ELLIOTT SCHOOL GLOBAL CAPSTONE

The Elliott School Global Capstone is an experience like no other in the Elliott School. Capstone projects combine academic knowledge, in-depth research, and professional skills into a practical exploration of foreign policy. Working in teams, Elliott School graduate students—many with professional experience in global affairs—analyze present-day policy challenges and develop innovative proposals. Participants are eligible for school-sponsored travel awards that help them travel abroad to research their topic more closely. Capstone students emerge with analytical, teamwork, and management skills to launch substantive careers in international affairs and public policy.

Client Participation
Working with clients is a fundamental piece of an authentic Capstone experience. Often Capstone teams develop projects for a government, nonprofit, or corporate clients drawn from GWU’s deep connections with the policy community and alumni. The principal product is a report that identifies a clear policy action for the client, an argument for the policy action, and a policy-based strategy that can be implemented by the client. Supported by relevant analysis and assessments, Capstone team projects give comprehensive policy pathways for real-world issues.

EXAMPLES OF CAPSTONE PROJECTS

Improving US Private Investment in East Africa
EU Energy Security: Exploring Demand Side Initiatives and Solutions
Breaking the Ice: Conflict Potential and Development in the Arctic
Enhancing Programming Policy to Effectively Combat Sexual Violence in India

Engaging an Elliott School Capstone team offers clients:

- Research and analysis on a timely policy issue
- A team comprising diverse professional and educational experience
- Students in the final stretch of a world-class international affairs degree program

Through a close and productive client relationship, Capstone teams develop leadership, project management, briefing, and public speaking skills. Client partnerships enhance team members’ abilities to collaborate, negotiate, and meet internal and external deadlines. Ultimately, both clients and Capstone teams benefit from a fruitful partnership that fosters the next generation of policy makers.
Client Requirements
At the outset of the relationship, the consulting team and the client outline specific responsibilities, including but not limited to:

- Research plan
- Client input and guidance
- Referrals to expert sources
- Deliverables and publication

Clients are expected to meet with teams at the start of the project, participate in a meeting that outlines preliminary findings, and attend final oral presentations. Each client should provide a primary project contact for the team who can address questions as they arise or direct the team to resources for further information. The project runs from October (initial client recruitment) through April (final presentation).

Previous Capstone Clients
Active Change Foundation
Caerus Associates
German Marshall Fund
U.S. Department of State
Asian Development Bank
CNA Corporation
Marine Corps Warfighting Lab
World Bank

Team Resources
As Capstone teams endeavor to deliver top-quality research and analysis, expenses occasionally arise for teams as they research, interview, and travel to get the most accurate information. As the Capstone team and client outline their agreement, the client may consider if it can make resources available to help the team succeed. This offer could include in-kind offers (housing while on travel, for instance) or travel funding, though providing resources is not required.

Final Product
The Capstone team and client determine the terms of distribution for the final product. However, the Capstone team members reserve the right to reference the client and project on their resume to advance their professional careers, and they hold the intellectual property for the product. When possible, the Elliott School publishes the client’s name and the abstract or final report on the GWU website.

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