The Public Policy Analysis Challenge

The Public Policy Analysis Challenge at Lake Forest College welcomes all students into the public policy arena by challenging them to develop an effective, practicable and convincing policy recommendation on an important issue.

Public policy concerns the laws, regulations, and policies set by governments at all levels, and it affects all aspects of society. Bringing about constructive change in the world and governing well requires an ability to analyze issues and policy options rigorously and objectively. At Lake Forest College, analysis is therefore at the core of our public policy programming. We do not approach public policy from a partisan point of view. We recognize that human affairs are extremely complex, that there are no easy answers, and that information, circumstances and priorities are always subject to change. The foundation of our approach is objective, evidence-based, pragmatic analysis of all identifiable costs, benefits and risks. We seek an in-depth understanding of both the issues, including their interrelationships, and our policy options, including their tradeoffs.

The Public Policy Analysis Challenge welcomes entries from current Lake Forest College students working in teams of two to four, with each team mentored by a faculty member. Teams compete for significant cash prizes by researching and analyzing that year's topic, by evaluating policy options for the particular problem or opportunity the team has chosen to address, and by making a specific policy recommendation. Entry requirements include a white paper and a formal presentation by the team to a panel of judges.

The topic for the 2022-2023 academic year is **Privacy and the Internet**. To provide background and insights on this topic, a **series of public lectures** by government, industry, and/or academic leaders concerned with privacy and the internet will be presented on campus in the Fall of 2022. (Click below to watch the video of each talk.)

- Sept. 27: Fred Cate, Indiana University School of Law, "Privacy and Consent in the Digital Age"
- Oct. 11: John Nealon, Data Protection Service, "An International Comparison of Privacy Rights"
- Nov. 1: Rebecca Richards, National Security Agency, "Privacy, Civil Liberties, and the NSA"
- Dec. 6: Alan Butler, Electronic Privacy Information Center, "Consumer Privacy and Corporate Surveillance"

A **research repository** has been made available to students and community members who wish to learn more about privacy issues and the internet.

Eligibility

All Lake Forest College students who are studying on campus or In-The-Loop in spring 2023 are eligible to enter the Public Policy Analysis Challenge. Students must be available to compete on campus on Tuesday, April 18 and Tuesday, May 2.

All students enrolled in PPCY 100: Public Policy Incubator in the spring are required to enter the Public Policy Analysis Challenge. It is strongly suggested that students not taking PPCY 100 form a team with at least one member who is enrolled in PPCY 100 as the incubator focuses on the

Challenge topic. Students who want to compete but are not taking PPCY 100 and who are without a teammate taking the class should email Prof. Lemke (lemke@lakeforest.edu) and Prof. Walker (walker@lakeforest.edu) by December 1st to make their intentions known. We will help you find a team member in PPCY 100 or discuss other strategies for competing.

Deadlines

Please pay close attention to the deadlines below as timely completion of each is necessary for competing in the Challenge.

- **Notification: Thursday, December 1**

Students who want to compete but are not registered for PPCY 100 in the spring and who are without a teammate taking the class must email Prof. Lemke (lemke@lakeforest.edu) and Prof. Walker (walker@lakeforest.edu) by December 1 to make their intentions known.

- **Team Registration: Sunday, February 12, 5pm**

All teams must email Professor Lemke (lemke@lakeforest.edu) and Professor Walker (walker@lakeforest.edu) by 5pm on Sunday, February 12. This email must:

1. Identify all team members.
2. Identify the faculty mentor, if the team has recruited one, or request a faculty mentor be assigned to the team.
3. Provide a brief description (3-5 sentences) of the specific problem or opportunity the team will address.

- **Submission: Sunday, April 9, 5pm**

All teams must submit their written entry to Professor Lemke and Professor Walker by 5pm on Sunday, April 9 via email. The email must have a PDF file attached (not hosted in the cloud) of the team's white paper and executive summary.

- **Preliminary Round: Tuesday, April 18, 1pm – 10pm**

Teams must be available on campus for the preliminary round of competition on Tuesday, April 18. A schedule for the preliminary round will be announced in March. For the preliminary round, each team's white paper with executive summary will be shared with the judges ahead of time. Each team will present their analysis and recommendations. Following the presentation, the judges will ask questions of the team. The judges will then choose several teams to advance to the final round.

- **Final Round: Tuesday, May 2, 5pm – 10pm**

Teams advancing to the final round will compete in the evening of Tuesday, May 2 at the Gorton Center. The final round will take place in front of a campus audience and afford more time than was available in the preliminary round for both their presentation and for responding to the judges' questions.

<u>Entries</u>

An entry for each team comes in three parts – white paper, executive summary, and presentation. Below is a brief description of each.

White Paper Guidelines

A white paper includes a formal statement of either a problem and its root causes, or of an opportunity and its potential benefits, an analysis of the tradeoffs involved with different options available to address the issue (which will usually include the option of doing nothing), and a formal recommendation. In particular:

1. The white paper should typically be 10-15 pages in length, including all tables, graphs, and references but not including the title page or executive summary. White papers cannot be fewer than 8 pages nor more than 25 pages.
2. The white paper includes an unnumbered title page that identifies your issue, all team members, and the team's faculty mentor.
3. The white paper includes a 1- to 2-page executive summary of the team's recommendation and the analytical basis for it.
4. Although the white paper's structure is left to each team's discretion, white papers typically have the following content, in whatever order is most logical.
    a. Explain clearly the problem/opportunity being addressed, and how it falls within the scope of Privacy and the Internet.
    b. Describe the nature and dimensions of the problem/opportunity. It is not necessary to identify a problem or opportunity with global or even national reach. Local problems deserve good policy too. Data, tables, and graphs are likely key tools to convey importance and urgency.
    c. Using research and analysis, identify the root causes of the problem or the opportunity's untapped potential. The aim is to convince the reader that the root causes or potential have been identified and connected to the expected effects of the proposed policy.
    d. Identify all the plausible options for addressing the problem/opportunity, including the implications of maintaining the status quo. For each, be clear about what the option calls for, provide an analysis of the likely outcomes with emphasis on the tradeoffs involved, and clearly describe any key assumptions and risks, including a sensitivity analysis for each of them.
    e. Provide a comparison of the tradeoffs across the identified range of options.
    f. Clearly state and defend a specific policy recommendation, and demonstrate that it is a practicable option.
        i. Explain clearly how the recommendation will achieve the desired result at an acceptable social cost.
        ii. Identify key performance indicators (KPIs) against which success will be measured.
        iii. Make clear how the effects of the recommended policy and any key assumptions, key risks and key success factors should be monitored over time.

Executive Summary

The executive summary is placed immediately after the title page of the white paper. The executive summary is a "talking points memo" meant to bring the reader quickly up to speed on the most important facts, arguments and recommendations. In particular:

1. The executive summary should be one or two pages; one is preferable and three is not allowed. Bullet points are acceptable.
2. Whereas the white paper is written for an any interested party, the executive summary is written specifically for a decision maker. The objectives are to provide the key points about the problem/opportunity, to review the tradeoffs associated with the recommended policy, and to explain why the recommendation is preferred to other possible courses of action. The executive summary should include arguments and evidence at a high level.
3. The executive summary should be structured in a way that leads the reader through the problem and recommendation in a logical way, and it should be detailed enough to allow the reader to understand and anticipate questions from an audience.

Presentation

All teams will make a formal presentation of their white paper. In particular:

1. All team members must participate in the presentation. Teams are expected to deliver their prepared presentation professionally and to demonstrate command of the issues and their analysis during the question-and-answer session with the judges.
2. The time limit must be adhered to. Accordingly, the entire content of the white paper likely cannot be presented, and teams will have to decide what to include. Teams should keep in mind that the judges will have read their executive summary and white paper prior to the presentation.
3. The purpose of the presentation is to present a summary of the team's analysis of the issue, of the policy options that were considered, of the tradeoffs associated with each, and of the reasoning behind its specific recommendation.
4. The presentation should include a brief review of a practicable implementation process should the policy be adopted.
5. Questions will be asked by the judges regarding the executive summary, the white paper, and the presentation. Judges can also ask questions on any topic they feel is appropriate regarding the issue at hand.

Judging Criteria

The judges will focus in particular on the quality of the team's analysis and presentation, on how well it supports its recommendation, and on its overall command of the subject it has chosen to address.