

SPRING 2019 POLICY LABS COURSE INFORMATION

Harris Policy Labs are unique Harris elective courses in which students apply their rigorous core education to address real-time, complex public policy challenges facing client organizations (government agencies and nonprofits). Students work in small interdisciplinary teams and serve as policy consultants, conducting research, analyzing data, and producing actionable, impactful policy recommendations for presentation to client leadership.

THE BENEFITS

Policy Labs students have the opportunity to gain:

- In-depth, real world experience on a specific policy issue
- Skills essential to success in many policy careers:
 - Managing a policy project
 - Integrating complex data sets
 - Analyzing imperfect data
 - Distilling policy analyses and recommendations for executives
 - Working on interdisciplinary teams
 - Interacting with policy experts
 - Functioning amidst ambiguity
- An expanded network of professional contacts

THE DETAILS

Two Spring Quarter Policy Labs will be offered:

- Nonprofit Lab, led by Karen Gahl-Mills, Harris Lecturer (Tuesdays 5-7:50 pm)
- Energy & Environment Lab, led by Ann McCabe, Harris Lecturer (Thursdays 3:30-6:20pm)

Detailed descriptions of the two Spring Quarter 2019 Labs follow. Clients range from local to regional to international organizations; projects cover an array of timely policy issues.

Second-year students and one-year Master's students are eligible to enroll.

ENROLLMENT & DEADLINE

Labs have enrollment caps and deadlines. A simple application is required. [Apply online](#) by **February 19**. You will be notified of your Lab placement by February 25. Some projects may reach enrollment caps, so it's best to apply early. Applications submitted after February 19 will be reviewed on a rolling basis. No Adds will be permitted after the first week of class.

LEARN MORE

- Academic Showcase: Feb 12, 12-1:30pm
- Contact Policy Labs staff: Carol Brown, Executive Director carolbrown@uchicago.edu or Wai-Sinn Chan, Senior Associate Director wlchan@uchicago.edu

NONPROFIT POLICY LAB

Instructor: Karen Gahl-Mills (PPHA 60000-1)

Spring Quarter 2019, Tuesdays 5-7:50pm

Led by Karen Gahl-Mills, Harris Lecturer, this Lab will focus on the policy and social impact role of nonprofits, collectively as a sector and at the level of individual organizations. Projects will cover a range of issues, from assessing the value of nonprofits for a city that has an inadequate supply of them, to analyzing the impact of the nonprofit sector in Illinois, to building an advocacy strategy for a nonprofit to expand its reach. Enrolled students will be a team member on one of the following client projects:

PROJECT: Assessing & Strengthening Nonprofit Sector Capacity in a Legacy City

CLIENT: City of Gary, Indiana

Building on the [longstanding partnership](#) between Harris and the City of Gary, one of the nation's most challenged cities, students will analyze the landscape of nonprofit and other charitable organizations in Gary to characterize their programs and services, location, demand and capacity. They will then conduct a gap analysis to identify how the nonprofit sector could more effectively serve Gary residents and relieve city government from the need to provide some of these services. Students will also analyze engagement of volunteers, potential partnerships, and reduction of competing services among other potential policy solutions to help the City of Gary build nonprofit capacity.

Relevant policy areas: urban, local government, cross-sector collaboration

PROJECT: Analyzing the Collective Impact of Nonprofit Organizations in Illinois

CLIENT: Forefront

Forefront is an innovative statewide association of grantmakers, nonprofits and advisors providing education, advocacy, and policy leadership to leverage the collective power of philanthropy and nonprofits to strengthen communities in Illinois. Students will assess Illinois's nonprofit sector to characterize its size, health and impact, including employment and revenue generation. In addition they will analyze funding to nonprofits from state government to deliver essential public services. Based on these findings, students will develop a policy brief and other tools for Forefront to use as it advocates for its strategic initiatives, including protecting state funding of nonprofits.

Relevant policy areas: sector analysis, collective impact, advocacy

PROJECT: Designing a Policy Implementation Plan for a Food Education Curriculum

CLIENT: Pilot Light

Pilot Light is a Chicago-based nonprofit providing food-based classroom lessons that support children with the knowledge and skills necessary for healthy relationships with food. Its curriculum is currently used in 17 Chicago schools and Pilot Light seeks adoption of its [Food Education Standards](#) as a broader curriculum requirement. Students will formulate a plan to build support for implementation by researching the curriculum adoption process in Illinois and identifying local, state and national stakeholders critical for policy changes. They will also develop policy recommendations for Pilot Light to achieve its objectives and a policy brief for relevant interest groups.

Relevant policy areas: K-12 education, food, advocacy

Questions about a specific project? Contact Karen Gahl-Mills, kegahlmi@uchicago.edu

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT POLICY LAB

Instructor: Ann McCabe (PPHA 60000-2)

Spring Quarter 2019, Thursdays 3:30-6:20pm

Led by Ann McCabe, Harris Lecturer, projects in this Lab will focus on energy and environmental policy projects ranging from binational policies for decommissioning nuclear power plants to incentivizing, evaluating and advocating for community solar projects in both Illinois and Michigan. Enrolled students will be a team member on one of the following client projects:

PROJECT: Analyzing Regulation & Funding of Nuclear Power Plant Decommissioning

CLIENT: International Joint Commission

The International Joint Commission (IJC), a binational body established by the United States-Canada Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909, promotes collaboration and advises both governments in efforts to protect, restore and enhance water quality in the Great Lakes Basin, which holds 20% of the earth's fresh water. Students will analyze financial regulations and responsibilities for decommissioning nuclear power plants in the Great Lakes region, identify funds available for decommissioning, and recommend policies and actions to ensure that decommissioning is completed in a timely, cost-effective manner that minimizes environmental and human health risks.

Relevant policy areas: energy regulation, environment, water, international agreements

PROJECT: Evaluating & Incentivizing Community Solar Power Projects in Illinois

CLIENT: Illinois Power Agency

The Illinois Power Agency (IPA), a state agency, is implementing a program to incentivize the development of new solar photovoltaic projects of up to 2 megawatts. These may be rooftop projects or "community solar" projects (centralized and shared systems). The program's first round, now underway, provides incentives that IPA has established based on a cost-based pricing model developed by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory. Students will review and analyze project proposals, assess whether alternative or additional incentives might lead to a more diverse pool of project proposals, and advise IPA on potential policy and incentive changes for the program's future.

Relevant policy areas: renewable energy, program evaluation, economic incentives

PROJECT: Developing Community Solar Policies for Low-Income Communities

CLIENT: UChicago Abrams Environmental Law Clinic and Soulardarity

Soulardarity, a client of the UChicago Law School's Abrams Environmental Law Clinic, is a nonprofit organization that promotes the use of clean energy in low-income communities and communities of color in Michigan. The Law Clinic is providing legal and policy support to Soulardarity as it participates in an official process to develop new government policies in Michigan to promote "community solar" (centralized and shared solar generation systems). Students will conduct policy research and data analysis to support Soulardarity's advocacy efforts in this process.

Relevant policy areas: renewable energy, energy policy development and advocacy, environmental justice

INSTRUCTOR BIOS

Karen Gahl-Mills is a systems leader, teacher, and believer in cultural democracy. Her work involves all aspects of cultural management and policy. A seasoned c-level leader, arts practitioner and experienced teacher, she combines practical experience with scholarly research to create an engaging classroom experience.

Since 2016, Karen has taught Arts, Culture and Policy at the Harris School. She also teaches graduate courses in fundraising, strategy and leadership at the School for Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University and Northwestern University's School of Communications.

From 2010-2018, Karen served as CEO and Executive Director of Cuyahoga Arts & Culture (CAC), the public funder of arts and culture activities serving the Cleveland, Ohio region. Under her leadership, CAC invested more than \$170 million in more than 350 organizations who serve millions of area residents. During her time with CAC, it became one of the most respected local arts agencies in the nation. Prior to CAC, Karen led and served in key leadership roles for nonprofit cultural organizations in New York and Illinois.

Karen is also a respected civic leader, both locally and nationally. Her current volunteer projects include work with the Partnership for Safe and Peaceful Communities in Chicago and the Illinois Arts Alliance. She serves on the board of the Old Town School of Folk Music and on the campaign cabinet for Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries. A member of the Leadership Cleveland class of 2011, her work has been recognized with numerous awards, including the Crain's "Women of Note" award in 2016. She holds a bachelor of music degree from DePaul University and an MBA from the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business.

Ann McCabe has over 25 years of energy and environmental policy and regulatory experience in the public, private and non-profit sectors. As a Commissioner at the Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) from 2012-2017, a position to which she was appointed by the Governor, she focused on electric power grid modernization, advanced (smart) meters and data access, regional transmission markets and nuclear issues.

During her term at the ICC, Ann was elected president of the board of MidAmerica Regulatory Conference (MARC) of 14 states' public utility commissioners and of the Organization of PJM States, Inc., and chaired the Nuclear Issues Subcommittee of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners. She continues to speak and write about electricity grid modernization, how to maximize the benefits of advanced meters, energy efficiency and nuclear issues. After graduate school, she was an Illinois state budget analyst, assistant to ICC commissioners and covered energy and environmental legislation in the Illinois Washington, DC office for Governor Jim Thompson.

After leaving the ICC, Ann returned to consulting. Since 2017, she has been the part-time executive director of The Climate Registry, a platform for high quality greenhouse gas reporting, and also assists PJM Clean Energy Advocates with state advocacy on regional transmission issues. Ann has fundraised for two bipartisan state delegations to the UN Climate Conference and co-led a delegation of 11 states including four governors to the 2017 UN climate conference in Bonn. In addition, Ann previously advised the Union of Concerned Scientists on state and national public utility regulatory issues and recruited sponsors for the 2017 and 2018 MARC annual conference of state commissioners.

Ann's environmental regulatory experience includes ten years (1990-2001) at BP and Amoco working on state and federal air, water and fuels issues. She is on the board of the Delta Institute and Institute of Regulatory Law and Economics. Ann has a master's degree in public policy from the University of Chicago's Harris School of Public Policy and a bachelor's degree in political science from Williams College.