POLICY BRIEFING
CONCEPT INTRODUCTION

2011 NOSB Finals
Competition

April 30, 2011
Galveston, TX
POLICY BRIEFING TEAM INSTRUCTIONS

In 2011, NOSB will be piloting a new element at the Finals Competition in order to help students increase their knowledge of the structure, format and purpose of policy briefing; improve their analysis skills; gain experience preparing a formal testimony; and hone their critical thinking and cooperative learning skills. This new Policy Briefing Component will consist of two key elements -- a written document (Policy Briefing Report) that the teams will write and submit prior to the Finals Competition and an oral presentation (Congressional Testimony) that the team will give to a panel of judges during the competition on Saturday, April 30, 2011.

Each team and team member will be scored on the written report and on the oral presentation. The team with the overall highest total score will receive a special award trip. It should be noted that since the Policy Briefing is a brand new, untested addition to the competition, each team’s Policy Briefing score will NOT be added into the team’s overall competition score during the 2011 event. However, even though the Policy Briefing score will not affect a team’s ability to place in Finals, this is a significant activity at the competition and full team participation is required. A team that chooses not to fully participate in this new element will not be eligible to advance to the double elimination rounds at the 2011 Finals.

The Policy Briefing topic that all the teams will focus on will be provided after the national office runs a coaches’ training webinar on the policy briefing in early March. The release of the topic at that time ensures that all teams are on a level-playing field, whether their regional competition occurred the first weekend or the fourth weekend in February.

COMPONENTS OF THE POLICY BRIEFING

PART I.

The first phase of this new element is the Policy Briefing Report, which includes a written compilation of five different stakeholders’ views on the assigned policy issue and a team’s discussion and final recommendations on what they feel Congress should do with the current policy.

Prior to the competition, each team member will become an ‘expert’ on a specific stakeholder’s point-of-view (i.e. a fisherman, seafood restaurant owner, Federal Employee, etc.) of the selected topic for this year’s briefing. The students will draft a narrative testimony on their stakeholder’s view and make recommendations based on the implications of this policy in their community. The purpose of this activity is not to draft a history of the issue, but to focus on the policy’s impacts and recommend how the policy can be revised, kept the same or thrown out in order to most closely meet the needs of specific stakeholders.

The teams will all receive 4-5 pieces of draft legislation, which were introduced, but were not passed in the previous (111th) Congress. As a team, the students will need to review the issues of the associated bills. They will be expected to analyze these bills, and then research primary and secondary sources on the selected subject.
As individual team members, they will need to explore the backgrounds of their chosen stakeholder and grasp why their stakeholder might be in favor of, or might despise the proposed bills. Subsequently, they will determine what changes they would like to see. Students do NOT need to contact stakeholders to conduct their research.

Based on the information the students find, they will need to make specific recommendations on what their specific stakeholder group would like to see in a final version of a bill on the topic. As a team, they will also be expected to make final recommendations on the issue. This final team recommendation should provide the new “Congress” with a comprehensive approach that takes into consideration all stakeholders’ perspectives.

The team’s policy briefing report will include a written statement, work cited and visual aides (optional) for each stakeholder and a team final recommendation statement.

Each individual stakeholder testimony within the policy briefing report should be approximately 300 words; this testimony will be the “script” that each team member will read aloud during their presentation at the competition. Given this condensed length, the students must work hard to get to the heart of the issue.

The team’s final recommendation should be approximately 200 words. The final recommendations will be the team’s (representing their stakeholders’ views) collective viewpoint on what steps “Congress” should take to implement a new comprehensive policy on the chosen topic – i.e. pass specific bill(s) as is, amend previous bill(s), or provide recommendations for developing an entirely new bill. These recommendations should be well thought-out, specific and highlight appropriate and realistic compromise.

As mentioned above the inclusion of visual aids is allowable, but not required. However, all visual aids must be from previously developed (i.e. publicly available) graphs, charts, or tables, and should be specifically used to explain or reinforce a stakeholder’s point(s). Students should not design their own visual aid materials. In addition, since all submitted documents will be put into a binder for the judges to review, none of the documents may be larger than 8 ½ x 11 inches (a standard sheet of paper).

The Policy Briefing report is due electronically to NOSB prior to the competition on Monday, April 18, 2011 at Noon (local submission time). Additional information on the requirements for submitting and drafting the Policy Briefing Report and a complete rubric are in the appendices.

**PART II.**

During the Finals competition, the students will conduct the second phase of the Policy Briefing by presenting their Congressional Testimony to a panel of judges. The students will read their prepared narrative testimonies, which they submitted previously to NOSB. Since most public speakers present at a rate of approximately 200 words per minute, the 300-word written report should be the appropriate length for each team member to address their stakeholders’ views, while staying within their individual allotted time (1 ½ minutes).
Each team will only be able to bring one complete copy of their team’s Policy Briefing report into the competition room at Finals. No additional notes, papers, or materials will be permitted. Even if the team submitted visual aids, those aids must be exact replicas of what was submitted previously to NOSB, visuals cannot be formatted into a PowerPoint slide, poster, or display. NOSB will NOT make copies of team reports, so it is important that teams remember to bring their own copies.

The team should be prepared to answer a total of three questions from the judges. The team will be given a set amount of time to confer with each other before one team member answers the question, within the allotted time. These questions will be unique to each team, as their goal is to delve into the issue deeper and determine the team’s true level of comprehension and analysis. The questions will be developed based upon each judges’ review of the team’s policy briefing report.

Team members should consider themselves professional representatives of that collective stakeholder group, and should NOT dress in costume to represent their stakeholder. Moreover, students do NOT need to dress up for this activity - they may wear their NOSB t-shirt, their team costume, or other appropriate event attire.

**PROGRAM STRUCTURE**

Whether a team has four or five members, each team will prepare testimonies for all five stakeholders associated with the policy issue. A team with only four students will need to assign one student the responsibility of representing two stakeholders. Each team will also have to identify one student who will not only represent a stakeholder, but will also be the individual who will give the team’s final policy recommendations.

In total, each team will prepare six (6) testimonies – five (5) that represent each of the stakeholders’ views (listed below) and one (1) final recommendation. The five (5) stakeholders that will be represented in each testimony are:

1. Federal representative
2. State representative
3. Industry representative
4. Scientist
5. Non-governmental representative

Since every team member must participate in the Policy Briefing, it is important that teams divide up the requirements in a way that ensures each team member prepares a written testimony for at least one stakeholder, is prepared to read their testimony orally, and is prepared to participate in the answering of questions from the judges during the team’s presentation.

The presentations will occur on Saturday during the first day of the Finals Competition. The majority of the teams will conduct their presentation during the traditional “bye” period of the round robins. There will be two separate Policy Briefing competition rooms, which will allow two teams to present their testimonies simultaneously. This scheduling ensures there is enough
time to complete all the presentations prior to the beginning of the double elimination portion of the competition.

Each team presentation will occur within a 16-minute time block. The session will start with brief opening remarks by the judging panel. The team members will then be allotted a maximum of 11 minutes for their presentations and a total of 5 minutes for the judges to ask the team questions. Each team member will give a testimony on his or her stakeholder’s viewpoint for approximately 1.5 minutes. After all students have presented, the final presenter for the team will then give a ~1 minute presentation on the team’s final recommendations.

Teams will receive a warning by the timekeeper when they have 2 minutes, 1 minute, and thirty seconds left in the 11 minutes, and then when their time has expired. There will not be warnings given for the individual 1.5-minute presentations. When the clock expires, all team members are required to stop talking.

After the team presentation is finished or time has ended, a total of five minutes will be allotted for the Q&A session. Teams will answer three questions presented by the judges (one question per judge). The judges will be allowed a maximum of 20 seconds to ask each question. After a question has been asked, the timekeeper will set the clock to give the team 40 seconds to confer and to select a team representative to answer the question. The students will be given a 5-second warning to indicate that their conferring time is about to end. When the timekeeper indicates that time is up, the team must stop all discussion. Any conferring after the team has been instructed to answer the question will result in a score of zero (0) for that question.

Students will be given 30 seconds to answer questions. The timekeeper will set the clock. Students will NOT be given a time warning, and must stop talking when the buzzer sounds. No answers, or partial answers, provided after the buzzer has sounded will be taken into consideration.

When the team’s Policy Briefing time block is done, the team will transition to their next location as another team prepares to present in that room.

**SCORING**

Each team’s total Policy Briefing score will be compiled from their Policy Briefing Report score and their Congressional Testimony Score. These two main components are made up of eight key subcategories. Each team can earn a **maximum total of 300 points.** A complete scoring rubric can found in the appendix.

- The Policy Briefing Report score will be comprised of the five stakeholder’s scores, and the team’s final recommendation score. Each student representing their stakeholder and/or providing their team’s final recommendations can earn a maximum of **25 points**, providing their team with a maximum **sub-total score of 150 points.**
  - Each subcategory (Submission, Writing Style, Issue Comprehension, Impact/Persuasiveness, and Recommendations) is worth a maximum of 5 points per category per stakeholder/team final recommendations.
Policy Briefing Score: 5 stakeholders x 5 subcategories x 5 points possible/subcategory = 125 points + 25 possible points for the team’s final recommendations = 150 points

The Congressional Testimony portion is comprised of two parts – the oral presentation section, where the students read their written testimony and the Open Forum -- Q&A session. During the oral presentation part, each student representing their stakeholder and/or providing their team’s final recommendations has the opportunity to earn 10 points, allowing their team to acquire a maximum sub-total score of 60 points.

Each subcategory (Style & Delivery and Time) for the oral presentation is worth a maximum of 5 points per category per stakeholder/team final recommendations.

Congressional Testimony = 5 stakeholders x 2 subcategories x 5 possible points/subcategory = 50 + 10 possible points for the team’s final recommendations = 60 points

The Q&A section evaluates the students as a team and provides a score for each question the team answers. In this part, students do not receive an individual stakeholder score. Each team will have the opportunity to accumulate an additional 90 points for collectively answering the expert judges’ three questions during the open forum.

Each question is worth a maximum for 30 points.

Open Forum = 3 questions x 30 points possible = 90 points

All judges’ scores are final. Each team will receive a copy of their total score and Team Rankings (1-25), which will be provided when the Round Robin Scores are announced; numeric scores will not be posted.

Should there be a tie for the first place position:
  a. The judges will first look for the highest score in the category of the total “individual” team recommendation score between the tied teams.
  b. If there is still a tie, judges will look for the highest total individual score from the stakeholders’ score, other than the captain’s score
  c. If there is still a tie, judges will look for the highest captain’s score among the team score.
  d. If neither of these options determines a winner, the teams will answer a TCQ on the topic and the top score will be the winner.

ROOM SET-UP & STRUCTURE

A table with three chairs for the judges will be placed at the front of the room. One long table or two shorter tables with five chairs will be set up for the students, so the team will be facing the judges. The coach will sit in the back of the room behind the students.

The presentations will not be open to the public. Only the team, coach, room officials and videographer will be allowed in the room. Presentations will be recorded for program development use. Videos of top presentations may be used as a teaching tool for 2012.
COACH PREPARATION

During the first week of March 2011, the NOSB national office will schedule a webinar for all the coaches participating in the 2011 NOSB Finals (Scheduled: Wednesday, March 3, 2011 at 8pm ET). The webinar will focus on how this portion of the competition will be structured; what the individual policy briefing components are; general team preparation suggestions; and how the activity will be scored. No questions will be answered on the Policy Briefing Topic.

Any coach, even if they are not attending Finals, is eligible to participate in the webinar; however, all non-Finals coaches will be muted during the webinar. Coaches not participating in Finals will only be able to submit written questions through the webinar question feature.

The 2011 topic will be released after the conclusion of the webinar. Finals coaches will receive the topic by email; all other coaches will be able to retrieve the topic from the NOSB website.

TEAM PREPARATION

Team captains from competing teams may submit questions to the NOSB national office via email at nosb@oceanleadership.org until Friday, March 25, 2011. Answers to all submitted questions will be answered one at one time and will be posted on the NOSB website by April 1, 2011.
Policy Briefing Report Submission Requirements

**Due Date:** April 18, 2011 – 12:00pm (noon) local submission time  
**Submit to:** nosb@oceanleadership.org

Each team must submit one team packet that includes a cover page for the entire team, each of the individual team members’ stakeholder testimonies and the team’s discussion and final recommendations.

**General Document Structure & Format**

- **Page/Word Limits**
  - a. 50 word maximum abstract per stakeholder/final recommendations
  - b. ~300 word testimony per stakeholder
  - c. ~ 200 word final recommendations
  - d. 3-5 pages per stakeholder/final recommendation, which includes the cover page, abstract, testimony, and references.

- **Formatting**
  - a. 12pt font
  - b. Double line spacing
  - c. 1” margins all around
  - d. Page numbers – consecutive throughout the entire team submission
  - e. Headers/Sub-headers

- **Team Packet Cover Page**
  - a. Team/School name
  - b. Region
  - c. Name of each team member & stakeholder role
  - d. Name of individual making final recommendations
  - e. Coach’s name
  - f. Captain’s contact information

- **Individual Stakeholder Documents**
  - **Stakeholder Title Page**
    - a. Stakeholder
    - b. Presenter name
  - **Abstract**
    - a. 50 word maximum abstract per stakeholder
  - **Stakeholder Testimony**
    - a. ~ 300 words (1 to 1 ½ pages in length) - the average number of words that can be spoken in 1.5 minutes
    - b. Testimony should include stakeholder’s individual recommendations
  - **Graphs and figures, pictures**
    - a. Max 2 per stakeholder
    - b. Proper use of citations and documentation
  - **Citations/References**
    - a. Max 5 per stakeholder
b. APA formatting

**Team Final Recommendation Documents**

Team Final Recommendation Title Page

a. Presenter’s name

Abstract

a. 50 word maximum abstract per stakeholder

Final Recommendation

  c. ~200 words (3/4 to 1 page in length) – approximate number of words that can be spoken in 1 minute.

Graphs and figures, pictures

  c. Max 2
  d. Proper use of citations and documentation

Citations/References

  c. Max 5
  d. APA formatting

**Plagiarism will not be tolerated**