

FLIPPING A CLASSROOM INTO A CONGRESS TO INCITE LEARNING ABOUT THE POLICY PROCESS



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CONTEXT: Senior-level course in Natural Resource Policy & Administration

MY MOTIVATION: The perception of many students regarding the “policy process”

- Dull
- Boring
- Confusing
- Something politicians do...often poorly
- “Why should this matter to me?”



Not very exciting or stimulating!

MY APPROACH:

- Class of 40 students organized into a bicameral “Congress”
 - Senate
 - House of Representatives
- Five Subcommittees of four students each
- Elected leadership roles
- “Sessions” of Congress interspersed across a few weeks of the semester
- Formation of a Conference Committee
- Mimic the proceedings of the US Congress

GOAL:

- Create a **Natural Resource Bill of Rights** comprised of ten amendments.



OBJECTIVE:

- Experience the policy formation process first-hand...*and actually enjoy it!*

PROCEDURE & PROTOCOL:

1. Each Subcommittee drafts three amendments in rank order for a **Natural Resource Bill of Rights.**
2. Each Subcommittee places the compilation of 15 amendments for their “Body” into rank order.



PROCEDURE & PROTOCOL:

3. Elected Senate Subcommittee Chairs meet to consolidate a ranking of amendments for the full Senate; House Subcommittee Chairs do likewise for the full House
4. Separate sessions of the Senate and House to:
 - a. Agree on a final ranking of **ten** amendments
 - b. Elect a **Senate President Pro-Tempore** and a **Speaker of the House**

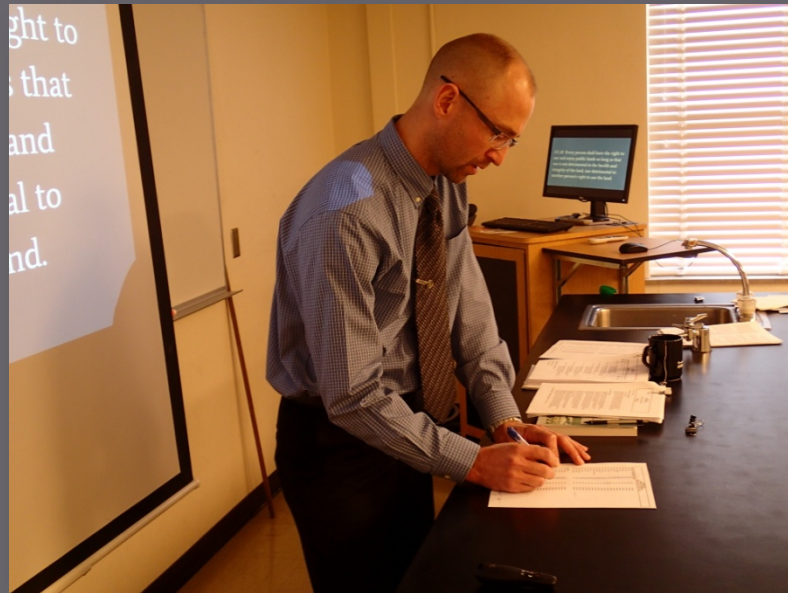
PROCEDURE & PROTOCOL:

5. President Pro-Tempore and Speaker present their body's version of a **Natural Resource Bill of Rights** at a full session of Congress.
6. Conference Committee of 6 members formed to reconcile differences and arrive at a “joint resolution.”



PROCEDURE & PROTOCOL:

7. Joint resolution presented at full session of Congress.
8. Roll-call voice vote of all members of Congress; two-thirds majority in favor required for ratification.



EXAMPLES OF AMENDMENTS:

“Every citizen of the United States has the right to equal and fair use of federal lands.”

“It is the right of citizens to have public lands and natural resources managed with research-based data supported by the scientific community.”

“Natural resources in areas of the public domain shall be evaluated by their ecological worth and essentiality to the ecosystem of which they belong.”

LEARNING OUTCOMES & SKILLS:

- Better understanding of administrative organization and process
- Leadership development
- Effective engagement in discussion and debate
- Formal writing in *“legalese”*
- Hone oral communication and presentation skills
- Understand importance of compromise and consensus building

LEARNING OUTCOMES & SKILLS:

Rather than just hearing or reading about the policy process, students *become* the process and *live* the process!

Develop a better understanding and appreciation of a complex process that is a critical element of our society.

Embrace a mindset for “serving the greater good” as a public servant.

QUESTIONS or COMMENTS?

