

To: Prospective Clients of Applied Policy Projects (APP)

From: Jeanine Braithwaite, Kirsten Gelsdorf, Randall Lutter, Andrew Pennock,
Raymond Scheppach, D. Sebastian Tello-Trillo, James Wyckoff, APP Professors

Re: Applied Policy Analysis Projects at the Batten School

Date: July 14, 2016

As the capstone of their Master of Public Policy degree at the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy, graduate students are required to write a high-quality professional paper (Applied Policy Project or APP). With faculty supervision and advice, each student conducts a thorough analysis of a significant public policy question facing an organization in the public, non-profit or private sectors by applying the interdisciplinary methods, approaches, and perspectives studied in the Batten School's core curriculum. This analysis must meet not only the academic standards of the School but also the standards and needs of you, the client for the APP.

During their APP, Batten students will serve as a consultant on a pressing issue for your organization. These talented young professionals bring to the table up-to-date coursework in microeconomics, statistics, political analysis, and leadership development, as well as training in a systematic analytical approach to solving problems. Students are expected to act professionally, to keep confidences, and to be respectful of people's busy schedules.

While partnering with student(s) is beneficial to your organization, it is also beneficial to the students. The APP gives students an opportunity to hone their policy analytic and leadership skills and to apply their coursework to address significant public policy problems.

As an APP client, you will have four main obligations:

- (1) meet with the students early in the life of the project to give them an orientation and agree on a problem statement;
- (2) advise them about sources, including written material and people to talk to;
- (3) whenever appropriate, arrange for access to others in the organization;
- (4) review the final report and provide feedback to the student.

Interacting more frequently with the students -- including commenting on interim written products -- typically improves the quality of the APP and increases the likelihood that it will really meet your needs.

If possible, you are also requested to reimburse students for copying and transportation expenses. Most clients want to do more than this and many clients compensate students for the APP (others do not). Compensation is a matter for negotiation between the student and client.

We encourage students to have conversations with prospective clients as soon as possible to explore the feasibility of an APP. Students will attend 5 meetings for APP Preparation in Fall 2016. The projects start in earnest mid-January--students should put in 18-21 hours weekly until completion of the APP in mid-May 2017. The students participate in a weekly seminar during the spring semester and receive constructive feedback from peers and the individual faculty instructor.

At the end of the semester, you may wish to provide the supervising faculty member with an evaluation of how the project went, and the degree to which the results were useful to your organization. We would very much welcome such feedback.

To prevent misunderstanding down the road, let us mention three hazards to effective relations between clients and APP students that we have observed in the past. One occurs when the client wants the student merely to gather information rather than synthesize that information, analyze it and make recommendations from it. We try to avoid projects that involve little more than collecting survey data, program descriptions, or information about possible funding sources. To put it another way, it is best to think of the student as a consultant with a fair degree of professional and analytical autonomy. A key objective of the APP is to give students an opportunity to hone their policy analytic and leadership skills. Second, sometimes clients have a preferred solution and urge it upon students, either explicitly or implicitly. We enjoin our students to take a critical stance and, if necessary, to try to persuade the client to a different point of view. Finally, the student reserves the right to share the final policy project for his or her own academic and professional purposes. Of course supporting data or other information, which are typically shared with Batten faculty and graduate students, may be protected as deemed appropriate by the client, though restrictions regarding disclosure should be made clear in writing as early as possible. Batten makes the finished APPs available to all Batten faculty, students and alumni, in an electronic form.

We believe that The Batten School is offering your organization a valuable opportunity and resource, and we appreciate very much your willingness to consider participating in students' capstone projects.

If you have any questions, please contact Jeanine Braithwaite, Lead Instructor.

Sincerely,

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