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**Strategic Issues in Developing Mid-Career and
Executive Programs**

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April, 1986

I. Introduction

The core of most schools of Public Policy and Management consists of graduate degree programs designed principally for pre-career students. Eventually, most schools will consider the question of how to supplement these core programs not only with doctoral programs, or undergraduate courses, or special research activities, but also with special teaching programs for practicing professionals in the fields of public policy and management.

There are a number of reasons why APPAM schools are turning their attention to mid-career and executive level programs:

- Demographic projections suggest that the college/graduate school age cohort (20-25 years) will continue to decline over the next decade. This cohort, which included 16 million young people and was nearly 15% of the labor force in 1980 is projected to decline to 13.3 million by 1995. There are likely to be fewer pre-career students out there.
- Government employment, which grew from 9.4% of employment in 1955 to 14.6% of employment in 1980, will be essentially stagnant, growing slightly in numbers of jobs and declining as a share of the workforce. The stabilization of the government workforce means far fewer entry level jobs for graduates than was the case a decade ago. When combined with the above projection, this suggests that growth paths for APPAM schools should explore the generation of employees now in government jobs.
- Such programs can be economically attractive, particularly as they utilize existing facilities more extensively (weekends, evenings and summers), spread other overhead costs, provide additional compensation opportunities for faculty, support curriculum development and may command higher tuitions than regular master's programs.
- On a separate plane, many schools see tangible benefits from programs that reach into government agencies. These benefits range from the development of internships and job opportunities for master's level students to professional development opportunities for faculty.
- Finally, such programs provide an opportunity to test faculty policy and management ideas and teaching abilities against the experience of seasoned professionals. This may be advanced either to *validate* the concepts or methods of an existing master's curriculum, or to *challenge* and *influence* existing professional *practice*.

The purpose of this paper is to help the APPAM Schools consider the question of how best to pursue the opportunities associated with mid-career and executive training programs. The first step is to outline the varied forms such programs have taken or could take. The second is to outline the potential benefits of mounting mid-career or executive programs, and the obstacles that typically must be overcome in fielding high quality programs. The third step is to outline

some basic strategies for getting into the business distinguished from one another in terms of the level and kind of investment that must be made, and the risks that must be born by the sponsoring institution.

Within the sharp financial constraints of this project, we have made an effort to learn about current planning and programs at all the APPAM Schools. Appendix 1 presents the results of a phone survey of the APPAM Schools. In addition, we have benefitted from some lengthy phone conversations with those who responded to the first round of requests for information, and planned to attend this conference. Nonetheless, it is probably true that this paper disproportionately reflects our experience at the Kennedy School. As a result, we present this paper in the spirit of beginning a discussion rather than resolving all relevant questions.

II. Mid-Career and Executive Programs: Alternative Forms

In characterizing the variety of mid-career and executive programs, a crucial distinction must be drawn between "degree" programs on the one hand, and "certificate" programs on the other. In an academic institution, a degree program inevitably carries a great deal more baggage than a certificate program. Degree programs are typically longer and more comprehensive than a certificate program. Curriculum and faculty are more likely to be drawn from traditional academic disciplines. The pedagogic approach in most degree programs presumes that faculty possess skills and knowledge and their job is to impart these elements to the students. Put another way, degree programs are not usually structured to maximize opportunities for students to learn from each other. They stress individual student performance as measured through tests and papers rather than corporate or group work. And in a subtle but important way, the terms of the encounter between faculty and student/participants will be set by the faculty since they are the ones who are assumed to have the knowledge that the student/participants needs, and have the formal authority to say when the aspiring student/participants have achieved the necessary level of knowledge and skill to merit the degree.

In contrast, in certificate programs there is more room for variety and experimentation. The curriculum may be more innovative. The faculty will be drawn from places other than traditional academic disciplines. And the relationships between the faculty and the participants will be more collegial, with the faculty expecting to learn something from the students. While some may see these as advantages, they can also pose real threats to intellectual rigor, academic standards and quality control.

From the vantage point of the students/participants, these different characteristics impose a distinct trade-off. On the one hand, some aspirants would like to earn a degree as tangible evidence of their achievement that can be parlayed into higher level jobs or greater mobility. On the other hand, the degree requirements often create substantial hurdles. Mid-career and senior officials may not be able to afford the time and money that must go into a degree program. They also find it hard to accept the necessity of learning material whose relevance they suspect. Their academic classroom skills may have atrophied considerably in the decade or two since they were last in school. And they may deeply resent the subordinate status they are assigned as students

when their experience often qualifies them to deal with practical problems every bit as effectively as the faculty.

For these reasons, if one is to open up schools of public policy and management to mid-career public officials and executives, some special arrangements must be made. The special arrangements can be made within the relatively rigid constraints of degree programs, or with the much more fluid arrangements that are possible in certificate programs.

A. Special Arrangements in Degree Programs

Broadly speaking, to make degree programs appealing to mid-career officials and executives, one can make changes in the logistics of the enterprise, in the admission standards, or in the content of the curriculum and the pedagogic style.

1. Logistics: Financial Aid and Course Scheduling

With respect to the logistics of the enterprise the most obvious and most important adaptation is to find ways to reduce the cost of attending the programs to the students. The best solution to the financial problem is generally to establish agency sponsorships of individual student/participants. Indeed, in the best of circumstances, agencies will not only pay tuition bills, but also continue paying the student's salary while a degree candidate. This is a common solution in the private sector where the commitment to developing personnel is fairly strong, but it is practiced less in the public sector. One tends to find this commitment to training only in the largest and most "professional" public sector organizations. Even here, financial restrictions now threaten the enterprise.

A second solution to the financial problem is to seek third party funding to support scholarships or fellowships to attend the program. This has been a staple of U.S. graduate education for nearly thirty years as foundations and various public institutions have sponsored various forms of fellowship programs. It is less commonly extended to practising professionals. If there is a foundation or private donor who is particularly interested in one locale or element of the public sector (such as Houston on health, Cleveland on criminal justice), they might be willing to make a grant to see to it that first-rate people from that sector can attend first-rate educational institutions. Our experience is that this is a "hard sell," but if it can be tied to visions of effective leadership, and if the person or foundation is interested in effective leadership, one can sometimes make the enterprise attractive. The strategy may be more effective for local institutions and local foundations than for national operations where the potential impact of a few people is inevitably diluted and obscured. It is also important to keep in mind that the establishment of a fellowship program inevitably creates a problem of selecting the candidates who will receive the fellowship. This not only creates an administrative burden, but also exposes the sponsoring institution to criticism for its selection procedures, and hard feelings among those rejected.

After finances, the second most important logistical problem to solve for mid-career officials and executives is the problem of scheduling and pacing of the program. Indeed, if one cannot solve the financial problem by subsidizing the student or granting a degree that is so valuable that it is clearly a worthwhile investment for the student, the only other solution is to arrange a schedule for obtaining a degree that allows the officials to continue to work. There are many different solutions to this problem.

The easiest is simply to allow students to take less than a full time course load without making any changes in the schedule of courses. Essentially the notion here is that officials might be able to find room in their working schedules to take a course or two each semester, but they cannot find the time to enroll on a full time basis. This obviously lengthens the time it takes to get a degree, imposes restrictions on what courses the officials can take, increases the administrative cost for handling an individual student, and loses some of the intensity and synergy that come from being a full time student, but it has the advantage of making regular courses available to mid-career officials without requiring basic changes in the course schedule. The University of Maryland integrates mid-career professionals into its regular Masters of Public Management program classes. Students take courses over a three year period to complete their degree. Most classes are scheduled in the late afternoon (4:00-6:00 p.m.) so that the workday disruption is minimized.

A more radical solution to the scheduling problem involves offering separate classes at night or on weekends. Thus, for example, Carnegie-Mellon has built its Master of Public Management Program around a set of courses offered to mid-career officials in the evenings. This strategy also lengthens the time that it takes for a student to complete a degree, and therefore increases administrative costs and loses some educational effectiveness through lost intensity and synergy across courses. In addition, however, this solution has the further problem of requiring new courses to be developed, and teachers must adapt themselves to new schedules.

A third solution to the scheduling problem involves scheduling programs in bursts of intensive activity; the students meet their course requirements by taking a week or two off periodically to take a course that is packed into that time frame. Like the "night school" solution, this tactic requires the design of new courses and re-orientation of faculty schedules. It has the virtues, however, of retaining the intensity of full time academic activity, and, in all likelihood, of being preferred by faculty to the solution of nights and weekends. It also has the advantage of being more like short course certificate programs, and therefore helps to position a school for this sort of activity as well. Indeed, it might be possible to imagine offering courses packed into one or two week intensive programs that would be attractive to both degree students and those who are only interested in certificates. The Government Executives Institute at the University of North Carolina, the LBJ Schools top state managers program and the Harvard Business School's smaller company management program have all demonstrated variants on this approach.

2. Admission Standards

There are three crucial issues with respect to admissions standards to degree programs designed to accommodate mid-career officials. The first is how to value professional experience and accomplishment relative to past academic performance in granting admission to the program. The second is how to measure professional experience and accomplishment (assuming that it will be relevant). The third is whether to rely on aptitude tests, and if so, which ones.

The issue of taking professional attainments seriously in the admissions process arises because there are many people who have had distinguished professional careers in the public sector, but whose academic achievements are more modest. They may have attended mediocre colleges, or received mediocre grades, or perhaps even have failed to obtain an undergraduate degree. Yet, once in the workplace, their performance may have been exemplary. For such people, the question becomes should their poor academic performance be taken as disqualifying with respect to admission, or should their outstanding professional performance outweigh their poor academic qualifications. It seems to us that the obvious answer to that question is that the professional accomplishments should be taken quite seriously as an element that qualifies them for admission to graduate degree programs. Indeed, it might even outweigh the absence of an undergraduate degree. If making room for mid-career officials in a program means anything, it must mean recognizing the value of the knowledge and skills they have developed on the job. Obviously, these are not sufficient for the granting of academic degrees, but they must be seen as contributing. So, the issue is not hard in principle.

What turns out to be difficult is measuring the quality of the professional experience and attainments of applicants to these programs. The typical method has been to specify a certain amount of practical experience - usually five years or more. But this raises a whole host of questions about what sorts of experience qualifies. Do summer jobs count? How about working in a non-profit agency, or a newspaper, or the government relations section of a private corporation? Does it matter whether one was a boss or only a clerk? And so on. Even if one had a suitable definition of professional experience, gathering and validating information about that experience is quite costly and imprecise. Job titles are often deceptively grandiose. Determining the real content of the job requires essays by the participants (which must then be read), or interviews with bosses and colleagues. Gauging the quality of the performance on the job is even more difficult. So, this information is exceedingly difficult to gather and use.

What ultimately happens is that an institution reaches an answer to this question in the way that it designs its application for admission, and the procedure it uses to review the applications. The form for the Kennedy School's MPA program, for example, requires several essays that not only describe the professional experience of the applicants, but also check their ability to interrogate their own professional experience. The procedure for reviewing the applications is a joint faculty and administrative process. This is necessary to reassure the faculty that the administrative interest in building the program is not done at the expense of genuine distinction and ability in the student body. But there is always the worry that this is occurring because of the difficulty of gauging the quality of professional accomplishments and attainments

- particularly when one is dealing with officials mired in the middle of their careers in the middle of their bureaucracies. It would be a great contribution not only to the future success of mid-career programs, but also for the practice of government if the profession could refine its conception of what distinguished performance at the mid-ranks of government bureaucracies really required.

The question of aptitude tests arises for two different reasons - one entirely legitimate, and another slightly more illicit. The legitimate reason is that whatever a person's accomplishment on the job, there is a legitimate question about that person's ability to learn in a school setting. After all, not everyone learns well in school. It may take some special characteristics for people to be able to use their school experience effectively and well. To the extent that aptitude tests distinguished people who can learn well in school from those who find that learning environment less useful, the tests would be extremely valuable.

The illicit reason is to rely on the tests to relieve worries and burdens on the faculty. They can relieve the faculty's worries about the quality of students by apparently providing objective evidence of the "quality" of the student body. This is faintly illicit because it imports too narrow a definition of "quality." They can relieve burdens on the faculty by guaranteeing that the faculty will not have to change either the content or the pedagogic style of their courses to interest the students. In effect, the tests guarantee that the students are prepared to learn in the way that the faculty prefers to teach. Since the use of the tests would reduce the pressure on the faculty to experiment with alternative materials and approaches, whatever potential exists in these alternative approaches will be less likely to be developed.

3. Curriculum Content and Pedagogic Style

The third broad area in which accommodations for mid-career officials could be made within the context of traditional graduate degree programs is in the curriculum and pedagogic style of the program. In general, mid-career students are less impressed by the disciplinary basis of the material that forms the core of their curriculum, and much more interested in its immediate practical value. This most often implies that the standard curriculum in schools of public policy must shift its emphasis from training in quantitative methods of policy analysis, to a more diversified curriculum that includes courses on managing public sector enterprises, and on substantive areas of public policy within which students might practice applying their analytic skills, and from which they might learn what academics have learned or thought about specific policy areas.

Of course, there are important reasons to resist these demands for relevance. One is that the design of the curriculum should be influenced at least partly by what the existing institutions know how to teach, and the comparative advantage of most schools of public policy is in analytic methods - not management or specific substantive areas. A second is that the aim of degree granting programs is not to leave professional practice as it now is, but to improve it. Thus, to the extent that the commitment of policy programs to the use of analytic methods in evaluating past performance or planning future enterprises strengthens the profession of governing, these

should be taught rather than things which challenge and equip the profession less usefully. Or, to the extent that a School could identify "best practice" in the domain of public management, these should be taught to improve the average level of performance. Third, not only should these programs challenge the current profession in general, but they should also challenge individual students. Since most mid-career officials are relatively strong in their knowledge of management and the substance of the areas in which they work, they should be encouraged - even required - to play to weakness in their individual programs.

Still, even with all these caveats, the balance of a curriculum designed for mid-career students would probably shift in the direction of applications of analytic techniques and management of public enterprises compared to where the intellectual center of most graduate programs in public policy now lie. Note that one way to think about this shift is that it involves a shift from "analysis" to "management." Another way to think about the shift is that it involves a shift from pre-occupation with "policy" and "substance" to "implementation" and "institutional maintenance." Perhaps the most important way to think about the shift in emphasis, however, is to see that what is fundamentally required is a shift from teaching social science theories that are relevant to both policy and management (e.g. economics, political science, statistics, operations research, etc.) to an interest in teaching about practical problem solving regardless of whether the problems to be solved are policy problems or managerial problems. The significance of this shift, of course, is that one finds oneself in the business of teaching how to do "particular prescription" rather than "general description." This, in turn, means that the solutions to the problems become less determinate and less obviously correct, since there can always be disagreements about which objective function is to be maximized, and which facts should be taken as facts and which as likelihoods. It also means that there is more room and more necessity for creativity and invention in both the definition of the problem and the imagining of solutions. These observations, in turn, mean that there is more room for discussion and different opinions than in a world where the teacher is explaining to the students what is known conclusively.

The ultimate effect of a shift of the curricular focus will thus be a shift in pedagogic style as well as curriculum content. As the focus shifts from learning and applying theories about both policy and institutions to inventing solutions to concrete policy and managerial problems, the pedagogic style inevitably shifts to one where discussion and invention are more appropriate, and where the faculty member is a valued guide, but no longer a dominant expert. This pedagogic style is often valued by mid-career students more highly than alternative approaches since it enhances their status, values their experience and recognizes their responsibility for their own education.

At the extreme, then, one can end up with a graduate degree program that looks very different in its content and style from the traditional form of pre-career public policy programs. This difference is quite obvious in the difference between the Kennedy School's MPP Program for pre-career students, and its MPA Program for mid-career officials. Even though the MPA program has a "shadow core" that is modeled on the basic courses in the MPP program, the students generally take a larger proportion of their program in the areas of management and

substantive policy than in analytic methods. Moreover, the pedagogic style across all the courses is quite different. There is a heavier use of cases, examples, exercises and discussions, and less use of textbooks and lectures. For a while, the faculty viewed this as a dilution of the MPP curriculum, but increasingly the faculty that teaches in the MPA program finds the MPA courses and students more challenging and interesting to teach than the pre-career students - particularly when the problems are practical rather than theoretical.

B. Certificate Programs

If an institution cannot make enough room for mid-career officials in the context of degree granting programs because the price (reckoned in financial or academic terms) seems too high to pay, they can still get into the business of training mid-career officials or executives by offering certificate programs rather than degree programs. To a great extent, all of the concerns that make degree granting programs difficult for mid-career officials (e.g. the opportunity cost of their time, the tuition cost of the program, the interference with careers in their own organization, etc.) apply equally to certificate programs. Indeed, given that the reward for a certificate program is only a certificate not a degree, the costs may pose an even greater obstacle to enrollment for the benefits may seem much smaller. But these potential liabilities are outweighed by a very important advantage: the certificate programs can be shorter and less intensive than the degree granting programs. This means that they can be offered and taken at a much lower cost to both the providing institution and the student/participants than degree granting programs. It also means that a different portion of the profession can be attracted. Specifically, the programs might reach a higher level group than can be reached by the longer, more intensive degree granting programs, because they can be fitted within the limited amounts of time that very high level officials can make available for additional training.

We emphasize the word "apparently" in this discussion because the certificate programs carry substantial risks hidden behind their apparent simplicity. These risks are particularly great if the program reaches for high levels of the profession. The reason for the greater risks are essentially three. First, without the reward of the degree, and without the academic power associated with the granting of degrees, participant demands for immediate relevance and value increase in strength. These demands are often hard to meet for academic institutions that have become accustomed to relying on their degree granting power to motivate student interest. Second, while the potential benefits to an institution of high level exposure are great, the risks are equally great. When an institution fails with an important audience it is obviously much worse than when it fails with a less consequential group. Third, to identify opportunities for these programs, market them successfully, and treat the high level officials who come with appropriate degrees of solicitousness and attention often requires a rather substantial investment in administrative capabilities to work alongside the academic efforts. Both the quantity of the administrative effort, and the relationship between the faculty and administrative efforts are often unfamiliar to graduate programs in public policy, yet crucial to the success of the ventures. Thus, there is a risk of failure, very high costs associated with failure, and very high costs associated with efforts to insure against failure.

Despite these potential problems, APPAM institutions are making forays into the domain of certificate programs for both high level and mid-career public executives. While one could, in principle, categorize these programs in many different ways, we have found it useful and descriptive to think of these diverse programs in four distinct bundles - each with its own potential market, and each with its own distinctive cost/benefit structure.

1. "Topical Briefings"

The first kind of program we describe as "topical briefings." These programs are built around intermittent opportunities where the faculty's knowledge assumes more or less suddenly some practical value to the professional world. In one version of these programs, the situation arises as a planned effort to disseminate research findings beyond the immediate sponsors of the research. In a second version, an on-going research effort suddenly assumes unusual importance because the spotlight of public attention suddenly shifts in that direction. For example, Rand's long term research program in terrorism or sentencing policies might suddenly form the nucleus of a series of topical briefings as Libya's conduct becomes more outrageous or the prisons become more crowded. Or, Maryland's extensive knowledge of the institutions and processes of federal budgeting might suddenly become important as the Gramm-Rudman deadlines approach. And so on.

Such programs have several distinctive characteristics. First, they are much more likely to focus on substantive or concrete institutional topics than on methodological or theoretical subjects. If the subject is theoretical or methodological, it is likely to be linked fairly directly to important policy issues, and the audience for the briefings will probably include academics as well as practitioners. Second, the programs are likely to be relatively short (i.e. less than a week long), and relatively short lived. There are few particular issues that can sustain a very lengthy program, and it is the defining characteristic of these programs that they are on topical subjects. Thus, public demand will be short-lived. Third, the programs are likely to have relatively low total costs, but the average cost of these programs per participant is likely to be high. To the extent that the intellectual investment in these programs has already been paid for by research programs, the costs can be kept low. But the administrative costs of these programs are likely to be high because the efforts to develop the market, build the facilities, and so on cannot be amortized by operating the program repetitively over a long period of time.

These observations suggest that "topical briefings" will inevitably be an opportunistic feature element of mid-career and executive programs. A small school with a limited research program could get lucky and discover that they could run a reasonable number of such programs each year. A large school may cover enough areas to be able to anticipate having such programs in several areas each year and therefore be willing to invest in some administrative capacity to facilitate the programs. But intermittent opportunism will be the style of such programs.

2. Substantive Programs

A second kind of certificate program is one that is organized around particular substantive areas such as environmental policy, health policy, labor policy, criminal justice policy, international development, or defense and foreign policy. To a degree, one can think of these programs as "market oriented." Since the world of public policy and management tends to be organized around substantive areas, one can often find ready markets for these programs in the "issue networks", the professional associations, or the agencies that are particularly concerned with specific substantive issues. Moreover, they often draw on the distinctive competence of the schools of public policy and management which also tend to specialize in specific policy areas, and therefore think of themselves as qualified to offer such programs. An example of such programs would be Harvard's Program in National and International Security (NISM).

The difficulty with such programs comes when one has to design a specific curriculum. One's first instinct is to design the program around the specific substantive issues that are important in the field, and to which one's own faculty and research programs can make a contribution. There are two problems with this, however. The first is that it is difficult to fill a two or three week program with nothing but one substantive analysis after another. The pedagogic style tends to be monotonous, and there is too little coherence in the overall curriculum. The second is that with respect to any particular issue, there is apt to be more expertise among the participants than among the faculty. In such programs, there are always people who are more current than the faculty, or at least have well informed and strongly held views. And this, along with the pedagogic monotony, tends to weaken the credibility and standing of the faculty - particularly if the basic premise of the program is that it exists to bring academic wisdom to the practitioners.

Anticipating this result, and also wondering how to bring more faculty into the program, the designers of such programs usually leaven the program with material where they can be more sure of being the most knowledgeable. This often means bringing in some special methodology useful in addressing the substantive policy questions. They also add some wrinkle to the basic premises of the program that give more respect to the practitioners' knowledge. Thus, for example, Harvard's NISM program added some training in macro-economics, the law of the first amendment, using history for analysis, and some newly developed techniques of foreign assessment to discussions of policy issues, and analyses of the institutions of national security. They also emphasized the importance of bringing the diverse elements of the foreign policy community together in a single program, thereby facilitating each individual's knowledge of the diverse perspectives of the community as a whole.

3. General Management Programs

To escape the pressure that comes from teaching experienced professionals in areas of their own substantive competence, schools of public policy and management can offer certificate programs built around the general methods of public policy and management abstracted from

specific substantive areas, or specific institutions. In principle, this approach should have marketing advantages, for no element of the public sector is excluded. In practice, the general programs are somewhat difficult to sell because the public sector (unlike the private sector) continues to believe that each substantive area, and each organization is sufficiently different from each other that executives can learn very little of value out of the context of their own substantive areas and agencies.

Similarly, in principle, this approach should fit the distinctive competence of the schools of public policy and management since they are predicated on the idea that a specific set of methodological skills exist that are of value to practitioners no matter what their substantive area, particular institution, or specific job. In practice, this is hard to sell because the particular methodologies in which schools of public policy and management particularly excel are in the analytic areas (whose relevance is suspect to many officials) rather than in management (whose relevance is more widely accepted). In fact, there are some important variants of these programs built around different emphases of the different methodological techniques.

It is possible to offer an executive program based on teaching the analytic techniques in which the schools in public policy and management have particularly excelled. Indeed, such programs exist. Duke's Top State Executive Program is a certificate program built primarily around analytic techniques. Similarly, George Washington University is investing in a set of programs in micro-economic theory, program evaluation and computers offered to executives in the General Accounting Office. But each of these programs has some special features that make them feasible. The Duke program enjoys the sponsorship of the Southern Growth Policies Board which not only reduces the administrative costs of marketing the program, but also vouches for its relevance and value. Duke also has the advantage of having honed their skills in teaching analytic techniques by teaching a primarily undergraduate program. The GWU program has the advantage of having a close relationship with GAO, and of dealing with an organization whose commitment to technique is quite high. Without such special characteristics, it is not clear that there would be a demand for training in these areas. Perhaps one could organize a market among policy analysts and program evaluators in government and consulting firms, but no one has yet done this.

It would also be possible to build programs around specific managerial functions such as budgeting, personnel management, financial management, press relations, or strategic planning systems. And some such programs are being built, or could be built. The Humphrey Institute, for example, is planning a fairly long term, intensive certificate program one of whose major elements is strategic planning. It seems to us that Maryland and Boston University could build successful programs in public sector financial management. Again, however, it is not clear what the market for such programs would be. Nor is it clear that schools of public policy and management know enough about these subjects to launch them at low cost, and with reasonable confidence that they would succeed.

The most attractive model of certificate programs built around methods are those programs that are based on the techniques of general management. Most business schools have

organized their executive programs on this basis. This is also the basis for the largest portion of the Kennedy School's executive programs. There are essentially two interacting issues in the design of such programs. The first is how public management will be defined, or more particularly, what managerial functions will be attended to in the curriculum of such programs. The second is what institutions and what levels of government officials will be targeted in such programs.

The problematic issues in the definition of public management is whether the curriculum will be limited to the traditional managerial functions recognized in public administration such as budgeting, personnel management, organizational design, organizational behavior, management control, information systems, and so on. Or, whether the curriculum will incorporate the particular strengths of public policy programs that include economics, statistics, policy analysis, and program evaluation. Or, whether the curriculum will also attempt to teach about emerging issues in public management such as political management, press relations, and the development of organizational strategies.

This is related to the issue of the level of official that is the focus of the market for an important reason. The lore about the institutional structure of the U.S. government has it that career officials in bureaucracies should not be concerned about political management. The political world of legislatures, the press, interest groups, and so on operate outside their domain. It is only political appointees and elected executives who should be concerned about these matters. It follows, then, that if the focus of these programs is on career officials, the emphasis should be on the traditional downward looking functions of management; e.g., personnel, budgeting and so on.

This view seems wrong to us on three counts. First, it is by no means clear to us that career officials at mid-levels of government institutions benefit much from training in administrative systems. After all, these do not change very often. When they do, they are generally re-designed by high level officials rather than low. And their routine operations and maintenance are in the hands of specialized units of administration and management rather than broadly dispersed throughout the organization. So, if one wanted to design a program for mid-level officials, it would probably focus primarily on the techniques of face to face supervision, and the analysis and review of specific operating programs rather than the design of administrative systems.

Second, we subscribe to the view of Harvard's Business School that it is desirable to train people at all levels of an organization not only to be able to see things from the perspective of the general manager, but also to think in those terms oneself. This is important not only because it facilitates agreement in the inevitable arguments across the functional elements of a particular organization, but also because it allows subordinate managers to take independent action in a way that will co-ordinate with the aims of top management. So, it is valuable to teach from the point of view of general management even if the audience does not consist of general managers.

Third, we hold the even more heretical view that mid-level career officials have responsibilities that are like those of higher level managers. They are responsible for thinking about their objectives, imagining alternative ways of doing business, and coming up with new program ideas. For this reason, they are also responsible for thinking how such ideas would "play" in political environments. They also find themselves occasionally interacting with this political environment. They are interviewed by reporters. They write papers which leak to legislative overseers. They are lobbied by interest groups. In essence, then, we think their jobs are strategic, policy-making jobs as well as technical, implementation jobs. Thus, while the relative importance of the different managerial functions changes as one moves up and down levels of an organization, all of the functions are at least partially represented at each level.

We are not sure we are right about this. And even if we were right, we are not sure that we could get the market to accept this idea. But it seems significant to us that we have been able to run a large number of programs on this basis.

4. Leadership and Personal Skills Programs

A radically different approach to mid-career and executive training is to decide to work on the personal orientations and skills of the executives. This approach is based on the idea that the principal instrument one must use to make something important happen in the public sector is oneself, and that one's own skills includes a great deal more than one's cognitive skills and knowledge. It includes things like creativity, courage and imagination. It also includes such things as managing one's own time, coping with stress, listening well, and learning to speak and write in ways that move people as well as state facts with precision. Sometimes, such things are bundled together in programs designed to enhance leadership abilities. Other times they are disaggregated into specific personal skills.

These programs have widespread appeal to experienced officials, for they speak directly to the thing that most managers find most frustrating - namely themselves. They keep wishing that someone could give them the secret so that they could show up in the office each day and find some way to be sure that their work was adding up to something. They also tend to think that their fears and frustrations on the job represent failures of personality and technique. Hence, to the extent that they could be taught about their personalities or learn techniques that allow them to work more effectively with others and with less conflict and stress, they are hopeful that they can become happier, more effective managers.

The difficulty with such programs in the context of schools of public policy and management is that they do not seem to draw on faculty from traditional disciplines. Moreover, their emphasis on psychology, temperament, and the affective side of management clashes with the predominantly intellectual and cognitive thrust of programs in policy analysis and management. Finally, the apparently micro emphasis of the programs on the person of the individual managers conflicts with the more macro concerns with broad policies, big institutions, and management systems that is also characteristic of programs in public policy and management.

Despite these problems, these programs are beginning to make their mark in mid-career and executive programs. The dominant mid-career and executive program at the Hubert Humphrey Institute, for example, is the Program for Reflective Leadership. We at the Kennedy School have discovered that adding these features to existing executive programs tends to intensify and deepen the learning of more traditional subjects, and through more traditional pedagogic devices. Whether such programs could ever stand alone as a powerful element of mid-career and executive training, and how they might be effectively integrated into other programs remain important questions.

III. Pros and Cons of Mid-Career and Executive Training

Deciding whether to enter the field of mid-career and executive training, and if so, in what kinds of programs requires a judgment about the potential benefits weighed against the certain costs and risks. It is helpful to set out the categories or accounting terms in which such benefits and costs might be reckoned.

A. Potential Benefits

The potential benefits of such programs can be broadly grouped in five categories ranging from the most immediate and tangible justifications to the most future oriented and intangible effects.

1. Economic Benefits: Intensive Resource Utilization

The most immediate and practical justification for such programs is an economic one: the desire to use an underutilized resource available to the sponsoring institution more intensively than it is now being used to produce revenues that can be used for other purposes. Which resources are slack can vary. Sometimes it is a building that can be used more intensively: dorms may be unoccupied in the summer; classrooms might be available during semester breaks; a nice conference center donated by an alumnus may be vacant. Other times it is intellectual products such as research findings or curriculum developed in the degree granting programs that seems underutilized and potentially valuable to the world. Indeed, most faculty are frustrated that the work they do to produce research findings or develop first rate courses goes unacknowledged and unused not only by the profession, but also by their own institutions. Still other times, it is the faculty that can be used more intensively, although it is hard to know when the intensive use of faculty for these programs begins to diminish their research productivity in terms of both quantity and quality.

Now, there is a certain deceptive quality to this idea of slack resources, for it costs a great deal to figure out how to use these resources, organize them into programs, and market the programs. In effect, there is an up-front administrative cost that must be paid to organize to use the resources effectively. That cost may or may not be large relative to the potential value of the apparently slack resource. In addition, to have slack resources in aggregate is not necessarily to have slack resources in areas that have value to the profession. Often, the

resources that are most valuable to the profession - particularly on the faculty side - are the resources that are already being most intensively used. The slack resources are the ones that are hard to market to the profession. Thus, the simple notion that one can make money for one's institution by using one's resources more intensively in revenue raising activities can be wrong because it underestimates the additional costs that must be born to organize and sell the product, or because the valued products come not from slack resources in the institution, but instead from the most intensively used parts of an institution.

2. Professional Contact

The second reason for doing mid-career and executive training is to establish contact with the profession, and increase an institution's visibility. Obviously, if an institution only has contact with graduate students, it has a much lower profile with those practicing government than if government executives were central to its programs. To a degree, this liability can be overcome by creating active alumni associations. But it can also be overcome by creating "instant alumni" in influential positions through mid-career and executive training.

Contact and visibility in the profession create benefits throughout the institution. It is helpful to the placement function of the pre-career programs simply by cultivating job opportunities. Perhaps even more importantly, it can increase the ability of the current profession to use the special skills of the graduates of the pre-career programs. On the faculty research side, pre-career and executive programs can develop personal contacts that can be parlayed into consulting opportunities, or more sustained research efforts. Indeed, one must be a little careful that the opportunities for consulting created by the executive programs do not begin to overwhelm the faculty. It turns out that the demand for short training programs or management consulting in small scale contracts from the government is quite large. Over the long run, these opportunities may end up competing with the market one is trying to create for broader, more sustained training programs in both the budgets of the agencies with whom one is dealing, and in the time of one's own faculty.

3. Community Service

It is worth noting that these opportunities for consulting and closer engagement with practicing officials and operating agencies can also be justified not in terms of private benefits to faculty or institutional benefits to the school, but also in terms of service from the university to the community. Indeed, as we talked to the officials in the APPAM schools who were active in committing their organizations to this sort of activity, we were struck by how often they talked in terms of an obligation to serve the community. Often, the original charters of their programs included a clause that emphasized service to the profession and the community. That clause became the predicate and justification for entering the field of mid-career and executive training. At the Humphrey Institute, for example, they thought the obligation of technical service to the community was part of the general culture of land-grant universities.

4. Faculty Development

While the engagement of the faculty in the real problems of the profession carries some risks in terms of distracting them from enterprises with greater long term value, it also carries some potential benefits; namely, to help educate the faculty about the problems with which the profession is now grappling, and to provide experience that equips them to deal with these problems more effectively. For most faculty, it is a sobering experience to confront experienced executives, and to try to help them with their problems. It focuses attention on the difference between what they know and what is valuable in a way that no amount of intellectual conversation about this issue can do. Similarly, if the faculty are tempted into working relationships with the individuals and agencies of government, they learn very quickly how to be helpful, and that changes the way they think about themselves and their jobs. To the extent that one wants a faculty that is not only part of the academy, but also part of the profession of governing, mid-career and executive programs can provide a fast way to develop such a faculty.

5. Enhancing the Quality of Government

The fifth reason to engage in mid-career and executive training is to enhance the quality of governance. To the extent that schools of public policy and management have something important to say about how the governmental enterprise should be conducted, and to the extent that they can teach concepts and skills that are helpful to those engaged in the task, the best way for them to produce an attractive result is to teach those things to people who are particularly influential in government. Generally, that means teaching executives rather than those just entering the profession. Teaching people at earlier stages of their careers risks the possibility that the people will leave public service, or languish in low-level positions. This does not mean that the pre-career programs should be abandoned. Indeed, it seems likely that over time there would be a synergistic effect of teaching people at many different levels and different stages of their careers. But it does mean that the executive programs are particularly valuable elements of a school's overall portfolio.

B. Typical Problems to be Overcome

These potential benefits tempt schools of public policy and management into the domain of mid-career and executive training. What holds them back is some potential problems - some obvious, some more subtle. Broadly speaking, these can be classified as administrative problems, or as academic problems.

1. Administrative Problems

To organize and run successful mid-career and executive programs one must leap over some relatively high administrative hurdles. Probably the most important is in the area of marketing the program. This includes having the concept of the program sufficiently well worked out so that it has market appeal. But it also means getting on the road and talking to a large number of potential donors of fellowships, agency sponsors of students, and students

themselves. As one builds a network of alumni, this gets easier. And one can also reduce the costs of marketing by finding a partner in the form of a professional association that already has a mailing list and conferences. But there must still be a fairly substantial investment.

The second crucial kind of administrative investment is in caring for the students while they are at the school. Mid-career students come with different housing demands, different health demands, different child-care demands, different spouse employment demands, and so on than mid-career students. Not all of these must be responded to, of course. But the problems they face are always there as issues that can surface and profoundly affect the quality of their experience at the school. A particular need that cannot easily be sloughed off is the creation of some special capabilities for placement. The demands will be different and more urgent than the placement demands of pre-career students. If the students are paying a high price for their education, uprooting their families, and trying to change their careers, the schools will inevitably find themselves the focus of some of the anxieties and fears associated with such upheaval.

The principal logistics problems presented by executives in certificate programs are different. They are generally concerned with their accommodations. They worry about the food, the lodging, the athletic facilities, the quality of the xeroxing, and where they can receive messages and take telephone calls. Behind much of the nagging about these issues is a strong desire to be treated with respect and interest by the institution to which they have come. To meet both the particular mechanical demands and the broader demands to be taken seriously by the program to which they have come, it is generally necessary to dedicate some first class administrative talent. The people must be efficient and charming. They must also be extremely patient.

To a certain degree, first rate administrative arrangements can substitute for less satisfactory academic performance. In fact, it sometimes seems that one could run a successful executive program with little more than a first class group of participants and first rate administrative capabilities. But our experience has been that it is better to think of the administrative capabilities as a necessary but not sufficient condition for success. Lacking administrative capacity can kill an otherwise successful program. Ultimately, however, one must also be able to deliver the intellectual goods. And that brings us to the academic obstacles.

2. Academic Obstacles

Indeed, the hardest obstacles to overcome are the academic obstacles. Two seem particularly important.

The first has to do with the painful discovery that one's school may know relatively little that the profession wants to learn. This may be because the profession thinks of useful learning in terms that are too narrow and particular. Or, it could be because the schools have not made investments in areas that are, in fact, important in the public sector. Obviously, to overcome this problem requires a substantial investment in what the school knows, as well as how the school thinks of itself and manages itself. For, to change what the school as a whole knows requires

a change in the school's self image and pattern of intellectual investment. And to make this change all at once necessitates important managerial changes in its arrangements for conducting research and making academic appointments and promotions.

The second problem is probably less fundamental, but it would be easy to underestimate its significance. That problem has to do with the pedagogic style of the school, and the structure of the relationships established between faculty and students. At one level, this involves the issue of lectures and textbooks versus discussions and cases as pedagogic devices. But the issue is really much deeper than this. It involves the question of whether the faculty respects the representatives of its profession that come to the mid-career and executive programs. Our experience is that the actual level of respect shows through the program regardless of the School's intention and regardless of its pedagogic techniques.

There is a risk in going too far to cultivate a relationship with the profession, of course. If one is not careful, one can end up pandering to the profession and being its cheerleader rather than its guide or challenger. On the other hand, if one is disrespectful, one can be easily dismissed by those one is trying to help. The stance we have found helpful is to think of our programs and our faculty as a "challenging mirror" to be held up to the profession. We want them to recognize themselves and their problems in the programs we present, but to be challenged by the images - not made complacent.

IV. Developing Mid-Career and Executive Programs

To get into the business of mid-career and executive programs, APPAM Schools must not only decide to do so, but follow discrete paths in developing the programs. The paths involve differing degrees of risk, and differing levels and kinds of investment. The risks associated with launching these programs are suggested by the earlier analysis. Some risks show up in administrative areas; the other risks accumulate in academic areas.

The key administrative risk is that an APPAM School can announce that it is open for business and have no students appear. The public sector training market is notably underdeveloped in comparison to the private sector market. And this market - buffeted by cutbacks at the federal level and enforced economies in many states and localities - may simply not acknowledge a new venture. When Harvard launched its ambitious 13 week program for Senior Executive Fellows in the fall of 1980, 16 participants turned up for the initial class against hopes of 25-40. While enrollment now seems to have stabilized at about 40 per session, poor market response can threaten both short run economic interests and longer term institutional damage. Generalized expectations of interest and support don't always translate into talented and funded applicants. Aggressive market development and recruiting is essential in the early stages of any executive education program.

A subtler administrative risk arises from the need to adapt administrative support systems and logistics to meet executive program standards. This extends through every facet of a prospective program, e.g., food, housing, reproduction quality of classroom materials, classroom

layout and design, teaching, extra-curricular activity and so on. Mature adults have different standards and expectations than young masters' students. The key question is whether one's institution can adapt to deliver the necessary quality service to support a successful venture in executive education.

The academic risks arise in the domains of curriculum and pedagogy on the one hand, and faculty development on the other. Professional audiences have lower tolerance for academic elegance, demand relevance and expect instructors to indicate at least some awareness of the practitioners world. Curricular materials or pedagogy that are satisfactory with pre-career students may be inadequate for experienced professionals. The latter may be less comfortable with abstract materials common in master's level public policy programs. Similarly, the promising young faculty member who is a confident teacher to younger graduate students may find it difficult facing a room full of older, experienced practitioners. A traumatic classroom experience for a young instructor may hazard or retard the *individual's* development. Several such experiences in a poorly taught program may hazard the reputation and the development of the institution.

Given the risks, it follows that the investment required to make such a program successful can be quite substantial. If one needs to upgrade administrative and logistics services and recruit intensively, develop new curricular materials, and invest in improved teaching skills, the investment can be significant indeed. However, institutions have employed a number of successful strategies to lessen the initial investment. These include the following:

- First, market vicissitudes can be mitigated if a lead customer or agency is willing to commit a sizeable number of participants in advance, e.g., through a training contract or similar arrangement. This is a little like getting a "name" store to anchor a shopping center. It both guarantees a sizeable fraction of the center's revenues and helps attract other tenants. A decision by one state or city agency to commit five managers to an untried program may encourage others to experiment as well.
- Second, one can contract out much of the administrative and logistics support (housing, food, etc.). There are many conference center facilities that offer services on both a residential and non-residential basis. While they vary in quality and cost, a maiden program may benefit by engaging services and facilities of experienced professionals, thus reducing the risk of problems in this area.
- Third, one can decide to make a large investment in first rate administrative and logistical capabilities. This was probably the key decision made at the Kennedy School in developing its executive programs. Once we had a significant administrative capacity in this area, the future was guaranteed in terms of direction, and ultimately, in terms of quality.
- Fourth, one can seek linkages with more experienced, established purveyors of executive education. Many business schools offer successful programs to private sector executives.

The Kennedy School learned much and owes a real debt to its collaboration with the Harvard Business School. In turn, the University of Colorado established a relationship with the Kennedy School for the first three years of its Rocky Mountain Leadership Program. The benefits of such collaborations are obvious from the use of proven approaches, materials and faculty to enhanced institutional credibility. But depending too much or too long on others may retard the developmental objectives which were the initial grounds for launching such programs in the first place.

- Fifth, to deal with weaknesses on the faculty side, one can rely on outside "stars", experienced trainers, or others with established track records in the teaching of executives. If well known, they may even help draw customers. They can also reduce the risk of classroom failure and the institutional consequences of poor performance by any individual faculty member. Outside faculty can be particularly valuable in the start up phase if they are willing to apprentice or mentor younger "in-house" faculty. On the down side, use of outsiders can have the effect of reducing participants identification with the institution. And problems of curricular coordination and coherence grow as outside teachers and trainers from different disciplines and backgrounds are added to a program faculty.

With the foregoing in mind, what paths might a particular APPAM school adopt to test the waters of executive education? For heuristic purposes, we have distinguished three possible approaches:

- "Capacity push" - one that exploits existing capacity within the school's current resources;
- "Market pull" - in which the school responds to an opportunity posed by a particular segment of its professional market;
- "Market development" - in which the school attempts to exploit latent demand to craft a niche in the executive education market.

These three broad strategies are discussed in somewhat more detail below.

A. *Capacity Push: Minimal Investment, Minimal Risk, Variable Returns*

Most APPAM schools have resources of particular interest to various segments of the professional community. For example, a school with faculty strong in financial management, budgeting, or tax issues may exploit their comparative advantage to offer short seminars on the impact of Gramm-Rudman, new tax legislation, or similar topics. A school with a strong local or regional economics research capacity may conduct short seminars for local public and private sector individuals on the local or regional economy. Duke, which has an excellent program to teach policy analysis skills to undergraduates, has found that similar teaching approaches are well received by experienced professionals. The Humphrey Institute is using its successful

reflective leadership program as one of the core elements of a new venture. The possibilities are endless. Schools can take advantage of existing capacity and off the shelf materials to begin to extend and expand networks in particular professional communities. Such programs still require strong teaching or presentation skills and are advantaged by logistics and administrative support that at least exceeds the average professional conference.

An important question is how such programs "showing what we know" relates to the institutions larger strategy and objectives. A narrowly focused program that plays to the particular skills or topical knowledge of one (or a few) key faculty, or which follows topics of the day, may simply become a sink for time and energy.

B. *Market Pull:* Larger Investments; Minimal Risk; Uncertain Returns

As the technology, philosophy and practice of management evolves and as circumstances change in the public sector, there are frequent demands from agencies, states and cities for tailored executive education programs. For example, the excellence literature has spurred demands for seminars and programs that teach how these concepts apply to public sector employees. Similarly, advances in computer technology have led to requests for specialized courses on the applications of computing in management or the development of management information systems. And so on. And, changes in the political and economic environment, such as proposals for the devolution of federal programs to states and localities, or the pressures of international economic competition have led many public agencies to seek out expertise in universities. New legislation, changes in policy or other factors will spur agencies to plan and launch internal training programs. While there is a large training and consulting industry that conducts such programs, increasingly, government agencies are turning to public affairs and public policy schools as well. For example, Boston University conducts several tailored programs each year under contract to state or local agencies. An agency implementing a new performance appraisal and MBO system contracted with B.U. to conduct a several day workshop. Similarly, at the urging of the Texas Governor's office the LBJ School has launched a series of short programs for top state executives.

While it might not be wise for a school interested in executive education to start responding to public agency RFP's, conversations with public officials in nearby federal, state and local offices may well reveal latent demand for some tailored programs. Such programs, if performed under contract, have the advantage of reducing risk and exposure to vicissitudes in the market and of providing a secure base on which to build.

There are certain hazards associated with tailored or in-house programs, however. If participants are drawn from a single agency, locale or policy domain, the teaching challenge will be different. Homogeneity in some professional dimension (level of job, professional field, etc.) often means that participants bring a distinctive world-view or culture to the classroom. Homogeneity skews their perception of what is "relevant" toward the particular dimension they share in common. And it is often features of the participants common heritage that the teacher is most trying to challenge or reshape.

C. *Creating A Market: Longer Investment, Great Risk, Uncertain Returns*

The great majority of executive education programs in both public and private institutions are aimed at wide market segments: they rely on recruiting and a program's reputation to attract participants from a wide variety of agencies and institutions. In launching such programs, institutions blanket all available groups with whom they have plausible connections, e.g., masters program alumni, advisory committees, public sector agencies, particularly their training and personnel offices and so on. While this approach has been employed successfully in a number of institutions (including Harvard) it entails the greatest risks of failure. With a few exceptions, the public sector lacks the tradition of development and training common in many private institutions. Much of the training purchased by government agencies is managed by low-level personnel who lack any strategic view of the agencies needs and whose budgets are among the first cut during times of fiscal stress. While it is essential that one gets the materials in the hands of such individuals, they are rarely in a position to make commitments on behalf of their agency. To elicit such commitments, one must penetrate the top management ranks of public organizations. Yet, at top levels when political leadership turns over frequently, little thought may be given to the long term pay off from training and development in many public institutions. The novice marketeer is caught in something of a "Catch 22" - the folks who have the interest don't have the authority, and the folks who have the authority don't have the interest.

Launching a broad-based program does seem to require a substantial upfront investment in a number of areas - administration and marketing, materials, logistics and the like. Our experience at Harvard inclines us to raise a caution flag for any school that would try to launch a program without such an investment. And, that same experience suggests that there is a premium on administrative talent (as opposed to faculty) in the planning and start-up phase.

V. *Assessing Performance*

Evaluating the effects of mid-career and executive education programs is problematic, given the absence of any large scale investment in trials. Of course, the same point applies to most graduate programs in policy and management. Unlike law and medicine, one cannot assess public policy programs in terms of how graduates perform on nationally or regionally standardized tests such as law or medical boards.

Assessing mid-career/executive programs turns on the varied objectives in launching such ventures. If financial performance, faculty development or other such institutional objectives are part of the rationale for entering this business, any evaluation process should take these factors into account.

Most program "evaluations" are focused solely on the dimension of participant reaction at completion of the program. Such evaluations probe participant assessments of curriculum quality, teaching and administrative arrangements in great detail. These evaluations are often useful in providing clues about program performance. And they are related in important ways

to other objectives, e.g., high participant satisfaction facilitates recruiting for subsequent programs; "happy campers" generally mean enjoyable experiences for faculty and so on.

But there are several limitations with current evaluation methods:

- Participant assessments at the immediate end of a program may not reflect their longer term assessments once they are back on the job. The value of training and education programs may only become evident to participants over time as they test and exercise new found skills.
- Participants may not be sufficiently discriminating about the value of mid-career or executive programs. There is some suspicion that participants reported judgements reflect what (or who) they like, not necessarily what they have learned. There are many other biases in self-reporting that need not be detailed.
- It is difficult to assess how training affects subsequent on-the-job performance. In addition to self-reporting bias, there is the difficulty of charting cause and effect.

Some experiments have been conducted at Harvard to elicit third-party assessments of the effect of training on participants subsequent job performance. While far from tight methodologically, these methods may provide some better indication of program effectiveness.

VI. Conclusions

In the end, developing mid-career and executive programs involves a great deal of work and a great deal of risk. The obvious question, then, is why do it. The answer seems to be this:

- if an APPAM institution is financially secure and relatively satisfied with a niche in the academy that involves bringing analytic techniques to bear on practical problems, and training students for entry level jobs in public bureaucracies, there is little reason to change.
- if, on the other hand, an APPAM institution would like to grow so that it could sustain more diverse activities, or to learn more about the actual practice of government, or to meet an obligation for community service, or to have a larger impact on the actual conduct of the governmental enterprise, then the work and the risks are probably justified.

In short, it is a question of institutional strategy.