

Capstone Project Overview

Our graduate students complete a pro-bono Capstone project for external clients as part of their final degree requirement (Public Policy MPP, Public Administration MPA, or Environmental and Sustainability Policy MA-ESP). Each team provides an evidence base for recommendations in a written report and formal presentation of their analysis, findings, and recommendations.

Submit a project proposal: <https://bit.ly/3NFath2>

WHAT KINDS OF ANALYSES ARE COMPLETED?

- Quantitative and/or qualitative analysis
- Projects might include statistical computations, systems reviews, observation assessments, electronic surveys, interviews, evaluation protocols and tools, literature reviews, community asset mapping, data visualization, text thematic analysis, logic models, and case studies

WHAT WORKS WELL?

- Clients have a question(s) for the team to answer using an evidence-based approach
- Projects are feasible to deliver in one semester (8-10 weeks)
- Teams can complete tasks remotely and outside standard business hours
- Sources, data, and documents are immediately available or can be gathered within the timeframe
- Clients are supportive but do not manage the project

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE CLIENT?

- Agree on project goal(s) and approach with Capstone Team and Faculty Advisor, which may be an iterative process as findings or sources for data emerge
- Meet periodically with Capstone team to check-in and provide feedback
- As appropriate, help suggest sources and provide access to data
- Offer honest feedback on project products and recommendations
- Ensure that team members are not seen as interns or report to client as an employee

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE STUDENT?

- Serve as external consultant to the client, contributing approximately 10-15 hours per week
- Honor any confidentiality agreements
- Provide professional products that can inform client decision-making

WHAT IS THE TIMELINE?

- For Fall Semester Capstone Projects:
 - Client Interest Form Deadline: Early June (late submissions are possible)
 - Notification of Project Selection: July

- Project Work Period: September - December
- For Spring Semester Capstone Projects:
 - Client Interest Form Deadline: Mid-October (late submissions are possible)
 - Notification of Project Selection: November
 - Project Work Period: January - May

Capstone Project Examples

CLIENT	PROJECT
FIGHT COLORECTAL CANCER	Examined relationship between colorectal cancer incident rates and state- level policy implementation to identify barriers to receiving follow-up colonoscopies after positive test results. Utilized quantitative and qualitative methods including interviews, literature review, and statistical analyses.
HORTON'S KIDS	Conducted an asset-mapping project in the Anacostia neighborhood of DC to help client better leverage community resources in support of their mission. The project included a literature review, and utilized a mixed method approach to identify gaps, create an asset map and complete a critical needs analysis.
CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES	Analyzed the impact and effectiveness of US Investments in women and girl's education in Afghanistan. Completed a statistical analysis of dollars invested and indicators such as education participation and completion; economic participation and empowerment, political participation, and democracy measures.
MARSHALL HEIGHTS COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION	Produced a theory of change model that guides short and long-term actions to improve Single Room Occupancy Programming for the Homeless. Examined policy objectives, analyzed program implementation and success measures, as well as end user engagement through literature review, interviews, and surveys.
GEORGETOWN MAIN STREETS	Recommended new feedback methods, improved metrics, and grantmaking processes based on an analysis of metrics & promising small business grant practices. Conducted quantitative surveys of 66 organizations, qualitative interviews, and literature review.
OFFICE OF THE DC AUDITOR	Produced a policy review, as well as analysis of implementation and impacts of NEAR Act in relation to Office of Police Complaint and Review Board. Through interviews, policy & literature review, provided policy recommendations and key findings on policy adherence.
DC DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY & NATIONAL	Created a cost benefit analysis framework for stream restoration in Rock

PARK SERVICE	Creek Park, identifying nearly USD 2M in costs, established environmental valuation of 6.6M, performed sensitivity analysis, and recommended further actions to increase ROI of restoration projects.
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