

# PRG REPORT

Newsletter of the Presidency Research Group of the American Political Science Association

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## *A LETTER FROM THE SECTION PRESIDENT*

We are already hard at work on the year's agenda outlined at the business meeting in August, and I am confident we will accomplish much in the coming months ahead.

As many of you are aware, we will be undergoing a transition in editors of the PRG Report. This is the final report produced by Rich Powell. I would like to thank Rich on behalf of the section for his efforts and dedication to the production of this report. Rich has worked diligently to enhance our online presence as well as to digitize all of our old reports. We are indebted to him for the wonderful contributions he has made to our section and wish him well as he embarks on his leave.

It is with great pleasure that I announce that David Crockett from Trinity University has agreed to assume the role of PRG Report Editor beginning in the spring of 2008. David will serve a two-year appointment ending in 2010. Like Rich, David will be looking to all of us to provide articles, teaching spotlights, and the like.

Along these lines, we felt this transition is a perfect time for us to revisit the role of the PRG Report in our section and to determine what our membership would like to see in terms of the Report's content. Therefore, in the early spring we will be sending out a short, online survey asking questions to gauge what the membership would find most useful. Be looking for an e-mail from the officers in early spring announcing the opening of the survey. I ask that you make every effort to participate in this survey, as it will be a mechanism to help shape the future of our section's report.

In looking forward to the upcoming APSA conference, we do hope that you all were able to submit proposals. Our section chair, Diane Heith of St. John's University, is getting ready to review the rich proposals she is sure to have received. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Diane. Additionally, if you have any interest in sponsoring a short-course for the section, please contact myself or Diane. The deadline for submitting a short-course proposal to APSA is March 14, 2008 (see [http://apsanet.org/content\\_4650.cfm](http://apsanet.org/content_4650.cfm) for additional information regarding organizing a short course).

The section has a series of other initiatives in the works. Our Secretary/Treasurer has conducted a financial review and the Board will soon be looking at issues regarding our section's long-term fiscal planning. In addition, Robert Spitzer of SUNY-Cortland has agreed to chair a task force charged with exploring membership and recruitment related issues, including the possible transition of our website to be fully under APSA's auspices. As you may know, we currently have our own page on the APSA website (see [http://apsanet.org/section\\_315.cfm](http://apsanet.org/section_315.cfm)) and hope to take full advantage of expanding this site to

*See Letter, Page 7*

### *INSIDE THIS ISSUE*

GENERAL INFORMATION.....	2
AWARDS.....	3
THE UPSIDE OF AN UNFAIR PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY SCHEDULE? WAYNE P. STEGER.....	8
PROMOTING ACTIVE LEARNING THROUGH SIMULATIONS IN PRESIDENCY CLASSES VICTORIA A. FARRAR-MYERS.....	10
BOOK SCAN.....	14
JOURNAL SCAN.....	15

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PRG/index.asp](http://cstl-cla.semo.edu/Renka/PRG/index.asp)

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## PRG REPORT

The *PRG REPORT* is published twice annually on behalf of the Presidency Research Section of the American Political Science Association.

The *PRG REPORT* serves the scholarly community in presidential and executive politics. The editor of the Report welcomes your submissions and ideas.

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### SYMPOSIUM ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ralph and Mary Regula Center for Public Service at Mount Union College in Northeast Ohio is organizing a symposium on the legacy of George W. Bush on March 1, 2008. MUC Assistant Professor Mike Grossman, one of the organizers of the event, has asked this information be shared with PRG members. The website where you can access further information is as follows: [[http://www.muc.edu/bush\\_symposium](http://www.muc.edu/bush_symposium)]

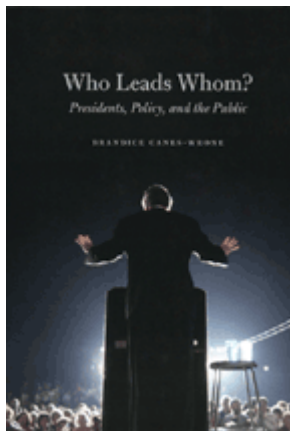
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# AWARDS

## PRG SECTION AWARDS

### RICHARD E. NEUSTADT AWARD



The **Richard E. Neustadt Award** is given for the best book published that contributed to research and scholarship in the field of the American presidency during the previous year.

2007 Richard E. Neustadt Award Recipient:  
**Brandice Canes-Wrone**, Princeton University  
Title: **Who Leads Whom? Presidents, Policy, and the Public** (University of Chicago Press, 2006)

Nominations for the 2008 Neustadt Award can be sent to the award committee. Please note the full contact information is provided for each committee member since books must be sent to all members.

George C. Edwards, III, *Chair*  
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**Nominations should be submitted by February 1, 2008.**

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**FOUNDERS AWARD**

The **Founders Award**, named in honor of Martha Joynt Kumar, is given for the best paper presented by a graduate student at either the preceding year's APSA annual meeting or at any of the regional meetings in 2006-2007.

2006-2007 Founders Award Recipient:

**Kevin James Parsneau**, University of Minnesota

Title: **"Politicizing Priority Departments:  
Presidential Policy Priorities and Subcabinet  
Nominations"**

Nominations for the 2007-2008 Founders Award, named in honor of David Neveh, can be sent to the award committee.

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*Committee Members:*

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Tobias Gibson, Monmouth College  
Karen Hult, Virginia Tech University  
Leah Murray, Weber State College

**Nominations should be submitted by May 1, 2008.**



**FOUNDERS AWARD (PhD.)**

The **Founders Award (PhD.)**, named in honor of Erwin Hargrove, is given for the best paper presented by a PhD-holding scholar at the previous year's APSA annual meeting.

2007 Founders Paper Award Co-Recipients:

**Jeffrey Cohen**, Fordham University and **Matthew Eshbaugh-Soha**, University of North Texas

Title: **"Change and Stability in the President's  
Legislative Policy Agenda, 1789-2002"**

Nominations for the 2008 Founders Paper Award, named in honor of Bert Rockman, can be sent to the award committee.

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Bruce Miroff, University of Albany, SUNY  
David Yalof, University of Connecticut

**Nominations should be submitted by February 1, 2008.**

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**BEST UNDERGRADUATE  
PAPER AWARD**

The **Best Undergraduate Paper Award** is given for the best undergraduate paper completed in the present academic year.

2006-2007 Best Undergraduate Paper Award Recipient:

**Carrie Roush**, Dickinson College

Title: **“Great Writ,’ Great Power: Habeus Corpus and Prerogative in the Lincoln and Bush II Presidencies”**

Nominations for the 2007-2008 Best Undergraduate Paper Award can be sent to the award committee.

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Nancy Kassop, SUNY-New Paltz  
Brian Newman, Pepperdine University

**Nominations should be submitted by May 1, 2008.**

**PAUL PECK PRESIDENTIAL AWARD**

The Paul Peck Presidential Award is presented by the National Portrait Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution to honor presidential service and portrayal. The PRG represents APSA as one of the eight nominating organizations. For more information, please visit <http://www.npg.si.edu/>.

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Daniel Ponder, Drury University  
Shirley Warshaw, Gettysburg College

**The deadline will be set by the Smithsonian Institution.**

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**GEORGE C. EDWARDS III  
DISSERTATION AWARD**

**\*\*NEW AWARD\*\***

The George C. Edwards III Dissertation Award will be given annually for the best dissertation in presidency research completed and accepted during the 2007 calendar year (January 1, 2007 - December 31, 2007). The recipient will receive a \$200 award. To be considered for the award, nominees must submit the following documents to each member of the award committee: (1) a hard copy of the dissertation, (2) a PDF of the dissertation on a CD, (3) a nominee form, (4) a nominator form and letter. The award committee welcomes nominations by dissertation committee chairs or committee members.

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**Nominations should be submitted by February 1, 2008.**



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CAREER SERVICE AWARD

The **Career Service Award** is given every year during a presidential election year, the PRG shall form a committee to give an award to recognize career service to the study of the Presidency.

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Ryan Barilleaux, Miami University  
Meena Bose, Hofstra University  
Elvin Lim, University of Tulsa

**Nominations should be submitted by February 1, 2008.**

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**Letter**, *continued from Page 1*

include the information currently and diligently maintained for us by Russ Renka of Southeast Missouri State University (see <http://cstl-cla.semo.edu/Renka/PRG/>).

Work continues on planning for a spring 2009 PRG-sponsored conference on presidential decision-making, and several section members have agreed to advise in the process. Right now we are working on trying to secure funding for the conference. If you have any ideas for potential sources of funding, please do not hesitate to contact me. Look for more information regarding this in the coming months.

Please remember to nominate our members for the various section awards. For information regarding the various committees, please reference the Award Section of this PRG Report. We would especially remind those of you who have published books in the last year to have your publishers send the books to our Richard E. Neustadt Award chair (George Edwards at Texas A&M University). Additionally, please do not forget our newest award, the George C. Edwards III Dissertation Award (see the APSA website for details regarding submissions or contact the committee chair, MaryAnne Borrelli of Connecticut College). In addition, we will be presenting the section's Career Service Award this year, as we do every four years to coincide with presidential election years.

This brings me to a reminder regarding our ongoing fundraising initiatives. Under the leadership of Martha Kumar and with a \$1,000 donation by the PRG, we are over our \$5,000 goal for endowing the Edwards Dissertation Award. As you may recall, though, we are not only attempting to endow the Dissertation Award, but also the Neustadt Award. Look for an e-mail in the coming weeks regarding this initiative and how you might participate. These endowments will be a nice legacy to continue the long tradition of mentorship and recognition of excellence by the PRG of its members. Please consider participating in this worthy endeavor.

Thank you to those of you who have shared information with us via our listserv. Please continue to share your news of job openings, conferences, and other special issues of interest to section members. Certainly, do not hesitate to contact me if any

questions arise or if you have things that you wish posted to the full membership.

On a final note, I wish to thank the many of you who have offered your support to the section and who have not hesitated to volunteer in various capacities when I have called upon you. I am particularly honored to serve amongst such a wonderful group of scholars and look forward to working with you to advance the PRG in the year ahead.

All my best –

Victoria Farrar-Myers  
PRG President 2007-2008

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# THE UPSIDE OF AN UNFAIR PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY SCHEDULE?

Wayne P. Steger

There is considerable concern that our presidential nominating system is broken and needs to be fixed (e.g., Haskell 1996; Mayer and Busch 2004). The current front-loading of the primary calendar is certainly problematic, but proposals for a regional or national primary may make the system worse in certain respects. Proposals for a regional primary, such as the bill introduced in Congress by Joseph Lieberman, are geared toward changing the existing system in which Iowa and New Hampshire have a dominant role, while staving off more dramatic movement toward a *de facto* national primary. For better or worse, we are married to an imperfect nomination system because other potential primary sequences are less desirable than the current one.

First, the concerns with Iowa and New Hampshire are often overblown in the news media. The main effects of the Iowa and New Hampshire caucuses are on the candidates and the media—both spend inordinate amounts of time and money in these states. These nominating elections also affect the choices available to voters in subsequent primaries, but the main effect is to persuade poorly performing candidates to drop out of the race (e.g., Steger 20002; Norrander 2006). The withdrawal of these candidates from the race does not affect outcomes as much as is commonly thought. Dark horse candidates pin their hopes on these states to break through and reverse their status as also-rans; most do not. The vast majority of candidates who do poorly in the Iowa caucus and New Hampshire primary are failing to resonate with large numbers of voters and campaign contributors. The Iowa caucuses arguably was not the cause of Howard Dean's collapse in 2004. Howard Dean's campaign had peaked in the third week of December of 2003 when he gained his largest lead in national Gallup polls and gained the endorsement of Al Gore and other elected officials. Dean actually declined in polls relative to other candidates thereafter. Dean's chances were falling as he became subjected to greater scrutiny. That Iowans did not support him probably owes more to the information that these voters possessed relative to the national audience, than it did to these voters having dramatically different values. While the New Hampshire primary has a more powerful effect on the nomination in Democratic races, the resulting bias in favor of a New England liberal candidate reflects the preferences of the geographic and ideological base of the Democratic Party. The New England bias probably does constrain the chances of moderate candidates--which may be why Lieberman and others are proposing regional primaries that would amplify the impact of ideologically moderate preferences in the nomination campaign.

Even though Iowa and New Hampshire do affect the options of voters in subsequent primaries, beginning a sequence of primaries with two small states with a history of going first is advantageous for several reasons. First, small states require candidates to engage in retail or personalized campaigning rather than wholesale campaigning through mass media. Candidates



in the current system must interact with people which means that candidates learn more about real people with real concerns rather than relying on pollsters and paid advisors. Second, the voters in Iowa and New Hampshire are bombarded with campaign information, so their awareness of the candidates greatly exceeds that of voters in a national or regional primary. The choices made by Iowans and New Hampshirites are probably better informed. That these states have had a history of going first is important because these voters have learned to take that responsibility seriously, which would not necessarily occur with a random, rotating primary schedule. Third, candidates with less money are able to compete, which reduces the impact of money and well-heeled contributors—mainly better educated, wealthier activists with sufficiently intense issue preferences to open their pocketbooks.

Moving toward a national primary or a system of rotating regional primaries would create problems of its own. First, there can be little question that it would advantage candidates who can raise large sums of money since only strong fundraisers could compete simultaneously in multiple states. Second, the constituencies advantaged by a money-driven campaign are the richer and better educated activists who can contribute and who have intense enough preferences to do so. Third, a system that advantages political party activists with intense issue preferences would likely contribute to a more polarized electorate selecting the presidential nominees of both parties. This, in turn, would create greater dissatisfaction with the general election outcome on the part of the losing partisans. Fourth, there is less candidate learning in a national or regional primary system since candidates necessarily have to rely more on mass media to communicate with hundreds of thousands if not millions more voters in a short time frame. Fifth, citizens will likely be less informed about candidates since voters in regional or national primary would



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be less exposed to campaign messages compared to the average voter in the early states in the existing system. Finally, there is an increased chance of having no winner decided in the primaries under a national or regional system if no candidate dominates everywhere which could happen if several candidates with money target their campaigns--competing in areas where they can dominate while avoiding those areas where they have less appeal. In short, the beneficiaries of a regional or national primary system are wealthier, better educated activists with relatively extreme views on issues, the media whose ratings thrive on uncertainty and drama, and candidates who play well with both of these audiences.

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*Wayne P. Steger is Associate Professor of Political Science at DePaul University in Chicago, IL.*



# PROMOTING ACTIVE LEARNING THROUGH SIMULATIONS IN PRESIDENCY CLASSES

Victoria A. Farrar-Myers

“If you tell me, I will listen. If you show me, I will see. But if you let me experience, I will learn.” - Lao-Tse

Lao-Tse’s insight captures the essence of an active learning based approach to education. Such an approach calls for students to have a role and responsibility in developing their own knowledge; in the words of John Dewey, learning is “something that an individual does when he studies. It is an active, personally conducted affair” (1924). Unlike more traditional teaching styles where the instructor simply transfers information to the student, who is required to do little more than act as a depository for such information (Freire, 1970) or as a sponge soaking it up (Keeley, Ali & Gebing, 1998; Fox-Cardamone & Rue, 2003), an active learning approach places an emphasis on students’ independent inquiry, restructuring of their knowledge, and other constructivist qualities (Niemi, 2002).

Employing active learning strategies in political science classes not only has been shown to work (Brock & Cameron, 1999), but more importantly would seem to be a natural fit. “Learning is not a spectator sport” (Chickering and Gamson, 1987), and neither is the world of politics. As a result, one way to enhance students’ learning about the political world is for them to “talk about what they are learning, write about it, relate it to past experiences and apply it to their daily lives. They must make what they learn part of themselves” (Chickering and Gamson, 1987). Further, active learning techniques – particularly if tied to learning outcomes designed to promote higher order thinking skills such as analysis, application, synthesis, and evaluation (Bloom, 1956) – can help students prepare “to tackle a multitude of challenges that they are likely to face in their personal lives, careers, and *duties as responsible citizens*” (Tsui, 2002). As political scientists, we may be in the best position in the academy to promote a sense of civic engagement in our students, and the use of intentionally designed active learning techniques tied to specific learning outcomes can greatly assist us in helping to instill this sense.

The use of active learning encompasses a wide array of teaching techniques that can be used in large classes as well as small ones; techniques such as: using guided lectures and answering open-ended, student-generated questions (Bonwell & Eison, 1991); using primary sources in the classroom (May, 1986); cooperative learning (Smith, 1986); and simulations and role-playing games (Shannon, 1986; for a general discussion on active learning strategies, see Bonwell & Eison, 1991; Astin et al., 1984; and Schomberg, 1986). However, finding a technique that works successfully can be influenced by:

- Institutional variables*: e.g., size of class, physical arrangement of classrooms, and lack of incentives for professors to undertake new active learning strategies

(see generally Bonwell & Eison, 1991);

- The professor*: e.g., the professor’s comfort level with student interaction and the amount of control in the classroom the professor desires (see generally Bonwell & Sutherland, 1996); and

- The students*: e.g., prior exposure and experiences (Hoover, 2006), students’ different learning styles (Kolb, 1981; Cross, 1998), and student motivation (Gross Davis, 1993) or indifference (Warren, 1997) to participate in active learning activities.

The *POTUS and PASS* projects were two semester-long, in-class simulations employing active learning techniques and designed to achieve desired course learning outcomes. Despite some initial reluctance by the students, these simulations helped them achieve the course outcomes, but more significantly generated a high level of efficacy, engagement, and understanding. Although the specific model employed may not work in every context (the variables noted above will create a different dynamic in each class), the process by which these projects were developed and employed may provide those who teach presidency-related classes with insights on how to best employ active learning techniques in their own setting.

The 2008 presidential election marks the first time since 1952 that a sitting president or vice president will not be a candidate for nomination in either major party. As I was developing my general survey course on the U.S. Presidency in the fall of 2005, I contemplated how to make this factoid become more relevant to my students, especially since encouraging civic engagement and voter participation in the 18-24 year-old age group has been a focus in recent presidential races. I wanted a way to bring to life the usual discussion of presidential elections and encourage my students to become active participants in the process of identifying, evaluating, and promoting various candidates. Out of these thoughts germinated *The POTUS Project* – short for *The President Of The United States Project*.

In this simulation, my students took on the role of political consultants responsible for developing a plan to guide their candidate to the Oval Office. Each student started by assessing the viability of a chosen candidate and then developing a strategy for winning that candidate’s party nomination. At mid-semester, the class divided into two groups – the two major parties – to hold a nomination convention where each party chose its own presidential-vice presidential ticket. Students had to caucus and advocate for their own candidate much like the Iowa caucus. From there, each team developed a “Vision Statement” for its candidate to let the voters know their candidate’s strategy for winning the general election, transitioning into power, and governing as president once in office. Each group presented its “Vision Statement” to the full class and to two real-world politi-

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cal consultants. The students were not alone in their learning endeavor. I took the liberty of writing to each of our selected candidates, telling them about the project and asking them to write my students. Two of the candidates did and in sharing these letters with the class, my students and I became acutely aware that what we were learning has meaning outside the four walls of our classroom; the very lesson I hope to impart in each of my classes.

In the end, *The POTUS Project* allowed the students to combine the course material with real life events and possibilities, and to work with their classmates to create a comprehensive electoral plan for someone who might become the next President of the United States. In doing so, the students were able to reinforce their learning through individual and group-effort written analysis and oral presentation. Further, the *Project* achieved the desired outcome of fostering collaborative action after individual analysis. Since most political enterprises take place within working groups or teams, these simulations allowed the students to gain experience with, as well as a direct appreciation for, this important political enterprise. Most significantly, through both a formal student evaluation of *The POTUS Project* and informal discussions with individual students, I found that they applied their knowledge in more sophisticated ways than in my more traditional course offering as well as reported more ownership and comfort with the core concepts of the class. They also reported a greater sense of efficacy and understanding of the presidential selection process; even two years later, I received an email from a student indicating how she is using the knowledge and insights gained from her class experience to be more engaged with this year's actual presidential primaries.

With the lessons I learned from *The POTUS Project*, I decided to employ a similar model in an upper-division course entitled *Presidency and Foreign Policy*. In *The PASS Project* (Presidential Advisory Strategy Simulation), the students played the role of foreign policy analysts and advisors. Each student selected his or her country of expertise, completed an assessment of the U.S. foreign relations with that country, and prepared a briefing paper for a current presidential candidate based upon a vision statement outlined by their candidate in the journal *Foreign Affairs*. Students then teamed-up with classmates who selected the same candidate and developed a comprehensive foreign policy/national security strategy for that candidate. The students worked with their teams during the semester, and then shared their collective insights with their classmates in a final presentation during an "Advisory Summit."

*The PASS Project* required the students to play different roles throughout the simulation and, as a result, develop and employ different cognitive skills. In becoming a country expert, the students served as foreign policy analysts responsible for obtaining knowledge and being able to critically analyze it in meaningful ways. In fact, I was able to have a foreign policy analyst from the Department of State as a guest speaker by means of teleconferencing, and he showed the students how the skills they were using in class were the same ones that the speaker used in his job. The next portion of the simulation, where the students prepared a briefing paper, required them to apply their knowledge in a specific context of a presidential candidate's general statements on foreign affairs. Finally, the group project required the

students to synthesize their collective knowledge into a coherent plan for their presidential candidate and evaluate the effectiveness of their proposals.

From the *POTUS and PASS projects*, a number of lessons emerged for effectively employing simulations in presidency classes, including:

- Intentionality of design*: Although the rewards in successfully employing an active-learning simulation are well worth it for both student and teacher, doing so requires that the instructor put substantial thought up front into the design of the program. Certainly, this lesson speaks to understanding the desired learning outcomes of the simulation, but also extends to such matters as evaluation and simulation mechanics. For example, students tend to be wary of group projects and free-riders who might bring a student's grade down. To address this concern, I structured the evaluative aspects of the simulations so that most of the items for which the students were graded upon were based solely on their own work (e.g., individual assignments that were then later used in the group project or reflection papers on the group project process). In a few instances, though, where a student received the same grade as other group members for their collective effort, I limited both the number of people within each working subgroup, and also limited the percentage of the student's overall grade attributed to the group effort. As far as design mechanics, the instructor needs to identify as many potential glitches as possible and develop prevention methods. For example, to ensure a proper balance of students working for either party in *The POTUS Project* or for any candidate in *The PASS Project*, I reserved the right to require students to switch to a different party or candidate as needed.

- Assessing achievement of learning outcomes*: Active learning techniques have been shown to have a powerful impact on students' learning, for example on "measures of transfer of knowledge to new situations or measures of problem-solving, thinking, attitude change, or motivation for further learning" (McKeachie et al., 1986; for other studies measuring the impact of active learning techniques, see Kuh et al., 1997; Springer, 1997; Cabrera et al., 1998; McCarthy and Anderson, 2000; and Pascarella and Terenzini, 2005). Therefore, any simulation design should incorporate assessment tools that allow the instructor to measure the impact of the learning technique. For example, a pre- and post-test was administered to ascertain students' base level of understanding of course material being covered by the simulation. Students also completed self-assessment and group assessments of their and their classmates' participation in the simulation. Further, a reflection session was held to provide the students with the ability to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the simulation. The insights culled from all of these various

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assessments were later employed to refine implementation of similar models in future classes.

•*Obtaining student buy-in:* As one scholar noted, “many active learning techniques fail simply because teachers do not take time to explain them” (Warren, 1997). Perhaps the best way to obtain the necessary student buy-in, therefore, appears to be communication and guidance from the professor (Felder & Brent, 2006). To this end, I included a detailed addendum to my syllabus in each class outlining every step of the simulation process and then discussed the simulation in the first day of class. Doing so put the students on notice of what was expected of them and giving them the opportunity to drop the class if they were not willing to put forth the necessary effort. Further, I sought input and feedback from the students throughout the semester – something that has been known to mitigate students’ concern related to the simulation (Sutherland, 1996) – and found ways to act on the feedback. For example, based on discussions with students, I decided to provide an additional incentive for students to do well on their oral presentation in *The PASS Project* by giving the winning team, as voted on by the students themselves, two extra questions to choose from in the short-answer portion of their final exam (i.e., instead of answering all eight short answer questions I gave them, the winning team had to answer eight of ten questions with each student choosing which eight she would answer).

•*Surrendering control:* Ultimately, if the simulation is going to be a “personally conducted affair” of learning, to use John Dewey’s words, the students at some point have to control the process for themselves. Certainly, as the instructor, I established the framework of the simulations, the minimum requirements that needed to be satisfied, and the desired outcomes. In the context of oral presentations, the students showed great initiative in their presentations – from complex slide shows, to informative and eye-catching displays, to even doing their presentation in the form of a game show (*Foreign Policy Jeopardy*). By my surrendering some of the control over the process to the students, they made it their own and, in doing so, learned greater lessons for themselves than I simply could have told them.

Of all the ways to evaluate and document the success of these simulations, the best way to do so is in the words of the students themselves. At the end of *The POTUS Project*, I asked the students to evaluate the *Project*, their contributions, and the contributions of others. Many pointed to the nominating convention as an astonishing experience – one where they were using the course material to persuade others. They noted how one student, who was alone in backing his candidate, used his knowledge to lobby others to place the candidate on the party’s ticket as the vice presidential candidate. As one student indicated, “the power of one armed with knowledge can really rule the world of poli-

tics!” This is the lesson of civic engagement that I wanted my students to learn – that one person, with commitment, information, and passion, can influence and better the world around them – and it is a lesson that the use of active learning simulations can help them achieve.

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