Our students often say that they’re drawn to our MPA program because of the emphasis we place on experiential learning.

Graduates regularly list their involvement with our Public Engagement program as key in helping them develop the skill set they need to be successful in their future careers. We offer two consulting courses that are client-based:

■ Consulting for Government and Nonprofit Organizations (for 1st and 2nd year students)
■ Domestic or International Capstone (for 2nd year students)

Both the Consulting course and the Capstone challenge students to develop skills in the following areas:

■ Real-world project management
■ Evaluation
■ Consulting
■ Teamwork
■ Leadership

Consulting for Government and Nonprofit Organizations is designed as a service-learning experience. Students engage with a wide variety of government and nonprofit client-organizations to work on pro bono consulting projects. Clients may be locally, nationally, or internationally-based.

■ Students gain valuable hands-on experience while partnering with these clients to mitigate or solve agreed-upon public policy or management problems. Many of these partner agencies and nonprofit organizations end up offering internship or ongoing consulting opportunities to students, as a result of the project work. Additionally, some students offer to continue working for these clients on a volunteer basis after the course is over.
The CIPA Capstone is an in-depth, semester-long program designed for students who are in their second year of studies. Participants engage in rigorous consultancy projects for either domestic or international clients. For each Capstone project, students form consultancy teams that propose relevant and actionable solutions to well-defined policy or management problems posed by their clients.

- Capstone projects are multidisciplinary and experiential in nature, and students have the opportunity to learn from each other and from faculty and staff resources across the University, as well as from CIPA’s contacts in the field. Over the course of the program, students learn about managing projects and undertaking policy analysis within the constraints of various political environments and organizations. They also gain professional and public service experience and learn to manage a team project.

- The Capstone course fulfills the professional writing/analysis requirement of the MPA degree.

Derek Moretz, MPA 2016

Employer: Associate Budget Analyst, City and County of Denver, Colorado
CIPA Concentration: Economic & Financial Policy
Capstone: Boston Redevelopment Authority

“Capstone gave me more experience serving municipal organizations... I was able to see issues I studied in the classroom impact real people and real organizations. Unlike your common problem sets and essay work, my Capstone project allowed me to work with real data and provide assistance to an organization that was having an impact on the lives of people.”
Representative Capstone & Consulting Clients

• 1492 Consulting Group, Ithaca, NY
• AFL-CIO, Washington, DC
• Africa Impact Group, West Africa
• Alternatives Federal Credit Union, Ithaca, NY
• American Red Cross, Ithaca, NY
• Appalachian Rural Poverty Initiative, Georgia
• Astana International Finance Centre Authority, Kazakhstan
• Bekondo Foundation, Cameroon
• The Belize Zoo, Belize
• California Coalition for Clean Air, Sacramento, CA
• Cancer Resource Center of the Finger Lakes, Ithaca, NY
• Cayuga Medical Center, Ithaca, NY
• Centre d’Education Inclusif (CEI), Haiti
• City of Ithaca Department of Human Resources, Ithaca, NY
• City of Ithaca Department of Planning and Urban Renewal, Ithaca, NY
• City of Ithaca Department of Public Works, Ithaca, NY
• City of Ithaca Downtown Partnership, Ithaca, NY
• CityScience Outdoor Exploration and Learning, NYC
• Community Foundation of Tompkins County, Ithaca, NY
• Cornell Cooperative Extension, Ithaca, NY
• Cornell Prison Education Program, Ithaca, NY
• Cornell United Way, Ithaca, NY
• Cornell University International Students and Scholars Office, Ithaca, NY
• Cornell University Sustainability, Ithaca, NY
• Danby Fire District, Danby, NY
• Dialogistica, Venezuela, US
• Early Childhood Collaborative, Ithaca, NY
• Economic Development Administration, NYC
• Education Fund, New York City and Washington, DC
• Educate the Children, Inc., Kathmandu, Nepal
• Egbok Mission, Cambodia
• Finger Lakes ReUse, Ithaca, NY
• Friends of Warm Hearth, Armenia
• Fundación Quirós Tanzi, Costa Rica
• Global Livingston Institute, Denver, Colorado
• Greater Hudson Valley Family Health Center, NY
• Green Empowerment, Port Au Prince, Haiti
• Greenhouse Gas Management Institute (GHGMI), Washington, DC
• Health and Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County, Ithaca, NY
• Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia & Nizhny Novgorod, Russia
• Ithaca Area Wastewater Treatment Facility, Ithaca, NY

continued on next spread
Marcus Franklin, MPA 2016

Employment: Program Specialist, NAACP, Environment and Climate Justice Program, Baltimore, MD

CIPA Concentration: Environmental Policy

Capstone Client: Climate Changers

“My team aided a locally-based environmental non-profit, Climate Changers, in developing its identity and path as an organization. We advised on a number of strategic priorities including organizational development, fundraising, communication, and network building.

One aspect of the Capstone that I found particularly transformative was bridging academic theory and practical insight. You need to be able to think strategically, using a variety of theoretical lenses, to solve complex and often ambiguous problems. Capstone provided me with a framework for approaching these challenges and executing solutions within complex and dynamic environments.”
Representative Clients continued from previous spread

- Ithaca City School District, Ithaca, NY
- Ithaca Public Education Initiative, Ithaca, NY
- Ithaca Youth Bureau, Ithaca, NY
- INOMA Educational Products, Mexico
- Kadangas, The Netherlands
- Lake Placid — North Elba Community Development Board, NY
- Madison County Agricultural Economic Development, NY
- Mutual Housing Association of Tompkins County, Ithaca, NY
- Namaste Montessori School, Ithaca, NY
- Namgyal Monastery, Ithaca, NY
- Nature Iraq, Tigris River, Iraq
- New Orleans Recovery Project for the 9th Ward, New Orleans, LA
- New Orleans Redevelopment Authority (NOLA), LA
- New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), New York City
- Pader Girls Academy, Northern Uganda
- Paleontological Research Institute/Museum of the Earth, Ithaca, NY
- Pipeline 4 Progress, Corning, NY
- Save the Children, La Paz, Bolivia
- Sciencenter, Ithaca, NY
- Stop the Silence, Glenn Dale, MD
- St. Paul Catholic University Development Studies Center, Peru
- Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement
Chuchu Lou, MPA 2016

**Employer:** Marketing Coordinator, Uber, Shanghai, China  
**CIPA Concentration:** Public & Nonprofit Management  
**Capstone:** Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) / Salud Mesoamerica Initiative

“I am passionate about studying nonprofit development and communications, and my Capstone project was precisely on that topic—benchmarking communication strategies at IADB. As part of my work, I interviewed many experts on best practices. The experience proved to myself and to potential employers that I have the ability to apply skills and knowledge to issues requiring effective, real-world problem-solving.”

(SVYM), Mysore, Karnataka State, India  
- Thrive, Nicaragua  
- Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce, Ithaca, NY  
- Tompkins County Department of Administration, Ithaca, NY  
- Tompkins County, Ithaca, NY  
- Tompkins County Office for the Aging, Ithaca, NY  
- Transparency International, Berlin, Germany  
- Upstate New York Safety Coalition Task Force, NY  
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Washington, DC  
- U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), Washington, DC  
- Village at Ithaca, Ithaca, NY  
- Volcker Alliance, New York, NY  
- Water Resources Institute, Ithaca, NY  
- YMCA, Ithaca, NY
In June 2017, GLI collaborated with CIPA, Children of Peace Uganda, and Makerere University to conduct focus groups in Lira, Uganda. The research team met with community members, as well as government, business, and NGO representatives to learn about the agricultural challenges facing the local community. Additionally, the team presented a business model for community farmer groups, which would aim to organize farmers and provide access to skills training, tools, and regional markets. Reactions to the business model were extremely positive, and findings from the focus groups will be used to inform future stages of this initiative.

This research was part of an ongoing partnership between GLI, CIPA, and Makerere University that aims to strengthen the socioeconomic status of former child soldiers in northern Uganda through vocational reintegration, and follows on research, including interviews conducted with former child soldiers in the Lira region, in 2015-2016.
The Volcker Alliance is a nonpartisan nonprofit focused on addressing the challenges of effective execution of public policies and rebuilding public trust in government. They have an ongoing partnership with CIPA to work on their Truth and Integrity in Government Finance project.

This initiative examines transparency, accountability, and efficiency in state budget practices across the 50 states. Successive CIPA teams have been charged with researching and reporting on NY state budgeting practices for fiscal years 2015, 2016, and 2017. This involved analyzing executive budgets and comptroller’s reports, reviewing revenues and expenditures, examining bond ratings and pension and capital budget documents, and analyzing changes in legislation and appropriations.

Future teams will continue to participate in the Volcker Alliance’s ongoing nationwide project through fiscal year 2018.
Financial Markets and Community Investment team, Washington, DC.

The Capstone team is working with the GAO to better understand the ways that the federal Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program supports affordable rental housing and community development outcomes, with a focus on New York City.

The team is using GIS and American Community Survey data to examine changes in several neighborhoods with high concentrations of LIHTC properties in New York City over two time periods: 2005-2009 and 2010-2014. The work follows a LIHTC research project conducted last spring. For both projects, students have received advice from Human Ecology alumni (from both the Department of Policy Analysis and Management and CIPA) who are currently employed at the GAO and New York City’s Department of Housing Preservation and Development.

At an end-of-semester event showcasing CIPA Capstone work, Muhammad Bilal Ali Khan ’17 (r), shows fellow student Aibolat Abibekov ’17 (l) the poster for a project conducted in consultation with the U.S. Government Accountability Office.
For my Capstone project, I had the opportunity to work with the GAO on research targeted to attracting and retaining federal cybersecurity employees. Capstone allowed me to utilize the skills I had gained through my CIPA coursework as well as develop new skills, such as how to work with a client and manage team dynamics. The experience helped hone my ability to communicate clearly with a variety of stakeholders in order to manage expectations and deliver a high-quality project.

I did my internship at a wonderful nonprofit called the Partnership for Public Service, which consults with the federal government on a variety of issues from employee well-being to presidential transition. I was able to apply the skills I learned in class to making government more effective. This was one of my most formative experiences at CIPA, which helped shape the direction of my career and, ultimately, land my first job.”
Students enrolled in CIPA’s Consulting for Government and Nonprofit Organizations course assist with a wide variety of domestic and international non-profit and government organizations with timely research and recommendations. The projects on the following pages highlight recent work by CIPA student consultants in the PSE course.

**Africa Impact Group West Africa**
A six-person consulting team worked with the Africa Impact Group, a leading non-profit advisory firm in West Africa, to carry out a feasibility study of Social Impact bonds in order to strengthen impact investing efforts in the region.

**City Science Outdoor Exploration & Learning**
Student consultants assisted with the improvement of hands-on science education for children in New York City through the proposal of actionable solutions to help capture, maintain, and communicate program evaluation data.

**Cornell United Way**
Student consultants worked on the analysis of current giving trends among University faculty and staff and created marketing and communication strategies to help improve participation (accounting for 40% of the total Tompkins County United Way campaign).

**Cornerstone Family Healthcare**
With opioid addiction outpacing local treatment services, this student team conducted a comprehensive needs assessment to guide Cornerstone Family Healthcare in developing new programs.

“Working with CIPA adds great energy, integrity, skill, and excitement to projects which we could not do otherwise. The students are resourceful, self-directed, positive, entrepreneurial, and always exceed my expectations... CIPA students help us reach greater levels of achievement in our work.”

— George Ferrari, Executive Director, Community Foundation of Tompkins County
The CIPA team did a remarkably in-depth job of conducting the Sustainability Analysis for Foodnet Meals on Wheels. The matrix map they created enabled our [stakeholders] to easily visualize our mission impact and financial strategies... We will be presenting the findings of the project to the Health and Human Services Committee of the Tompkins County Legislature to show how our strategic decisions are financially viable and provide a significant community benefit.

— Steve Griffin, Executive Director, Foodnet Meals on Wheels
The CIPA students gave us a fresh, informed, perspective on some core operational issues we’ve been wrestling with for years. Organizations like ours lack the time and resources to do this type of analysis and I’m grateful for the information the students gathered and their recommendations.”

— Warren D. Allmon, Executive Assistant, Tompkins County Administration

Tompkins County Community Foundation

A two-person student team assisted with project development and fundraising recommendations to improve socio-economics in the County through strengthened networks and trust among community members, i.e. “social capital.”

Tompkins County Department of Administration

Students assisted with the establishment of an organization-wide performance measurement system to enhance communication between managers, supervisors, government officials, and elected representatives about the impact of County programs and services.

Left: First-year students (l to r) Yunie Chang, Molly Warrington, and Steven Greco spent a week in India over winter break meeting with their consulting client, the Nav Jeevan Sansthha School.

Right: The project at the Nav Jeevan Sansthha School focused on evaluating options for rainwater harvesting systems to provide clean drinking water for the school, which serves children living in nearby slum neighborhoods.

Photos provided
Laurie Miller works with students engaged in Capstone and consulting projects.

Potential clients who wish to propose a public engagement project for CIPA should contact:

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CIPA Office of Public Engagement
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Phone: 607-255-4858
LEARN MORE

Thank you for your interest in CIPA. We invite you to learn more. Follow the blogs of some of our current students on our web site. Explore the CIPA Facebook page. Schedule a campus visit and discover first-hand what makes the CIPA EXPERIENCE so unique.

CREDITS

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ON THE COVER

M. Patrick Squeglia, MPA 2016, takes questions about his Capstone project at a campus-wide event showcasing CIPA public engagement work.

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