Assignments for Health Advocacy 2020

One of the goals of this course is to prepare each of you to identify a public health problem and develop an advocacy campaign and a set of strategies to address a specific aspect of that public health problem. Each of the assignments in this class will contribute to the development and execution of a successful advocacy campaign. To prepare for the assignments, please take the time to identify a public health problem and policy solution that you can use for all three assignments. We recommend thinking through what type of campaign you want to conduct and how your second and third assignment will fit into your overall campaign. For instance, in your first assignment you will outline a public health advocacy campaign and highlight some of the advocacy elements that will be part of the campaign. Since assignment two is a letter to the editor or an elevator pitch, and assignment three is a testimony exercise, describing these elements, among others, in assignment one would give you a roadmap for the rest of the semester. Additionally, it may be helpful to represent the same real or fictional organization for all three assignments.

Assignment 1: Health Advocacy Campaign (20 points)
In your first assignment, you will identify a public health problem, a policy solution, and create a campaign designed to get policy makers to engage with you and support your policy solution.

Instructions:
Please identify a public health problem that has been in the news in the last three months and outline a policy solution and a public health advocacy campaign for remediying that public health problem. Your policy solution can be on international, national, state, or local level. Please do not describe a campaign that currently exists. Please create a new campaign and identify the agency/organization/group (real or fictional) that you represent. Basically, the teaching team shouldn’t be able to search for your campaign and find it online. For examples of appropriate public health problems, see Class Exercise 1.

Please include:
- A concise description of the public health problem (limited to 1 paragraph). Use readily available epidemiological or other data (or discuss what data needs to be collected) to support your problem statement. Include references (footnotes, endnotes, and formal references all suffice).
- A well-thought-out policy solution including the appropriate intervention point.
- Your campaign should include advocacy tactics and strategies for each of the elements described in lecture 1, slide 25: research, strategic engagement, influencing public opinion and policy makers, and implementation. Consider what objectives you want your campaign to achieve.

Please limit your response to no more than 3 typed double-spaced pages with 1-inch margins and 12-pt font. References will not count against your total pages.

DUE DATE: Thursday, April 16, 2020 by 11:59 PM EST via CoursePlus DropBox.
Assignment 2: Letter to the Editor or Elevator Pitch (20 points)

Now that you’ve identified a public health problem, a policy solution, and the necessary elements to developing a successful campaign, you will employ a specific strategy or tool to engage policy makers and voters and inform them of your public health problem and policy solution.

Instructions:
Please choose either a letter to the editor (LTE) or elevator pitch in which the focus of your assignment is your public health problem from Assignment 1.

For LTE:
• Identify a recent article (defined as published within the past three months) which covers the public health problem identified in Assignment 1 and write an LTE in response to it.
• You may write the letter in your own voice OR write from the perspective of a stakeholder (e.g. advocacy group working on the issue discussed in the article).
• Please indicate the organization you represent should you decide to write as a specific stakeholder.
• The letter must not exceed 250 words in length. Please use single-spacing with at least a 12-pt font. Please include the word count in the header of your document.

For Elevator Pitch:
• Develop an elevator pitch using strategies discussed in class
• Incorporate social math pertaining to the public health problem identified in Assignment 1 when developing your pitch.
• The video must not exceed 45 seconds in length and should be recorded using VoiceThread. Please submit a file with the link pasted in it to Dropbox.
  o If you have any issues doing this, please let the TAs know.

DUE DATE: Thursday, April 30, 2020 by 11:59 PM EST via CoursePlus Dropbox.

Tips for Writing a Letter to the Editor¹
 ✓ Be brief and concise when presenting your issue/position.
 ✓ Remember you are writing for a lay audience – use clear language and avoid jargon.
 ✓ Organization is key – a letter should have a clear beginning, middle and end.
 ✓ Open with a strong statement commenting on the article that appeared in the paper.
 ✓ Include details and facts to support your points.
 ✓ Your letter should end with a re-statement of your position and what specific action you want to see take place.

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¹ Adapted from APHA’s “Tips for Writing a Letter to the Editor”, available at http://www.apha.org/advocacy/
Assignment 3: Congressional Testimony - Oral and Written (20 points each)

Finally, it is time. There are upcoming US Congressional hearings regarding the President’s proposed budget for FY 2021. You have an opportunity to step up and present testimony supporting a restoration or increase in funds or arguing against a restoration or increase in funds for a public health program of your choice. If you represent an international or country-specific organization and you prefer to present testimony to a different legislative body than the US Congress, in addition to your testimony, you must provide documentation that you are testifying in support or against a budget item in an actual legislative budget proposal.

Your final assignment will focus on upcoming US Congressional hearings regarding the President’s proposed budget (FY 2021; available at https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/fy-2021-budget-in-brief.pdf for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and other agencies. The US House of Representatives will be holding hearings on agency funding levels but must determine how to balance many competing budget demands.

Instructions:
There are two parts to the final assignment:
1. Oral Testimony for Mock Hearing
2. Written Testimony

Oral Testimony for Mock Hearing
- Each student will present oral testimony to the House Committee on Appropriations (unless you are testifying as an international or country-specific organization testifying under the instructions described in the first paragraph of this assignment).
- You should take the position of the executive director of a real or "created" public charity (501c3) or social welfare organization (501c4).
- Your objective is to restore or increase funds to a priority public health program (or argue against a funding increase) within the budget that you view as critical to effectively addressing top health problems.
- Each student will be given two (2) minutes to present his/her testimony.
- After testimony is provided, “committee members” will ask each presenter a follow-up question.

Written Testimony
- You are also asked to submit written testimony related to the call for funding (or defunding) made in your oral testimony.
- Your written testimony should include a brief summary of your issue, why funding (or defunding) for the particular public health program is important and defensible, and your recommendation to the committee.
- Written testimony should not exceed 3 double-spaced pages with 12-pt font and standard 1-inch margins with appropriate in-text citations and a reference list.

DUE DATE for Oral Testimonies: Will take place on Thursday, May 14 at 5:30 PM via Zoom (submission process subject to change).
DUE DATE for Written Testimony: Tuesday, May 12th by 11:59 PM via CoursePlus DropBox.