UNIVERSITY HONORS PROGRAM

SENIOR PROJECT - APPROVAL

Name: Candace Garner

College: Arts & Sciences Department: Psychology

Faculty Mentor: Robert Kronick

PROJECT TITLE: Service Learning at the University of Tennessee: Lessons from the past and suggestions for the Future

I have reviewed this completed senior honors thesis with this student and certify that it is a project commensurate with honors level undergraduate research in this field.

Signed: Robert V. Kronick, Faculty Mentor

Date: 9/17/04

Comments (Optional):

Senior Project
Approval & Completion Form

To be submitted on the **last day for providing the semester grades** and forwarded to:

University Honors Program, F 101 Melrose Hall
Tel.: 974-7875
Fax: 974-4784
honors@utk.edu

Student		**Faculty**	
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Project Title : The Policy Research Initiative

Approval

☑ I have reviewed this completed senior honors project with this student and certify that it is complete and commensurate with honors level undergraduate research in the field.

☐ Based on its academic merits, I recommend that this project be digitally catalogued and archived by Hodges Library to make it widely available.

☐ I recommend this project for an Award of Distinction.
Note: A small number of awards, including financial recognition, will be given at the UHP spring convocation.

Alan C. Lowe — Faculty Member's Signature

5/16/05 — Date

☐ Read, approved and recorded

University Honors Program — Date

(November 2004)

Bryce W. McKenzie

Honors Project

Policy Research Initiative for the The Baker Center for Public Policy

I. Policy Research Initiative—Proposal
II. Interview Summaries
III. Handout for Potential Supporters
IV. PowerPoint Presentation Sent in Preparation of Interviews

The Baker Center for Public Policy

Policy Research Initiative

The Howard Baker Center for Public Policy was developed by the University of Tennessee to honor its famous graduate and to carry on his tradition of service. The Baker Center has been operating for over two years, experiencing many successes in its inaugural programs at UT. From a full forum on imbedded journalism during Operation Iraqi Freedom to a keynote speech by famed author David Halberstien, the Baker Center has brought meaningful intellectual programming to students and faculty. Most recently, the Baker Center produced a conference dedicated to the Clean Air Act of 1970 that involved multiple speakers that included Tennessee Valley Authority and Great Smokey Mountain National Park experts. The conference ended with addresses from Senator Baker and Vice President Al Gore.

With a new building slated for construction on campus and the leadership of Senator Howard Baker and Executive Director Alan Lowe, formerly of the Presidential Libraries, the Baker Center has ample opportunity to provide a wide array of important services to UT and the state of Tennessee.

Currently, the Baker Center is pursuing a Policy Research Initiative. Tennessee lacks a comprehensive non-partisan research center. Many states have such programs that aid policymakers at the local, state, and national level. With the resources of the Baker Center and the University of Tennessee, the Baker Center certainly has the potential to provide strong, non-partisan research to aid in policy decisions for the State of Tennessee.

The following proposal will outline the methods and goals of the Policy Research Initiative.

The Initiative

Policy making impacts every Tennessean every day. Thus, it is imperative that legislators, mayors, and city/county councils have access to current research. Currently Tennessee's policy makers rely on study committees or other forms of ad hoc research when making important policy analysis. There are few institutions dedicated to researching issues that government officials can use. The most notable exception is the University of Tennessee's Institute of Public Service. The IPS provides four realms of research for government. The first two, the Municipal Technology Advisory Service and the County Technology Advisory Service, provide operational advising to local governments. The Center for Industrial Services provides research and consulting for existing businesses in Tennessee. Law Enforcement Innovation Center provides criminal justice training.

The IPS programs make great contributions to the state of Tennessee. The scope of the IPS's research, however, limits its ability of finding comprehensive policy. Important fields such as energy, environment, education, and health care do not find prominence among the IPS programming. Comprehensive public policy requires carefully orchestrated interdisciplinary research, followed by professional presentation of such research. The Baker Center Policy Research Initiative will orchestrate this

comprehensive form of study, calling upon previously existing foundations such as the IPS to aid in the overall objective.

The Policy Research Initiative hopes to bridge the gap in the policy development process. Policy makers seeking the best governance possible should have access to useful information developed in academics. By using the resources of the University of Tennessee, including students, faculty, and the Baker Center, the Policy Research Initiative can develop thorough studies of important issues. Georgia uses the Carl Vincent Institute of Government at the University of Georgia in a similar manner. The Vincent Institute closely resembles the IPS in services; however, it additionally provides for general research based on government issues. For years the Tennessee Legislature has been using the University of Tennessee to help with fiscal policy and agricultural research—the Baker Center hopes to open up to other areas of research with the same efficiency.

The Issues

In order to assure that the Policy Initiative's research is both current and relevant, a board would properly guide the Policy Center's research. Using other state models, a bipartisan board would help the center in scheduling research projects. A Policy Initiative board consisting of State elected and administrative officials, federal government officials, former government dignitaries, and influential businesspersons and citizens would meet periodically to aid the research agenda.

With such guidance, the Baker Center could complete thorough research reports during the policy determination process. Aided with extensive research from the University of Tennessee, decision makers could review the findings and conclusions—aiding the integrity of the decision making process. For example, if the Tennessee Legislature knew a bill on child care was slated for consideration in committee in March, the board would advise the Baker Center to develop child care research in order to aid discussion on the bill.

Because the Policy Research Initiative does not intend to duplicate research that currently exists at the University of Tennessee, the Baker Center will focus its policy areas on few key policy areas in which UT and the Baker Center have a core competency. The realms of research will include:

Energy and Environment: Local resources such as Oak Ridge National Laboratories and the Joint Institute of Energy and Environment have helped the Baker Center excel in energy and environmental policy. The Clear Air Act program shows the breadth of resources available to the Baker Center in this endeavor. Additionally, Senator Baker's passion for sound environmental policy during his tenure in the United States Senate fits well into the overall scheme of the policy center devoted to him and his distinguished career.

Education: The challenges of providing quality education in the State of Tennessee have become more apparent in recent times. The lottery and its scholarships, No Child Left Behind, government spending restrictions, and the plan of enacting a Pre-Kindergarten program have all made the realm of education a challenge for policy makers. Drawing upon well-established and research oriented faculty base in education

studies, the Baker Center can focus on thorough evaluations of education policy in Tennessee and elsewhere. Also, the responsibility of education research currently does not fall under the IPS or other prominent research institutions at the University of Tennessee. The need for such research is apparent and the Public Research Initiative has ample resources to meet the need.

Governance: Throughout his distinguished career, Senator Baker not only talked of policy, but also process. His writings reflect revolutionary thoughts on government structure and reviving the role of government and returning to its constitutional responsibilities. The Baker Center would open the discussion further on such topics of how to govern best and how to structure a government as to be responsible and responsive.

The Program Operations

The Policy Initiative plans to begin conducting research without an increase in staff. Currently, the Baker Center consists of a board of directors, a group of students referred to as Baker Scholars, a director, an assistant director, a program director, an archivist, and a secretary. The PRI would mainly call upon the leadership of the current staff and the abilities of students and faculty to create research analysis.

When the advisory board selects a topic to pursue, the Baker Center initiates the research project through three beginning steps:

1. Finding a faculty member to lead research on the project who excels in the topic under discussion

2. Finding students who wish to build their academic careers through participating in research opportunities directed toward public policy
3. Finding a government institution wishing to use the research to advise the project

After these steps have been fulfilled, the students mainly would have the responsibility of finding research on the topic. By searching all existing sources available and working through faculty. The research will be requested and reviewed by the faculty member responsible for the project. This faculty member will not only have the responsibility of maintaining the integrity of the research, but also to mentor and advise the students involved in the project.

Periodically, the students along with the faculty members and the Baker Center will brief the government institution to assure that the research remains relevant and useful. At the close, the Director of the Baker Center will approve the final product and assure that the research reaches the appropriate clients. The Baker Center will create time-lines for these projects in order to assure that they are completed effecciantly and effectively.

In other cases, a government institution may act as a client. Rather than the board directing a policy study, a political entity may solicit advice. In this situation, the Policy Research Initiative will assume the same protocol. Instead of finding a government institution to help advice, the Baker Center will simply work with the client for advice and assurance of the quality of the work.

This system should keep costs low. Using academic incentives such as internship credit or independent study credit, the bulk of research will cost the university little.

Although grant money may be necessary to garner faculty support, some project may fall in line with required research for the department. The Baker Center plans to gain additional support from state officials, which may help with funding and development.

The Pilot Project

Currently, the Baker Center plans to embark on a pilot project. The pilot project deals with the development of the South side of the riverfront in Knoxville. The Baker Center met with Dr. William Lyons, a UT professor of political science currently serving as Senior Director of Economic Development for the City of Knoxville. He suggested we assist in looking best practices for developing riverfront land. We are to take into account the attitude of the community, the rights of the government to convert land, and what other cities have undertaken to develop successful riverfront projects. A group of Baker Scholars have volunteered to help with research. Currently the Baker Center is working to find a faculty sponsor, and will continue talks with Dr. Ed Jepsen, a professor from planning and development to facilitate the study. The completion of the pilot project will end with a full example of what the Policy Research Initiative plans on creating.

Interview Summaries

Dr. David Feldman, Head of Political Science Department and Robert Schwartz, Director of Municipal Technology Advisory Services (December 2004)

The project began with several meetings with Dr. Feldman and Mr. Schwartz. Mr. Schwartz pushed the concept that most services provided by MTAS and CTAS are short-term operations consulting and a need existed for long term research. The two also helped show what programs already existed to advise certain departments of the government.

Dr. Joseph Johnson, President Emeritus, University of Tennessee (February 2005)

Dr. Johnson helped us find the appropriate channels to follow at the university. He stated he supported the idea and though it was very feasible. He helped set up appointments with Dr. Bob Levy and helped prepare us for the challenges of pushing such a program through the University of Tennessee.

Dr. William Lyons, Professor of Political Science, University of Tennessee, and Director of Economic Development, City of Knoxville (February 2005)

Dr. Lyons was especially enthused by the concept of this policy project. After meeting with us he suggested that we pilot a project through Knoxville. At this point Mayor Haslam Walked in the room and told us about his struggle with the development of the South front of the river. This has set the stage for our pilot project.

Dr. Robert Levy, Vice President of Academic Affairs, University of Tennessee (February 2005)

Dr. Levy helped us comprehend the academic side of the project. He advised us to watch for intellectual property rights within the university. Also, we needed to gain clearance to create independent study programs to entice student support. He also advised us to attempt partnering with IPS and to talk with Dr. Mary Taylor. Lastly he suggested that completing a successful pilot would be essential to gaining administrative support.

Tom Ballard, Former Vice President of Governmental Relations, University of Tennessee (February 2005)

The meeting with Mr. Ballard proved very fruitful because it outlined the realistic challenges of this project. He informed us of two main summaries: money and turf wars. He helped us understand how the state of Tennessee would be hesitant to rely on under funded research, and that services such as those provided by MTAS are generally paid for by the client. Also, he predicted the turf war that may arise with IPS. He also encourage

us to find an interdisciplinary approach, working with environmental, education, planning, law, and social work experts.

Dr. David Feldman, Head of Political Science Department (March 2005)

Dr. Feldman has always been a help to the Policy Research Initiative. In this meeting he helped us to facilitate the pilot project. He suggested Dr. Ed Jepson to aid on the riverfront study and also gave us other departments to look toward for advice, including the College of Agriculture and the Geography Department.

Dr. Mary Taylor, Director of the Institute of Public Service (March 2005)

Dr. Taylor directs the IPS. She seemed less than enthusiastic about our Policy Research Initiative, stating that IPS was already planning to conduct the same service. She showed us a proposal she submitted to Governor Phil Bredesen's administration that outlined the IPS's plans to do preemptive policy studies for the government of Tennessee. She felt that we may be able to help the IPS in the endeavor, but it seemed that she felt our plan was a duplication of current services. Although a frustrating meeting, we decided to refocus our energies after this meeting. In order to steer clear of IPS's "turf," we focused the Policy Research Initiative on Energy, Environment, Education, and Governance.

THE UNIVERSITY of TENNESSEE
Howard H. Baker Jr.
Center for Public Policy

Policy Research Initiative

The Mission:

The Policy Research Initiative at the Baker Center links the academic strengths of UT with the policy development process in state and local government. UT has a wealth of resources to offer policy decision makers who face the difficult task of making sound policy for the citizens of Tennessee, so it is our intention to assist in making UT talent and skills even more available.

The Policy Research Initiative plans to give government officials the chance to consult with UT as a virtual "think tank" to help form intelligent public policy. Ultimately, the Policy Research Initiative seeks to create a bond of social responsibility between the realm of academia and the pragmatic field of state and local government, thereby ensuring that decisions made by government officials reflect both the wishes of Tennesseans, and the foresight of professional research. In turn, research and educational initiatives at the university will be greatly enriched by these real-world projects, and we will contribute to the tremendous land-grant mission of this institution.

The System:

The Policy Research Initiative will identify a pool of professors who wish to volunteer part of their research efforts to the community. When an issue requiring attention arises, the government official will submit the issue to the Baker Center. From there, the Baker Center will work with this pool of researchers to develop a strategy and research the issue.

For example, if state senator John Doe knows that he expects to see the issue of daycare reform in the next legislative session, he may submit this issue to the Baker Center. If the Center believes the issue can be addressed by the available expertise at UT, it will accept the topic. The Center will then use its pool of UT professors to develop a team capable of thoroughly researching the matter. After research is completed, a report will be sent to Sen. Doe, who may use the report for committee hearings and floor debate. Thus, the Policy Research Initiative will enable the state senator to understand an issue more thoroughly than would otherwise be possible.

As the Center creates research, we hope to retain these studies, offering their insights to a more general audience. The Baker Center hopes to post policy papers online and share them with other communities. This will serve as a reference in the future and provide groundwork for additional research.

Student Involvement:

Because the Policy Research Initiative involves constant communications between state/local officials, the Baker Center, and faculty, it provides a perfect opportunity to involve University of Tennessee students. During the semester research is conducted, the aforementioned research "team" can appoint a student to help with information gathering and analysis, as well as other tasks associated with the project. By giving academic credit to the student for this independent study program, the Baker Center will both provide UT students with real world experience and have the ability to staff the Public Research Initiative.

Where to Start:

In these initial phases, support is the most important aspect of jumpstarting the Policy Research initiative. On the university side, we need the cooperation of faculty who are willing to opt into the research pool. Also, we need to recruit interested students pursuing policy studies. On the state/local government side, we need advocates of this program who are willing to work with the Baker Center to produce and develop appropriate policy research. We have interviewed state/local officials who have expressed interest in a comprehensive policy center in the state of Tennessee. There is a clear need for extensive research on long-term solutions. With the support of public officials and employees, we can improve our ability to pursue comprehensive research in Tennessee.

Contact:

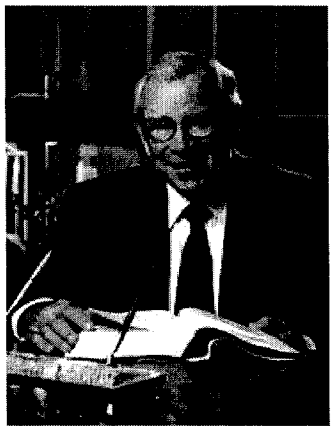
If you would like to help our mission you may contact the Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy.

Alan Lowe, Executive Director
217 Hoskins Library
Knoxville, TN 37996-4014
Phone: 865-974-0931
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The Howard Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy

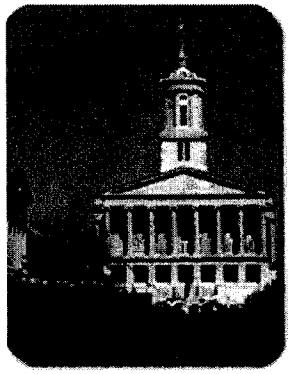
THE UNIVERSITY of TENNESSEE
Howard H. Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy

Policy Research Initiative



The Mission of the Policy Research Initiative

The Policy Research Initiative will create comprehensive research focused on long term solutions for the State of Tennessee. Tennessee has bountiful resources and industrious citizens. There is no reason for expediency and misinformation to be the basis of public policy. Decisions made by state and local officials affect Tennesseans of the present and future. The Policy Research Initiative will change the basis of decision making in Tennessee, providing intelligent and meaningful research by combining the intelligence and experience of the University of Tennessee with the needs of state and local officials. The Policy Research Initiative will make the University of Tennessee more relevant to all Tennesseans while creating more stable research for public decision makers.



The Operations of the PRI

The Baker Library

The Baker Library will serve as a clearinghouse for research at the University of Tennessee.

By using documents and research already being conducted by the University of Tennessee, the Baker Library will create a searchable database of this information. This will help make information from UT available and useful to policy makers.

The Research Program

The Research Program will allow professors to opt into researching present needs in public policy. The Baker Center will facilitate creating a list of present needs in public policy and a professor or graduate student could select a topic from this list to pursue research. Afterwards, the research will be moved into the Baker Library. Also, students will help with the research as well as handle the relationship between the researchers and the public officials who have requested information.



The Baker Library will be a collection of documents from the University of Tennessee, electronically stored. These documents will be accessible and searchable online. The Baker Center will find a student from OIT that would be available to store the documents in PDF format onto the Baker Library website.

Contributing documents will include:

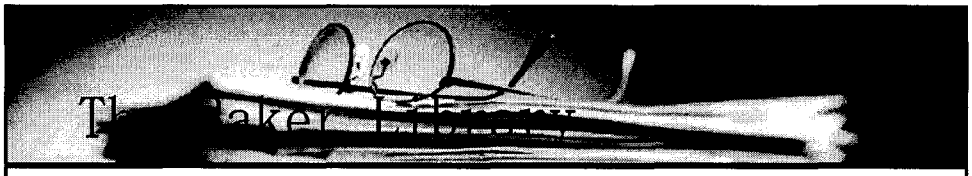
Doctoral thesis papers

Honors Projects deemed publishable

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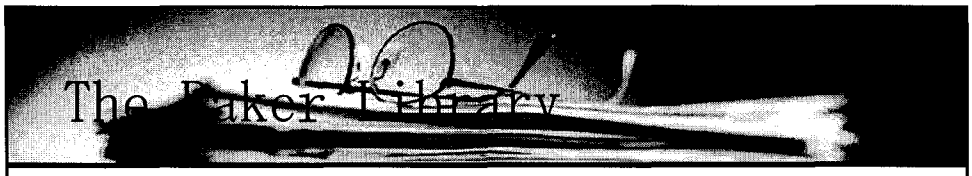
Water management in rural counties

Bush's Agenda impact on TN finance

The Case for Yearly Audits in TN

How to Grow Right: Williamson Co.

VIEW COMPLETE COLLECTION



There are several unanswered questions remaining to create that Baker Library. Though the formation should be relatively simple, these issues remain:

How does the Baker Center obtain the right to publish—is it in conjunction with the University of Tennessee?

How can the Baker Center find and review work from faculty and students?

How much would it cost to upload and maintain an online database of the research?

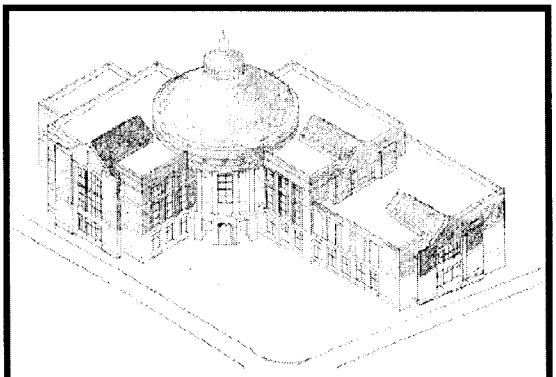
How do we market the Baker Library to policy and decision makers as to assure the information is used?

How does the Baker Center approve this through the University of Tennessee administration?

The Research Program

The Research Program is the more aggressive aspect of the Policy Research Initiative. It involves coordinating faculty and students to respond to present needs in Tennessee.

Unlike the Baker Library, the Research Program will involve deadlines and public relations. The outcome of research may tend to be more controversial and have more immediate effects.



Exterior aerial view of the proposed Baker Center for Public Policy Building on the corner of Melrose Place and Cumberland Avenue.

A Brief Description of the Program

The Research Program will give long term solutions to short term problems. The idea is to create a lasting relationship between state and local officials and the University of Tennessee by cooperation on policy issues. For example, if Knox County Mayor Mike Ragsdale wanted a responsible study comparing the effects of the Wheel Tax vs. a raise in property taxes, he would contact the University to perform the study. A professor of public budgeting could opt into the program and perform the study. Ideally, the Department of Political Science would offer an internship or independent study to an undergraduate or masters student interested in the field. The student would aid in collected data and keeping open communication with the Mayor's office. Once completed, the research would be published, given to the Mayor, and stored at the Baker Library.

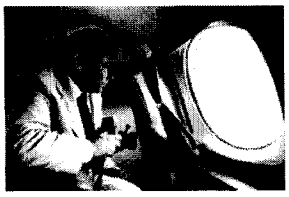


Looking for Relevant Research



The PRI Advisory Board

In order to assure a broad selection of topics for the Research Program to review, the Baker Center will create the PRI Advisory Board. It will consist of state legislators, state administrators, local leaders, and community leaders. The experience and knowledge of the board will help find and approve suitable topics to research.

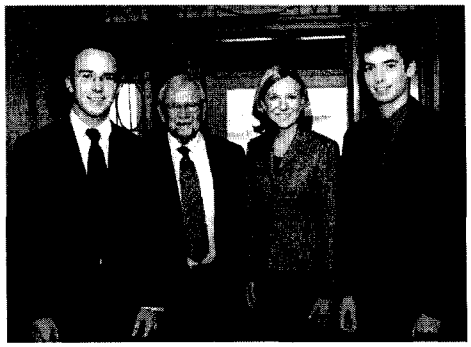


Direct Requests

As the Baker Center builds its reputation, it will be able to respond to direct requests from policy makers, much like the aforementioned example of Mike Ragsdale. Though more unstable, it will make UT indispensable to the policy evaluation processes in Tennessee.

The Public Policy Internship

Another goal of the PRI involves bringing students into more academic opportunities at the University of Tennessee. Undergraduates in particular, have few opportunities to participate in advanced research and even less opportunity to attach themselves to published works. Thus, with the cooperation of Dr. David Feldman, the Baker Center is proposing an undergraduate internship.

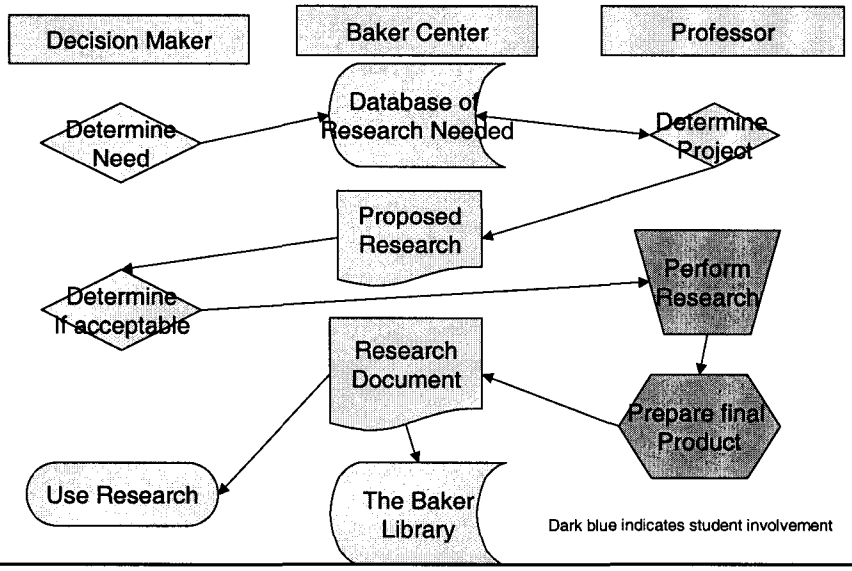


After a professor commits to researching a PRI topic, he/she has the option of taking on a student to help. The student will be responsible for researching available sources and contributing to the final product.

Additional responsibilities will include keeping a working relationship with whomever requested the research or would benefit from the research. Also, the student will help to promote the final product and assure the information reaches the right hands.

This opportunity will help the student develop advanced researching skills. It will also give him/her expertise in the needed field and networking opportunities with current officials.

Flowchart of Research Program



The Research Program



The magnitude of this program makes it very problematic in practice. Questions regarding its implementation include:

How do we convince faculty to opt into the PRI Program?

How do we match student interns with faculty members for research?

How do we accommodate students interested in researching without faculty mentors?

How do we approve this plan with academic administration?

How do we market the PRI to state and local leaders to solicit policy requests?

Who do we choose for the PRI Advisory Board?

How will the board define a "policy issue" and who/where will requests be sent to determine if they are a "public policy issue" versus local rule or law and then forwarded to the board for decision?

University Resources

The University of Tennessee has an incredible array of resources which, if pooled, could collectively serve as a wealth of information for the PRI:

Agricultural Policy Analysis Center
Appalachian Rural System Initiative
Institute for Assessment and Evaluation
Center for Business and Economics Research
Center for Clean Products and Clean Technologies
Corporate Governance Center
County Technical Assistance Service
Energy, Environment and Resources Center
Law Enforcement Innovation Center
Municipal Technology Advisory Service
Nashville Civic Design Center
The Center for Profitable Agriculture
The Institute for Public Service
The Social Science Research Institute
Social Work Office of Research and Public Service
UT/ORNL Center for Homeland Security and Counterproliferation
Water Resources Research Center



Howard H. Baker, Jr.

The End Product of the PRI



The Public Research Initiative will ultimately enable the University of Tennessee to contribute to the development of Tennessee.

It will create an atmosphere where university professors are working for something greater than themselves.

It will bring publicity and credibility to well maintained programs at UT.

The PRI will give undergraduates opportunities to participate in meaningful research.

THE UNIVERSITY of TENNESSEE
Howard H. Baker Jr.
Center for Public Policy



Presented by

Bryce W. McKenzie

Senior, Accounting and Political Science
Baker Scholar