

Highlights: The Webb Lecture *Intersector Governance* Frank. A. Weil



Introduction to The Intersector

- Perhaps more than ever before, addressing the serious problems that our society faces today requires navigating across the government, business, and non-profit sectors. While each sector has its limitations, it also has unique assets; if the sectors work together toward a common purpose, they can accomplish far more than anyone can alone by sharing expertise, resources, and authority to address problems together

The Importance of Distinguishing Government from Governance

- Many people blame government for a failure to solve complex problems.
- However most problems in modern society require the assets and strengths of multiple sectors: government, business and the non-profit sector.
- Those three basic sectors make up pretty much all of modern society.
- Government would benefit from being more effective stewards of Intersector governance. Problem solving is not all about government, it is all about governance!

Policy Versus Process

- Policy is what one wants to happen. Process is how to make it happen.
- The “policy or process” question can be asked when looking at a host of modern problems – immigration, climate change, human trafficking, etc. On any given issue, these problems describe a policy goal, but they are also totally reliant on a solid process of awareness and actions to gain traction towards their goal.
- Why is this question even worth thinking about? The answer is that without a clear understanding of the consequences and differences, both suffer in the absence of the other.
- For example, a process without a clear focus and goal likely will spin wheels and nothing more. Similarly a clear policy, for example, to stimulate economic growth, without a clear and well directed process is unlikely to be effective.

Intersector Governance As A Public Issue

- How can we make the quality of Intersector governance an issue the public cares about? Commissioned focus groups on the topic revealed that citizens are attracted to an Intersector approach when introduced to it. However, citizens do not proactively actively demand it. The media and elected officials have a more prominent role to play.

- How can we demonstrate the economic benefits of effective Intersector governance? This would help us better understand the necessary conditions to invest in collaborative approaches and when to avoid.
- How do we create systemic processes within public administration to more effectively diagnose the right opportunities for intersectoral approaches? There can be an understandable fear of entering into a bad agreement within government. Better diagnostic processes and training to identify opportunities have an important role in making it easier for local, state and national governments to identify the right opportunities.
- The Intersector Project was created to illuminate and propagate the intersector collaboration and governance. The intersector process draws attention to the reality that good processes are essential to effective public-problem solving and that good policy comes from good process.

The Grand Challenge: The Future of Government is Governance

- The solutions to complex public policy problems -- from cyber-security to climate change -- do not rest solely in the hands of government. Businesses and civil society have critical roles to play and are actively in search of new ways to wield their involvement for the public good. But effective solutions to these problems require that the three sectors work hand-in-glove, or intersect, by sharing authority, expertise, and resources.
- Fortunately, the topic of multi-sector collaborative governance seems to be garnering additional attention among educators, practitioners, and students.
- An important consideration for those involved in public administration is to ensure future generations of public administrators are educated on governance and governing, not just government.
- Adjusting the names of schools to include or focus on governance (e.g. the school of public policy and governance) is an important signaling device)
- Paul Volcker in a recent NY Times interview echoed similar sentiments: we need people in government equipped with more than policy analysis skills.