Programme

The Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
School of Public Administration

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1993 UBC M.A.
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“Public Sector Capacity to Plan and Deliver Public/Private Infrastructure Partnerships (P3S): A Case Study of British Columbia’s Health Care Sector”

March 4, 2013
1:00 pm
FHSD Building, Room A373

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. John Langford, School of Public Administration (Supervisor)
Dr. Evert Lindquist, School of Public Administration, UVic
Dr. David Scoones, Department of Economics, UVic
Dr. Thomas Ross, Sauder School of Business, UBC
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External Examiner:
Dr. Ken Rasmussen, University of Regina

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Carolyn Crippen, Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies, UVic
Abstract

Sweeping public sector reforms have occurred globally in recent decades. One of the more high profile and contentious strategies pursued in jurisdictions such as Australia, the United Kingdom, and more recently Canada is the paradigm shift to public-private infrastructure partnerships - commonly referred to in Canada as ‘P3s’. The Government of British Columbia (BC) has emerged as the leading proponent of the P3 model in Canada, targeting the healthcare sector to move forward the Government’s P3 agenda.

Focusing on the issue of public sector capacity to implement complex policies, this study examines how BC has transitioned from traditional procurement and operation of public infrastructure such as hospitals to the use of P3s. Drawing from an extensive literature review, the study asks questions about three independent variables of capacity related to implementation of P3 and other cross-cutting programs: governance; human resources; and, inter-agency collaboration within the public sector. These variables form the basis of the study’s analytical model.

Applying this analytical model, the study employed the following multi-method (triangulation) research and data collection approach: i) an archival review of text-based government documents; ii) interviews with key public employees either directly or indirectly involved in P3 program implementation; and, iii) field observations of the principal researcher based on first-hand experiences as a senior manager in the BC government during this period. The results suggest a capacity deficit exists in BC’s public sector to adequately plan and implement a comprehensive P3 program.

For practitioners, the study validates using multiple, key elements of capacity when planning and implementing major shifts in public policy. The literature review and study findings also have relevance for the public administration profession through the development of the analytical model and its application to an important contemporary public policy area. This paper tests the validity and reliability of the analytical
model developed and the overall methodology used, and identifies significant areas related to public sector capacity and the broader phenomenon of P3s that merit further study.

**Awards, Scholarships, Fellowships**

*Visiting Research Fellowship*, UBC P3 Project (Infrastructure Canada and UBC), 2006/2008. Member of collaborative, interdisciplinary “P3 Project” to build expertise, generate and support research, and disseminate knowledge of infrastructure P3s in Canada and globally. In support of scholarly publication and Doctoral dissertation research.


**Presentations**

- *Public/Private Partnerships in Post Secondary Infrastructure Development*, co-presentation (with Tom Ross and Alan Russell, UBC) to the University and Colleges Facility Managers Association (B.C.), Victoria (B.C.), May 2006.


**Publications**