



Policy Analysis and Management

Putting theory into practice in the public, private, and non-profit sectors

Program highlights:

- Demography
- Economics and public policy
- Policy analysis
- Regulation and public policy
- Social welfare policy

Overview

Public policy affects every aspect of our lives, from the prices of the goods we buy to the decisions we make about where to live, work, and go to school. The study of public policy involves understanding the politics and processes of policy creation and implementation, as well as evaluation of whether policies are improving our lives and well-being. Students majoring in Policy Analysis and Management (PAM) study the effects of government policies on children and families, crime, democracy, education, the environment, financial markets, inequality, public health, product markets, the workplace, and more. The major's unique strength stems from the research tools learned and used – robust theory, rigorous empirical quantitative skills, analytical thinking and planning, practical applications to real world policy issues – skills demanded by the best in government and industry.



PAM majors employ theories and methods from demography, economics, law, political science, and sociology to understand government policy. Using data analysis techniques, students learn how to measure the magnitude of policy effects. Through published findings and public engagement, PAM faculty advance knowledge globally.

Students are prepared to lead, serve and thrive in a wide range of careers in businesses, government, and nonprofits. Their skills and depth in demography, economics, policy analysis, public finance, and statistics make them job-ready now and prepare them for careers not yet imagined. Many graduates further their education at premier graduate programs in law, business, public policy, economics, and sociology.

Sample Courses

Economics of Discrimination (PAM 3390) surveys economists' analyses of the experiences of underrepresented racial and ethnic groups in the U.S., both as individuals and in communities. The course examines theoretical material related to wage determination, labor market discrimination, housing segregation. Students will also make a detailed empirical examination of changes in family structure and wellbeing, labor market inequality, educational attainment and achievement, household values and behavior, and racial disparities in criminal justice outcomes. In addition, students will examine various public policy issues and proposals and the intended or unintended consequences on racial inequality.

Introduction to Policy Analysis (PAM 2300) uses theories, concepts, and methods from disciplines such as economics, sociology, and political science to address substantive public policy issues. Students are introduced to the functions of and interactions between the major institutions (public and private) at the national, state, and local levels involved in the policy making process. The course focuses on public policy analysis in the family/social welfare, health, and market regulatory areas and includes an introduction to the technical skills required to undertake policy analysis.

Nonprofits and Public Policy (PAM 3190) examines the important role the nonprofit sector plays in society and as a growing share of the U.S. economy. Students will use economic theory and econometric tools to examine the nonprofit market and how it is shaped by public policy. Theories of the nonprofit market, determinants of charitable giving and volunteering, the role of faith and religion, and the effects of taxes, subsidies and regulations are addressed.

Population and Public Policy (PAM 2030) teaches students to understand the nature, collection, and interpretation of demographic data, the application of demographic techniques, the major components (for example, fertility, mortality, and migration) of national and global population change, and contemporary population problems (such as population aging, teen childbearing, the rise in non-marital childbearing, immigrant adaptation), along with public policies that can influence demographic change.



Research

Undergraduate research opportunities abound for students interested in working closely with faculty members on specific topics. Faculty are experts in child and family policy, crime, democracy, education, the environment and sustainability, family and social welfare, financial markets, health policy, international policy, law, social policy, technology policy, and more.

Research examples

- Economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic
- Effects of pharmaceutical advertising on consumer behavior
- Google search data and unemployment rate predictions
- Homelessness during the opioid crises
- Reproductive access and the economic impact of the Pink Tax
- Salary inequalities by race and gender
- State abortion policy and fertility outcomes
- Vaping, e-cigarettes, and the impact on public health

Honors program

The PAM Honors Program gives official recognition to students who have demonstrated excellence in their academic work and their capacity for independent research. In addition to fulfilling the requirements for the major, students in the Honors Program will participate in an honors seminar and prepare an empirically based honors thesis. Honors students work with a research mentor in preparing their thesis. Students apply to the Honors Program during the first semester of their junior year.

Experiential Opportunities

Optional integrative experiences provide students an opportunity to gain practical, hands-on learning, under the mentorship of Cornell faculty.

- The Capital Semester in Albany, NY, New York State's capital, allows students to work as paid interns in the New York State Legislature and examine challenges inherent in state public policy.
- Cornell in Washington, allows students to live, intern and learn in Washington, D.C. while studying public policy.
- Study abroad programs allow students to compare U.S. public policy with those of other countries. In addition to full semester programs, short abroad field studies are offered including the 10-day Copenhagen trip as part of the Population and Public Policy course, and the three week Cornell in Turin Population Controversies in Europe course.

Internship examples

- Congressional Intern, U.S. Senate
- Community Engagement Intern, AIDS Healthcare Foundation
- Equality California & LGBTQ+ Legislative Caucus Intern, California State Assembly
- Healthcare Administration Intern, Ascension
- Intern, U.S. Department of State Okinawa, Japan Office
- Legislative Intern, House Committee on Energy and Commerce
- Policy Intern, The Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services
- Project Management Intern, Women of Color Worldwide
- Public Policy and Research Intern, Another Tomorrow (Sustainable Clothing Corp.)

Professional Pathways

The increased interaction of federal, state, and local governments with social service organizations and private corporations requires specialized analytical skills and in-depth institutional knowledge of policy areas. PAM majors are well positioned to take on policymaking roles in government agencies, non-profit organizations, and corporations.

Sample early career paths include:

- Associate Manager of Marketing, SC Johnson
- Clinical Operations Associate, Endeavor Biomedicines
- Clinical Research Coordinator, Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center
- Data Privacy Associate, Ankura
- Global Public Policy Analyst, Blackrock
- Paralegal, Trachtenberg Rodes & Friedberg
- Public Relations and Communications Specialist, Bloomreach
- Political Strategy Consultant, Schoen Consulting
- Real Estate Analyst, Blackstone
- Regulatory Policy Analyst, Goldman Sachs
- Research and Policy Associate, Innovate Public Schools
- Research Assistant, Yale Tobin Center for Economic Policy

Graduate/Professional school:

Many PAM students seek graduate education immediately after their undergraduate degree or after a few years in the workforce. Often PAM students go on to pursue a professional master's degree, law school, or a PhD. Graduate school fields of study include demography, economics, health administration, political science, public administration, public health, public policy, or sociology.

One-Year Master's Degree at Cornell:

PAM juniors are eligible to apply to the Sloan Program in Health Administration for a five-year B.S./M.H.A. This accelerated program expands on the undergraduate PAM health policy curriculum to prepare students for leadership positions in health care. Graduates enter the job market with strong management skills, a deep understanding of the health care industry, and connections to the vast Sloan alumni network.