What sets us apart from other Master of Public Administration programs?

EXPERIENCE.
There is nothing generic about the Cornell MPA degree—or our graduates. With a degree from CIPA, you enter the job market with a sound foundation of core competencies, as well as expertise in a policy area aligned with your career goals. This pays off when you begin your job search.

- **Interdisciplinary MPA**
  Our program allows you to take courses from faculty members across Cornell, which is among the largest and most diverse of the Ivy League universities.

- **Concentration Flexibility**
  We offer a broad range of concentration options built on foundational coursework. See page 10!

- **Cutting-Edge Research**
  You will learn from distinguished Cornell faculty engaged in scholarship relevant to your interests.

- **Networking Opportunities**
  World leaders and dignitaries, decorated scholars and authors, leading CEOs and heads of NGOs are regularly featured at campus-wide lectures and CIPA-sponsored events.
Many courses include a practical component, challenging you to apply your knowledge and skills to real-world clients and situations.

- **Public Service Exchange & Capstone**
  As a first-year student, you can gain introductory consulting experience through the Public Service Exchange. During your second year of study, the Capstone offers you the option of completing a rigorous, semester-long consulting project for either a domestic or international client.

  *Recent clients include:* • Africa Impact Group, West Africa • Educate the Children, Inc., Kathmandu, Nepal • Environmental Protection Agency, Washington DC • Inter-American Development Bank, Panama • Ithaca City School District, Ithaca NY • New York City Housing Authority, New York NY • U.S. Government Accountability Office, Washington DC

- **Off-Campus Study**
  CIPA offers you the option of studying off-campus for a semester and earning academic credit while completing an externship in Washington, DC, or Albany, NY, or in one of two locations abroad — Rome, Italy or Mysore, India.

- **Internships**
  Most of our students undertake an internship in the summer between their first and second year. Because many of the most challenging and rewarding internships in the field of public affairs are unpaid, CIPA offers a competitive grant program to assist with expenses.

*Above:* Mauricio Cortes ’17 completed an externship with the U.S. Department of State while enrolled in CIPA’s off-campus study program in Washington, DC. One of his duties included traveling to Mexico City to serve as a policy analyst for the Third Trilateral Anti-Trafficking in Persons meetings with Susan Coppedge, the U.S. Ambassador-at-Large to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. Photo provided

*Below:* Jamie Van Leeuwen, the founder and Executive Director of the Global Livingston Institute, makes a campus visit to collaborate with Capstone team members assigned to his project, including Michael Veglucci ’17 (left). Based in East Africa, the Institute is an NGO designed to engage students and community leaders in developing innovative solutions to poverty. Photo by Lisa Jervey Lennox
One of the most pleasant surprises about CIPA was the true sense of community it fosters—one that emphasizes camaraderie over competition. Cornell is a challenging place, but this sense of being one “CIPA family” was key to why I enjoyed my time here so much!

At CIPA, I was able to combine practical experience with coursework taught by professors at the cutting edge of their fields. Through CIPA’s affiliation with the Cornell in Rome program, I spent a semester working full time at the United Nations World Food Programme, while earning academic credit. There, I worked on some of the largest humanitarian emergencies in the world today, including the crisis in Syria—and I was able to see how the theory I learned at Cornell translated into practice. This externship helped me clarify what I wanted to do with my post-CIPA career, and it was an amazing opportunity to learn from true practitioners of multilateral public policy. Ultimately, this experience led to a full-time job offer.”

I spent a semester working full time at the United Nations World Food Programme, while earning academic credit.

Daniel Arukwe Johansen • MPA 2015
Operational Information Management Officer • UN World Food Programme
Emergency Preparedness and Support Response Division • Rome, Italy
CIPA concentration: Government, Politics, and Policy Studies
You will value the diverse community of CIPA students, who come from around the globe and represent widely varied fields of interests, endeavors and experiences. CIPA has a long-standing reputation for fostering a culture of collaboration, openness, and genuine support and respect among students and faculty alike.

• **Diverse Student Body**
  About 60% of the student body is international, representing as many as 30 to 35 different countries at any given time. This eclectic mix of cultures and perspectives serves as a rich environment for collaborative learning.

• **Co-Curricular Organizations**
  CIPA boasts a wide variety of student co-curricular organizations such as the Cornell Public Affairs Society (CPAS), Women in Public Policy (WIPP), and the Cornell International City-County Management Association (cICMA). Through these organizations, you can gain leadership experience while pursuing your specific policy interests.

• **Social Opportunities**
  CIPA students value their friendships and their community. Picnics, lake cruises, bowling nights, sports teams, an annual talent show, a winter Gala, karaoke competitions, and post-colloquium drinks at Big Red Barn are all a part of the CIPA social fabric.

Above: CIPA’s Women in Public Policy (WIPP) organization launched a “Global Women Exhibit” at Cornell in the fall of 2017, a curated collection of photographs visualizing both mastered and ongoing challenges of women across the globe. At the opening, guest speaker and Ithaca College Professor Cynthia Henderson (fourth from right) poses with WIPP advisor Laurie Miller (far left) and the WIPP officers (l to r): Aikeda Aierken, Sofia Olofsson, Liza von Grafenstein, Danielle Mearis, Stephanie Coker, and Fang Zhang. Photo by Dave Burbank.

Below: During fall orientation each year, incoming CIPA students embark on a Cornell-themed Amazing Race. Teams are challenged to outwit and outrun each other in the quest for glory—and a delicious dinner with their academic advisor. Photo provided.
Michael W. Foley • MPA 2017
Consultant, Aviation Forecasting and Financial Planning • Landrum & Brown
CIPA Concentration: Science, Technology, and Infrastructure Policy

“I only applied to CIPA. There were no other MPA programs I found that had an infrastructure related concentration. The choice was easy.

To work in the aviation industry—my career choice—or the transportation infrastructure realm in general, one needs both policy and financial acumen. I took advantage of the flexible curriculum structure at CIPA, enrolling in classes that allowed me to obtain the specific skillset I wanted to acquire.

For the CIPA Capstone, I worked on a project that involved interfacing with staff at the New York State Comptroller’s Office. Doing a project that attracts a high-level audience is always gratifying, and at the same time motivating when you know your work will be read by subject matter experts in the field.

CIPA’s student body is very diverse … and welcoming. My experience in Ithaca during these past two years was defined by the people I met from across the world, and the lifelong friendships that we forged.”

I only applied to CIPA… the choice was easy.
Historically, 75 to 80% of our students find employment or go on to further graduate work within three months of study, and 90% within nine months.

- **Career Counseling**
  CIPA’s Office of Career Management offers you employment counseling, résumé review, interview coaching, and workshops on all aspects of the internship and career search process.

- **Networking Events**
  Our annual employment and alumni events in New York City and Washington, DC are well-attended and offer valuable networking opportunities.

- **Alumni Mentors**
  CIPA alumni are generous in offering informational interviews to current students and providing mentorship to those enrolled in off-campus study programs in their region. When you graduate, you will join one of the largest alumni networks in the world—with university-wide Cornell alums eager to open doors for you.

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**Bobby Toth • MPA 2015**

**Capital Budget Analyst • New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development**

**CIPA concentration: Economic and Financial Policy**

“Faculty and staff genuinely cared about my success at CIPA and were always willing to go the extra mile. When I arrived at Cornell, I was certain about a career in public service, but I wanted to leave some room for exploration. CIPA allowed me to tailor my coursework, balancing a mixture of theory and hands-on experience. One of the highlights was my summer internship with the US Government Accountability Office (GAO). I was part of a team responsible for evaluating the US Navy’s ship modernization plan. I helped design an audit plan and interview protocol using evaluation methodology skills I learned at CIPA.”

**CIPA allowed me to tailor my coursework, balancing a mixture of theory and hands-on experience...**
Clare O’Brien • MPA 2017
Leadership Fellow • The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey • CIPA Concentration: Public and Nonprofit Management

“The affordable tuition and Cornell name offered me unparalleled value for an MPA program. CIPA also provided a supportive environment for me to grow from a fresh liberal-arts graduate to a prepared and confident public affairs professional.

I received a fantastic level of individual support from CIPA’s Career Services Office throughout my job and internship search process. I also received incredibly helpful advice and support from CIPA alumni.

My internship at the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau’s Office of the Chief Financial Officer was invaluable to my professional development. Working on the budget team, I put some of my coursework into action while also developing on-the-job Excel and budget analysis skills. I attended meetings with the CFO and agency director, learning about the budget process as well as organizational politics.”

The affordable tuition and Cornell name offered me unparalleled value.
**O verview**

Our two-year MPA program offers you unparalleled flexibility in selecting your courses and professional engagement experiences.

CIPA provides a solid foundation in the fundamentals, specialized expertise in an area of your choosing, and the analytical skill sets you will need to succeed as a public affairs professional. In addition, you will be presented with multiple options for gaining practical, hands-on work experience in the classroom as well as in the field.

You will leave CIPA well-prepared for the next phase of your career — ready to compete as one of the best-of-the-best in the job market.

**Foundation Coursework**

{9 courses} To develop a strong foundation of cross-disciplinary knowledge for working within the broad domain of public affairs, CIPA students all take coursework in the following three complementary subject areas:

- **Administrative, Political and Policy Processes**  
  — how public affairs are conducted

- **Economic Analysis and Public Finance**  
  — how public affairs are financed

- **Quantitative Analysis**  
  — how decisions & results in public affairs are evaluated

**Concentration Coursework**

{5 courses} The CIPA program offers eight areas of concentration. You will choose not only a concentration, but also the sub-specialties or combinations of specialized knowledge needed to achieve your personal goals within one of these areas. According to your own objectives, you will formulate a study plan (five concentration courses) to prepare you for work in your chosen field:

- **Economic and Financial Policy**
- **Environmental Policy**
- **Government, Politics and Policy Studies**
- **Human Rights and Social Justice**
- **International Development Studies**
- **Public and Nonprofit Management**
- **Science, Technology and Infrastructure Policy**
- **Social Policy**

**Colloquium**

{1 course} You will participate in a weekly colloquium every semester you are on campus. These forums will allow you to engage with invited speakers on domestic and international policy and other public affairs issues.

**Professional Writing / Analysis Qualification**

In the public affairs profession, you will need a high level of expertise in both analysis and written communication.

At CIPA, there are several ways you can improve your skills and demonstrate professional competency in these areas:

- **Capstone project.** You may undertake a rigorous, semester-long, pro bono consulting project for real clients in public agencies or nonprofits, culminating in a written report.

- **Professional report.** Some students who undertake a summer internship expand on their experience by enrolling in a semester-long independent study or directed reading course, culminating in a more complete professional report that is useful to the client and others.

- **Thesis.** Writing a master’s thesis is another option, particularly appropriate for those who plan to go on for a PhD.

To schedule a campus visit, please see the Admissions page on the CIPA website: www.cipa.cornell.edu
Qualifications for Admission

- Our Admissions Committee rigorously evaluates applicants on the basis of potential for academic success at Cornell, as well as demonstrated commitment to a career in public service.

- We look for applicants who will serve as change-makers across the global public, private, and nonprofit sectors — highly capable professionals who think creatively and are passionate about confronting some of the world’s most challenging public policy issues.

- Our MPA requires strong analytical abilities and quantitative skills. While a background in the social sciences is helpful, the breadth of public affairs as a field of study and practice invites interest from an expansive range of professional fields, including the arts, business, engineering, and the natural sciences.

Official Application Material

Documents needed to complete your application

- Cornell’s online Graduate School application.

- Transcripts. Copies from all colleges and universities previously attended.

- GRE scores. Cornell University Code is: 2098 and the Public Affairs Department Code is: 2204. Note: CIPA does NOT accept GMAT or LSAT scores in lieu of GRE scores.

- Three (3) letters of recommendation.

- Current résumé.

- TOEFL or IELTS test scores are required of applicants for whom English is a second language. Please refer to the Admissions section of the CIPA web site for a complete listing of minimum scores.

Statement of Purpose (500 words maximum)

- Detail why you are applying to the program.

- Include personal and/or professional experiences that have led to your interest in Cornell’s MPA program.

- Describe your future goals and explain how you would put an MPA graduate education to use.

- Include examples of volunteer work, positions of responsibility, and any other life experiences that have contributed to your interest in public affairs.

Essay (1,000 words maximum)

- Briefly describe an area of public affairs to which you would like to make a contribution.

- Discuss what you would like to see accomplished in this area.

- Explain how you would go about initiating, supporting and sustaining changes in this area so as to enhance public well-being and public services.

Online Interview

- Once we receive your application, we will send you an e-mail with information about completing an online interview. It will include login information and detailed instructions.

see the Admissions page on the CIPA website: www.cipa.cornell.edu
Thank you for your interest in CIPA. We invite you to learn more. Follow the CIPA 101 blog that is under the “Admissions” section of our web site. Explore the CIPA Facebook page. Make a campus visit and discover first-hand what makes the CIPA EXPERIENCE so unique.

ON THE COVER
As part of the Cornell College of Human Ecology (CHE), CIPA enjoys many resources that being a part of a college affords. CIPA students congregate here, on the Terrace outside of the Human Ecology Building, home to several other programs that CHE offers. Photo by Jason Koski, University Photography. Inside cover photo by Mark Anbinder, Dave Burbank Photography.

Editor: Lisa Jervey Lennox  •  Designer: Julie Manners  •  Photos: University Photography, unless otherwise indicated.