0:00:00 Rebecca Cohen: Hello, my name is Rebecca Cohen and I'm the senior communication and outreach specialist at the Ford School. I'm also an alum, and I'm so excited that you're considering joining the Ford School community. As we get started, please use the chat box to tell us where you're joining us from. As you may heard, we will be hosting a virtual spring preview this year, and we're working hard to expand opportunities to engage with faculty, students, and alumni online. So, please continue to check back to the Future40's website, and you'll be updated there on opportunities and recordings of the webinars that we've had already. Today we have an exciting group of panelists who will share details with you about a critical part of the Ford School curriculum, engaged learning. This takes many different forms here at the Ford School and gives you an opportunity to practice and apply what you learn in the classroom while building additional practical skills and network with prospective employers. We'll leave lots of time for questions after some brief remarks. If you wanna ask a question use the Q&A box to the right-hand side of your screen, and don't hesitate to fill that up with questions. We wanna hear from you.

0:01:14 RC: So with that, I wanna introduce our panelists, we have Cindy Bank, associate director for the Program in Practical Policy Engagement. We have Liz Gerber, Associate Dean for research and policy engagement, also the faculty director for the Program for Practical Policy Engagement. And we also have DeAndre Calvert, who is a Community Engagement Manager for the Program in Practical Policy Engagement. We also like to call that P3E for short. So let's just start out by having each of our panelists give a little bit of background about yourselves and your roles at the Ford School. Liz, do you wanna start?

0:02:02 Liz Gerber: Sure I'll start. Hi everybody. I'm Liz Gerber, I'm a faculty member, Associate Dean and Director of the Program for Practical Policy Engagement at the Ford School. I teach... I'm trained in political science, so I sort of specialize in thinking about political institutions and their role in the policy process. I also do a bunch of research on cities and metropolitan areas. Much of my focus these days is in Detroit. I'm always excited to talk to students about their research and professional interests in Detroit. You'll hear that theme throughout our group conversation, but I'm delighted to be able to welcome all of you into this space and hopefully give you some useful information that'll help you decide to come and join us at the Ford School.

0:03:01 RC: Cindy, why don't you go next?

0:03:03 Cindy Bank: Hi everyone. As Rebecca said, my name is Cindy Bank, and I'm really looking forward to meeting you all in the fall. I moved back to Ann Arbor two years ago after spending 35 years in Washington DC. I originally went down there after I graduated from the University of Michigan, but from school of Natural Resources, which is now known as the School of Environment and Sustainability, and I have a vast amount of experience working with Capitol Hill as a lobbyist for originally on environmental issues then working for a civic education group, then working for an organization on alcohol, tobacco, and other drug prevention. But the last 23 years in Washington, I was the Assistant Director of the University of Michigan's Washington DC office. I was really happy to come back to campus 'cause I'm able to bring my vast experience, and contacts in Washington and the thing that I really love most is connecting with students in helping you do what you want to do with the next leg of your journey. So, looking forward to this session, hope you have lots of great questions and thanks Rebecca.

0:04:19 RC: Thanks Cindy. DeAndre, how about you? Wanna give some background?

0:04:23 DeAndre Calvert: Yeah, sure. My name is DeAndre Calvert, I am a native of Flint, Michigan, but I was fortunate enough to spend a big chunk of my life in the city of Detroit, 12 years. I graduated from Wayne State University with my degree in sociology. My whole career has been built in the City of Detroit. Started off in law enforcement... Well, I got involved in my community through my fraternity and then started off in law enforcement and then got into community engagement, community organizing, development, building block clubs and neighborhood associations in various avenues and then also working in foundations and then I parlayed all that community work into working for the government. I've worked for the City of Detroit for a number of years, being a director of Community Relations for the politician that represents the largest district in the City of Detroit. From there I went to work for the State briefly, but I came home to the University of Michigan. Actually my grandmother worked in U of M Flint for 30 years. So, a part... This is in my heart, U of M I feel like, it's a legacy opportunity for me.

0:05:25 DC: So, my job is to help connect students to opportunities in the community and help students use the knowledge that they learn in the classroom in practical real world ways, working with a variety of community partners on a variety of different projects and also just being a connector. I see myself as a community switchboard, so I look forward to getting a chance to meet you and see how I can help connect you to Detroit and other areas around the university.

0:05:54 RC: Great, thank you. I love that. A community switchboard. We have close to 20 attendees joining us today. Please... Welcome, and please use the chat box to let us know where you're dialing in from. I see we have people from all over the world, from Mexico and from all over. So, please use the chat box and also the Q&A box to ask some questions. Okay, so next, if we can start with Liz, can each of you describe what engaged learning looks like from your perspective at the Ford School and what kinds of opportunities that are available for students?

0:06:35 LG: Sure. Thank you. So, let me start with sort of giving a big picture idea about both how we at the Program for Practical Policy Engagement, and the Ford School more broadly thinks about engaged learning. So, when we talk about engaged learning, we're typically thinking about ways that students are partnering directly with people and organizations outside of the university who are working on important, timely policy issues. So, that takes many forms. Many of our classes have opportunities for students to conduct projects, either over the course of the semester or for a shorter period of time, with real-world partners, working on real problems and real challenges that their organizations are facing. We also have lots of other outside-of-classroom opportunities for engaged learning. Some of what we do within the Program for Practical Policy Engagement, which DeAndre will elaborate on in a few moments, involve finding opportunities for students to either work over a semester or in the summer, or sometimes even for shorter periods.

0:07:56 LG: But the key is that we're partnering directly with organizations and people outside of the university, so that we're working on real problems that are affecting real people in real time. You can imagine why that's so important, right? Because all of you, when... Some of you very well may, or probably do, have experience already working in policy, but a huge part of what we wanna help you with at the Ford School, a huge part of the Ford School experience, is to simultaneously develop skills that will help you with those... That work that you wanna do in the world, and practice it, [chuckle] put it to real use during your experience at Ford. Now we do many other things to help you get those real world experiences. We require internships between the first and the second year of the MPP program. If you any of you on the call are MPA students, we have a required Capstone, where you're working with real-world organizations and people. So, it's really integral to the Ford School experience to have these opportunities, to work with real people in real organizations, outside of the university, and both develop and apply your skills.

0:09:19 LG: We know you all wanna make a difference, that's why you come to Ford, that's why we are all at Ford. And so, the sooner we can get you involved with real projects, the better it is for everybody. It's good for you as students, but it's also great for the partners that we work with. And we're always looking for mutually beneficial opportunities. We don't want you to go off and just do a term paper and write about an experience that isn't gonna be helpful to anyone. We really do want your experiences with the engaged learning opportunities to make a difference in the world. And we know from lots and lots and lots of feedback from students, that that's a real priority as well. So, when we talk about engaged learning, it really is... It's not something separate from what we do elsewhere, you know, it's not like, we learn in the classroom and then we go out in the world and those are totally separate. At Ford, we really want those things to be well integrated. And so, what we at P3E, which is a program within the Ford School, but also lots of other people across the school are committed to helping identify and find those opportunities.

0:10:35 LG: And then, helping you as students navigate them, so that you can have the best learning experience possible. It's hard work. Sometimes clients don't behave the way you want them to. It's not like DeAndre and Cindy and I can just sit down and decide exactly what your experience is going to be, write it down, hand it to you, and that's what you have. In fact, that's the whole point of engaged learning, is you've gotta be responsive to what's happening, and you've gotta be comfortable being agile. And so, we believe, really, the best way to do that is to do that, to learn those skills with real clients, working on real projects in the real world. The other thing I wanna talk about is, how interdisciplinary the nature of engaged learning at the Ford School is. You can't just bring one skill to an engaged learning experience and expect that to be the thing you do. So, in other words, you may be tasked, or develop collaboratively with a partner, a plan where you're gonna be doing data analysis, for example. And we have a lot of engaged learning opportunities where students do work on real data.

0:11:58 LG: Maybe it's administrative data that government agency or some organization collects, or it might be collecting data yourselves, like running surveys or focus groups, qualitative data, lots of different kinds of data. But I promise you that in no engaged learning experience is that all you'll be doing. You'll be developing lots of other skills as well. Communication skills, understanding stakeholders, understanding politics, understanding the broader economic context within which this organization is working, understanding sociology and psychology, and how people are interacting together, and how they're engaging with the broader communities and the broader stakeholders. So, we really see engaged learning both as a way to learn many soft skills, which we were talking about before, being flexible, being agile, being able to sort of figure out what needs to happen in the moment, but also to then be able to pull on all the different skills and experiences that you're developing in your other work at the Ford School, and then bring them to bear on the current topic or in the current project that you're working on.

0:13:17 LG: So, I don't say this about a lot of things, but I am a true believer [chuckle] in engaged learning. I think it's really an incredible opportunity for all of you. I think it really differentiates the Ford School, our commitment to it, the experiences that our students have, the way that it's integrated throughout our curriculum, and I hope that if you all come to the Ford School, you will both help us understand what kinds of engaged learning opportunities you are looking for, and then help us help you find those opportunities so that you can really build your experience around the integration of the classroom experience and your real world experience. So I'll stop with that and ask Cindy and DeAndre to elaborate on some of the more nuts and bolts, the details and specific examples of the kinds of engaged learning opportunities that we are able to provide for students.

0:14:20 CB: Right. Thanks, Liz, that was an incredible overview. So for... I'm just gonna refer to it as P3E, 'cause as you notice, we all sort of stumble over the longer name, and it's much easier to use P3E, and people have gotten to know us by that name. The one other part I wanna mention too about being interdisciplinary is while we're housed at the Ford School, we are a resource across campus. We spend a lot of time meeting with our colleagues at the school of information, the school social works, school of engineering, school of public health. So we create projects across schools and work on... You know, work together with colleagues and bring those experiences and opportunities to our students as well. So P3E was established sort of with three buckets. We do the engaged learning which Liz described, and it's done through coursework or semester projects that DeAndre will elaborate on.

0:15:16 CB: As part of our coursework for both the MPP program and the MPA program, we... When the students are doing semester-long class projects, we have a mentoring initiative that goes along with that in which we have a set of distinguished mentors, and people in this group are former congressmen, former state and local and federal officials. We have experts in skilled workforce, in public health, in environmental issues, that we have teams of mentors that work with teams of students to sort of help you and guide you through the process of working on these projects over the semester. Our mentors love doing it. Again, these are very long-time policy professionals that really love giving back to students and acting as mentors to you all.

0:16:13 CB: We also... Our second piece is policy research, and we do this by... We hire both undergrad and graduate students for outside organizations to work on policy impact projects. And generally the students work about 10 hours a week. We do... We put the notice out, we collect the resumes, but then, the organization will choose the student that fits best with what their mission is. And they've worked on some really incredible projects. Just this semester, you have to excuse me for reading off the list, but this semester we have... We've got this great project going with the Port of Monroe, which started off as a class project looking at the economic impact of the US Customs and Border Patrol policies. It's turned into... I think we're in our fourth semester now working with this group?

0:17:06 LG: Yeah.

0:17:07 CB: Right, And they have done incredible work that has helped the port, and working through some very complex issues. We have a student working with the US Department of State at the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. We have somebody working with a group called... This is the third semester working with the Center for Community-Based Enterprises, which works on state policy issues for worker or employee-owned businesses. We had somebody who worked with the Detroit Riverfront Conservancy to collaborate on enhanced diversity equity and inclusion, and we had this group of elders in the Michigan Consensus Project on the effects of technology on middle-skilled workers and informing strategies for re-engaging workers displaced by technology. I mean, these are just a small sample of the types of research projects that, again, in this case we're talking to graduate students, but we also do this for undergrad students.

0:18:08 CB: Our third piece is on policy impact, which we want to... You're learning all these skills in your classes, but we wanna give you the other skills you're gonna need to take what you're learning and researching about to impact policy at the local, state, federal and even international level, and these include a few things that Liz mentioned before, communication skills. We have a whole communication skills theories in which we work with professional journalists to help you know how to tell the story and work with media, how to get your op-ed placed, how to get it right on social media. We had somebody come in and talk about alternative... Well, it's not really alternative media anymore, but we had somebody come in and talk about his show on SiriusXM in which he looks at the cross-sections of culture and politics and policy, the ways to... Different ways of getting your story out. We also do some work on effective advocacy policy, and we do a number of workshops leading up to the election this year on voter registration training. We're taking a very active role at the Ford School and around the university to make sure that we increase voter engagement in both the voter registration and voting, and getting everybody involved.

0:19:33 CB: We've been very lucky in that between Liz, DeAndre and myself, we have a number of contacts and we're able to put together workshops, both large and small, on a number of different issues. We work with the Michigan Municipal League on a great project on women leading local government, in which local... It's looking at women who lead as the city managers, often positions that people don't think about, and just the complex issues that they have to deal with, so people can start thinking about that as a career. We have a... We also do small round tables with these policy professionals which have been really exciting. I mean, we've had... We had former Congressman Dave Camp, who chaired the Ways and Means committee, come talk about effective advocacy.

0:20:24 CB: We had Doug Rothwell, who's the President and CEO of the Business Leaders of Michigan, come talk about creating public and private partnerships. We even had Ellen Agress, who was Head of the U of M Alumni Association and retired VP and Deputy General Counsel for 21st Century Fox come talk about the role of media in impacting policy and the complex issues of privacy and First Amendment issues. So, it's very broad and what we do, we're open. We also like to hear what students think would be helpful. And so, we're here as a resource for you all and we're really looking forward, hopefully to, like I said earlier, welcoming you all in Ann Arbor when the semester starts.

0:21:13 DC: Alrighty. And I want to talk about one of our engaged learning opportunities called the Practical Community Learning Projects. As you see, we like P acronyms. The PCLP and that is a big part of my work. I represent the program and the Ford School in a variety of ways. Like we said, we partner with the entire university, so being able to partner is a great opportunity to be a connection and a resource, but when it comes to our engaged learning, we have an independent study, the PCLP, where again, we take public policy students like yourself out of the classroom and into the community. A great aspect of the PCLP is to be able to use the education that you get in the classroom, but get that real world experience, on-the-job experience, engaged learning as we say and also, it's a piece of service too, to the organization. As Liz said, we are all about mutually beneficial relationships. So, to be able to work with a variety of community partners is an absolute pleasure. To be able to see the students being enriched, but also see these organizations thrive because of the student work is, it's just an honor on our part.

0:22:29 DC: So, we are in our fourth semester of the PCLP. Our first semester started off in the City of Detroit with the Detroit City Council Pro Tem and we helped her work on an ordinance of hiring Detroiters on 51% of all publicly funded construction projects, in which the students ended up writing a grant proposal to enrich workforce development. And they also worked on doing research on the water shutoffs as it's been an issue in the city of Detroit for a number of years. And as maybe some of you have heard, it's still an issue, especially dealing with COVID-19 in the City of Detroit. From there, we had students work in the Virginia Park neighborhood of Detroit. They were... It was a great project to do over the summer, so the students actually had office hours at a local community center. And they worked closely with a non-profit called 360 Detroit to do an overview and an evaluation of all of the studies that had been done in the neighborhood, especially when it comes to development as there is a huge development coming in the neighborhood. So they just helped the organization kinda get a feel for the neighborhood, but also really see where the neighborhood is going and make some policy-based recommendations based on advocacy of the residents.

0:23:42 DC: From there, we had students work on child support policies, working with an organization out of Detroit, working with the court systems, working with the state and the city in different departments. We also had an organization, a very exciting project called Detroit Hives. We worked with an organization called Detroit Hives, excuse me, where students worked on bee conservancy in the City of Detroit, and the students' work actually led to the passing of a resolution through the Detroit City Council. So, there's just so many opportunities for students, so it can go from grassroots meeting in community centers in the middle of the summer or you could be meeting with the city of Detroit's legislative policy division. Our students have engaged with politicians, both locally, statewide. They have engaged with different department leaders, community leaders, advocates, activists, you name it. And we try to have our students have the opportunity to meet and engage with these stakeholders. This semester, we have expanded our efforts, so not only do we have the PCLP, but we also have student-led initiatives. So we're allowing students to scope their own projects with a community partner of their choosing, working with P3E and our final approval, but the students actually lead their own projects that cater to their interests.

0:24:58 DC: So we have three student groups right now. One working with an organization in Highland Park. So we focus in Detroit primarily, but now we're expanding. We're in Highland Park right now, working with a energy conservation organization called Soulardarity. We're working in Dearborn, Michigan with an organization called ACCESS that works with Arab-American populations. And then we're also working for the city of Detroit on more workforce development. On top of that, we have our normal PCLP, where students are working with two organizations, one called Eastside Community Network and they are mapping out all the policies, both statewide, locally and federally that had to deal with climate and environment, because there is a large organization moving in the neighborhood that's building a factory. Then our organization is working with Lean & Green Michigan. Our other student team working with Lean & Green Michigan are bringing a... Excuse me, PACE funding. So PACE funding would allow people to do upgrades on their home like green energy, green infrastructure to possibly save money, but we don't have that in the State of Michigan. So students are actually working with organizations and stakeholders literally across the country to see how we can make that work here.

0:26:10 DC: So, I know that's a lot to throw at you, but I just wanted to show the just absolute variety that we have when it comes to the PCLP and how students can get involved. So, that would be a great opportunity if you want to get involved in different areas for you. Like I said, we're expanding from Detroit, working on partnerships with U of M Flint to partner with their EDA and their outreach department on projects up there. That's my hometown so it's close to my heart, but there's also great opportunities for service and for some policy change and policy impact in the city of Detroit. And we have an opportunity to work with a Ford School alumni who is a state senator right now that would like to work on community benefits statewide, so expanding on Lansing too. There's no shortage of community partners. There's no shortage of opportunities. And there's no shortage of ways for you to get engaged with P3E.

0:27:06 RC: That's great. Thank you. Thank you all for that wonderful overview. Like you said, there's no shortage of opportunities to work with stakeholders at any level. And this is such an important part of the Ford School experience. We... I just wanna... We have a question, and for those of you who have joined us, please keep those questions coming in the Q&A box. Let us know what you're thinking in the chat box. Please use those freely. We are looking at those. But we did get a question about student chosen research projects. So, we know that so often, these projects can be not just instrumental in furthering education, but it can also often lead to a job afterwards. So, can you maybe expand a little bit on these student-driven research projects, either for a client or for a thesis project that is really personalized to a student's interest?

0:28:12 CB: DeAndre, you wanna take that?

0:28:15 DC: Yeah, sure, 'cause we just had this conversation this morning. One of our...

0:28:18 CB: Yes, we did.

[chuckle]

0:28:19 DC: One of our student-led projects for the PCLP. The student is just an absolute all-star. And the organization has just benefited so much from her work, and it's actually offered her an opportunity to extend the work. So, I forgot to mention that we do... That PCLP is for credits. We offer two credits for their work, but it does lead to more opportunities. So, the student is currently scoping out a proposal for... You know, to be brought on to the team, because her work is so valuable. So there are opportunities, like we said, to get that... Not only that engagement opportunities, but to also make an impact in an organization can lead to a lot more in life, more life skills, more chances. And this is something that we're happy to see, and we're proud of her. But this is something that we hope for all of our students to be able to make those connections on the job, during the project to parley and use the education for future employment.

0:29:25 RC: That's great. Liz or Cindy, do you have anything to add on those research projects, any other examples?

0:29:35 CB: Well, I would just say we... This is your education, and so, there are many opportunities. So, P3E offers sort of a suite of support for students. DeAndre meets regularly with both the community partners, as well as the students. And so, it helps those... Which can often be very challenging relationships, helps the communication and provides guidance to both sides of the relationship, both to the organizations and the students. But there are... Throughout the university and throughout the curriculum, there are many other opportunities as well for students to pick their own interests, their own connections, and use those as the basis for additional learning through the curriculum. So, many classes offer opportunities to sort of dive deep into an issue with an organization. And sometimes, the faculty identify and scope out those projects, and sometimes the students do it. So, there's no shortage of opportunities.

0:30:46 CB: If you guys have good ideas about organizations you wanna work with and ways that you wanna work to help them, there are lots of ways you can do that at the Ford School, and lots of models that can be applied to suit your needs. Some projects, the ones that DeAndre helps with, in particular, those tend to be projects where it really is sort of navigating the relationship. Maybe it's a new organization or an organization that the Ford School hasn't worked with so much. And it's really critical to have institutional support to make sure that those experiences are positive, both for the client and for the student. In other cases, an independent study, it makes more sense. It might be that both the student and the organization know each other. Maybe you used to work there, maybe you did an internship there, and you have a pretty good idea of what needs to be done and you can kind of run with that through a regular independent study. Cindy mentioned these opportunities for us to actually hire people for organizations.

0:32:00 CB: We pay you to work for an organization to do different kinds of work. So those are also opportunities for students to bring to us their ideas. Of course, there is competition for these resources, especially the research assistants, but our goal is to provide as many of these opportunities as you can think of. So, come to us with those ideas. Come to your faculty. When you get here, your classroom faculty will often be able to provide opportunities for you to work with real organizations. Again, the sky's the limit, really. This is a huge part of the Ford School experience, and we're just touching on some examples, but we don't wanna limit you. We want you to be able to do the work that excites you, that's valuable, that enhances your education, and we're here to support it.

0:33:00 DC: I'd like to add something briefly on that support. Now, as Cindy mentioned, we have distinguished mentors, but the support is... There's no shortage of that, either. When it comes to the PCLP, the students actually meet with me in Ann Arbor, around once a month to check in. And we have guest speakers from across the Ford School and across the university that talk to the students about data evaluation, data research, also presentation skills, slide decks, infographs, things like that. But, also teach on community engagement. And we have seminars that we throw, and workshops and whatnot, so the students get a chance to engage with P3E, all the staff, we're small but mighty, on campus but also in the communities that we serve. So, the students have at least one scheduled engagement opportunity per month, but we obviously encourage more if they find some, or if they're stakeholders to go out there, and I actually go with all the student groups to their engagement meetings, so we're not just throwing you out there to the wolves.

0:34:04 DC: We're always there for you. Everyone on the team is open and available for you. We also have an office that you can come and sit down and get some work done if you'd like. So, we're always making sure that you are supported and that you have someone on the team that is there for you with these opportunities to help cultivate, but also mold any opportunities that you'd like to make. And on top of that, we also host office hours. Cindy's always meeting with students. Dr. Gerber is, and I am, too. That's a very important part, especially with our student-led projects, make sure that we always have an open door for our students, that we're always sitting down not only in a group setting, but also individually.

0:34:45 LG: And the only other piece I would add to that, is because of our own extensive networks, whether it be a P3E, or a Ford School program, we're always meeting with students and helping you make connections and network within what your interest area is. I mean, I meet with students weekly about folks who wanna move to Washington and just help connect them. Beyond even the Ford School alums, we've got such an incredible University of Michigan network and people out there who really wanna work with our students.

0:35:18 RC: Cindy is always meeting, she meets daily with students. [chuckle] It's not weekly, it's daily. Sorry, Cindy.

[laughter]

0:35:27 CB: That's okay.

0:35:30 RC: That's really helpful. We've talked a lot about the opportunities in Michigan. I think Cindy, you might have... You just mentioned DC. Are there other opportunities across the country or even internationally for students to do some of these engaged learning projects?

0:35:53 LG: I'll take a shot at that and then Cindy, I know you've got more to add. So in addition to P3E, Rebecca, I don't know if you guys are doing a webinar with either the, ba-ba-ba-ba-ba, the internet, what's it called again?

0:36:11 RC: Weiser. Weiser Diplomacy Center, which will be tomorrow at noon.

0:36:15 LG: Perfect.

0:36:17 RC: Yup.

0:36:17 LG: And then the broader international work that we do on campus. We have a couple of classes that are travel classes. It's hard to know what those will look like in the future, but lots of opportunities for students to work both with organizations, either individually or in small groups, or as a whole class. As DeAndre was talking about the student-led, student-initiated projects that we help support, there's a parallel program on the international side that allows students to come to the center and propose projects, and even receive some funding from the center to be able to work directly with international partners, international clients. So, you'll hear more about that tomorrow if you join that. Also happy to provide more resources and information if you'd like to know more about international work. Cindy is very helpful, and busy, and skillful on the DC connection. So maybe, you wanna talk a little bit about that?

0:37:40 CB: Yeah, as I mentioned before, I spent a lot of time in DC, and I've spent a lot of time with students just helping them connect with our incredible network of U of M alums, and friends of the university on various... Whether you wanna work on the Hill, or working with agencies, or work for a advocacy organization, or just helping make connections in DC, we have a number of alums that also work internationally, on international issues. So, if that's a focus, a lot of those folks I know are also in DC, they're working on international policy issues. And again, our alums... I mean, since day one, even when I started working in Washington DC, I always had a policy that if I had a job opening, even if I didn't think somebody was right for the position, if they had gone to the University of Michigan, I would at least bring them in and talk to them to see what else I could do to help them. And you'll find a lot of alums throughout the world and in DC that are like that. I would also just mention some of our semester long projects through the class work have been done outside of the State of Michigan, some in the federal government, and Liz can probably address that better.

0:39:06 LG: Rebecca, do you want me to spend some time on that or do you wanna go to another question?

0:39:11 RC: Yeah, if you could just take a couple of minutes to talk about outside of the DC area and around the country.

0:39:18 LG: Sure. So, one of the... So, I hope with all of these examples that we're giving, you get the sense that there's a wide range of opportunities for students to engage with real world partners. And they run the gamut from semester long organized class-based projects through more of an independent study, which are a little bit looser in terms of requirements and timing, but still tend to be semester-long. The shorter projects that have varying degrees of involvement by... Explicitly by Cindy and me and DeAndre and other faculty and staff around the school, do independent studies that might be very independent and might vary in different... In their time frame and so on. So, like a wide menu of opportunities. One that I didn't talk too much about, but is a really important part of this, is a course that's offered at least once a year, sometimes twice a year depending on student demand and faculty availability, that we call strategic public policy consulting, SPPC. And that's a course, I've been teaching it for about a dozen years, maybe more than that.

0:40:39 LG: And in that class, smallish teams of students, usually three to six, work with a client over the course of the semester. I usually work with the client beforehand to scope the project, and it's a very intensive 13-week opportunity to do this group project with an organization. And we've had over a hundred different projects, unique client-student opportunities through that over time. And there we try to have a really wide range of clients. So, we often work with government organizations like GAO and we had... We've worked with the Congressional Research Service, State Department and Justice Department, other organizations in Washington, either that have sort of an international focus or a domestic focus. Lots of state-level organizations, both in Michigan and outside of Michigan. And then lots and lots and lots, because it's sort of my sweet spot, local state and sort of community level organizations as well. But there we really try very deliberately and very explicitly to be sure that we've got a wide range of local, state, federal and international projects for students to choose from.

0:42:14 LG: And it's a really robust program in the sense that we put a lot of resources and we put a lot of energy into scoping these projects to try to be sure that students have a really good experience. I can say that of the over 100 projects, only like three have failed, which if you're doing a statistical test of significance, it's pretty good. [chuckle] And those failures always have a silver lining as well. That's part of the learning experience, when you're working with real world organizations, sometimes crazy stuff happens. But the big point isn't that three projects have failed, the big point is that over a hundred projects have succeeded and with lots of different kinds of organizations. So, we're always open to suggestions about possible organizations that we could work with in that strategic consulting class. And again, we are... We have developed a network of partners so that we can be sure to offer a really nice variety, not just of the focus of the level of government, but also the methodologies and the policy areas and the nature of the work that gets done. So, our goal is to be sure that there's something for everyone in those offerings, both international, domestics, local, state, national, international, etcetera.

0:43:46 RC: Thank you, thanks everyone. And Liz, I still remember when I took your course over a decade ago [laughter] on Detroit transportation and used that... The lessons I learned there for my consulting career.

0:43:58 LG: Yay.

0:44:00 RC: So, I can attest to that. So, we have another question about, if you all could go into a little bit more detail about the independent study option. So, number of credits, approval process, faculty role, etcetera.

0:44:14 DC: Yeah, sure, I'll take that. So again, we have two credits. We offer two credits for the independent study and... The Q&A 2s. Yeah, two credits approval process. So if it's the student-led we actually have an application process that you have. We encourage... We allow for students to do it on their own, but we encourage group work between one and three students we think is a nice sweet spot. So, for our current ones, we have two that are individual students and then one project that is three students working together and they really like the three-person team. So, the approval process is through an application, and really we just want to know what's the benefit to the organization, what's the benefit to the Ford School, how do you plan on helping, how do you plan on engaging equitably? One thing that we do at P3E and that we've brought to the Ford School is working with a Ginsberg Center for Community Service in their entering, engaging and exiting communities workshop.

0:45:18 DC: And it's something that we're actually developing, one of our own too. But we want to make sure that when students are going into communities that may not really represent their own upbringing or that it's just different, that they're doing it as a guest in someone else's home, but also coming with respect and recognizing the power that that community already has. So, that is something that we just wanna make sure that those parameters are hit and not in any way... I mean, we don't expect people to come in with that knowledge, we definitely pride ourselves on teaching that and always having that at the forefront of our students' minds. But we go through the application process and just see if this project is a good fit. But there's no... Well, this is our first semester doing it, but we wanted to help the students in any way we can make it fit. So, whether that is engaging with the students one-on-one or just shooting some emails back and forth on their project applications and proposals, we wanted to make sure that they are...

0:46:15 DC: Oh my computer is trying to update, sorry. But we are making sure that they are hitting those parameters. When it comes to the faculty role obviously Liz is overseeing the projects, but I work with the students and the community partners one on one also, like I said, I will attend any meeting that you'd like. With our student-led projects, they're engaging on their own. But what I do is, I actually have... I build my own relationships with the community partners to make sure that the students are doing the work that they promised to do, but also making sure that our community partner is treating our students with respect and that their goals still align. Again we wanna make sure that our students are catering to the goals of the organization to only strengthen not only the organization, but the population they serve. So, we make sure that we are definitely engaged on both ways and we advocate for either side when need be. So, two credits, great approval process and faculty world. We just... We wanna make sure that you're engaged, that you're supported and you have the necessary resources to complete the work that you signed up to do.

0:47:24 RC: Great.

0:47:24 DC: Hope that [0:47:25] \_\_\_\_.

0:47:27 RC: Thanks DeAndre. Any... We just have a little over 10 minutes, so any final questions, please make sure you add them to the Q&A box, we are checking on that. Wondering if you all could maybe speak to some of the more... One of the more successful or memorable projects that you haven't already mentioned that students have taken part of in the last few years?

0:48:03 CB: DeAndre you wanna take that or you want me to go first?

0:48:07 DC: So, I'm going through my rolodex of projects that we've had. I mentioned Detroit Hives, and I saw that was put in there, but I actually... I will say our Eastside Community Network project that we have right now, it's a month from being over but the engagement opportunities I think are fantastic. And so, we have our students not only meeting with the organization, but the organization received a giant... A big grant from the Kresge Foundation, so they were able to have a sustainability fellows with the organization. So, our students are meeting with Sustainability Fellows. ECN has also compiled a locally, statewide, and I think they have some federal representatives of a climate advisory board that represents so many areas that have to deal with climate and environment, whether state departments, local legislators, local activists, things like that. So our students are actively engaging with different members of the advisory board. Our students have also met with a local city council woman who is a champion for the environment in her district. So, for us to be able to meet in her district office in Southwest Detroit on a Friday, we were all dressed up and the councilwoman was in a t-shirt, like a hoodie and jeans.

0:49:22 DC: But we were in her office and where she serves her community, and there were community members in and out of there. So, just for opportunities for students to do that, it's kinda common place for me, because that's kind of the realm I came from, but to be able to have a student that's so nervous like, "Oh my gosh, I'm meeting an elected official." And into the meeting, I was like, "What did you think about it?" They're like, "Oh, wasn't that bad." Exactly. These are just everyday people and they do have a position that should be respected, but at the same time, it's great that we can have our students sit down with elected officials, with people in power to make these great decisions and sit down and chat, just like we are right now. So, that's something I'm really proud of with this project, and I think it's really beneficial for the students.

0:50:11 RC: Great. Thanks DeAndre. What about you Cindy or Liz? Cindy?

0:50:21 CB: There was a project I was working on that was actually outside the Ford School. But I'm hoping to bring a similar project to the Ford School, working with a group of... This was health policy students. Who are working... Had worked all semester on getting together to do a Lansing day. They picked an advocacy issue, they researched it, we worked on that, worked with them on how to put together the one-page advocacy sheet, and they started to make all of their appointments in Lansing, which was first postponed because of snow, and now postponed because of our current situation. But working with our students and I've said this oftentimes, I went... I was in Washington for a really long time, and went during a time in the early '80s, where there was a lot of work to be done, especially in the environmental field. I am just... Every day I'm so struck and optimistic about what's going on when I meet our Ford students and students around the university and on the differences you all are gonna make to our future. And I thank you.

0:51:41 RC: Great. Thanks. Liz any memorable projects in the last decade plus that you've been doing this work at the Ford School?

0:51:51 LG: Yeah, there's so many. One of the lessons we learn is often the work that we do translates into helping organizations not make bad mistakes. So in other words, they'll come to us and say, "Oh, we've got this great idea." And the students will help them see all the different stakeholders that need to be addressed and all the different both benefits and costs of the proposal that they have. And so, although that might not be as bright and shiny as getting an ordinance or getting a law passed, we are often acknowledged and thanked in a huge way by the partners for helping us do the more thorough analysis that's needed for them to be able to make good decisions about whether to go forward or not with a new policy or a new proposal. But sometimes we do get that bright shiny object. DeAndre mentioned his students who helped the City of Detroit pass a B city ordinance, which was really amazing. A number of years ago, I had a group of students in the strategic consulting class who were working with a state rep interested in this issue of investment crowdfunding. I'm sure you guys have all heard about crowdfunding. Like, you funded programs that help raise money for different causes.

0:53:17 LG: There's a variant of that which is investment crowdfunding, where people can... Small investors can invest in local businesses and... For an equity share in that business. And it's not... It's prohibited by the federal government unless allowed explicitly through legislation at the state level. And so, a number of years ago, there was a state rep and a community development person from her district that were interested in this idea of investment crowdfunding as a way to help revitalize local communities. And so, we started the semester... It was fall semester in September, and the students were doing some background research on... There were just a couple of states who had passed early laws of this type, and so, they started doing some basic background analysis. Well, by the end of September, the issue really caught fire in the Michigan legislature and a bill was introduced and it was marked up in committee, and it was moved to the floor and the students testified in the Michigan legislature in the House Commerce Committee and the darn law passed, all within a semester.

0:54:34 LG: So, that was, again, like, crazy and exciting. And clearly, the students weren't expecting when they came into the opportunity that they would be testifying in the Michigan legislature but they did a fabulous job. And the law is considered one of the leading investment crowdfunding laws in the country. And then, a cool thing is, for two semesters subsequently, we had different teams of students working on additional aspects of that. So the next question is, "Okay, we passed this thing, how do you implement it?" And so, the students in the next semester developed a whole bunch of materials for investors, for legislators and for entrepreneurs that would help them navigate this new law and figure out what do they all need to do to be able to take advantage of it? And then the following semester they actually did... They laid out an evaluation proposal, so that we could start collecting data on how the law was being used, so that at a point in the future, we can look back and have good data from the very beginning of the implementation of this law on who was using it and what impact it was making in communities.

0:55:56 LG: And we're still collecting that data. So, that was pretty great, right, because it started out as just background research, but the... Sort of a perfect storm in the moment was there and the students got to play a really important role. I can't guarantee that any of you will actually get to pass a law during a semester, but you can certainly contribute to the process in that kind of way, and you never really know once you get started what the outcome is going to be. So, pretty cool.

0:56:29 RC: Yeah. That's really exciting. Okay, we just have a couple of minutes left. I would love if each of you could give your 30-second pitch for why students should come to the Ford School as it pertains to engaged learning? Cindy, why don't you start?

0:56:51 CB: Well, I do hope you all come. And when you're in the Ford School, you come and meet with us and we're here to... As Liz said, this is about your education and we're here to help you get to where you wanna be. So, look forward to seeing you all and hey, go blue.

[chuckle]

0:57:16 RC: DeAndre, why don't you go next?

0:57:18 DC: I feel like a professional wrestler right now, like, if you wanna be a victor, if you wanna be the best, if you wanna be like [chuckle] [0:57:26] \_\_\_\_ number fourth, it's simple. I mean, there's a reason that it's number one, and in the top 10 in so many categories and the fact that there's so many people dedicated to innovation, dedicated to engagement, dedicated to mutually beneficial relationships and just creating opportunities for students outside of the norm, is... It just speaks volumes, especially even now in this age that we're in, and these unfortunate situations to be able to take things digitally, and still get you engaged, still get you involved. It's something that we're trying to stay on the forefront, and always, no matter what the situation, making sure that we deliver resources, great service to you and always being there for our students. So, choose Ford School all the way.

0:58:11 RC: Great. What about you, Liz?

0:58:14 LG: I think my teammates said it all. The Ford School's a really special place and we're here for you, we're dedicated to engaged learning, we're dedicated to help you find the opportunities and the experiences that will help you achieve your goals. We all love the work that we do and we would all love to have you join us on this journey and learn from you as much as you learn from all of us and all of your other instructors and peers at the Ford School. So, please don't hesitate if you have any follow up questions. Our contact information is readily available. I would love to meet any of you. It's actually, especially readily available right in front of us all. So, let us know how we can help and give us your strongest consideration and as Cindy said, go Blue.

0:59:16 RC: Great. Thank you, and we have the... The contact information should be on your screen. We had a question come in at the very end, and we will make sure some of your last minute questions get answered and please feel free to reach out. We wanna thank our panelists for their time today and also, thank you all for making time in your day to learn more about the Ford School. As I mentioned earlier, we have several additional opportunities this week, we have lunchtime webinars every day this week, featuring our research center. So please find out more information on our Future40's webpage or... And tune in at 12 o'clock Eastern time every day this week. We are also, on April 3rd, going to have the virtual Spring preview with several panels there for you to learn more. We hope to see you in Ann Arbor this fall. Go Blue.

1:00:15 CB: Bye.