ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVES IN CRIMINAL JUSTICE
AND PUBLIC POLICY EDUCATION

Juliette Roddy, PhD
Professor, Criminology and Criminal Justice
James Wurgler MD Chair of Criminal Justice and Behavioral Health
NARBHA Institute Transformational Fellow
TEACHING ECONOMICS: LESSONS FROM THE FIELD

A200 Economics Education and Teaching of Economics

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BACKGROUND

• 2006-2013-University of Michigan Dearborn, College of Arts, Sciences and Letters, Master of Public Policy Program, Assistant Professor of Public Police
  – MPP 500 Introduction to Economics
  – MPP 503 Microeconomics and Public Policy
  – MPP 506 Program Evaluation
  – MPP 508 Cost Benefit Analysis
  – MPP 560 Environmental Economics and Public Policy

• 2013-2016-University of Michigan Dearborn, College of Education, Health and Human Services, Department of Health and Human Services, Chair and Associate Professor of Health Policy and Public Policy
  – HIT 500 Health Economics
  – HPS 406/506 Program Evaluation
BACKGROUND

• 2016-2019 University of Michigan Dearborn, College of Arts Sciences and Letters, Criminology and Criminal Justice Program, Director of Graduate Studies CCJ, Professor of Health Policy and Public Policy
  – MPA 506 Program Evaluation
  – CCJ 415/515 Restorative Justice
  – SOC 350 Poverty and Inequality

• 2019-present Northern Arizona University, College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, James Wurgler MD Chair of Criminal Justice and Behavioral Health, NARBHA Institute Transformational Fellow
  – CCJ 345W Investigating Difference
• Masters in Public Policy (also Masters in Public Administration)

The MPP degree was developed by the Economics and Political Science Department

The MPA degree (later administrated jointly in the Behavioral Sciences Department) was developed by the School of Education

Students enter government work (aides to public office holders), non-profits, mid-level managers in government agencies and education fields

• Distributional effects

  – Rationality assumptions
  – Markets (supply and demand)
  – Consumer surplus
  – Progressive policies

As well as the concepts of full cost
Three degrees were developed in this newly launched department: Public Health, Community Health Education, and Health Information Technology (graduate degree).

CHE was developed jointly with Education
HIT was developed jointly with Business
HPS was transferred from CASL

Students enter non-clinical health positions (sometimes in clinical settings). Policy and resource optimization is a big part of the work.

Cost Savings

- Long v short run effects (PV)
- Distribution effects
  - Across government levels
  - Between consumers and providers
  - Between current and future generations
- Marginal costs
- Progressive policies (distributional effects)
- Cost benefit, cost effectiveness and cost utility

As well as the concepts of full cost
Masters in Criminology and Criminal Justice

The MS in CCJ degree was developed by the Criminology and Criminal Justice Program.

A certificate in Addiction Studies was developed jointly with the HHS Department.

Students enter law enforcement fields and law school: Police management, FBI, CIA, Secret Service, Homeland Security, Border Patrol, Dept. of Defense, parole, probation and correctional staff as well as law school. This is a diverse body of students.

Cost savings and evaluation methods

- Distribution effects across govt levels
- Measuring effectiveness
- Prevention vs enforcement (long vs short run)
- Understanding program evaluation

As well as the concepts of **full cost** (for society vs individuals)
Teaching the application of economics requires the understanding of economic principles

- Generally two courses (microeconomics and macroeconomics)
- These two courses are often four credit courses (cost)
- The courses require some proficiency in mathematics
- The applications in the principles courses are often outside of professional students’ interests
- For the graduate degrees, this requires foresight or enrollment in undergraduate courses (or other non-optimal solutions)

In addition, the methods for principles courses often conflict with some of the students’ understanding of how education should be approached.

--multiple choice questions, tricky questions, cumulative concepts
Teaching the application of economics requires the understanding of economic principles

- Generally two courses (microeconomics and macroeconomics)
  - We offered Intro to Econ; We offered Econ 500 (*neither count for much*)
- These two courses are often four credit courses (cost)
  - Intro to Econ was 4 credits undergrad; Econ 500 was 3 credits graduate level
- The courses require some proficiency in mathematics
  - It is difficult to minimize the mathematics; students will avoid math and arrive unprepared
- Applications in the principles courses are often outside of professional students’ interests; enrollment in undergraduate courses (or other non-optimal solutions)
  - We have tried discipline specific courses and intro, however enrollment/turf issues arise

In addition, the methods for principles courses often conflict with some of the students understanding of how education should be approached.

--Teaching skill/representation (classroom charisma, diverse teachers) become more valuable
OPPORTUNITIES

There is an opportunity to promote multi-disciplinary, interdisciplinary study

- Integrate economists into colleges and disciplines
- Heavy use of software and flipped classroom
- Emphasize conceptual and applied examples that are discipline specific
- Integrate of extra text material (Economics of public issues; Freakonomics)
- Extra emphasis on teaching skills and diversity when recruiting faculty

Keep economics teaching within the department or allow for the teaching of (field related) economics within specific programs and degree?
There are opportunities outside of the traditional academic setting as well:

- I have taught principles of micro to female inmates in Women’s Huron Valley as a year long volunteer effort
- I have given short economics lectures (topics, i.e. minimum wage, rational addiction) to returning citizens at a non-profit in Michigan as a part of a luncheon series
- I have been trained, but not offered, in offering Inside/Out courses (dialogic, inside a correctional institution, with 15 inmates and 15 college students)

Introducing a broad range of individuals to economic thought will increase the power of the discipline.
CRIMINAL JUSTICE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES

- Cost Benefit

- Cost Effectiveness

Comparison Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario 1: Residential Treatment for Homeless Males with Co-Occurring Disorders</th>
<th>Scenario 2: Non-Residential Treatment for Defendants with Housing Stability and Co-Occurring Disorders</th>
<th>Scenario 3: Outpatient Restoration of Competency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 1</td>
<td>Year 2</td>
<td>Year 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Jail Days Saved</td>
<td>2,751</td>
<td>3,045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Cost</td>
<td>$1,538,381</td>
<td>$991,496</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
• Cost Utility

“What does it say about any state that focuses more on prison uniforms than on caps and gowns?” — Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, 2010 CA state of the state address
• Distribution
QUESTIONS?

Thank you!
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