Elliott School Policy Labs Initiative

The Faculty Study Group report recommended that the Elliott School "do more to facilitate research and teaching on important [and timely] topics like gender studies, climate change, governance, democratic backsliding, artificial intelligence and data science." Building on this observation and recommendation, and wholly aligned with the strategic planning exercise carried out during 2021-22, we are pleased to announce the launch of the Policy Labs Initiative.

Policy Labs aim to spur research collaboration and policy engagement on important and timely topics that cut across regional and functional research centers and institutes. Labs will complement established centers and institutes by providing short-term programmatic flexibility built around faculty research interests in key contemporary issues not fully represented by the school's architecture. Importantly, Policy Labs will also include an active policy engagement component, which will reinforce the relationship between research and impact so central to the Elliott School's mission. Policy Labs will tackle tough, cross-cutting challenges for a defined period of time, and with a defined purpose. We envision that Policy Labs will also give rise to new areas of course and programmatic development over time.

Policy Labs Organization

The Elliott School aims to sponsor one new Policy Lab beginning this year, and will issue a call for proposals in subsequent years depending on availability of funding. Labs will be selected via an open competition. Policy Labs will have a three-year tenure, potentially renewable once. The Dean will support these policy labs from available Strategic Initiatives funding and/or other endowments if the focus aligns with endowment requirements.

Labs must meet the following criteria:

- A minimum of four core committed faculty members from at least two different disciplines and/or two different centers/institutes. At least 2 faculty members must hold primary appointments at the Elliott School. At least 4 faculty members must be primary or secondary members of the Elliott School.
- The Lab will pursue at least 3 major extramural collaborative grant proposals, totaling a minimum of $600,000 in requested funding.
- Policy Labs should plan explicitly for their work to produce publications in peer reviewed journals, edited volumes, book chapters in volumes, or substantial progress toward monographs. A publications plan should be part of the application.
- Policy Labs should also plan explicitly for their work to connect with policy communities in the United States and/or around the world, per the third part of the school's mission. General-interest publications, collaborations with think tanks, and/or panels or workshops with a policy component are a few examples.

Call for Policy Labs Proposals

The Elliott School invites interested faculty to submit proposals for the 2024 policy lab application round to esiaresearch@gwu.edu. For the first competition, priority interests will be from the cross-cutting themes identified earlier and underscored by the Faculty Study Group: climate change, democracy and governance, and cyber/digital issues in international affairs. The dead-line for proposals is April 30, 2024. The winning policy lab will begin operation at the start of the 2024-2025 Academic Year.

Proposals should include a description of the proposed policy lab, which will:

- identify core affiliated faculty;
- explain the focus of the policy lab, address its importance to contemporary international affairs and how affiliated faculty are uniquely well positioned to examine the issue; and
- outline lab goals to include external funding, publications, and policy engagement bench-marks.

In addition, please include a budget outlining three years of estimated operating costs. Budgets can total up to $30,000/year for a maximum total budget of $90,000 for all three years. Funds may be used to support:

- workshops, conferences, or lecture series;
- augmented faculty research funding, akin to support offered by centers/institutes;
- support for student research assistants; and
- additional support as appropriate.

Funds cannot be used for faculty salary (or course releases).

We also ask that you send a copy of your current CV along with the proposal description and budget.

Please limit your submissions to no more than five single-spaced pages (not including your CV).

Questions? Please contact esiaresearch@gwu.edu.