



NYU

**ROBERT F. WAGNER GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE**

CAPSTONE



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RECRUITING YOUR OWN CAPSTONE CLIENT

**Presented by Elizabeth Larsen,
Capstone Co-Director**

Understanding Capstone



- Capstone is a full year project and 3-credit course
- Students work with clients to solve a problem or challenge unique to the client organization
- Client recruitment happens in the **spring** preceding the Capstone year
- Students who don't recruit their own team+client will rank projects from a slate offered in their respective sections (which may include individually-recruited projects)

Panelists



Kevin Muehleman
MPA-PNP (M&L)

Capstone Team:
Hewnoaks Artist Colony



Aiden Wynia
HPAM

Capstone Team:
BJC HealthCare



Winnie Shen
MUP

Capstone Team:
Grounded Solutions
Network



Seth Kerr
MUP Alum, 2022

Capstone Team:
Suffolk County
Dept. of Economic
Development & Planning

Advantages of Recruiting a Client



- Provides the opportunity to form your own student team
- Gives you practice performing client outreach
- Enables you to pursue an issue area, specific topic, and/or client of personal interest
- If team is also recruited, provides certainty around client and team before the start of the course

Recent Clients Recruited by Students

- Hewnoaks Artist Colony - ***PNP-Management 2023***
- Center for Just Journalism - ***PNP-Policy 2023***
- BJC Healthcare - ***HPAM 2023***
- Islamic Relief USA - ***SI3 2023***
- Oonee - ***MUP 2023***
- Grounded Solutions Network - ***MUP 2023***
- TakeRoot Justice - ***PNP-Advocacy 2022***
- IMPACCT Brooklyn (Pratt Area Community Council) - ***PNP-Advocacy 2021***
- Banco Popular Costa Rica - ***PNP-Finance 2021***



Before Reaching Out to a Client

- Make sure you're [Capstone Eligible](#)
- Think about the type of client(s) you want to work with: industry, size, recent initiatives, impact, personal career goals
- Identify organizations of interest and think about the types of problems you may want to suggest
- Familiarize yourself with the [Capstone Employer webpage](#) to gain an understanding of what being a client entails

If Creating a Team

- A Capstone team comprises 3-5 students
- Make sure you share interest areas
- Understand each other's work styles before committing
- Ways to find team members:
 - Post on the Wagnerds Facebook page
 - Connect through student associations
 - Speak with professors in your program/specialization



If Creating a Team: Team Composition

- Capstone sections are based on specialization, so it is preferred for team members to share a specialization
- Cross-program teams are not allowed (e.g., MUP and HPAM students may not form a team)
- Ideally, no more than two specializations are represented on a team (e.g., PNP Public Policy + PNP Finance), but the nature of the project may allow for more flexibility.
- Use this [Sign-in sheet](#) to help you connect & network with each other

If You Cannot Create a Team

- If you are unsuccessful in recruiting a team, you may still recruit a client and encourage them to submit a proposal
- If it passes vetting, the client's proposal will be offered in your assigned Capstone section
- While you will have the opportunity to rank the recruited proposal, selection of your recruited client is not guaranteed as it is dependent upon the preferences of your classmates

Best Practices in Client Recruitment

- Choose your/your team's top client(s) to contact
- Research NYU Wagner connections with/at the organization using LinkedIn and alumni networks
- Be aware of any **conflicts of interest**: students may not conduct Capstone projects for their employers or internship organizations
- Generate an outreach strategy
- In reaching out to prospective clients, frame the project as **“What critical challenge does your organization face that you haven't had time to tackle?”**

Understanding Prospective Clients

- Look at recent job postings to understand where your prospective organizations are putting their resources
- Follow the organizations on social media, notably LinkedIn
- Questions to ask in initial conversations:
 - What is your organization's mission statement?
 - What are the highlights of your 5-year strategic plan?
 - What salient history/background should we know?
 - What could be the potential impact of our project?

Sample Email to Prospective Client

We are happy that [your organization] is interested in learning more about becoming a client in the 2023-24 NYU Wagner Capstone Program. The challenge that we discussed appears to be the seed of a great Capstone project. I encourage you, in further scoping the project, to explore our [Capstone Program page](#), [Capstone Client FAQs](#), and [2021-2022 Capstone Booklet](#) (in particular, please refer to past project abstracts in [Public Policy], which begin on page [14]).

Outreach to Prospects (~March-April)

Make sure the clients understand the following:

- The client needs to write and submit a proposal through the online portal by the **June 23, 2023** deadline
- The client needs to commit to working with you for a year
- This is not an internship
- There is a *suggested* engagement fee, but clients will **not** be turned down because of an inability to pay—*all client questions about the fee should be directed to Capstone Co-Director Elizabeth Larsen at elizabeth.larsen@nyu.edu*

Meeting with Capstone Co-director

Prior to your prospective client's proposal submission, you/your team **must** discuss the incoming project proposal with Capstone Co-Director Elizabeth Larsen (elizabeth.larsen@nyu.edu)



<https://www.linkedin.com/in/elizabeth-frances-larsen-9608271/>

Proposal Submission (~May-June)

- Clients need to read and agree to the Capstone [Client FAQs](#)
- Clients must submit a [Capstone Client Application](#) by the Request for Proposal (RFP) deadline - **June 23, 2023**
- Clients **must** indicate that the proposal was created with you/your team in mind, and must list each of your name(s) in the “Special Considerations” proposal field of the application
 - Following these steps ensures that the proposal is offered to your section and, if relevant, that you are placed in the same section as your teammates

Proposal Review

- Congratulations, your recruitment work is done!
- Your client's project proposal will be reviewed by the Capstone Directors over the summer—alongside all received proposals—for specialization and instructor fit
- Viable projects are assigned to a Capstone section and instructor
- Instructors reach out to the client prior to the start of classes

Section Assignment Notification

- You/your team will be notified approximately mid-summer of your section assignment and whether your recruited client project has been accepted/will be offered in your section
- If not accepted, you will, alongside your classmates, rank projects from a slate of client projects assigned to your section.

If you have any questions about this process, please email Elizabeth Larsen at elizabeth.larsen@nyu.edu.

THANK YOU



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<https://wagner.nyu.edu/portal/students/academics/capstone>