Fieldwork Experience and Master’s Project

Leadership, Policy and Politics (LPP) Concentration
Educational Leadership
Department of Organization and Leadership
Teachers College, Columbia University

Given the increasing complexity of education policy, research, and practice, policy analysis requires its practitioners to be able to evaluate the available information, to weigh the possible impacts of alternative policies, to understand political, legal and economic ramifications, and to produce plans for action that are organizationally feasible and publicly valuable. Thus, the concentration in Leadership, Policy and Politics includes a masters project for all students in which they apply their knowledge and skills to a specific education policy issue derived from the field. This project and an accompanying required course (ORLA 5515, Master’s Seminar in Leadership, Policy and Politics) are to be completed during the last (spring) semester that the student is enrolled. Enrollment in the required course requires permission of the instructor (see below).

This experience focuses on real-world educational problems identified by a national, state or community-based advocacy organization, or other education policy group in search of policy support. Students are encouraged to identify a group that is currently working within a substantive policy area of his or her interest and reflects his or her program of study (e.g., urban education reform, teacher professionalism, bilingual education, legislative implementation). The LPP concentration support staff maintain a data base of partnering organizations in New York City that have expressed interest in working with LPP students. It is made available to students in the fall as they anticipate beginning their master’s project.

Ed.D. students in LPP are also required to complete this master’s project as a part of the process in which they are advanced to doctoral candidacy. In the case of Ed. D. students, the policy brief resulting form this fieldwork/Master’s Seminar will be evaluated by two program faculty members in addition to the course instructor.