## Discussion Questions

# Chapter 6 Assessing Policy Alternatives

1. Brief writing: Assign students to write about one policy criterion (you can assign the class to cover all criteria listed in Table 6-1 or just the main ones of effectiveness and efficiency). Have the student explain how that criterion would be used in a real-life evaluation of alternatives: choosing which college to attend, choosing a cell-phone plan, or choosing a car. How would one measure the effectiveness or efficiency with regard to your decision?
2. Discussion (Video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=46OLt8vsPFU>): How should the effectiveness of foreign policy be evaluated? What policy outcomes are important? Which measures would reflect these outcomes?
3. Discussion (Video: <http://www.cnn.com/video/data/2.0/video/bestoftv/2012/11/21/exp-erin-taxing-the-wealth-to-reduce-inequality-and-avert-fiscal-cliff.cnn.html>): Discuss the issue of equity regarding tax policy. Would it be more equitable to tax someone’s wealth as opposed to their income?
4. Pair-share: Discuss the evaluative criterion of equity. What is the difference between equity of process and equity of outcome?
5. Brief writing: If you worked in the office of college admissions, how would you use projections and forecasting to estimate the size of the incoming freshman class? What data would you want to use to develop projections? What historical data would you use?
6. Discussion (Video: <http://youtu.be/v4u0fc8qXy8>): Drug courts have been shown to be an efficient way to deal with persons having drug offenses. They are shown to be effective in reducing recidivism and to save government money. After watching the video, what is your view of this policy tool, the drug court? Why aren’t they more prevalent? What issues might prevent a community from having a drug court?
7. Discussion: Wouldn’t it be a much more efficient approach to invest in prevention of health concerns than in caring for the growing number of obese Americans with heart disease and diabetes? How do you explain the fact that the United States has not invested extensively in prevention programs, which have been shown to be much more efficient policies?
8. Discussion (Video: <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/law-jan-june12-drugtesting_03-20/>): Should persons who are receiving welfare be required to be tested for illegal drugs on a regular basis? What are the equity concerns of such a policy?