SEVENTH ANNUAL UNDERGRADUATE PUBLIC POLICY COMPETITION

U.S. ENERGY POLICY IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

Official Rulebook for the 2020 Competition

Rice University’s Baker Institute for Public Policy
STUDENT FORUM
The Baker Institute Student Forum’s
Undergraduate Public Policy Competition

Official Rulebook for the 2020 Competition:
U.S Energy Policy in a Global Context
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I. INTRODUCTION

This document will serve as the official rulebook for the 2020 Baker Institute Student Forum (BISF) Undergraduate Public Policy Competition: U.S Energy Policy in a Global Context, to be held at the Baker Institute for Public Policy on April 11, 2020. The document will serve as the official rulebook for the competition. The BISF has made every effort to make this rulebook as comprehensive and readable as possible. Please consult this document for any questions you might have prior to contacting the BISF directly. Please note, the BISF maintains the right to amend these rules as deemed appropriate prior to the competition but will only do so if absolutely necessary or judged to be in the best interest of the participants. If any questions remain that are not clearly answered in this document, please contact the BISF at bisf@rice.edu, the Policy Competition Chair Andrew Wan at azw2@rice.edu, or the President Madison Grimes at mpg3@rice.edu. Additional details of the policy conference will be revealed to the selected finalists upon their notification of selection.

Please note, the BISF is a separate, though affiliated, organization from the Baker Institute for Public Policy. Under no circumstances should entrants directly contact the Baker Institute. The BISF can be reached by email at bisf@rice.edu or at the Presidents’ email. The members of the BISF will respond as timely as possible but we ask for your patience.
II. ELIGIBILITY

The BISF Public Policy Competition is open to submissions from entrants meeting the following eligibility requirements:

   a. At least 18 years of age at the time of the policy conference
   b. Enrolled, either part-time or full-time, as an undergraduate student during the 2019–2020 academic year at Rice University or the University of Houston

Additional Circumstances:

   c. Students enrolled in their final year of undergraduate study in the 2019-2020 academic year are considered eligible but should be able to attend the policy conference on April 11, 2020, if selected as a finalist.
   d. International students currently attending Rice University or the University of Houston are considered eligible.
   e. Students who have entered the competition previously may submit again, but they must present a paper that is substantially different from the paper they submitted previously. Entries from previous competitors should both address a problem and provide a proposal that are different than those which they presented previously. The BISF reserves the right to disqualify papers that are too similar to previous entries submitted by that competitor.

Team Structure:

   f. Interested participants may submit individually or in teams of two or three.
   g. Only one team member needs to submit the proposal, but all members’ identification information should be included.
   h. All team members should meet eligibility criteria and be available to participate in the conference if selected as a finalist team.

Throughout this document, any stipulation applied to participants or finalists is intended to apply to all members of a team submission.
III. SUBMITTING ENTRIES

All entries must be submitted by 11:59 P.M. (central standard time) on January 26, 2020. Entries may be submitted by emailing bisf@rice.edu with the following stipulations:

- The paper must be attached as a .doc or .pdf file
- The paper file should be titled:
  [BISF Policy Proposal – Last name First name]
- The paper should meet all formatting requirements described in Section VI.
- The email subject title should be labeled:
  [Policy Competition Submission Last name First name]
- The email should be sent from the entrant’s personal email address and will serve as the sole means of communication between the BISF and the entrant
- The email body must contain the entrant’s full legal name.
  - This information is strictly for identification purposes and will not be shared. This information will be withheld from the Review Committee at the time of paper evaluation.
IV. POLICY PAPER OVERVIEW

What should submissions address? Entrants must select from one of the following five prompts:

1. Energy and energy technology are globally-traded products. In the past decade, the U.S. has greatly increased investment in its natural gas and crude oil resources, allowing for greater energy independence and significant exports to the world market. Due to energy’s global market interconnectedness, the U.S.’s export, production and investment in energy has the potential to meaningfully impact global prices, shift market conditions and even contest OPEC’s strong influence on world energy. Meanwhile, in other areas of energy, the U.S. has continued to rely heavily on other countries, which could threaten U.S. energy security and exacerbate vulnerability to price shocks and resource shortages, as shown by recent tariffs on Chinese solar panels in the ongoing U.S.-China trade dispute. In your paper, do one or more of the following:
   a. Propose a change to current U.S. international trade policies with regards to energy that will support U.S. interests.
   b. Propose a policy that will encourage U.S. investment in energy abroad.
   c. Identify a specific economic or energy policy the U.S. can implement to remain competitive in a constantly evolving global energy market.

2. Energy policy necessitates consideration of environmental consequences and solutions, and for many environmental issues, the U.S cannot approach the problem alone. Climate change and environmental degradation continue to be global issues, and the success of environmental efforts depends on widespread international cooperation. On June 1, 2017, President Trump expressed firm intent to withdraw U.S. commitments to the Paris climate accords, citing unfair obligations and economic losses. Since then, there have been no significant renegotiations or new commitments to global climate accords by the U.S. In your paper, identify an existing international environmental regulation that relates to energy policy, address problems with this regulation, and propose a new course of action (reject the policy, alter the policy, adopt a different policy) and identify and address potential criticisms of the new course of action.

3. Due to its utility and necessity, energy has been at the center of several foreign policy discussions, and plays a major part in high-profile geopolitical disputes. Energy security and access is crucial for military and economic competitiveness, and energy-dependent economies highly prioritize energy objectives in their foreign policy. From Iran’s
interventions in the Strait of Hormuz and suspected role in the attack on oil infrastructure in Saudi Arabia, to Venezuela’s reliance on its state-run oil industry to entrench an authoritarian regime, to the increasingly controversial Nord Stream 2 pipeline, contemporary foreign policy demonstrates that energy policy can be leveraged to achieve both diplomatic and defense goals. In your paper:

a. Identify an existing U.S. agreement or regulation that relates to energy and geopolitical interests, address problems with this agreement, propose a new course of action (reject the policy, alter the policy, adopt a different policy), and identify and address potential criticisms of this new course of action or
b. Identify the strategic value of energy policy to the United States in a specific international context and designate a specific policy to advance a particular geopolitical interest associated with that context.

4. According to recent statistics from the International Energy Agency, around 840 million people worldwide lack access to electricity, with hundreds of millions more having unreliable access. Despite modest progress in recent years, energy poverty still inhibits economic development for billions of people globally by stifling businesses’ efforts to maintain productivity and limiting access to other necessities such as internet and healthcare. Energy insecurity can also manifest as social unrest and instability, especially in the context of urbanization and unemployment, serving as a threat multiplier for internal protests and mass migration. In response to this problem, propose a policy that the United States can implement to promote and support one specific aspect of the development of electricity access, stable energy infrastructure and energy security in developing countries across the world.

5. Choose your own topic. Either:
   a. Choose a specific U.S. policy that is currently in place with regards to global energy systems, identify problems with this policy, and recommend a new course of action (reject the policy, change the policy, adopt a new policy), or
   b. Argue for the adoption of a policy that would help address a specific problem in the realm of global energy policy at the U.S. national level. Identify and address potential criticisms of the new policy.

Regardless of the prompt chosen, all papers should contain the following content:
● They should address U.S. national level policy, rather than local or state policy. Papers may discuss domestic implications or context, but the bulk of the paper should focus on national level international policy and its implications on global markets and systems.
● They should address laws or public regulations.
● They should be written in a formal style, but assume minimal prior knowledge of the reader.
● They should utilize data and academic literature to support arguments made within the paper.
● If the course of action requires a cost, the writer should explain where funds will come from (within the state or national budget, a new tax, etc.).
● They should only contain analysis directly relevant to the policy being proposed.
● They should have a narrow focus and scope, relating to a specific law or regulation or a specific set of laws and regulations that are interconnected.
● They should take the form of a policy proposal, and thus include, at minimum:
  ○ a brief abstract
  ○ relevant background information about the subtopic being addressed
  ○ a statement of current policy and why it is inadequate (if against)/why it is beneficial (if for retaining the policy)
  ○ a statement of at least two policy options available for addressing this inadequacy (if against)/at least two proposed changes to this policy; with a brief summary of the benefits and drawbacks presented by each option
  ○ a recommendation for a specific course of action
  ○ an explanation of why this policy is the preferable alternative, reinforced by evidence and strong argumentation that addresses possible counterarguments
  ○ a bibliography

Entrants should utilize available data and academic literature to support arguments made within the paper. For a more detailed overview of evaluation, see Section V below.

V. PAPER EVALUATION OVERVIEW
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Background</td>
<td>Does the writer effectively provide background information relevant to the topic at hand? Does the writer describe the relevant status quo for the topic at hand? Does the writer clearly identify plausible, significant inadequacies of the status quo or identify plausible, significant benefits of the status quo?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Proposal</td>
<td>Does the writer describe at least two strong courses of action to resolve the aforementioned inadequacies or two strong proposals to change or eliminate the policies that help maintain the status quo? Does the writer convincingly describe the pros and cons of each alternative? Does the writer clearly and precisely convey what course of action is best? Is the course of action specific and detailed? Is the course of action a change in policy, is it significantly different from the status quo? Is the policy proposal directly relevant to the chosen prompt, or, if free choice, is the policy proposal directly relevant to the policy addressed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>Justification</td>
<td>Does the writer effectively and convincingly argue why the policy proposal will correct the problem presented, or why maintaining the status quo is better policy than accepting a proposed alternative? Does the writer identify and discuss major advantages and disadvantages to adopting the policy proposed? Does the writer effectively address counterarguments? Does the writer identify costs of implementing this policy, and address how these costs will be funded?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Feasibility and Specificity</td>
<td>Does the paper address a specific policy or set of policies that can be reasonably analyzed in a paper of this length? Is the proposal realistic and is its implementation conceivable? Is this policy cost-effective?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Evidence</td>
<td>Does the writer present relevant data to illustrate claims? Does the writer effectively use academic literature to support arguments? Are there many unsupported claims? Are there unnecessary, irrelevant, or inaccurate citations? Are there obvious gaps in research relevant to the policy? How informed does the writer appear to be on the subject matter chosen?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
VI. PAPER FORMATTING

a. All papers should be formatted according to the following criteria:
   - 3,000 – 6,000 words in length, excluding citations. Any paper exceeding the word limit will be subject to disqualification.
   - Times New Roman, 12 pt font
   - Double-spaced
   - Page number centered in footer
   - Standard 1 inch margins on all sides of page
   - Consistent formatting for subsection titles (Letters, numerals, etc.)

b. Page 1: Cover Page displaying entrant’s
   - Name
   - University Attended, Expected Year of Graduation
   - Title of Policy Paper

c. Page 2:
   - Title of Policy Paper
   - Abstract (250 – 350 words)

d. Page 3 – : Body of Paper

e. Last Pages: Bibliography

f. Citations: APA, Chicago/Turabian, MLA, and Harvard Styles will be accepted.

g. Footnotes: Times New Roman, 10 pt font, single-spaced

Please do not include any headings or footings beyond the requested page number. Do not include any personal information (name, university, etc.) on any page beyond the cover sheet. An example paper is included in Appendix B.

Failure to adhere to the formatting described above may result in point deductions from the Review Committee’s evaluation score.
VII. PAPER EVALUATION PROCEDURE

1. All entries must be received by January 26, 2020.

2. All entries received will be assigned an identification number and stripped of their personal identification information. Cover Pages will not be printed.

3. The Review Committee will read and score anonymous papers according to the criteria established in Section IV. Members of the Review Committee will have been trained in how papers are to be graded and will report their evaluations to the BISF.

4. Six to ten entrants will be selected as finalists based on the paper evaluation scores. All finalists are invited to participate in a formal conference at the Baker Institute.

5. Finalists will be notified no later than March 13, 2020, of their selection to participate in the 2020 Policy Conference. Those who are not selected as finalists will not be notified.

6. Students will have until March 20, 2020, to notify the BISF of their intent to participate in the competition. The BISF maintains the right to replace finalists who decline with alternates at its discretion pending circumstances at the time of occurrence.

VIII. RESPONSIBILITIES OF FINALISTS PRIOR TO CONFERENCE

After accepting their invitations to participate in the policy conference, finalists will be asked to prepare a PowerPoint to accompany a 20-minute presentation of their proposal to be presented to a panel of judges. This style of the PowerPoint is left to the discretion of the finalists but should be kept strictly professional. PowerPoints should be finalized and emailed to bisf@rice.edu by April 3, 2020. The BISF will try to accommodate changes made after this deadline prior to the first judging panel, but does not guarantee PowerPoints submitted after this deadline will be accessible for the presentation. The BISF is not responsible for providing computer access to any finalists.
IX. CONFERENCE COMPETITION PROCEDURE

1. Each finalist will be assigned a time slot on the afternoon of April 11, 2020 to present their policy proposal to a panel of judges from the Houston community.

2. Each finalist will have a maximum of 20 minutes to present their proposal using PowerPoint as a visual aid. This will be followed by 10 minutes for judges to ask questions.

3. All panel judges will be required to state any familiarity with finalists prior to the presentation. Those with stated relationships will be excused for the round.

4. Each finalist’s final score will be weighed 50% paper 50% presentation.

5. In the case of a tie final score for two or more finalists, the judges from the presentations will convene to rank the tying finalists. No two finalists will tie for a final placement or prize.

6. Cash prizes will be given as detailed in Section XI.

7. At the award ceremony, the top 3 placing finalists will be recognized. Each will be given 5 minutes to inform the audience of their proposal.
X. OVERVIEW OF PRESENTATION EVALUATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 25%    | Depth of Knowledge                | Does the speaker demonstrate knowledge of the subject matter being analyzed?  
|        |                                  | Does the speaker demonstrate an understanding of the literature on the subject matter?  
|        |                                  | Does the speaker effectively respond to questions proposed by the judges following the presentation? |
| 25%    | Completeness of Presentation      | Does the speaker discuss the most important relevant aspects of the policy area being analyzed?  
|        |                                  | Does the speaker effectively explain his or her proposal?                  |
| 25%    | Originality and Relevance         | Is the speaker’s proposal original or unique in some way?  
|        |                                  | Does the proposal directly address a specific policy or related set of policies relevant to one of the prompts?  
|        |                                  | Is the presentation focused on background, research, and analysis relevant to the policy area or proposal? |
| 25%    | Presentation                      | How effective is the speaker?  
|        |                                  | Does the speaker maintain professional demeanor?  
|        |                                  | Does the visual aid provide appropriate and useful visual support for the presentation? (Graphs, Plots, etc.) |

Final score to determine competition winner = 0.50*Paper Evaluation + 0.50*Presentation

XI. PRIZES

a. 1st Place: $1,000  
b. 2nd Place: $750  
c. 3rd Place: $500  
d. All finalists will have their Abstracts published in The Rice Journal of Public Policy, the student-run journal of the Baker Institute Student Forum.  
e. In the case of a tie, the paper evaluation score will serve as the tie breaker. Only one finalist will receive each prize.
APPENDIX A. TIMELINE OF IMPORTANT DATES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 26</td>
<td>Close Submission Window at 11:59 PM Central Standard Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 13</td>
<td>Deadline finalists notified of selection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 20</td>
<td>Deadline for selected finalists to confirm attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 3</td>
<td>Deadline for submitting PowerPoints for presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 10</td>
<td>Registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 11</td>
<td>BISF Undergraduate Public Policy Competition: US Energy Policy in a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Global Context</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
First Name Last Name

University Attended, Year of Graduation

Paper Title
Abstract:

This is where a participant should write the abstract. The abstract should be 250 – 350 words in length. It should state the policy area to be analyzed and the proposal being made. The abstract should be function as a complete thesis that guides the reader in what follows in the paper. The Abstract should be separated from the body of the paper itself by a page break. This page will function as the cover page during paper evaluations by the Review Committee.
I. Introduction

Papers may format subsection headings as desired. There is no standard format proposed in this rulebook, however participants should be consistent in whatever format is chosen.

II. Section Heading

The paper should be written in 12 point Times New Roman Font, Double spaced, and use 1 inch margins. The entire paper should be between 2,500 and 5,000 words in total, excluding citations.¹ The Bibliography should begin on a separate page from the last paragraph of the paper’s body text.

¹ Footnotes may be used at the discretion of the writer but are generally discouraged, with the exception of citation styles utilizing partial citations in footnotes throughout the essay. Participants may use APA, Chicago/Turabian, MLA, or Harvard Citation formats.
Bibliography

Consult a formal guide on citations such as the Chicago Manual of Style for details regarding proper formatting of references.
APPENDIX C. TENTATIVE CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

April 10, 2020

4:00 – 5:30 PM  Networking event with energy policy experts and professionals
5:30 – 6:00 PM  Registration for participants
6:00 – 7:30 PM  Opening dinner for participants, transportation will be provided
                7:30 PM  Close for Evening

April 11, 2020

8:00 – 9:00 AM  Check-in at the Baker Institute, Breakfast provided
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM Presentations by finalists
1:00 – 2:00 PM  Lunch provided in the Grand Hall, Keynote Speaker
2:00 – 2:30 PM  Awards presentation