



To: Prospective Clients  
From: Jane Mauldon, Associate Professor of Public Policy, Mia Bird, Lecturer in Public Policy  
Meredith Sadin, Lecturer in Public Policy  
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Subject: Client-Based Projects with Goldman School Graduate Teams

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## OVERVIEW

Might you, or your organization, benefit from having a team of bright and dedicated graduate students analyze and develop recommendations regarding a policy decision, a programmatic choice, or an implementation problem? Each spring, members of the annual Goldman School of Public Policy (GSPP) graduate workshop class, Introduction to Policy Analysis (IPA), offer **pro-bono consulting services** to offer analysis and recommendations for policy problems and opportunities facing public and non-profit agencies.

The IPA workshop course has small teams of GSPP first-year graduate students, supported by faculty coaches, applying the tools of policy analysis to client projects. 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 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**. Student teams identify and weigh policy options, generating analysis and recommendations that they present to the client orally and in written reports. Projects take some time to develop, so we encourage you to start thinking about this now and spreading the word to other organizations that might value our students' assistance.

## WHAT OUR STUDENTS CAN DO

Admission to the Master of Public Policy program is very competitive. 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/or management, and received 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 450 hours of student work between February and mid-May, by a team of three or four (occasionally 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, Jane Mauldon ([jmauldon@berkeley.edu](mailto:jmauldon@berkeley.edu)), Mia Bird ([miabird@berkeley.edu](mailto:miabird@berkeley.edu)), and Meredith Sadin ([msadin@berkeley.edu](mailto:msadin@berkeley.edu)) meet with each team about once every ten days, or more often as needed.

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



## 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 **relatively narrow, though complex**. Targeted projects which present interesting problems are more satisfying to both clients and teams than projects which are broad and analytically simple.
- It is centered on a question (or questions) of **policy choice or evaluation, implementation strategy, or options for program innovation or improvement**. Projects have come from: 1) public agencies looking to set policies; 2) advocacy organizations who wish to understand which specific policies to advocate; and 3) non-governmental organizations that want to know how best to deliver services.
- **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:

1. Projects that are primarily research (e.g. literature reviews or survey of stakeholders).
2. 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 – in mid- or late-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.



## NEXT STEPS

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' research and their final report. IPA staff will work with project clients in order to refine and clarify their original proposal. Ultimately, about two-thirds of proposals are included in the menu of projects offered to students. You can download last year's project menu [here](#). Examples of completed projects from earlier years are also available upon request.

**IPA staff begins to review IPA proposal submissions on a rolling basis in September. Based on student interests and policy focus of your project, we assess its fit within the IPA class. The earlier we receive a project, the better the chance it will appear on the menu. However, we will give full consideration to any projects received by November 1.** We aim to **finalize the project menu by the end of November** so students can review and indicate preferences for projects.

IPA project teams are assembled by mid-December. 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.

Teams initiate contact with clients at the start 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. At various points in the semester the team turns in outlines and drafts of the project report to their faculty coach, as well as meeting with their coach. The course concludes with the teams reporting their findings on the Berkeley campus and, often, presenting to clients' organizations as well.

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

- IPA Course Coordinator: Elizabeth Annis ([elizabeth\\_annis@berkeley.edu](mailto:elizabeth_annis@berkeley.edu))
- Alternatively you can reach Jane Mauldon ([jmauldon@berkeley.edu](mailto:jmauldon@berkeley.edu) or 510-847-1619), Mia Bird ([miabird@berkeley.edu](mailto:miabird@berkeley.edu)) or Meredith Sadin ([msadin@berkeley.edu](mailto:msadin@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 2019) 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 GSPG graduate student for Summer 2019 (<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.