



RICHARD & RHODA GOLDMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY

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TO: Prospective Client
FROM: The Dean and Faculty of the Goldman School of Public Policy
SUBJECT: Client-Based Projects with Goldman School Students

OVERVIEW

In their final semester of study, students at the Goldman School of Public Policy (GSPP) are required to write a high-quality professional paper (Advanced Policy Analysis, or APA) in order to complete the Master of Public Policy degree. With faculty supervision and advice, each student conducts a thorough analysis of a major policy question facing a "real-world" organization/practitioner, applying the interdisciplinary methods, approaches, and perspectives studied in GSPP's core curriculum. This paper must meet not only the academic standards of the School's faculty, but also the standards and needs of a practitioner who acts as a "client" for the work.

Most of the students' time on the APA project is spent outside of the classroom. However, students meet once a week with their faculty advisor and a small group of peers in a seminar which provides an opportunity for review, evaluation, and support of the student projects.

At the beginning of May, students deliver written reports to their clients which outline their project recommendations in light of relevant tradeoffs. The analytic work and argumentation underlying these reports must meet academic standards, but we expect the written product to be intelligible to lay readers. In the past, student reports have led to significant changes in policy and organizational management practices. It is the school's policy that final APA reports are made available to the public, with occasional exceptions agreed to by individual clients, students, and faculty members.

This year there are approximately 75 students doing APA projects. For projects to be completed in May 2009, we invite organizations to submit proposals between now and November 14, 2008 using the enclosed proposal Form. All submitted proposals will be circulated among students for review – students interested in a project will submit application materials required by potential clients, as outlined on the proposal form.

WHAT OUR STUDENTS CAN DO FOR YOU

- **Training:** Microeconomics, statistics, political and legal analysis, management, policy analysis and decision-making, plus a variety of electives
- **Work Experience:** Most students have had at least 3 years of work experience before graduate school. In addition, they have already completed a client-based policy analysis group project and a summer policy internship where they have applied the core skills learned during their first year of study.

CHARACTERISTICS OF "GOOD" PROJECTS

When completing the project proposal form, keep in mind that projects should be:

1. **Intellectually and analytically challenging.** Ideal projects involve some uncertainty regarding the projected effects of specific policy choices in which the alternative outcomes are very different and consequential. In addition, projects should not be based on a client's preferred solution. We enjoin our students to take a critical stance toward any policy analysis problem and, if necessary, to try to persuade the client of a different point of view. Students are consultants (rather than interns) with a fair degree of professional and analytical autonomy. Projects involving little more than collecting survey data, program descriptions or information about possible funding sources are not suitable unless these activities raise interesting issues of analysis.

2. **Centered on a decision faced by your organization.** APA projects should have an important “applied” component, rather than be primarily based on research with remote policy implications. Applied projects allow students to hone their policy analysis skills and their ability to confront difficult tradeoffs between two or more alternative courses of action.
3. **Possible to undertake within 15 weeks.** Projects should be relatively narrow though complex, rather than broad but simple. Note that there are instances when the client requires the student to start the project sooner than January; we regard this as perfectly acceptable.

CLIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Successful working relations between students and clients vary greatly in detail. But at their core they all have a client who sets high expectations for quality of analysis and presentation. A client has five main responsibilities:

1. Meet with the student prior to the start of the project to negotiate and define the project's scope (remember that projects must meet the student's academic requirements and interests, as well as the client's needs);
2. Provide internal data sources relevant to the project, as well as advise students about external data sources;
3. Arrange for student access to other relevant stakeholders;
4. Meet with the student regularly throughout the Spring semester to ensure the project stays on course; and
5. Read and provide feedback on the final report

Most clients do more than this. Interacting more frequently with the students – including commenting on interim written products – typically improves the product and increases the likelihood that it will meet the client's needs. In addition, clients often provide students with opportunities to present their work before executive staff, advisory boards, and other audiences as appropriate. Some clients find that the student's completed report is worthy of publication and dissemination in a variety of settings.

Compensation: Most students are paid by their clients, typically in the range of \$6,000 – \$8,000 for the project. However, students are sometimes paid considerably more than this. The market is at work here as elsewhere, and projects offering higher compensation tend to attract more student interest and talent. *If your organization cannot offer payment for the project, reimbursement for incidental expenses including but not limited to travel, attending conferences relevant to the project, phone calls, and photocopying, is expected from the client.*

TIMELINE

September – November	Submit proposals. Clients submit project proposals for student review, with most students finalizing their client choices by November 1st. In-principle relationships between students and clients, as well as the basic project scope, should be established by the end of December.
January-May	Project work begins. Students begin projects during the third week of January, although this can occur earlier, depending on the needs of the client. Students attend a weekly seminar with a faculty advisor and another 10-15 students doing their own projects. The APA represents three-quarters of a student's workload in the spring semester.
Mid-April	Draft project due. Draft paper is due to the faculty advisor and client for review and feedback.
Early May	Final paper due. Final paper is due to the faculty advisor, client, and GSPP student services unit.

NEXT STEPS

If you are interested in sponsoring an APA project for Spring 2009, we invite you to submit a proposal using the enclosed proposal form between September 2 and November 14, 2008. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact Cecille Cabacungan (510-642-1303 or cecille@berkeley.edu).

Sincerely,

Cecille C. Cabacungan
Director of Career & Alumni Services

P.S. If the APA project does not meet your needs, you may want to consider submitting either an Introductory Policy Analysis (IPA) project idea for a team of 3-5 first-year students to serve as consultants to your organization, or a request for a summer internship by a GSPP student. More information on the IPA option is available at http://gspp.berkeley.edu/career_resources/emp_projects_ipa.html; the contact person for the IPA is Professor Margaret Taylor (510-642-1048 or mataylor@berkeley.edu).