

Proposal for a Graduate Certificate in Survey Research

**Department of Political Science
School of Liberal Arts
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis**

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1: SUMMARY

This is a proposal for an Indiana University Graduate Certificate in Survey Research, to be housed in – and administered by - the Department of Political Science in the School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI.

Its main objective will be to provide students with interdisciplinary training in the evaluation of survey research data, and the implementation of survey research programs.

Students will be required to complete 15 credit hours of course work with a grade in each course of B- or better. They will be required to take two core courses in Political Science, and three electives chosen from among a variety of different departments.

Students will be admitted through the IUPUI graduate admissions process, and should have at least an appropriate bachelor's degree from an accredited institution (or an institution approved by the certificate program), and either a minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or sufficient professional standing in employment to indicate their ability to handle the demands of the program. Upon completion of the program, students will receive an Indiana University certificate.

In keeping with the guidelines laid down by Graduate Affairs at IUPUI (February 20, 2000), this program is a focused collection of (mainly pre-existing) courses that will afford students a record of coherent academic accomplishment in the discipline of survey research. It consists of a well-defined sequence of coursework offering a clear educational objective. There are no comparable existing or proposed undergraduate or graduate certificates at IUPUI, nor in the state of Indiana.

2: RATIONALE

The use of survey data, in all its various formats, has grown exponentially in the past two decades. Even now, new developments in the use of the Internet for surveys are expanding the types and forms of data collected. The use of this data is interdisciplinary.

- *Medical researchers* use survey data in epidemiological studies and during evaluation components of various activities, and medical professionals rely on surveys to indicate the potential for delivery of medical services and planning preventative medicine activities.
- *Researchers in public health* use data to assess behavioral risks for disease and injury. The best example of this is the set of surveys done via the Center for Disease Control's annual BRFSS (Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance Survey).
- *Criminal justice researchers* use it in a variety of ways such as assessing the impact of public safety campaigns, and the evaluation of programs such as the "Click It or Ticket" campaign by the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute, sponsored by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

- *Urban planners and public administrators* use it for estimating attitudes about use of new transportation systems, satisfaction with public services, and possible zoning changes.
- *Educational leaders* use surveys for activities as diverse as marketing by universities and internal research on bus schedules by local school districts
- *Financial leaders* probe the Consumer Confidence Index - a quarterly survey.
- *Governmental leaders* look at measures of citizen satisfaction with matters as mundane as sewers and as complex as traffic planning, while *public officials* develop programs that are required to have survey components that “ask” their constituencies how they are doing and whether their collective or public actions appear to meet perceived public needs.
- *Attorneys and legal professionals* look for measures of matters such as rules for jury selection or trust in local and/or national courts.
- *Business leaders* decide on product development or marketing strategies based on such data.
- *Not-for-profit agencies* estimate the potential for volunteering and charitable donations and evaluate the usefulness of the programs they fund.

Of course, beyond applied uses, political scientists, sociologists, economists and a host of others have used survey data to study many phenomena ranging from voting to investment risk-taking behavior. For example, recent developments in economics – following the work of Nobel Prize winner Daniel Kahneman - recognize the need to use survey data, in part, to assess perceived risk in order to predict matters such as consumer behavior and investment activity.

Although many people use survey data, few are trained in the twin goals of survey research: evaluation of survey research data, and the implementation of survey research programs. The main objective of this graduate certificate program will be to provide students with such training through an interdisciplinary approach to all aspects of survey research. It will provide skills to evaluate and commission survey research, both in terms of the integrity of survey data and in terms of the possible needs and uses appropriate for a survey research application. It will also train students to know when they need a survey, how a survey can and ought to be undertaken, how to evaluate the various methods used in survey research, and how to evaluate the final product of a survey.

3: NEED FOR THE PROGRAM

The program will fill a need that is not currently met within Indiana, nor even very widely within the United States. According to the American Association for Public Opinion Research Web site (www.aapor.org), there are only eleven graduate programs in survey research in North America: three in Canada, two in Ohio, and one each in Connecticut, Maryland, Michigan, Nebraska, New York and Washington DC. These are all certificates or specializations, so our proposed certificate would both be the first program of its kind in Indiana, and would be following a format typically adopted by those other universities and colleges with such a program.

The proposed program will also increase the diversity of graduate education options for students at IUPUI, and play an important complementary role to the needs of other programs in which skills in survey research are useful; these include public health and public administration. We have strong anecdotal evidence of the demand for training in survey research, and state agencies regularly look for consultants to help them evaluate both survey requests and the results of surveys. Program evaluation is an important aspect of the work of most state and local agencies, and few of the staff who undertake such evaluation have had exposure to survey research.

The proposed program will also take advantage of the presence on the IU campus of the Indiana University Public Opinion Laboratory (POL), a well-established resource with a long and productive track record in survey research. Students in the certificate program will be introduced to the resources and procedures of POL, and will have the opportunity to participate in its activities.

4: TARGET AUDIENCE

We anticipate that most students in the certificate program will be part-time and live in Central Indiana, since it will aim at people already employed in several types of organizations that routinely use data generated through survey research.

We anticipate the strongest demand from employees in the social sciences, public health, public administration, non-profit organizational studies, nursing, business, education, and law. Representatives from all these groups have either used survey data by contracting with public and private groups or have expressed an interest in expanding student exposure to this aspect of public and private policy development.

We believe that a number of IUPUI graduate students (e.g. political science, public and environmental affairs (SPEA), sociology, public health, business, etc.) will find it advantageous to enroll in the program. Some of these will be attracted by the strong interdisciplinary qualities of the program. We also feel that a large group of non-degree graduate students will be attracted to the program because they are working in government, not-for-profits, or businesses that use this data and they want more formal training in how to evaluate and use complex survey data. This is particularly relevant in the Indianapolis metropolitan area with its concentration of large governmental agencies and numerous not-for-profit organizations. Many such potential students have little or no exposure to the techniques of data collection and evaluation in their current training. They do not seek a full graduate degree, but they do desire skills in how to evaluate, and perhaps generate, survey data.

We anticipate that the certificate program will have a positive impact on enrollments in several departments within (primarily) Liberal Arts, and on SPEA, because it will bring new students into a coordinated program of study that exploits existing courses and faculty expertise. Furthermore, the academic training provided by

the program may lead some students to pursue a PhD or another advanced degree in one of a variety of fields in which survey data is used.

We expect that cooperation with several schools and programs will be desirable because of the interdisciplinary nature of the program. We have consulted with the schools and programs involved, and letters of support are attached to this proposal (Appendix I).

5: ENROLLMENT PLAN

We propose to launch the program in the Spring semester of 2005. Thus the Program Committee will be appointed, courses will be scheduled, publicity for the program will be circulated, and invitations will be issued for applications from students. We plan to start with the admission in the Fall semester of 2005 of no more than five students, and then to expand through promotion to target organizations/agencies and interdisciplinary and inter-school listing of courses to a steady state of 20-30 students in the program at any time. Steady state enrollment should be reached by the beginning of the fourth year of the program (Fall 2008). Initial target populations include students either currently enrolled or considering enrollment in IUPUI programs in public health, health administration, public and environmental affairs, philanthropic studies, political science, sociology, and informatics.

6: NEW RESOURCES

No new resources are needed for this program. The existence of the IU Public Opinion Laboratory provides an important resource for the program, all the elective courses for the certificate already exist, and proposals for the two core courses have been submitted for consideration. Most of the courses are already being taught, and certainly enough of the electives are being taught to give students a broad enough selection from which to choose. Several of the political science options have been cross-listed with undergraduate research courses, and while this may continue to be an option in the short-term, we anticipate that these courses will quickly become stand-alone graduate courses.

The only significant costs will be (a) compensation for the occasional part-time faculty members who may be recruited to teach selected graduate courses, and (b) compensation for any part-time faculty who may be recruited to teach undergraduate courses that would otherwise have been taught by full-time faculty who are instead teaching graduate courses. That compensation will be met out of tuition income. Note: We are confident that full-time faculty will be able to offer the majority – if not all – of the courses.

7: PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The certificate program will be directed by a three-person Program Committee headed by a Director. The Director and at least one other member of the Committee will be full-time political science faculty. The third member may be a political scientist, or may be a full-time faculty member from another department within the School of Liberal Arts, or from another school at IUPUI. We anticipate that the first Director will be Prof. Brian Vargus, who was until 2003 Director of the Indiana University Public Opinion Laboratory, and is currently Professor of Political Science.

The Director will be responsible for submitting an annual report to the IUPUI Graduate Affairs Committee outlining the number of students enrolled, the number of certificates awarded annually, and – for each student – the date of admission, details of any degree programs to which the student has been admitted at IUPUI, and the number of credits completed toward fulfillment of certificate requirements. The Director will also be responsible for certifying completion of certificate requirements by students enrolled in the program.

8: PROGRAM FACULTY

The full-time faculty at IUPUI that will be most centrally involved with the program include – but are not limited to - the following:

Prof. Brian Vargus, Political Science. CV attached (Appendix II).

Prof. Robert Aponte, Sociology.

Prof. Wan-Ning Bao, Sociology.

Prof. Bill Blomquist, Political Science.

Prof. Margaret Ferguson, Political Science.

Prof. David Ford, Sociology.

Prof. Johnny Goldfinger, Political Science.

Prof. Ain Haas, Sociology.

Prof. Linda Haas, Sociology.

Prof. Gregory Steele, Public Health

Prof. Sue Steinmetz, Sociology.

Jim Wolf, Director, IU Public Opinion Laboratory.

Prof. Eric Wright, Sociology.

Prof. Terry Zollinger, Medicine, Associate Director of the Bowen Research Center.

In addition, some departments may occasionally employ suitably qualified part-time faculty to teach courses as needed.

We do not anticipate strong short-term prospects for using distance education approaches in delivering the certificate program.

9: ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Students will be admitted through the normal IUPUI admissions process. In general, admitted students must have at least an appropriate bachelor's degree from an accredited institution or an institution approved by the certificate program. They should also have a minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or have achieved sufficient professional standing in employment that clearly confirms their ability to handle the demands of an interdisciplinary graduate program.

For applicants whose native language is not English and who have not received a degree from a certified American university, a minimum TOEFL score of 550 or its equivalent is required. Students already admitted into an Indiana University or Purdue University graduate program are automatically eligible to earn a certificate.

Applications will be reviewed by an Admissions Committee made up of three members: one from the Department of Political Science, one from the Department of Sociology, and a rotating third member from another department or School. The Graduate Record Examination will be required of applicants, and the Committee will look particularly closely at the scores of applicants in the quantitative portion of the GRE.

10: PROPOSED CURRICULUM

University guidelines require that students in certificate programs take at least 12 hours of coursework and no more than half the credits necessary for a related master's degree, and that at least half the courses should be at the 500 level or above. In accordance, the Certificate will be granted to any student who completes 15 hours of course work with a grade of B- or higher, and with a cumulative GPA of at least 2.7. All required and elective courses will be at the 500- or 600-level, no more than three credit hours may be transferred from another institution, and no undergraduate level courses may be used toward the Certificate.

A: Required Courses (6 cr.) – Students must take both the following two courses:

1. POLS Y567 – *Public Opinion: Approaches and Issues* (3 cr). An introductory seminar that will discuss all the key approaches, issues and concepts in the field of survey research, allowing students to identify more specific interests that may be further explored in their elective courses. One element of this course will be a hands-on introduction to the facilities and methods of the IU Public Opinion Laboratory. (The course is numbered Y567 in order to cluster it with an existing group of Political Science “Approaches and Issues” courses, ranging from Y557 to Y569.)

2. POLS Y590 – *Seminar in Survey Research* (3 cr). A capstone seminar designed to examine current issues in the application of survey research to public policy. Students will be encouraged to take this course at the end of their program of study. They will be

encouraged to share with other students their particular applications to increase the interdisciplinary nature of the seminar.

Note: Neither Y567 nor Y590 currently exists, but new course proposals have been submitted for both; copies are attached (Appendix III).

B: Electives (9 cr.) – Students will be required to complete nine additional hours, chosen from a group of Primary Courses or Alternates. This list is designed to maximize the flexibility of a program that meets an interdisciplinary demand. They are offered with varying regularity, but the curriculum allows each discipline to adapt its courses to fit student needs in its area.

1. POLS Y575 - *Political Data Analysis I* (3 cr). Introduces students to quantitative research methods for studying politics, focusing on topics that are statistical in content or that must be addressed for statistics to make sense. Students who complete the course will achieve a level of statistical competency that will enable them to enroll in courses concerned with multivariate statistical techniques, and will acquire the basic skills of data analysis that are indispensable to the practice of quantitative political science.

Alternates: Sociology R551 – *Sociological Research Methods*
 Public Affairs V506 – *Statistical Analysis for Effective Decision Making*
 Psychology P600 – *Statistical Inference*
 Public Health S528 – *Mathematical Statistics*

Or any other graduate course that includes inferential statistics through regression analysis, and is accepted by the Program Committee.

2. POLS Y576 - *Political Data Analysis II* (3 cr). Builds on Y575 by familiarizing students with more advanced research methods, such as regression analysis and techniques for dealing with categorical and limited dependent variables. Models to be covered include logit, probit, multinomial logit, ordered probit, duration models and survival analysis. Attention will be directed at the application of these methods to political phenomena and the presentation of the results.

Alternates: Sociology R559 – *Intermediate Sociological Statistics*
 Public Affairs V507 – *Data Analysis and Modeling for Public Affairs*
 Public Health P600 - *Epidemiological Research Methods*

Or any other graduate course that includes log linear analysis and modeling techniques, and is accepted by the Program Committee.

3. POLS Y580 - *Research Methods* (3 cr). This course surveys the major techniques for investigating current political problems. It emphasizes the relationship between theory and practice in understanding and conducting research. It will examine issues in field research essential to a full understanding of a research problem.

Alternates: Sociology R551 – *Sociological Research Methods*
Sociology R653 – *Public Opinion: Research and Analysis*
Health Administration H518 – *Statistical Methods for Health Services*
Public Health P601 - *Advanced Epidemiology*
Public Affairs J502 – *Research Methods in Criminal Justice and Public Affairs*
Public Affairs V562 – *Public Program Evaluation*

Or any other comparable graduate course accepted by the Program Committee.

Note: All these elective courses currently exist, so no new course proposals are needed.

C: Internship Option (3 cr.) – As an alternative to one of the electives, students may – with the approval of the Program Committee – substitute an internship experience for one of the elective courses. They would have to work with an approved faculty member in completing a research project arising out of placement with an approved research organization or the IU Public Opinion Laboratory, involving a commitment of at least 8 hours per week for one full semester. They would enroll for credit in Y585 – *Internship in Survey Research*, or a comparable internship course in another department or school, subject to approval by the Program Committee.

The program is designed to be flexible and interdisciplinary, and the Program Committee will work to ensure that all schools with existing courses that could be proposed as alternates are given appropriate equivalent status.

It is anticipated that, because most of the enrollees will be non-traditional students, two years (including at least one Summer Session) will be the normal time to complete the Certificate, with a maximum of five calendar years allowed.

Granting of the Certificate will be audited by the program staff with certification of completion of credits to lay with the Program Committee Director, in consultation with the chair of Political Science. Notification of completion of the certificate will be made to the Indiana University Graduate School, and the award of the certificate will be made jointly by the School of Liberal Arts and the IU Graduate School. Diplomas will be awarded at the normal times when degrees are awarded.

11: FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

We anticipate that most students in the program will be enrolled part-time, and will either be meeting their own tuition costs, or will find assistance from their employers. However, we are in the fortunate position to be able to offer some financial assistance out of funds set aside in 2001 under the Survey Research Award. This will provide one-time awards of up to \$1250 for as many as two students who have completed at least six hours of

courses in the certificate program, and who have been adjudged to have produced work of a quality that is superior to other students in the program.

12: EVALUATION

The Certificate Program will undergo an initial review at the end of its third year, and thereafter will be evaluated periodically as part of the Political Science departmental program review process.

In addition, there will be a community Advisory Committee that will meet periodically to review the program and its components. This committee will be constituted from survey researchers active in the professional, educational, business and government sectors that the program is designed to serve. Possible candidates include Dr. Ron Anderson, Professor of Marketing in the Kelley School of Business; Dr. Gregory Steele, Epidemiologist in the Department of Public Health; Mr. Stephen Walker of Walker Information Systems; Mr. Fred Bingle of Bingle Associates; Associate Dean Greg Lindsey of the School of Public and Environmental Affairs; and others from local marketing research, survey research firms, government agencies, and relevant specialties in academia.

A NOTE ON THIS PROPOSAL: The first draft of the proposal was drawn up by Prof. Brian Vargus. An advanced draft was drawn up by Prof. John McCormick. It was reviewed by Jim Wolf, Director of the IU POL, and by Profs. Robert Aponte and Ain Haas of the Department of Sociology, and amended in response to comments. It has also been shared with faculty in the Department of Political Science, with faculty in the School of Public and Environmental Affairs, and discussed with SLA Acting Dean Robert White, and with (now former) Associate Dean for Graduate Program William Schneider.

APPENDICES

- I Letters of support from other schools and departments.
- II CV for Prof. Brian Vargus.
- III New course proposals for Y567 and Y590.