UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

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Goldman School of Public Policy

To:	Prospective Clients
From:	Mia Bird, Assistant Adjunct Professor of Public Policy
	Meredith Sadin, Assistant Adjunct Professor of Public Policy
Date:	September 2021
Subject:	Client-Based Projects with Goldman School Graduate Teams

OVERVIEW

Each spring, first-year MPP students in the Goldman School of Public Policy (GSPP) Introduction to Policy Analysis (IPA) course offer **pro-bono consulting services** to public sector and nonprofit agencies seeking to answer real-world policy problems or engage in rigorous policy analysis.

Under faculty supervision, small teams of MPP student conduct analyses and develop recommendations regarding a policy decision, a programmatic choice, or an implementation problem that their "client" is facing. Workshop clients have included city, county, state, and federal government departments, regulatory agencies, public service non-profits, consortia of service providers, policy analysis organizations, and, occasionally, private-sector businesses.

Projects typically arise from **problems, innovations, or opportunities** that have **significant impacts for the general public or the public sector**, for which **the client has (partial) responsibility**, and where **the path forward is not yet clear**.

WHAT OUR STUDENTS CAN DO FOR YOU

Our graduate students have strong undergraduate academic records and years of work experience under their belts. They have completed core courses in microeconomics, statistics, political analysis, legal analysis, and management, and receive training in a systematic analytical approach to problem-solving for the public interest.

The IPA workshop provides MPP students the opportunity to apply their analytic training to real-world policy problems and opportunities. A typical project involves about **300 to 500 hours of student work** between January and mid-May, by a team of three to five students. IPA team members are expected to act professionally, to keep confidences, and to be respectful of people's busy schedules. The IPA faculty coaches, Mia Bird (miabird@berkeley.edu) and Meredith Sadin (msadin@berkeley.edu) meet regularly with teams to provide support, feedback, and supervision over key project milestones.

The final products include an analytical report and an oral presentation of findings given on the Berkeley campus (or virtually, depending on the circumstances) in the spring. Clients are invited to attend these presentations and offer comments. In addition, clients often invite student teams to present to their organizations, an opportunity that students generally welcome. The deadline for the final report to clients is the middle of May.

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WHAT MAKES A GOOD IPA PROJECT

Circumscribed complexity, tradeoffs among policy or programmatic choices, and uncertainty about the effects of choices are the hallmarks of interesting policy problems that GSPP students can help your organization understand and resolve. An ideal IPA project will include two or three key features:

- It is centered on a question (or questions) of **policy choice or evaluation, implementation strategy, or options for program innovation or improvement.**

- **The way forward is not clear at the outset**. Projects ask students to explore the advantages and drawbacks of **a set of options,** and to **recommend one of them**.

- Excellent projects often call for a **careful analysis of uncertainty** attached to the data describing the extent of, causes of, or projected effects of a policy choice.

In contrast, the following types of projects are not successful for IPA:

- Projects that are primarily research-based (e.g. literature reviews or survey of stakeholders).

- Projects in which clients have a preferred solution to some problem and urge it upon students. It is vitally important that clients bring an open mind to the project and take seriously the fresh perspectives that students – with the guidance of their faculty mentor – may offer.

We hope clients will think of members of the project team as "consultants" with a fair degree of professional and analytical autonomy, who, while they may gather a considerable amount of information in the course of the project, do so in order to synthesize, analyze, and develop recommendations.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A CLIENT

We rely on our IPA clients to actively engage with student teams. We ask each client to meet with the team early in the semester, which begins the third week of January, and every two weeks thereafter. At the first meeting, the client should explain the problem, suggest sources of information, and facilitate access to data and to others that students should talk to (interviewing within organizations and efficiently using information in problem analysis are two skills addressed in IPA). We also ask clients to read the final report and provide feedback to the students and the faculty advisor, as well as complete a brief evaluation of the overall IPA experience. Of course, many clients have much more interaction than this, but this is not required.

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NEXT STEPS

Submit a proposal online: https://goldman.school/ipasubmissions

To apply to get a project on the IPA menu, please submit an IPA Proposal Form that describes the project, its significance, and the analytic questions students will investigate. **Typical descriptions are one page in length.** Please briefly explain how your organization will make use of the students' analysis and final report. IPA staff will work with project clients to refine and clarify their original proposal. Ultimately, about two-thirds of proposals are included in the menu of projects offered to students. Inevitably, a few of the proposals included on the menu do not receive enough student interest to be fielded. We realize that this is an inconvenience to clients who have worked to develop a proposal, and we do our best to select the menu to minimize the probability that a client will fail to garner a student team. We will communicate with you by mid-December to confirm your project's selection.

You can download last year's project menu here. Examples of completed projects from earlier years are also available upon request.

IPA Project Timeline	
September & October	***Submit proposals.*** Clients begin to submit project proposals in September, and IPA staff will review proposals on a rolling basis until **November 1**. We will determine whether projects fit within the IPA class based on their policy focus and relevance to student interests. We will give full consideration to any project proposals received **by November 1,** but we encourage clients to submit project proposals early during this timeframe**.**
November & December	***Finalize Menu and Select Projects.*** IPA instructional staff will finalize the project menu by mid-November and finalize project teams by early December. IPA staff will communicate with each client throughout this process.
January	***Project work begins.*** Student teams initiate contact with clients in mid-January and are fully engaged in their projects by February. Early in the semester each team develops a consulting agreement with their client to agree on the project scope of work and set other mutual expectations. Teams meet with their clients frequently to discuss the project. Students also have periodic meetings with their faculty coach and submit outlines and drafts of the projects to their faculty coach for review throughout the semester.
Mid-April	***Draft report due.*** Draft report is due to the faculty advisor and client. Clients have the option of providing feedback on the draft report.
May	***Final report and presentation due.*** Final report is due to the faculty coach in early May and to the client in mid-May. Teams present their findings to the IPA class and to client, as appropriate.

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If you have any questions about the process, please do not hesitate to contact us:

- IPA Course Assistant: Kari Malkki, MPP 2nd Year Student (kari.malkki@berkeley.edu)

Finally, if the IPA workshop course will not meet your needs, please consider submitting instead an Advanced Policy Analysis (APA) or Capstone Analytic Project (CAP) proposal for a single, advanced student to focus more time (again, during Spring 2021) as a consultant to your organization as follows:

- APA: https://gspp.berkeley.edu/career-services/client-based-projects/advanced-policy-analysis-apa
- CAP: https://gspp.berkeley.edu/career-services/client-based-projects/capstone-analytic-project-cap

You could also consider submitting a summer internship for a first-year GSPP graduate student for Summer 2021 (https://gspp.berkeley.edu/career-services/recruiting-services/post-a-job-at-gspp).

Thank you for considering our policy analysis services. We wish you much success in the good work you do.