

THE IMPLIED POLICY ANALYST:  
AN EXAMINATION OF EIGHT SCHOOLS OF PUBLIC POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

The practitioner of policy analysis is commonly thought of in concrete terms. If requested, almost anyone familiar with institutional research or the structure of the federal government could probably cite several examples of a policy analyst. Commonest of these examples would probably be staff positions in any of several federal departments whose responsibilities (and in some cases job titles) include policy research or program evaluation. Repetitions of the request, however, would reveal that these common examples are only the beginning of a long list of examples drawn from administrators, consultants, researchers, and teachers whose employers might include research institutions, state and local government, and colleges and universities as well as the federal government (see Table 1). It is when inquiry is made of the characteristics of these diverse examples that difficulty of defining a policy analyst becomes apparent. The different functions that are performed such as program evaluator, planner, implementer, administrator or coordinator are all mentioned along with the more informal functions of liaison and advisor. Many different kinds of people fulfill these functions, but there is no known similarity between the differences among the functions and the differences among those who perform them. Since these differences are not amenable to study, examination of the characteristics that schools that are training policy analysts are trying to impart to their students seems a suitable substitute.

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Paper prepared as a part of the course requirements for "The Expert and Society" conducted by Dr. H. Goldhamer at The Rand Graduate Institute.

TABLE 1  
THE LONG

EXPECTED EMPLOYING INSTITUTIONS: by School Awarded  
by Type of Employing Institution  
by Degree Awarded

		Federal		State		Local		Research Inst.	Univ./College	Others Mentioned
		Staff	Line	Staff	Line	Staff	Line			
MBA	Stanford	X	X	X	X	X	X			
MPP	U.C. Berkeley	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Ph.D.	U.C. Berkeley	X						X	X	
Ph.D.	RGI	X	X		X		X	X	X	
MPP	Harvard	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
Ph.D.	Harvard	X		X		X		X	X	
M.S.	Carnegie-Mellon	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Ph.D.	Carnegie-Mellon	X				X		X	X	X
MPP	U. Michigan	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
MPA	U. Texas	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
MPA	Princeton	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Ph.D.	Princeton	X		X		X		X	X	X

Source: Program Announcement Literature for each school.

DISCUSSION

The decision to examine schools of public policy in order to determine the characteristics of a policy analyst is based on the following presumption. While it is not necessary to achieve strong agreement about what constitutes a policy analyst, there are two sets of decisions which must be made and which are of sufficient importance that these decisions will only be made after careful thought and serious, even heated, discussions with the faculty. These decisions are what composition of disciplines to seek and what courses to require. Requiring coursework in a particular discipline constitutes strong endorsement of the importance of that discipline to the training of a policy analyst for his ambiguous function. Since it is also uncommon to specify completely a student's coursework, it is certain that the decision as to what to require in every student's program is reached only after consideration of the high opportunity costs that will be incurred with the choice.

For a particular program the ranking of the disciplines might be inferred from the relative proportion of the program devoted to it. The precision of ranking based on this approach will be very low since courses which are a straightforward development of the student's background will require relatively less time than those which are not. Courses which require quantitative background (economics) and those that are essentially unrelated to public policy but important instrumentally (statistics) would be likely to have their importance overstated using the relative share of program time approach. The precision of the ranking would not be completely disabled by these efficiency effects, and global comparisons would still be possible.

The purpose of this study is to identify those characteristics of a policy analyst which are essential to his performance. For this purpose a method of analysis is needed which arrays the disciplines in a ranking that is moderately precise up to the point where the disciplines cease to be essential to the policy analyst. Beyond this point the ranking may be imprecise, but the ranking of all of the disciplines with respect to that one point must be precise. The approach that will definitely sort the disciplines into those which are essential and those which are not (and to also provide some information as to the relative importance of those disciplines considered essential) is to measure agreement

among schools about each discipline's importance. A simple count of the number of schools requiring a particular discipline provides one such ranking.

As a method of validating this array a second array based on whether or not a representative of the discipline is on the faculty is developed. Some disagreement between the arrays is expected since the representation of the instrumental courses may be under counted if another school or department within the educational institution provides faculty in this area. The ranking of the disciplines across these two arrays along with the average of the relative amount of curriculum time required in the discipline should be sufficient to gain the necessary precision in the ranking of the disciplines by relative importance to the policy analyst and to discriminate between the essential and the non-essential disciplines.

A letter was sent to a number of institutions including all eight of those with a program in public affairs, public administration, or public policy funded by the Ford Foundation. It was originally intended that these eight would constitute the group whose program literature would be examined, and the other programs were contacted merely to give some opportunity for comparison to determine the representatives of the Ford-funded institutions. Duke failed to respond, however, and Princeton appeared to be a good substitute since it is a large established program. These programs were not selected randomly and there is only limited evidence that they capture the central tendency. Resources permitting, a more appropriate choice would have been to contact all of the programs since that would have enhanced precision and permitted the use of statistical inference. Some confidence in the results of this study may be regained with the recognition that the data examined reflects the results of consideration by some large fraction of the ~~367~~ total faculty listed in the program brochures of the eight programs.

Public policy practitioners are presently drawn from a multitude of academic and professional disciplines. This will certainly continue to be the case and it could therefore be argued that it is the frequency and relative success of practitioners from these disciplines that should be studied. Without arguing against that approach, it is apparent that it is practitioners from other disciplines who designed and are now operating the public policy programs in

this study. As further demonstration of the value of training outside the framework of the programs examined, the opportunities to work toward another degree while earning a Master's degree in public policy are displayed in Table 2.

Table 3 contains the data characterizing the decisions about required courses and the distribution of faculty. The number of faculty in each discipline for each school is entered in the upper left of the appropriate cell. The lower right of each cell contains the figure calculated to be the percent of the total minimum program time required to be allocated to the discipline of the cell's column for that school and degree. Thus there are different entries for every row for the required course percentages, but the faculty distribution is repeated if the school has both a Master's and a Ph.D. program. Course requirements not corresponding to a particular academic discipline are displayed on the extreme left since these are used as cross tabulations for sorting the schools. The characterization of the school's program as quantitative or not is determined by the program literature. However, the entries for quantitative methods serve as a check against that characterization. Ten percent seems to be the natural dividing line, and the school's own label is consistent with that measure. When quantitative methods and statistics are summed however, the agreement declines--as shown in Figure 1. In particular, Michigan, since it requires no statistics, is very different from others self-defined to be quantitative. The most plausible explanation for this anomaly is that the Michigan program in considering itself quantitative may be using Political Science rather than Economics or the Physical Sciences as its reference for comparison.

In defining 'applied' course requirements, summer internships were considered to add one-third year to the program length. The resulting calculated percentages were added to each school's workshop percentages to create the 'applied' measure. Figure 2 shows the distribution in descending order of this measure. Those programs above average were designated 'applied.' The ~~program~~ program for which these strategies did not serve well is the Ph.D. at Carnegie-Mellon. Of the four programs awarding both a Masters and a Ph.D., only Carnegie-Mellon's is not an extension of the Master's degree program. The only course requirement of the program is a year-round workshop wherein Ph.D. students report the results of their research. This disables the method that has been

TABLE 3:  
COUNT OF FACULTY MEMBERS BY SCHOOL AND  
BY ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE

School/Degree	WORKSHOPS	INTERNSHIPS	TOTAL OF APPLIED	COMPUTER	QUANTITATIVE METHODS	ECONOMICS	LAW	POLITICAL SCIENCE	ADMINISTRATION	ENGINEERING	MATHEMATICS	SOCIOLOGY	STATISTICS	HISTORY	OPERATIONS RESEARCH	ORGANIZATION THEORY	PHYSICS	PSYCHOLOGY	PUBLIC AFFAIRS	URBAN PLANNING	ACCOUNTING	ANTHROPOLOGY	ARCHITECTURE	BIOLOGY	FINANCE	GEOGRAPHY	GEOLOGY	MARKETING	MEDICINE	PHILOSOPHY	PUBLIC HEALTH	SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY	TOTAL FACULTY PER SCHOOL	NUMBER OF REQUIRED ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES PER PROGRAM	COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL PROGRAM TIME BY ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE <sup>c</sup>	
																																			APPLIED	NOT APPLIED
RAND Ph.D.	11.1	50.0	61.1		2.8	4	1	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	1	2.8	1															28	5			
TEXAS M.P.A.					2.0	4	1	2	1	1	1	2	5.8	1	1	2.8	5.6							2		1	1					17				
BERKELEY M.P.P.		52.1	54.2	71.3	2.0	5.2	11.5	11.1	11.1	11.1	11.1	2	5.8	1	1	11.1	11.1																13			
HARVARD M.P.P.		28.6	34.3	42.9	2.5	2.5	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1	2	4.8	1	1	7.1	1																16			
STANFORD M.P.P.		17.1	14.0	13.1	3	10	1	3.1	2.9	2.9	2.9	1	1.6	1	1	7	2								13			6				84				
CARNEGIE-MELLON M.S.		20.0	20.0	20.0	4.7	5.0	3	2	4	4	3	5	1	1	2	4.7	1															32				
MICHIGAN M.P.P.		10.7	14.2	24.9	2.5	10.0	8	8	5.0	2	2	2	2.5	2.5	2.5	1																19				
BERKELEY Ph.D.		11.1	11.1	11.1	2.1	7.4	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	2	3.7	1	1	5.6																	f			
HARVARD Ph.D.		11.5	9.4	20.9	3.9	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	2	5.8	1	1	5.8																	f			
CARNEGIE-MELLON Ph.D.		20.0	20.0	20.0	3	5	1	3	2	4	3	5	1	1	2	1																	f			
PRINCETON M.P.A.			14.2	14.2	19	5	20	2	3	4	1	3	5.1	1	1	1																	158			
PRINCETON Ph.D.			9.1	9.1	1	8	7	5	5	5	5	4	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	f				
Number of Schools with one or more faculty members in this discipline																																				
Number of Programs Requiring Field	9	12			2	6	11	8	3	3	10	5																								
Average Percentage of Program Time Required in Field	16.8	15.2	28.5		0.6	6.6	8.0	4.6	1.1	1.7	4.3	0.2	1.8																							

SOURCE: Program Announcement Literature for Each School.

- a To make the table easier to read, zeros are recorded as blanks and percentage figures are in italics.
- b Entries for this variable are indicated by n. Academic discipline is determined by faculty member's highest degree or, secondarily, by teaching responsibilities.
- c Entries for this variable are indicated by %. Since the total program time for each school is not included, percentages will not sum to 100.
- d Applied is equal to workshops plus internships.
- e This entry is an interdisciplinary research methodology course introducing non-quantitative and quantitative methods, including data analysis.
- f Entries in this row are duplicates of the same school in one of the rows above.



TABLE 2

JOINT DEGREE OPTION AVAILABLE\*

		Law	Medicine	Business Admin.	Architecture
MBA	Stanford	X	X	X	X
MPP	U.C. Berkeley	X			
MPP	Harvard	X	X	X	
M.S.	Carnegie-Mellon				X
MPP	U. Michigan	X			
MPA	U. Texas				
MPA	Princeton	X			

Source: Program Announcement Literature for each school.

NOTE: No Ph.D. programs offered, joint degree options.

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\* Defined to be a formally-arranged opportunity to earn two degrees with fewer requirements than pursuing the two degrees separately would entail.

chosen for course analysis. The most likely effect has been to move the program away from the "quantitative--not applied" cross-tabulation.

The disciplines are ordered from left to right by the number of schools which have a faculty member representing that discipline. By comparing between the upper two of the bottom three rows, it can be seen that statistics and organization theory are both more important than their faculty representation would indicate. Law seems to be the reverse case. Every school has at least one lawyer, but there are no required courses in law. Similarly, though five schools have engineers, none has required courses in engineering.

A feature common to all of the programs is to require either workshops or an internship. Both are required in fifty percent of the programs. This is the characteristic that distinguishes these programs from that which might be taken by an economist or political scientist with an inter-disciplinary bent. With the single exception of the Carnegie-Mellon Ph.D. programs, economics is required in all of the programs and statistics for all except Michigan. Seventy-five percent require political science while a different seventy-five percent require quantitative methods. No other requirement is found in even one-half of the programs. All of the schools had at least four economists, two political scientists, and one lawyer. All but two had a sociologist. Five schools had an engineer.

Rand Graduate Institute is the single exception to the view that the appropriate professional degree is the Master's. Princeton, Berkeley, and Harvard view the Ph.D. as a step toward specialization in research reserved for those in the Master's degree program who demonstrate an aptitude for research. This is buttressed by the paradoxical view advanced by the schools that the Master's degree student is prepared for everything but university teaching, but they do not suggest administration as a possible employment for the Ph.D. holder (see Table 4). In contrast to these three schools, Carnegie-Mellon has no requirements and very little correspondence between its Ph.D. and M.S. programs. The Rand Ph.D. is also unique in that it is the only program classified as both applied and quantitative. As with the Carnegie-Mellon M.S. program this appears to have occurred at the expense of political science.

FIGURE 1: PERCENT OF TOTAL PROGRAM DEVOTED TO REQUIRED QUANTITATIVE PROGRAMS

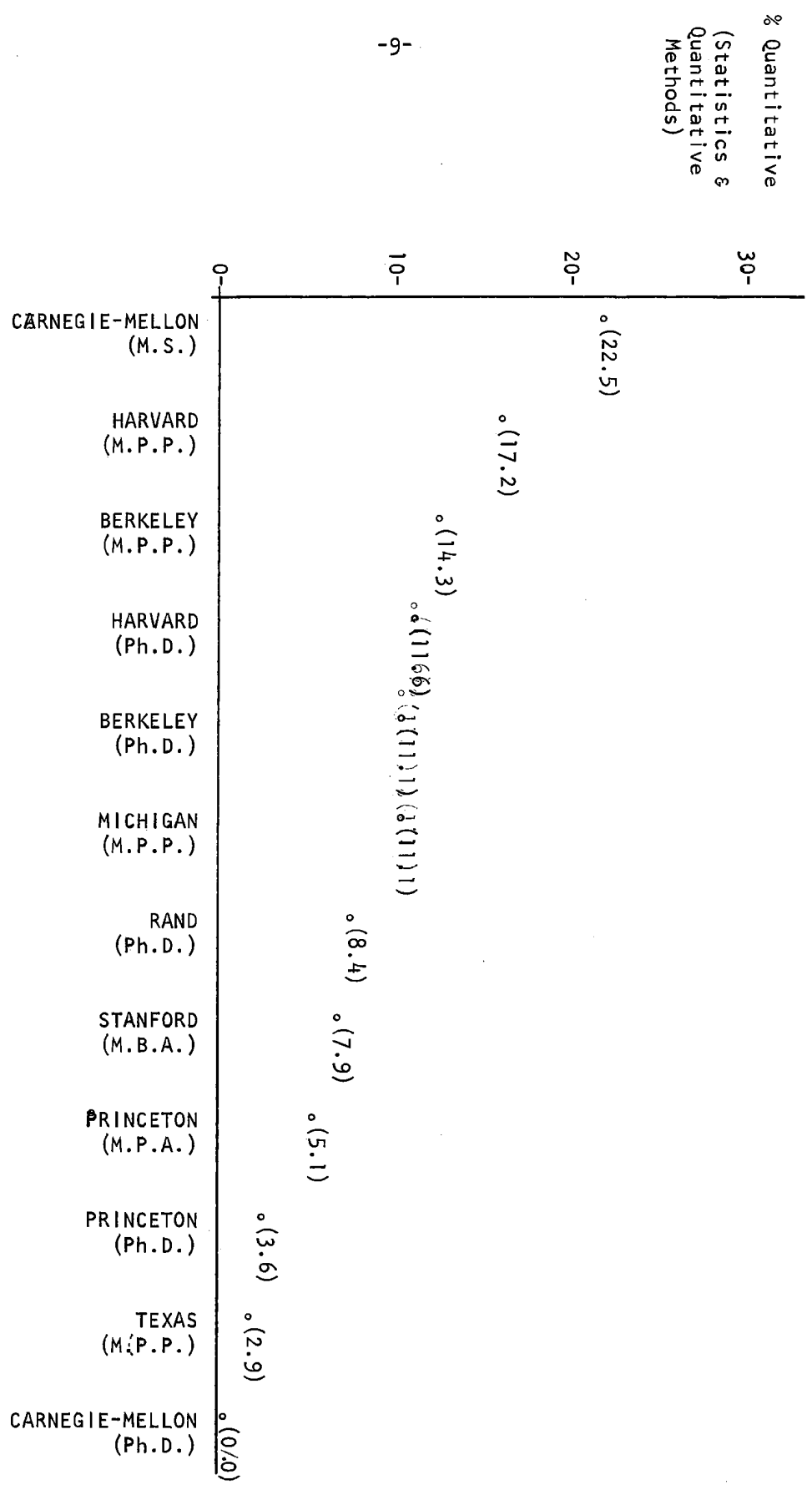


FIGURE 2: PERCENT OF TOTAL PROGRAM TIME DEVOTED TO REQUIRED APPLIED TOPICS

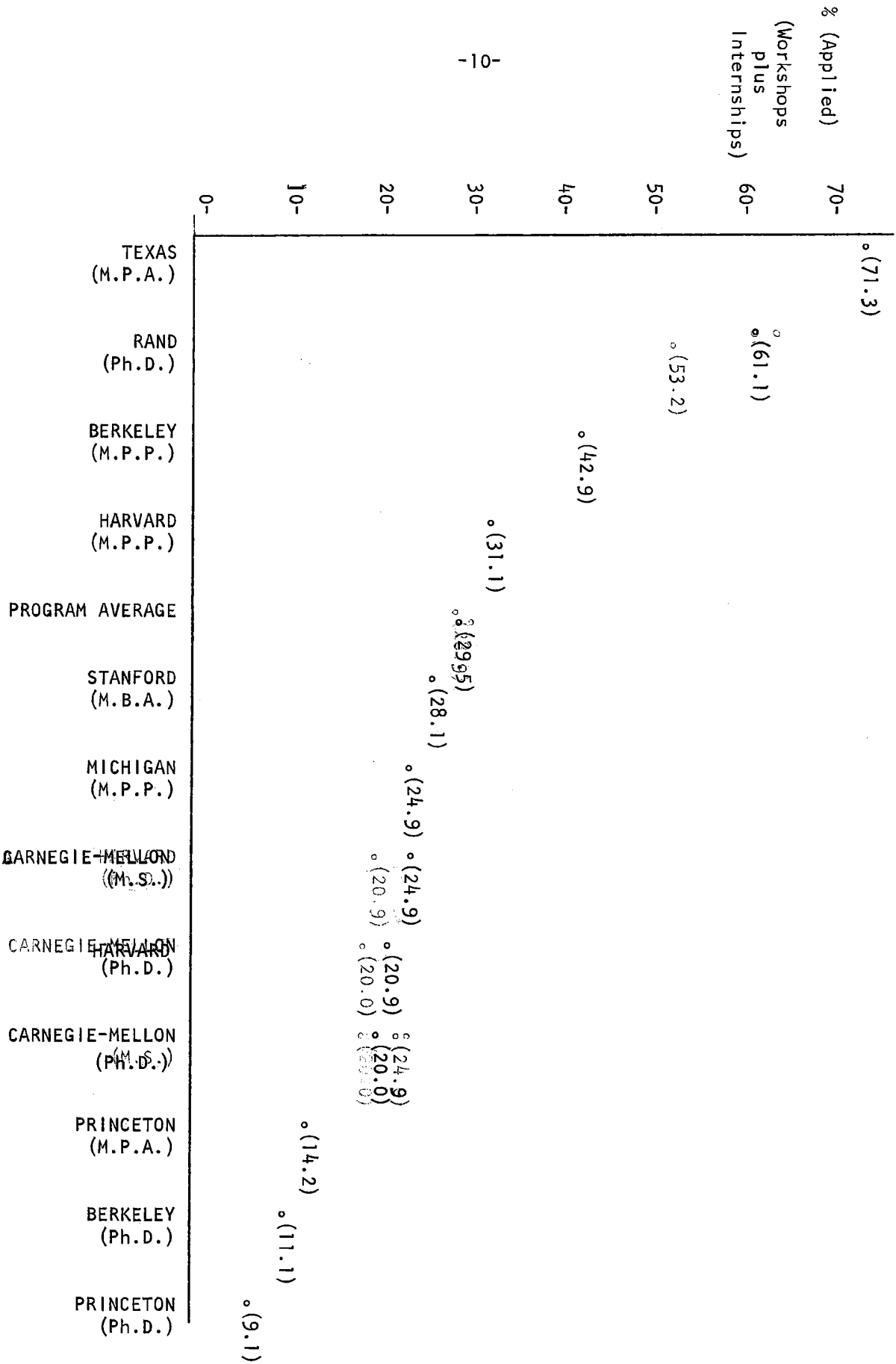


TABLE 4

EXPECTED CAREER FUNCTION

Count of expected career paths: by Class of Career  
 for graduates by Function within Class  
 by Degree Awarded  
 by School

		ADVISORY			ADMINISTRATIVE			ACADEMIC	
		Policy Analysis	Program Planning	Program Eval.	Decision Making	Implementation	Coordination	Teaching	Research
MBA	Stanford		X	X	X	X	X		
MPP	U.C. Berkeley	X			X	X	X		X
Ph.D.	U.C. Berkeley	X	X	X				X	X
Ph.D.	RGI X	X	X	X				X	X
MPP	Harvard	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Ph.D.	Harvard	X	X	X				X	X
M.S.	Carnegie-Mellon	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Ph.D.	Carnegie-Mellon	X		X				X	X
MPP	U. Michigan	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
MPA	U. Texas	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
MPA	Princeton	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Ph.D.	Princeton	X	X	X				X	X

Source: Program Announcement Literature for each school.

CONCLUSION

Much information was sacrificed by using the binary approach of counting only the presence or absence of a faculty representative or course requirement for a discipline. The benefit of this approach is the resulting lack of sensitivity to the misidentification of a faculty member's discipline or misinterpretation of one of the disciplines to which a course belongs. Even disregarding the traditionally ambiguous nature of program announcement literature, this approach is made necessary by the inter-disciplinary character of the public policy programs and by the multitude of designs that different schools have created in the attempt of each to design a program which best fits their conception of a policy analyst. The projection of the program design (in many cases arbitrarily) onto the traditional academic disciplines assists in the understanding of the degree to which each academic discipline enters separately into the design for the education of a policy analyst. This projection further serves to provide a basis for the display of the multi-disciplinary quality of the approach of the disparate public policy programs examined.

One other obvious generalization can be made from the various policy programs. In contrast to their divergent approaches and their disagreement (except for economics, statistics, and political science) about the value of the various disciplines in the training of a policy analyst, it is clear that some experience in the application of the techniques taught to the policy analyst is essential. In every program, either internships or workshops (and frequently both) were required. It is evident that the policy analyst is being trained as an adviser rather than as an academician and as a consequence the necessary techniques and skills cannot be taught entirely in the classroom.\*

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\*For the original and much more extensively developed discussion of the differences among the roles of the academician, clinician and strategist (adviser), see K.A. Archibald, "Alternative Orientations to Social Science Utilization," Social Science Information, Vol. 9 (April, 1970).

If the policy analyst is to assume the role of adviser rather than academician, then he must build his understanding and analysis of the issues in the context of those issues. There are several benefits from this approach. The resulting analysis does not need further analysis to make it applicable to the issue at hand as it would if developed from hypothetical circumstances. The credibility and versatility of the analyst is increased since he displays specific knowledge of the issue and he uses this knowledge to determine which tools in which discipline will be required. Finally, additional accumulation of the vast amount of specific information that the analyst must know in order to function as an expert adviser is gained.

Unlike the academician, the adviser is intent upon establishing his credentials and credibility with the client rather than his professional peers. He must then, understand the issues of the client in terms of the client's resources and preferences in addition to having command of the academic disciplines essential to his task. Given these requirements, the agreement among the schools of public policy about the importance of the opportunity for the realistic applications of the tools to the issues through workshops and internships seems inevitable.

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