of how we can best conduct (1) interdisciplinary pedagogical programs, (2) experiential learning opportunities, and (3) election-related education.

### Proposed Budget

<b>Expense Categories</b>	<b>Totals</b>	<b>Specifics</b>
Courses	\$500	
(1) Communication Deliverables		\$500
Colloquia	\$3,000	
(1) Refreshments		\$1,000
(2) Speaker Fees		\$2,000
Co-Curricular	\$500	
(1) Prizes		\$500
Conventions	\$17,054	
(1) One 52 Passenger Bus to Tampa (RNC)		\$4,776
(2) Hotels for 52 people for 3 nights (RNC)		\$9,750
(3) Four days of bussing to Charlotte (DNC)		\$2,528
Research	\$30,915	
(1) National Poll		
a. Interviewer Compensation		\$6,000
b. Sample		\$5,515
c. Consulting		\$3,000
(2) Interactive Voice Response in NC		\$14,800
(3) Oral History Project		\$1,600
Project Expenses	\$5,500	
(1) Website Development		\$3,000
(2) Work-study Student Coordinator		\$1,500
(3) Publicity		\$1,000
<b>Total Funds Requested</b>	<b>\$57,469</b>	

## Budget Justifications

### Courses:

- The Communication Deliverable costs are related to the quilt, chair, and book that will be created and auctioned off to raise money.
- The courses will all be part of the standard course loads of the participating faculty.
- At 20 students in each Service Learning Course and 30 students in all other courses, the course component should affect at least 180 students.

### Colloquia:

- Refreshments (water, soda, and cookies) will be provided to students during the colloquia.
- The Speaker fees will allow the Program to bring some notable speakers to campus to speak in the middle of the colloquia sessions and/or to address the larger University community.
- The colloquia will affect at least the 180 students involved in the Project courses.

### Co-Curricular:

- In order to encourage student attendance and participation, the Program would offer door prizes, free drink coupons, or other giveaways to students.
- We expect over 300 students to be reached by the co-curricular activities held primarily in the University Center because of the foot-traffic in that building, the participation of students in the Project courses, and the involvement of students from all of the election-related student groups.

### National Conventions:

- 52 students and faculty will be bussed to Tampa on an HPU bus, which costs \$4.00 a mile and the round-trip is 1144 miles. The cost also reflect mileage that might be accrued driving around Tampa.
- The students and faculty will be housed for three nights in Tampa at an average cost of \$250 a night for 13 rooms (at four people to a room).
- The 52 passenger HPU bus costs \$4.00 a mile, and with 158 mile round-trips to Charlotte and back for four days, the cost is \$2528.
- We can reach 47 students through the RNC, and if we bus 47 students each day for four days to the DNC, we can potentially give 188 students the chance to attend a National Convention.

### Research:

- The National Poll will include three types of costs: Interviewer compensation, sample, and consulting.  
First, we estimate based on past performance by the Survey Research Center that administering 1000 interviews will require approximately 1200

person-hours of labor. Assuming that the interviewers will be composed of 50% workshop students (receiving no federal subsidy for their wages) and 50% federal work study students (who receive a subsidy for their wages), the average per hour cost of labor should be \$5 per person hour of labor. Therefore, total wages for the interviewers should be approximately \$6000 for the survey. (A more detailed accounting of the total necessary hours will be provided upon request.)

Second, in order to field the survey with a random sample of households and cell phone users, the SRC will purchase a sample of random digit dial landline numbers and a sample of wireless numbers. Survey Sampling International offered an estimate for the complete survey that includes 20,000 wireless records and 25,000 landline phone numbers at a total price of \$5,515. Survey Sampling International is the vendor that the Survey Research Center uses for all of its North Carolina resident samples; it is recognized as a world leader in survey support. (A copy of the estimate is attached to this proposal).

Third, since this is the first time the SRC will attempt to field a national survey, consulting help may be necessary. We requested an estimate from Adam Slater of Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research. He provided an estimate of what it would cost to advise the SRC over a two-week period on how to administer the survey. The specific areas in which he would advise us are: programming the survey, administering the survey, and developing practices that interviewers will need to follow to avoid possible methodological pitfalls associated with a national survey; developing quotas and stratification to ensure a representative national sample which would involve monitoring the distribution of interviews each day to make sure we were balanced in terms of state, region, demographics; monitoring nonresponse (daily or at least every couple of days) to make sure that we are not introducing additional error; trouble shooting (things that are to us inexperienced national pollsters) unknowns. Slater's estimate of \$3000 – 3500 represents the minimum requirement for such advice. (A copy of correspondence with Slater is available upon request.)

- The estimate for the Interactive Voice Response in NC is attached, and it is from the national prominent public opinion research company SurveyUSA. They have provided estimates for 600 interviews with landlines and cell phone users. There are three populations for which they provided estimates. The first is all adults in North Carolina (which is the population most often interviewed by the HPU Poll). The second and third estimates are for registered and likely voter populations favored by some pollsters interested in making predictions about the outcomes of particular campaigns. In this case, it is most appropriate for this project to interview a sample of all adults in North Carolina because the group will be interested in questions that apply to all North Carolina residents, not necessarily those most likely to vote. In fact, the polls could include questions that would allow HPU researchers to make inferences about registered voters and likely voters. SurveyUSA's estimate is that for two IVR surveys (one before the

DNC and one after to judge the effects of the convention on public opinion) the total cost would be \$14,800. (A copy of SurveyUSA's estimate is attached to this proposal.)

- The Oral History Project proposes to pay interviewers \$8 per hour for a total of 5 hours per interview or \$40 per interview. The total cost for 10 interviewers conducting 4 interviews each would be \$1600.
- Nearly 100 students will be required to conduct all of the research initiatives.

**Project Expenses:**

- Though students will provide much of the content for the Project Website, the creation and maintenance of the site will need to be provided.
- A work-study student will help coordinate all of the logistics for the Project.
- The Program will need flyers to announce events and speakers, and it would like to create a nice banner that can hang at all Program-related events.



## Proposal Options

We understand that Think BIG Grants are an extraordinary responsibility and honor to receive. And we understand that the proposed Program is large in scope and cost. We would like to offer a few options for how the Program could be funded.

### Option A: Full Funding (\$57,469)

Of course, our primary desire would be to have the project fully funded as an organic whole.

### Option B: Funding the Project as Separate Grants (\$1,600-\$57,469)

The Project can be broken down into three distinct grant opportunities. The Think BIG committee may select from these the combination of grant opportunities they believe will best serve the HPU community.

1. HPU D-USA Central Grant for \$9,500: Dr. Blosser would supervise this grant, which would fund the colloquia series, the co-curricular election events, the website, and other Program expenses.
2. HPU D-USA Travel Grant: Profs. Carol Davis and Charisse McGhee-Lazarou would supervise this grant, which would fund the students attending the Conventions.
  - a. Option 1 for \$17,054: Funds students to attend both Conventions.
  - b. Option 2 for \$2,528: Funds students to attend only the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, NC.
3. HPU D-USA Research Grant: Prof. Martin Kifer would supervise this grant, which would fund the research specific portions of the Program.
  - a. Option 1 for \$30,915: Funds all three research initiatives.
  - b. Option 2: The Think BIG Committee selects the research initiatives it believes will be of greatest benefit to the HPU community.
    - i. National Poll: \$14,515
    - ii. NC Voice Poll: \$14,800
    - iii. Oral History Project: \$1,600

## Authors and Contributors

The HPU D-USA Project is the result of a large group of faculty from across the University who met several times over the course of the Fall 2011 semester to craft the proposal and potential project.

### **Principal Author**

Rev. Dr. Joe Blosser, Director of Service Learning, Asst. Prof. of Religion and Philosophy

### **Proposal Contributors and Participants**

Prof. Carol Davis, Inst. of Communication

Dr. Josh Fisher, Asst. Prof. of Anthropology

Dr. Martin Kifer, Director of the Survey Research Center, Asst. Prof. of Political Science

Dr. Sadie Leder, Asst. Director of the Survey Research Center, Asst. Prof. of Psychology

Dr. Amy MacArthur, Asst. Prof. of Philosophy

Prof. Charisse McGhee-Lazarou, Director of the Media Fellows, Asst. Prof. of Communication

Dr. Paul Namaste, Asst. Prof. of Sociology

Dr. Paul Ringel, Asst. Prof. of History

Dr. Mark Setzler, Chair and Assoc. Prof. of Political Science

Dr. Alixandra Yanus, Asst. Prof. of Political Science

## Appendix

The following pages include the cost estimates for the election-related research initiatives.

**From:** Hiram Santiago [mailto:Hiram.Santiago@SurveySampling.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 21, 2011 10:23 AM  
**To:** Kifer, Martin  
**Cc:** Frank Markowitz  
**Subject:** FW: Estimates for High Point University

Martin,

Here are the estimates... Estimate 1 total Project Price is \$5,115.00 and Estimate 2 is \$3,955.00.

**Estimate 1: SSI – Offline RDD Estimate**

- Date/Estimate number – December 21, 2011/ Estimate #198871
- Geography – National (excluding Alaska and Hawaii)
- Select – Random A Screened and Wireless
- Records –

20,000 Wireless Records @\$ .12/record = \$2,400.00

25,000 RDD A Records @.10/record = \$2,500.00

25,000 RDD A Records Screened @.02/record = \$500.00

2 Set up Fees = \$115.00

**Total Project Cost: \$5,515.00**

**\*Counts are subject to change due to database updates, etc.**

- Turnaround time/delivery – Same business day (if ordered by 3pm ET)
- \$100 Min. / .12 cents per record plus set up fees
  - Setup fees are on a sliding scale:  
1 = \$75 (included in minimum), 2-5 = \$40 each, 6-10 = \$30 each, 11+ = \$20 ea

## Kifer, Martin

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**From:** 'Leve, Jay' [jleve@surveyusa.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, December 12, 2011 11:35 AM  
**To:** Kifer, Martin  
**Subject:** RE: Preliminary Project Planning from SurveyUSA for High Point University

Martin,

Amended pricing follows.

SurveyUSA no longer will conduct research of "landline only" populations. We will only conduct research of "landline and cell phone" populations, which is quoted below.

Price has gone down since our last correspondence, as cellphone inclusion is now baked into our everyday process and we are able to pass along those savings.

For context, [see](#):

	English language, landlines + cellphones
600 NC adults	\$7,400
600 NC registered voters	\$8,600
600 NC likely November voters	\$9,800

Jay H Leve  
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973-857-8500 x 551  
[jleve@surveyusa.com](mailto:jleve@surveyusa.com)  
[www.surveyusa.com](http://www.surveyusa.com)

---

**From:** Kifer, Martin [mailto:[mkifer@highpoint.edu](mailto:mkifer@highpoint.edu)]  
**Sent:** Monday, December 12, 2011 10:57 AM  
**To:** 'Leve, Jay'  
**Subject:** RE: Preliminary Project Planning from SurveyUSA for High Point University

Thanks. Good point on the other populations. How much do prices increase for registered voters, likely voters? Those are possibilities...

All adults may be relevant because we would be looking at how the state is reacting to the presence of the convention.

Thanks again.

Respectfully,

MJK

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**From:** 'Leve, Jay' [<mailto:jleve@surveyusa.com>]  
**Sent:** Monday, December 12, 2011 10:46 AM  
**To:** Kifer, Martin  
**Subject:** RE: Preliminary Project Planning from SurveyUSA for High Point University

Who would you want to interview in your Fall 2012 surveys:

- NC adults
- NC registered voters
- NC “likely November voters”
- NC Democrats (only)

Prices below are for adults, prices for the above populations would be higher.

Jay H Leve  
SurveyUSA  
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Clifton NJ 07013  
973-857-8500 x 551  
[jleve@surveyusa.com](mailto:jleve@surveyusa.com)  
[www.surveyusa.com](http://www.surveyusa.com)

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**From:** Kifer, Martin [<mailto:mkifer@highpoint.edu>]  
**Sent:** Monday, December 12, 2011 10:38 AM  
**To:** 'Leve, Jay'  
**Subject:** RE: Preliminary Project Planning from SurveyUSA for High Point University

Hi, Jay. We are looking at the possibility of fielding two surveys in the fall – one right before and one after the Democratic Convention in Charlotte. Are these prices still valid? If not, please send new numbers for these particular specs. Thanks a lot.

Respectfully,

MJK

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**From:** Leve, Jay [<mailto:jleve@surveyusa.com>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 11, 2010 3:37 PM  
**To:** Kifer, Martin  
**Subject:** Preliminary Project Planning from SurveyUSA for High Point University

Martin Kifer  
High Point University  
[mkifer@highpoint.edu](mailto:mkifer@highpoint.edu)  
336-841-9333

Martin,

thank you for your interest in SurveyUSA.

Here is a grid that gives you preliminary pricing information based on a state of North Carolina survey of 600 adults age 18+, asked 18 or fewer questions (including all demographic questions):

	English language, landlines only	English language, landlines + cellphones
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400 adult NC respondents	\$4,000	\$9,000
600 adult NC respondents	\$5,000	\$10,500
800 adult NC respondents	\$6,000	\$12,000

Here are terms and conditions that apply to any SurveyUSA project, and which are not unique to this project:

- A. The details of this project are confidential.
- B. SurveyUSA is an independent, non-partisan research company that does work for media, commercial clients and government agencies.
- C. SurveyUSA endorses no particular political ideology, cause or agenda. Acceptance of this work does not constitute, and may not by Client be represented as, an endorsement of Client's particular cause, ideology or agenda.
- D. Any research questions asked by SurveyUSA must be balanced and factual and may not contain partial truths or innuendo.
- E. SurveyUSA retains final editorial control over the exact wording of all questions, in order to ensure that no (unintentional or otherwise) biased questions make it into the final questionnaire. If Client and SurveyUSA are unable to agree on final wording for a particular question, SurveyUSA will note on the published data concerns it may have about question(s) wording.
- F. The largest portion of the cost of any SurveyUSA research project is the labor involved in conceptualizing the project, drafting the questionnaire, and programming the logic. As such, a minimum of 50% "kill" fee will apply on work that is stopped for any reason prior to completion.
- G. Research will be conducted using recorded-voice, interactive-telephone methodology, unless otherwise specified. SurveyUSA may modify its research methodology as needed to ensure that its surveys are representative of the population being studied.
- H. Research will be conducted in English, unless otherwise specified.
- I. Research will not be conducted in Spanish, unless explicitly contracted. Bi-lingual research can be contracted, during the term of the agreement, at an increased cost.
- J. Phone calls will be made to landline telephones.
- K. Calls will not be made to cellphones unless explicitly contracted. Client acknowledges that approximately 25% of American homes do not have landline telephones and will not be reachable in surveys of landline telephones.
- L. Once data from any SurveyUSA poll is published by Client, in whole or in part, SurveyUSA is obligated to answer truthfully any questions put to SurveyUSA by media or others with a stake in the outcome, and to, if requested, release the actual questionnaire used to gather the results.
- M. Client shall credit SurveyUSA when results are published.
- N. Client shall not mis-characterize SurveyUSA results.
- O. Client shall include a SurveyUSA approved "Statement of Methodology" when research results are published.
- P. SurveyUSA will weight poll data to US Census estimates for gender and age, and to other demographics as may be needed to make results representative of USA landline population.

- Q. Weighted poll results will be delivered to Client as an HTML link, in standard SurveyUSA format, which includes fully crosstabbed tables and interactive tracking graphs.
- R. SurveyUSA pollsters and programmers are available weekdays, 9 am to 6 pm Eastern Time. While interviews may be conducted 7 days a week, research is written and programmed only on weekdays.
- S. To make sure there is a record of all communication, and to reduce the chance of miscommunication, please provide all instructions to in writing, by email, to: [instructions@surveyusa.com](mailto:instructions@surveyusa.com) .
- T. SurveyUSA is "dark" (interviews are not typically conducted) on January 1, Memorial Day weekend, July 4, Labor Day weekend, Thanksgiving weekend, December 21 through December 31.
- U. 100% prepayment is required for first two surveys ordered by any new Client. Thereafter, SurveyUSA will invoice client for ongoing work, when data is delivered, with payment due upon receipt of invoice. Client agrees to pay SurveyUSA invoices timely. Interest on late payments is the higher of 1.5 percentage points per month or the maximum permitted by law, which interest may be applied beginning 31 days after the due date retroactive to the due date.

Additional information about SurveyUSA is available [here](#).

My contact information follows.

Jay H Leve  
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