

Deliberative Democracy Simulation

POL 1201
TA Section
Friday, 9/9

Introduction:

The student jury is a shorter version of the citizen juries initiated and run by the Jefferson Center in Minneapolis since 1974. In citizen juries, a representative group of Minnesotans, serving as a microcosm of the public, is brought together for a week to become informed about a specific topic of public concern, discuss potential solutions, and come up with recommendations that are brought to the attention of the public and local and state government. In student juries you will become informed about a specific issue through background readings (on publicagenda.org), meet in “juries” to deliberate about possible responses to the issue, and come up with a response that is brought to other juries and the class report will be sent to a public official. For this TA Section, you will meet in your individual juries to deliberate and we will continue the simulation in our next class session.

Issues Charge:

Ø Issue: Campaign Finance Reform

Issue Charge: “In what ways, if any, do you feel the national system of campaign finance should be reformed? If not, why?”

Becoming Informed:

Student juries are not focus groups which provide individual opinions on an issue but rather are to provide collectively considered judgments. The first step in this process involves becoming informed on the issue on which your jury will deliberate. Background readings the issue are assigned by me and you must read these before the TA Section.

The readings are found on publicagenda.org. Go to the bottom lefthand corner of the page where it says “issues.” Select “campaign reform.” You should read the issue “overview” and the detailed versions of the three “discussion guide” perspectives. Feel free to read any other items of interest and/or do additional research on the topic using other sources (be prepared to state the main points of these other sources clearly for your classmates in discussion and be clear the references are from outside readings).

Deliberation:

Students will divide up into their individual juries which will be your TA groups for the entire semester and each jury will deliberate on the specific “charge” that accompanies the issue. Deliberation is a structured discussion with the purpose of providing informed answers to the charge. It is not a competition among different opinions and students should feel free to change their minds and be persuaded by one another. Juries should strive for a common consensus, although not at the expense of honest disagreement and valid minority opinions.

How to Deliberate:

1. Elect a Jury Reporter for your group.
2. The TA Section leader will serve as the Jury Foreperson. The Foreperson will ask each member of the jury to introduce themselves and describe how they would initially answer the charge and their reasons for their answer. The Foreperson will facilitate the process and will share their views last (if they want to).
2. The Jury Reporter should then summarize major areas of agreement and disagreement.

3. The Foreperson should facilitate a brief discussion focusing on the Jury Reporter's summary.
4. Jury Reporter & Foreperson propose up to three points of common agreement and the Reporter should write them on a chalkboard.
5. Jury Forepersons conduct a vote on each point of agreement written down.
6. Jury Reporter indicates whether each vote was:
 - a. Unanimous (All jury members agreed.)
 - b. Majority (Not unanimous but at least two-thirds of the jury members agreed.)
 - c. Minority (Less than two-thirds but at least a third of the jury members agreed.)
7. If time allows, you can continue discussing the issue and, if it seems as though discussion leads to different levels of support for those areas of agreement you voted on, vote again!

Jury Roles:

ü **Jury Forepersons (TA Section Leader):** The TA will conduct the deliberation of individual student juries. It is their job to make sure all jury members get a chance to speak and make progress towards providing a report on the charge. They must conduct and keep track of the voting on points of agreement.

ü **Jury Reporter:** This student is responsible for recording the jury's collective response to the charge (a report form will be provided). They will work with the Foreperson to report initial areas of agreement and disagreement and will write them on the chalkboard for the group. They will also report these points to the other juries deliberating on the same issue in the next class session. Jury Reporters must submit their written report to the instructor after presenting it in class.

Reporting Jury Findings:

In our next class session, the Jury Reporters from each jury will then announce their findings –what, of the three points of agreement were voted on unanimously, by a majority and by a minority- to members of the other juries.

Final Report

At our in-class simulation, we will elect two students to write up our findings in a report to be sent to the appropriate national elected officials (we will determine who these people are in the session, too).

Jury Member Notes:

Initial Jury Member Response (How would you answer the charge?)

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What are the reasons for your response to the charge?

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Possible Question for additional discussion (Prepare based on background readings.)

