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

Call for Project Proposals
Fall 2021 & Spring 2022

Project Proposal Deadlines:
Fall 2021 semester: June 28, 2021
Spring 2022 semester: Dec. 3, 2021
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 you and your organization 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 4-6 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 you, 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.

COVID-19 Precautions
UNC anticipates the Fall 2021 semester will have a full return to in-person instruction, still with many safety precautions in place. We will follow guidance from the University, but we anticipate that students who follow COVID-19 protocols will be able to meet with you in-person or virtually over Zoom. We hope they will also be able to conduct some in-person interviews or site visits. For updates on the University’s plans, visit https://carolinatogther.unc.edu.

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 broader public interest. Students are expected to conduct themselves with integrity and professionalism.

Questions? Contact Elizabeth Sasser, Director of Experiential Education, at UNCPPCapstone@unc.edu, or 919-260-6444
What kinds of projects is the UNC 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 proposal includes a clear description of the problem or issue and identifies deliverables that contribute to the overall project goal.
- 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.
- The project can be completed by a student team in the course of one semester (approximately 14 weeks). If you anticipate that the project cannot be completed in a single semester, please contact the Director to discuss how the project could be broken into multiple simultaneous or sequential components.
- Projects can be in any geographic location, as long as clients are able to meet virtually.

Examples of recent Capstone projects

**Camp Corral:** Students analyzed results of a survey to identify areas of need among the families served by Camp Corral (which provides a unique summer camp experience for children of wounded, injured, ill, and fallen veterans) and assessed the impacts of the camp on families served.

**Institute for Emerging Issues:** Students analyzed key components of disparities in economic and community growth between North Carolina’s rural and urban communities. By collecting data, conducting interviews, and analyzing relevant case studies, they provided examples of best practices for a regionally coordinated approach.

**Orange County Arts Commission:** Students researched successful public funding models for the arts in peer communities and interviewed local stakeholders to determine the feasibility of applying these models to Orange County.

More project descriptions are available online at publicpolicy.unc.edu/academics/experiential-education

What are my responsibilities as a client?
While we respect your limited time and resources, we also know that 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. Past clients report spending an average of 1-2 hours a week engaging with students. The application includes a full list of your responsibilities as a client.

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How do I propose a project?
Complete the project proposal form and submit it to Elizabeth Sasser, Director of Experiential Education, at UNCPPCapstone@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 if you have any questions or to discuss the specifics of your project before submitting your proposal.

When will I know if the Capstone program will take on my project?
You will be notified by August 23 whether your project will be assigned to a team for Fall 2021, and by January 14 for Spring 2022. If we cannot take on your project now, we will consider it for a future semester.

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.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline for Capstone Program</th>
<th>Fall 2021</th>
<th>Spring 2022</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project proposals due</td>
<td>June 28, 2021</td>
<td>Dec. 3, 2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNC semester begins</td>
<td>Aug. 18, 2021</td>
<td>Jan. 10, 2022</td>
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<td>Initial client-team meetings; students develop work plan, with client approval</td>
<td>Aug. 30- Sept. 8, 2021</td>
<td>Jan. 24-28, 2022</td>
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<td>Students conduct research and analysis</td>
<td>Sept.-Nov. 2021</td>
<td>Feb.-Apr. 2022</td>
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<td>Final team presentations and final reports submitted</td>
<td>Nov. 19 - 29, 2021</td>
<td>Apr. 20-25, 2022</td>
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