



UNC  
COLLEGE OF  
ARTS & SCIENCES

**PUBLIC POLICY**

*Public Policy Capstone Program  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill*

*Request for Project Proposals  
Fall 2017-Spring 2018*

Project Proposal Deadline for Fall 2017:  
Aug. 1, 2017

## The Public Policy Major

UNC Public Policy is an interdisciplinary social science major designed to provide students with the theoretical perspective, analytical skill, and substantive knowledge needed to respond to major domestic and global policy problems. The core curriculum includes exposure to multiple disciplinary fields, including philosophy, economics, political science, and policy analysis. Students develop skills in conducting policy research with quantitative and qualitative methods, analyzing policy alternatives, and writing for diverse audiences. Many students also gain specialized knowledge about a particular policy area by pursuing a field concentration such as Health Policy, Education Policy, or the Environment and Sustainability.

## The Capstone Program

In the Capstone program, teams of senior public policy majors take on consulting projects with government agencies or non-profit organizations that seek policy research or analysis on a wide range of topics. While the partner organizations receive actionable, client-centered policy analysis, the students gain real-world experience and apply the interdisciplinary skills they have mastered as UNC Public Policy majors. Each project is assigned to a team of 3-5 students for a semester, with the expectation that each student works approximately 6-8 hours per week for 14 weeks (see timeline below). Student teams meet with their client, develop a work plan, research relevant policy issues, collect data, identify and analyze policy options, and produce a final report that includes specific recommendations for action.

## What can my organization expect from the teaching team and the students?

UNC Public Policy facilitates access to experts in the field and provides instructional staff who intensively mentor student teams and help ensure a high-quality final product. While students will seek to understand your organization's unique needs and perspective, they are also encouraged to approach the project from alternative points of view in order to consider the broadest public interest.

## What kinds of projects is the Public Policy Capstone Program looking for?

We work with non-profit or public-sector organizations on projects that meet the following criteria:

- Most importantly, the project addresses a policy question in the public interest.
- The project can be completed by a student team in the course of a semester, including interrelated deliverables that serve an overall project goal. If you anticipate that the project cannot be completed in a semester, please contact the Director to discuss how the project could be broken into multiple simultaneous or sequential components.

- The project requires students to use and further develop their research and analysis skills to learn about some policy topic or question, then propose and evaluate alternative courses of action.
- Projects can be in any geographic location, as long as clients are able to meet virtually.

### Examples of recent Capstone projects

**Innovate NC:** This team explored the capacity of small towns to support innovation with a particular focus on Wilson, NC. The team applied an international innovation assessment tool originally designed for large metropolitan cities, recommended areas of opportunity for innovation in Wilson, and highlighted relevant case studies.

**Third Sector Alliance:** The team studied nonprofit organizations operating in Orange County, North Carolina to quantify the direct, indirect, and induced economic effects that these social benefit organization have within the community.

**Wake County Housing & Transportation:** The team conducted research to help Wake County create a new affordable housing plan, focusing on an analysis of affordable housing plans in other municipalities that operate under a similar legal context.

### What are my responsibilities as a client?

We respect your limited time and resources, but your expertise and guidance are vital to the success of this project. We ask you to engage productively with a team of students over the course of several months. As the liaison from your organization, you are expected to:

- Provide an initial description of your projected needs and work with the teaching team to refine the scope of work before the semester begins.
- Provide access to organizational information or resources relevant to the project.
- Meet (in person or virtually) with the students three times: at the beginning of the semester, at least once during the semester, and at the end of the semester, when the students will make a presentation about their work and recommendations.
- Maintain regular communication with the instructor and student team, and provide written or oral feedback on 2-3 intermediate deliverables.
- Be open to students' ideas and suggestions.
- At the end of the semester, complete a short evaluation of the team's work and your experience with the Capstone program.

## How do I propose a project?

Submit the following information to Dr. Anna Krome-Lukens, Director of Experiential Education, at [annakl@unc.edu](mailto:annakl@unc.edu) by the deadlines listed below. If you would like to submit multiple projects, please list them separately. Please feel free to email or call the Director to discuss the specifics of your project or if you have any other questions.

- Organization name; brief description of the goals and functions of your organization (1 paragraph)
- Name, title, and contact information (mailing address, phone number, and email) of primary contact AND any secondary contacts who will work with students
- Project title and intended semester(s) for your project
- Brief description of the project/issue AND what you intend to do with the students' final product or recommendations (1-2 paragraphs)
- Links to any resources critical for understanding your project or organization
- Any other relevant information or comments

## When will I know if the Capstone program will take on my project?

Because we try to balance the needs and interests of our student teams with available projects, we cannot promise an immediate answer. You will be notified by August 25 whether your project will be assigned to a team for Fall 2017 (and by January 13 for Spring 2018). If we are not able to take on your project now, we will be happy to consider it for a future semester.

Timeline for Capstone Program	Fall 2017	Spring 2018
Project proposals due	Aug. 1, 2017	Dec. 1, 2017
UNC semester begins	Aug. 22, 2017	Jan. 10, 2018
Initial client-team meetings; students develop work plan, with client approval	Sept. 4-15, 2017	Jan. 22-Feb. 2, 2018
Students conduct research and analysis	Sept.-Nov. 2017	Feb.-Apr. 2018
Experiential Education Showcase (clients invited)	Nov. 29, 2017 (tentative)	Apr. 18, 2018 (tentative)
Final team presentations and final reports submitted	Nov. 27-Dec. 6, 2017	Apr. 16-27, 2018

**Thank you for your interest in the Capstone program. We are grateful for your willingness to engage our students in the important work you do.**