



NYU

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

CAPSTONE



**PROJECT SUMMARIES
2019/2020**



CAPSTONE

PROJECT SUMMARIES
2019/2020

LEARNING IN
ACTION

PUBLIC SERVICE IS
THE HIGHEST **AND**
GOOD, **WHEN**
DONE
HONORABLY
AND WELL,
THE MOST REWARDING.

ROBERT F. WAGNER,
MAYOR OF NEW YORK CITY
1953-1965

ABOUT CAPSTONE

Capstone, in architecture, is the crowning piece of an arch, the center stone that holds the arch together, giving it shape and strength. Similarly, NYU Wagner's Capstone Program provides students with the centerpiece of their graduate education where they turn their classroom learning into practice. Capstone teams spend an academic year addressing challenges and identifying opportunities for clients, or conducting research on a pressing social question—in a complex and real-world environment. Students must quickly become familiar with an issue or content area; demonstrate process skills such as project management and teamwork; and effectively gather, analyze, and present data.

The summaries in this booklet represent the 74 Capstone projects from the 2019-2020 academic year, conducted by 305 Wagner graduate students.

The Capstone Program was originally funded with a generous grant from the Ford Foundation in 1995 and subsequently received financial support from FJC: A Foundation of Philanthropic Funds. Since the program's inception, more than 6,400 students have completed over 1,400 projects for more than 900 organizations.

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Organizations—from the public, nonprofit, or private sector—interested in being a Capstone client should visit wagner.nyu.edu/capstone/clients for more information.

ABOUT NYU WAGNER

New York University's Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service prepares public service leaders to translate ideas into actions that have an effective and lasting impact. We ensure that our students learn critical analytic skills and frameworks, use New York City as a learning laboratory that can be applied anywhere in the world, and understand the distinct contexts in which they're working.

Ranked 10th nationally among all schools of public affairs, NYU Wagner has been educating the world's future public service leaders since 1938. We offer a Master of Public Administration in Public & Nonprofit Management & Policy, Master of Public Administration in Health Policy & Management, Master of Urban Planning, Master of Health Administration, Master of Science in Public Policy, Executive Master of Public Administration, and PhD in Public Administration.

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PROJECT
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BLACK GIRLS CODE

SCALING TO INTRODUCE ONE MILLION GIRLS TO STEM BY 2040

FACULTY:

Sonia Balaram

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Moeena Das, Tajana
London, Janai Smith,
Trevor Smith

Founded in 2011, Black Girls Code (BGC) seeks to change the face of the technology industry by introducing girls of color to the STEM field from an early age. BGC's multiple chapters reach over one thousand girls per year through nation-wide programming, helping girls develop hard skills in coding and computer science. To maximize its impact, BGC set a goal to reach one million girls by 2040, which will require rapid expansion of existing chapter operations and the opening of new chapters throughout the country. BGC brought in a Capstone team to conduct a rigorous literature review, internal scan, and external scan. The team examined best practices for rapidly scaling small nonprofits, analyzed program data and survey data collected from BGC volunteers and staff, and collated interviews from various members in the field. Based on its findings, the team proposed a set of recommendations and tools for BGC to consider as it seeks to grow its operations.

DIVERSITY JOINT VENTURE FOR CONSERVATION CAREERS

BUILDING EFFECTIVE JOINT VENTURES

FACULTY:

Quintin Haynes

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Oluwatosin Ajayi,
Futaim Al Hammadi,
Malcolm Jordan
Clark, Anne Mullen,
Philomena Ogalo

The Diversity Joint Venture for Conservation Careers (DJV) is a coalition founded in 2016 with the mission of strengthening the conservation workforce by increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion. The coalition comprises partners from nonprofit environmental organizations, state and federal governmental agencies, universities, and professional societies. DJV enlisted a capstone team to conduct an infrastructure and management assessment to recommend strategies for organizational effectiveness. The team completed an environmental scan of nonprofit coalitions and focused its literature review on coalition management and engagement best practices. To gather more in-depth information on the current practices and state of DJV, the team conducted internal and external interviews and surveys. The Capstone team utilized the information gathered through its research to provide recommendations and strategies for DJV to increase overall effectiveness; increase engagement; and strengthen its ability to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion in the conservation workforce.

GOODWILL INDUSTRIES OF GREATER NEW YORK AND NORTHERN NEW JERSEY

STRATEGIES FOR CORPORATE DONOR ACQUISITION

FACULTY:

Erica Foldy

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Alexis Agliano
Sanborn, Michael
Anderson, Max
Kruger-Dull, Alyssa
Meyer, Justine
Rosenthal

Goodwill Industries of Greater New York and Northern New Jersey (Goodwill NYNJ) is a social enterprise that collects and sells donated goods and empowers individuals with disabilities and other barriers to employment to gain independence through the dignity and power of work. Goodwill NYNJ enlisted a Capstone team to recommend strategies for strengthening its corporate donor experience and improving its ability to attract new corporate donors, with the goals of remaining competitive in the donated goods landscape and continuing to serve people with disabilities. The team conducted an environmental scan of both nonprofit and for-profit competitors, surveying the industry's corporate partnership norms. The team also conducted interviews with Goodwill NYNJ's corporate donors, as well as potential donors, to evaluate how Goodwill NYNJ can improve its partnerships. Using this data, the team created a presentation for Goodwill NYNJ to use when reaching out to potential donors and compiled a list of prospective partner organizations.

HUDSON LINK FOR HIGH EDUCATION IN PRISON

THE STRENGTH OF PRISON EDUCATION: MAINTAINING COMMUNITY POST-RELEASE

FACULTY:

Quintin Haynes

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Angel Arias, David
Aronov, Gabriela
Dominguez, Karen
Jang, Erika Marin

Hudson Link for Higher Education in Prison (Hudson Link) is a nonprofit focused on providing college education, life skills, and re-entry support to incarcerated men and women to make a positive impact on their lives, families, and communities. Hudson Link engaged the Capstone team to help locate, survey, and maintain ongoing contact with over 1,000 alumni. The team's goal was to familiarize themselves with higher education in prison programs and help answer this question: how do organizations who serve formerly incarcerated individuals continue to engage their alumni post-release? The team developed collection systems and communication plans to survey alumni and retrieve contact information continuously. Through online surveying, phone banking, engagement of software providers, and stakeholder analysis of participants and similar organizations, the team provided Hudson Link with the necessary tools to survey alumni annually, establish ongoing communications, and collect participant data that will inform programmatic decisions.

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

IMPROVING RESPONSE RATES FOR PARKS CONCESSIONS

FACULTY:

Quintin Haynes

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Vincent Argenziano,
Abigail DeAtley, Tess
Hill, Nick Roloson

The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation provides high-quality amenities and facilities to park users, which generate revenue for the city and create valuable business and employment opportunities for the public. Business opportunities are created through the solicitation process, utilizing Requests For Proposals, Requests For Bids, and Requests For Expressions of Interest for concessions in parks. The Department of Parks and Recreation enlisted a Capstone team to address concerns over the diversity of its current contact list of respondents for new business partnerships, as well as the number and quality of responses received for solicitations. Working with the client, the team analyzed marketing and outreach best practices, interviewed vendors from popular food trucks, and surveyed prospective candidates for concessions. The team developed a final report based on its research, including suggestions for improved response rates for solicitations and alternative marketing and outreach strategies.

OPPORTUNITY FUND

MEASURING JOB QUALITY IN SMALL BUSINESSES

FACULTY:

Erica Foldy

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Quemuel Arroyo,
Alison Dorsi, Margot
Pagan, Michaela
Slutsky, Jamie Spock

Opportunity Fund is the nation's leading nonprofit small business lender, providing microloans to entrepreneurs whose small businesses have not been able to access financial resources from traditional lenders. While Opportunity Fund has successfully provided over \$440 million in loans to underserved entrepreneurs so that they create and retain higher quality jobs, it is still revising its techniques to measure the impact of its loans on small businesses and the economy. In this pursuit, Opportunity Fund has committed to exploring opportunities to measure and analyze job quality as a top research objective, enlisting a Capstone team to provide relevant industry standards by which to query a subset of its borrowers on the quality of jobs they provide. The team divided the project into four phases: a literature review and environmental scan, data analysis of previous Opportunity Fund surveys and engagements with borrowers, developing and deploying a trial survey assessing job quality, and a culminating final report with the team's findings and recommendations.

PLAZA JEWISH COMMUNITY CHAPEL

MARKETING FUNERAL SERVICES IN THE DIGITAL AGE

FACULTY:

Sonia Balaram

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Rachael Compton,
Chloe Levinson,
Kenneth Seagreaves
Jr., Anna Wallman

Plaza Jewish Community Chapel (Plaza) is a nonprofit funeral home in New York City that has provided the Jewish community with an affordable option for funeral services for nearly 20 years. Due to stagnated growth in recent years caused by shifting consumer preferences and an increasingly competitive landscape, Plaza enlisted a Capstone team to help develop new marketing strategies. The team conducted a literature review of funeral industry marketing and digital marketing trends and an environmental scan that included a survey of past Plaza clients, an assessment of competitor funeral homes' websites and marketing materials, and an analysis of demographic trends. The team also visited local funeral homes to better understand the funeral market and identify best practices. The Capstone team provided Plaza with a strategic marketing plan outlining innovative 21st-century marketing solutions that will help Plaza stand out and continue to serve the NYC community for years to come.

TAKE OUR DAUGHTERS AND SONS TO WORK FOUNDATION

STRATEGIES TO ENGAGE A WIDER CONSTITUENCY

FACULTY:

Erica Foldy

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Jizelle Andrews,
Phoebe Kingsak,
Brian Richford,
Hannah Tofiliska,
Hanna Zirinsky

Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Foundation encourages young people to learn more about the workplace and potential future careers—working with schools, companies, and community organizations to make its signature programming a success. The Foundation features an annual day of participation, where parents, neighbors, aunts, and uncles are encouraged to bring a student to work with them to experience a planned day in the workplace—connecting what children learn at school with the actual working world. Since its founding in 1993, an estimated one-third of all Americans have participated in the annual day. The Capstone team was tasked with analyzing the current structure of the program to provide recommendations for expansion. The team identified and analyzed existing data from previous programming, interviewed external and internal stakeholders, and assessed the competitive landscape. The team then recommended strategies to create and strengthen partnerships with similarly-aligned nonprofits on a national level. By doing so, the foundation can use its brand recognition to reach new populations of underserved students and communities.

WENDY HILLIARD GYMNASTICS FOUNDATION

DEVELOPMENT OF A PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT AND MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

FACULTY:

Sonia Balaram

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Christine Beluk,
Karen Jiaxin Lu, Anh
Thao Nguyen, Ana
Rader

The Wendy Hilliard Gymnastics Foundation (WHGF) empowers the lives of young people from underserved communities by improving physical and emotional health through the sport of gymnastics. The Capstone team worked with WHGF to develop a performance measurement and management (PMM) system to equip the organization with an effective tool that captures key metrics of program quality. The team conducted an environmental scan—encompassing WHGF’s peers, key attributes of the NYC gymnastics industry, and funder requirements—along with a literature review of prominent research related to gymnastics and gymnastics organizations. Based on its research findings, the team developed a set of indicators and data collection tools and provided the client with a comprehensive PMM system. The system measures four primary outcomes—emotional health, leadership, physical health, and strong communities—and incorporates practices at peer organizations with customized structures and tools to suit the capacity of WHGF, setting the organization up for success in its implementation.

WOMEN’S ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT CENTER

DEVELOPING AN ALUMNI AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

FACULTY:

Sonia Balaram

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Dyuh Ariyanti, Susan
Belanich, Myeisha
Boyd, Kimberly Hom

The Women’s Enterprise Development Center (WEDC) provides women and minorities in Westchester County and the Hudson Valley with opportunities for business ownership. WEDC hosts a 60-hour entrepreneurial training program that assists its students with navigating all aspects of starting, running, and sustaining a business. With the help of a Capstone team, WEDC aims to create an ambassador program to keep its graduates engaged and connected. The team researched and analyzed how similar organizations engage their graduates through alumni programs, and the methods by which WEDC graduates prefer to stay engaged. The team formulated recommendations and a plan for implementation over the next twelve months. The final plan lays out the groundwork for an engagement strategy with graduates, including suggested communications and events, to bring graduates back to WEDC in the upcoming months.

GODDARD RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY CENTER

FEASIBILITY OF A MIXED-INCOME, FEE-BASED MODEL FOR OLDER ADULT SERVICE DELIVERY

FACULTY:

John Ceffalio

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Alison Glaser, Ana Meza, Laura Rocha Quiros, Konstantine Tettonis, Juntian Wang

Goddard Riverside Community Center (Goddard) is a nonprofit multi-service agency whose mission is to support people by meeting their needs and aspirations through education, social services, community gathering, civic engagement, and advocacy. Goddard's older adult programs—including its senior center, housing cooperatives, and home-delivered meals—serve about 2,000 older adults on Manhattan's Upper West Side. Goddard's leadership has expressed concern that current levels of government and philanthropic funding are insufficient to meet the needs of Goddard's target population. The organization tasked the Capstone team with investigating the market for, and feasibility of, a mixed-income, fee-based model to help fund Goddard's programs. The team conducted a market analysis revealing demand for older adult case management services in Goddard's catchment area, and a feasibility study assessing the potential opportunities and challenges associated with establishing a fee-based model for older adult case management services.

GUIDEHOUSE

FEDERAL CREDIT SECONDARY MARKET ANALYSIS

FACULTY:

Michael Dardia

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Paul Zhaoyi Gao,
Chee Kong, Lynn
Wanying Lin, Jessica
Shin, Regine Thervil

Guidehouse, a global consultancy in the public and private sectors, was selected by the US Small Business Association (SBA)—a government agency that provides support to small businesses and entrepreneurs—to function as its central servicing agent. Through the SBA 7(a) Loan Guarantee program, portions of small business loans are federally guaranteed and can be sold on the secondary market to provide greater liquidity to lenders. Guidehouse engaged a Capstone team to analyze the effectiveness of the SBA 7(a) Loan Guarantee program, including its loan pools and secondary market, and compare its findings to the market volumes, product structures, and market risks of the mortgage-backed securities of the Government National Mortgage Association (Ginnie Mae). The team produced a comprehensive white paper and presentation that includes data analysis, benchmarks, and actionable recommendations. The Capstone project provides Guidehouse with potential avenues to optimize the SBA 7(a) Loan Guarantee program and secondary market operations, resulting in increased access to credit for many Americans.

NEW YORK CITY MAYOR'S OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

AUTOMOTIVE PARTS OPERATIONS: A STUDY OF BEST PRACTICES

FACULTY:

Michael Dardia

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Jalil Austin, Iris
Jingyu Li, Salima
Moldokmatova, Lulu
Qinglu Peng, Daniel
Sedgh

The New York City Mayor's Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is the city's chief financial agency, organized as part of the Mayor's office. New York City operates the largest municipal fleet in the United States, including police cars, fire engines, sanitation waste units, forestry bucket trucks, street paving units, and other equipment. The City employs two management models to procure, deliver, and inventory automotive parts: the in-house parts operations model and the outsourced parts operations model provided by Genuine Parts Company (GPC). OMB engaged the Capstone team to review the city's management of automotive parts, with the objective of achieving operational efficiencies to reduce the number of unused parts located at in-house facilities, improve parts delivery times, yield lower vehicle out-of-service rates, and save money. The Capstone team compared the internal management operations to the GPC-managed model, and produced a report containing best practices and recommended operations strategies and finance models.

NYU INSTITUTE OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL CHANGE

REVENUE DIVERSIFICATION AND PROJECTION

FACULTY:

Michael Dardia

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Wengang Cao,
Haowen Ke, Sophia
Hye Kim, Tenzin
Kunphel, Summer
Xiao Nan Xing

The Institute of Human Development and Social Change (IHDSC) at NYU is a joint initiative of the Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development; the Wagner School of Public Service; the Faculty of Arts and Sciences; and the Office of the Provost. Supporting more than 70 faculty affiliates from the social, behavioral, and health sciences, IHDSC manages grants and brings together a network of interdisciplinary scholars. To fund its day-to-day operations, it relies heavily on indirect cost recovery as a major source of revenue. IHDSC enlisted the Capstone team to recommend external sources of revenue by analyzing comparable organizations and to predict future indirect cost recovery rate by bridging the gap between pre-award and post-award data. Through its research and data analysis, the Capstone team provided IHDSC with a requested revenue projection along with recommendations to diversify its revenue streams.

T. ROWE PRICE FOUNDATION

TRACKING FUNDING FLOWS IN BALTIMORE CITY NEIGHBORHOODS

FACULTY:

John Ceffalio

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Alice Heewon Kim,
Jessica Lui, Divine-
Asia Planes, Nico
Zhang, Yuna Zhang

T. Rowe Price Foundation is the largest corporate philanthropic organization in Baltimore. Since its launch in 1981, the T. Rowe Price Foundation has given more than \$125 million to nonprofit organizations focused on enhancing community life. Following the death of Freddie Gray in April 2015, local organizations and government agencies have made significant community investment, but there is ongoing debate about where the resources are going and if they are serving the communities in need. T. Rowe Price Foundation enlisted a Capstone team to assess the structural challenges in Baltimore through the flow of public and philanthropic dollars and track investments to ensure funds reach their intended recipients. The team's analysis focused on youth engagement, public safety, and workforce development in the Sandtown-Winchester and Park Heights neighborhoods. Based on data analysis and case studies, the team's recommendations will help T. Rowe Price Foundation conduct thoughtful and informed conversations surrounding funding in the community.

COALITION OF IMMOKALEE WORKERS

STRATEGIES FOR ADVANCING FARMWORKERS' RIGHTS THROUGH PROCUREMENT

FACULTY:

Meridith Seife

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Zoe Adel, Tatsuya Haga, Georgia Belle Glasman James, Jessica Oliphant, Jon T. Thorne

The Coalition for Immokalee Workers' (CIW) Fair Food Program (FFP) improves working conditions for farmworkers by promoting labor justice through partnerships with large corporate buyers at the top of the supply chain. The FFP is widely regarded as the “international benchmark” in the fight against modern-day slavery. To expand its reach, CIW wants to understand the potential for partnerships between the FFP and public institutions that wield significant purchasing power, including government agencies and schools. The Capstone team provided an analysis of food procurement practices across public institutions in New York City and presented potential strategies for influencing public procurement. Utilizing legal research, interviewing procurement experts, and analyzing procurement data, the team provided CIW with a report detailing the specific procurement practices of five selected public institutions in New York City, providing recommendations for how to leverage public procurement to broaden their impact.

ENTERPRISE COMMUNITY PARTNERS

AFFORDABLE HOUSING MODELS FOR THE JUSTICE-INVOLVED POPULATION

FACULTY:

Alexander
Shermansong

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Jálynn Castleman-
Smith, Gabriel
Friedman, Samuel
Kahn, Eleni Manis,
Chiweta Uzoka

Enterprise Community Partners is a nonprofit organization dedicated to ending housing insecurity by investing in affordable housing solutions through public and private partnerships, and scaling these solutions through political advocacy. Nationwide, justice-involved people struggle to find stable, affordable housing and access to the supportive services necessary to successful societal reentry after incarceration. As part of Enterprise's focus on vulnerable populations, the organization engaged the Capstone team to identify affordable housing models and services that best meet the needs of justice-involved people, and to provide recommendations for housing developers seeking to build for this population. The team interviewed social service providers, mission-oriented housing developers, and justice-involved individuals to identify the greatest challenges to reentry and affordable housing development. Ultimately, the team produced a full literature review and a final report that outlines findings, recommendations, and three sample housing models to help Enterprise and its partners expand affordable housing development for justice-involved people.

NEW YORK BUILDING FOUNDATION

DEVELOPING AN INFRASTRUCTURE SCORECARD FOR NYC

FACULTY:

Kevin Hansen

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Joshua Adams,
Adam Davis, Yeen
Dolma Lama, Janani
Meenakshi

The New York Building Foundation provides grants to support professional development and education in the design, construction, and real estate industries in New York City. Although national and state infrastructure needs are well documented, infrastructure needs in NYC are not. The New York Building Foundation approached the Capstone team to develop a solution to improve documentation of infrastructure needs in NYC. The team created a comprehensive scorecard to provide citizens and decision-makers a better understanding of infrastructure issues that can lead to lasting change for the city. The scorecard evaluates five core areas of public infrastructure—roads, communications, airports, energy, and mass transit—on a five-star scale that analyzes access, capacity, reliability, finances, and equity/sustainability. The team studied various evaluation models and compared NYC infrastructure data to national data, finding that NYC largely has comprehensive and high-quality infrastructure, while identifying key areas to improve its reliability, equity, and sustainability.

NYU MARRON INSTITUTE OF URBAN MANAGEMENT

BATON ROUGE NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION: GENERATING COMMUNITY VALUE AND PRIORITIZING SELF-GOVERNANCE

FACULTY:

Kevin Hansen

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Faizah Barlas,
Naquita Goldston,
Maya Portillo

The NYU Marron Institute of Urban Management (Marron Institute) conducts innovative applied research, working with cities to take on critical challenges of urban living. The Marron Institute and LabGov Georgetown, an applied research center at the McCourt School of Public Policy, have partnered with Build Baton Rouge (BBR), the redevelopment authority of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to pilot a multistakeholder approach to economic revitalization in Baton Rouge's Plank Road corridor. The Marron Institute engaged a Capstone team to research wealth that provide self-governance. The team conducted extensive research, interviewed practitioners and experts, and traveled to Baton Rouge to engage with local community members, BBR, and other stakeholders. The team's research culminated in a comprehensive report including an in-depth scan of governance and financing models, a portfolio of potential models for Baton Rouge, and the team's implementation recommendations to best serve the Plank Road corridor.

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR, TRENTON, NJ

TRENTON DISPARITY STUDY

FACULTY:

Alexander
Shermansong

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Julia Brauchle, Alex
Hunter, Elizabeth
McNevin, John
Petinos, Kyleigh
Keating Russ, Kate
Visconti

The Office of the Mayor of Trenton, New Jersey, a majority-minority city, engaged the Capstone team to conduct a disparity analysis to determine if minority- and women-owned business enterprises (M/WBEs) are underrepresented in the City's contracting. To determine the existence and extent of a disparity in the City's contracting process, the team compiled and analyzed data from numerous state and city business registration and procurement records. The team also conducted interviews and surveys with key government officials and business stakeholders to understand the procurement context in Trenton. In addition to focusing on the availability and utilization of M/WBEs in the City, the team recommended interventions, Trenton-specific procurement best practices, and economic development strategies. The team presented their findings and recommendations to the Trenton City Council.

PAY OUR INTERNS

THE EFFECTS OF UNPAID INTERNSHIPS ON NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL INTERNS

FACULTY:

Meridith Seife

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Juan Ardila, Giovanni Barcenes, Palak Kaushal, Savannah Romero

Pay Our Interns (POI) is a nonprofit organization that advocates for paid internships in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. Following the organization's successful advocacy campaign in 2018 for paid internships in the United States Congress, POI enlisted the Capstone team to research the effects of unpaid internships in the New York City Council. The team contacted all 51 council members, conducted stakeholder interviews, and administered a survey to current and former council interns to better understand the landscape and financial burden of unpaid internships. The team compiled a final report that presents evidence showing the detrimental effects of unpaid internships and makes policy recommendations for paying interns at the New York City Council, which POI plans to use as a model for advocacy efforts in NYC and other municipalities across the United States.

UPPER WEST STRATEGIES

ANALYSIS OF THE LIFESCI NYC INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

FACULTY:

Kevin Hansen

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Sarah DeFalco, Casey O'Hara, Thanisha Pariage

Founded in 2012, Upper West Strategies (UWS) is a consulting firm focused on driving economic opportunity. In 2017, the New York City Economic Development Corporation selected UWS to manage the LifeSci NYC Internship Program, a paid summer internship program for undergraduate and graduate students interested in pursuing careers in the life sciences. UWS has implemented two rounds of the program to date. UWS engaged a Capstone team to answer the following question: as the life sciences industry grows, how can NYC increase the number and diversity of local university students who receive opportunities through the internship program? The team conducted a review of best practices among life sciences hubs nationwide, a gap analysis, and an analysis of intern traits predictive of internship placements. In its final report, the team summarized its literature review findings and synthesized several recommendations for improving the internship program and increasing the number and diversity of placed applicants.

CITIZENS UNION

MEASURING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH

FACULTY:

Noelle Damico

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Lindsey Price

Jackson, Ryan

Newberry, André

Ware, Gloria Zhang

Citizens Union is a nonprofit that pursues government transparency and accountability in New York City and State, currently focusing on Census 2020, police accountability, and increased voter turnout. Citizens Union engaged a Capstone team to identify methods used by similar organizations to assess the impact and effectiveness of their high school-level civics programs, to assess the most valuable evaluation metrics, and to use those findings to identify the most effective civics programs in the region. The team researched and compared dozens of programs and their evaluation methods, conducting literature reviews, analyzing data, administering stakeholder interviews, engaging with school staff, and adapting frameworks. The team crafted a comprehensive report—for use initially by Citizens Union and eventually by any civic-minded nonprofit—that includes recommended best practices for implementing and evaluating civics programs for high schoolers in New York.

DAY ONE

CAMPAIGNING FOR COMPREHENSIVE SEXUAL HEALTH EDUCATION

FACULTY:

Noelle Damico

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Kristen Eaton, Marina
K. Montgomery, Iris
Zalun

Day One is the leading organization in New York City addressing dating violence among youth. It has joined a statewide coalition to advocate for New York State legislation requiring schools to teach healthy relationships and sexual education from kindergarten through twelfth grade. Day One engaged a Capstone team to support its work within the statewide coalition, conduct a literature review to determine opportunities and challenges from other jurisdictions, and develop legislative campaign materials highlighting healthy relationships and sexual education as violence prevention. In addition to these deliverables, the team updated Day One's stakeholder list, researched comprehensive sexual education standards in other states, and developed high-level messaging to counter opposition arguments against the legislation. Finally, the team created campaign materials including call sheets, postcards, and presentations for the coalition to use to recruit support for the legislation from other organizations and state representatives.

WESTCHESTER COALITION FOR LEGAL ABORTION - CHOICE MATTERS

DESIGN OF A PILOT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

FACULTY:

Noelle Damico

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Caitland Baxter,
Elenie Martinez,
Madina P.
Ouedraogo

Westchester Coalition for Legal Abortion - Choice Matters (Choice Matters) is a 501(c)4 nonprofit organization that strives to ensure that all women, regardless of age, race, class, status, geography, or ability to pay, have full access to reproductive health care. Choice Matters believes that a woman's ability to control all aspects of her reproductive health—including access to safe, legal abortions—is a fundamental right. Choice Matters enlisted a Capstone team to create a pilot educational website that includes research, FAQs, and short films to teach political candidates how to run as pro-choice candidates throughout the United States. The team focused specifically on the Reproductive Health Act (RHA) in New York State, researching issues raised by opponents and devising approaches to respond in a meaningful and medically-informed way. The team developed a complete pilot educational program, utilizing its research and the website to help Choice Matters achieve its goals.

CLIENT-BASED PROJECTS

CARICLUB

ADVANCING RESEARCH AND BEST PRACTICES FOR NONPROFIT ASSOCIATE BOARDS

FACULTY:

Sabine Toussaint

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Gabrielle Gallo, Luke
Jones, Emma Ruben,
Rachel Schultz

CariClub is a New York City-based social enterprise that uses an online technology platform to connect talented young professionals to nonprofit organizations seeking to fill associate board positions. The Capstone team was tasked with producing some of the first qualitative studies in the industry on what mechanisms contribute to the measurable success of an associate board. The team conducted a gap analysis to identify and recommend specific offerings that CariClub could provide. The team further conducted a landscape analysis, created and administered a qualitative survey, and held interviews with nonprofit professionals. Based on its findings, the team compiled a final report detailing which factors contribute to the measurable success of a nonprofit associate board. The team presented its findings and recommendations to CariClub on how it can become a leading source of support for nonprofits seeking to establish and grow their associate boards.

CITI VENTURES

OPPORTUNITY ZONES: IMPACT METRICS AND POLICY INCENTIVES

FACULTY:

Sabine Toussaint

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Mouhamed Kaba,
Nov Chemouny
Liss, Ignacio Paullier,
Michelle Pomerantz

Citi Ventures, the innovation and venture capital team of Citigroup, harnesses the power of Citigroup to help people, businesses, and communities thrive in a world of technological change by building products that address macroeconomic challenges. As a result of the enactment of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, 8,700 Opportunity Zones were created throughout the US, areas in which Citi Ventures' platform City Builder seeks to facilitate responsible investment. Citi Ventures engaged the Capstone team to define and refine social impact metrics and analyze policies and programs in various cities that incentivize investments in Opportunity Zones. The team utilized existing frameworks and methodologies from the US Impact Investing Alliance, BEECK Center, and IRIS+ to determine which metrics should be collected, and conducted extensive research on policies and programs that encourage investment in Opportunity Zones. The team's findings resulted in an impact indicator catalog and a final comprehensive report with recommendations on the policies that should be layered into City Builder.

GRAPEVINE GIVING

NEXT-GENERATION DONOR ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

FACULTY:

Mo Coffey

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Julia Chang, Sophie
Fishbein, Charlotte
Herzan, Reed Jaeger

Grapevine Giving is a platform that connects a community of givers and expert changemakers such as program officers, activists, nonprofit leaders, policymakers, and researchers. These changemakers provide recommendations to prospective donors in nonprofit issue areas about which they are knowledgeable and passionate. Seeking to grow its community of donors, Grapevine Giving enlisted a Capstone team to assess how it might bring next-generation donors into its community. The team conducted a comprehensive literature review of college-aged giving patterns and marketing preferences, and conducted a survey to identify college-age students' giving inclinations. Utilizing the survey findings, the team provided Grapevine Giving with a report of recommended strategies to support the organization's efforts to engage the next generation of donors.

HIGH WATER WOMEN

DEVELOPING IMPACT MEASUREMENT AND SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS

FACULTY:

Sabine Toussaint

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Cirenquji, Sharnell
Delmohammed,
Chenhao Li,
Elizabeth Ruben

High Water Women is a nonprofit organization focused on the economic empowerment of women and youth. The organization enlisted the Capstone team to solve its lack of sustainable funding sources and cohesive programming. To attract funders, High Water Women aims to unify its three programs—financial literacy workshops, the annual backpack program, and the investing for impact symposium—as well as develop a method to measure impact. The team conducted a landscape analysis, literature review, and competitor analysis, and developed a theory of change. The team’s recommendations include utilizing surveys as an effective method of impact measurement and developing a partnership model combining aspects of the three program streams as a feasible source of sustainable funding. The team provided High Water Women with a final report that included detailed research, impact measurement survey questions, and sample partnership structures.

SING FOR HOPE

DIVERSIFYING REVENUE STREAMS IN THE ARTS IMPACT SPACE

FACULTY:

Mo Coffey

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Nicole Howe,
Stephanie Klarer,
Sarah Worthen

Sing for Hope is a nonprofit organization dedicated to harnessing the performing arts to transform lives. Each year, the Pianos Festival acts as a throughline for their programming in public spaces, schools, and hospitals, placing artist-designed pianos throughout NYC’s parks and public spaces for anyone and everyone to play. The Capstone team was tasked with helping the organization become more financially resilient by diversifying its revenue streams and decreasing its dependency on conventional fundraising methods. The team focused on leveraging the signature pianos program as an emblem of Sing for Hope’s organizational identity and visibility. They conducted a competitive landscape analysis as a means of distilling the organization’s unique value proposition among peer nonprofits to influence Sing for Hope’s communications with external stakeholders. Additionally, the team evaluated existing fee-for-service models and identified revenue-maximizing strategies. The project culminated in a final presentation and report summarizing the team’s insights and recommendations for a financial path forward.

SPRINGBOARD COMMUNITIES

BUILDING A REAL ESTATE MODEL FOR COMMUNITY-CENTERED DEVELOPMENT

FACULTY:

Mo Coffey

CAPSTONE TEAM:

David A. Beech,
Mariyamou Drammeh,
Jennifer Fung, Sindhu
D. Janakiram

Springboard Communities (Springboard) is a startup social enterprise that serves the real estate needs of community-based organizations in the South Side of Chicago by driving community-centered development. It provides avenues to boost local real estate ownership to create a cycle that increases property values as people invest in communities. The client engaged the Capstone team to further develop Springboard's business model by identifying financing options for property acquisition, determining viable ownership transfer plans, and developing a landscape of relevant social impact metrics. The team conducted research, met with industry experts, and developed one-page marketing materials for Springboard's real estate services. The team also conducted analyses to create Springboard's property acquisition, financing, and incremental ownership strategies. The team provided Springboard a final report with steps for implementing its business model, including marketing materials, a detailed breakdown of Springboard's real estate services and financing, and relevant social impact metrics.

TEAM-GENERATED PROJECTS

CSK EDUCATION

CONNECTING TEACHERS USING ED TECH VIA EDPROCONNECT

FACULTY:

Miriam Altman

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Danielle Campbell,
Philippa Ji-Hyun
Kim, Nicole Shaia

Classrooms have widely adopted educational technology (EdTech) as a means to offer more personalized learning. However, while there is a proliferation of solutions in the global ed tech market, which is estimated to reach \$252 billion by 2020, little is known about the efficacy of EdTech and its effect on learning outcomes. To address these questions, the Capstone team conducted over 70 customer interviews with key stakeholders, including educators, EdTech firms, parents, administrators, and policymakers. The team found that the most important factor in technology and education is an educator's ability to incorporate technology tools into their curriculum skillfully, understand the functionality of these tools, and adapt to advancements in technology. However, if a teacher or school does not have the resources or experience to develop a technology-based curriculum, the results are ineffective. In response, the team created a platform called EdProConnect to facilitate communications and exchanges between teachers and stakeholders.

KIDVY

CHILDCARE ACCESSIBILITY FOR EMPLOYEES OF MID-SIZED COMPANIES

FACULTY:

Miriam Altman

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Bryan Brown, Grace
Earle, Rachel Landau

Half of the families in the United States find it difficult to find childcare. Moreover, the lack of affordable childcare causes many women to leave the workforce early and stagnates their careers. Kidvy, the Capstone team initiative, seeks to address this gender inequity by expanding access to childcare. Kidvy creates collectives of mid-sized companies to facilitate partnerships with childcare providers that enable near-site, subsidized childcare for their employees. While large organizations such as Starbucks and CUNY can negotiate independently with a provider to secure childcare for their employees, mid-sized companies cannot. Kidvy enables employers to provide a path to quality, affordable childcare, which, in addition to addressing their commitment to gender equity in the workplace, brings the added benefits of increased employee retention, satisfaction, and productivity.

FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT FUND

BRIDGING THE RACIAL WEALTH GAP THROUGH IMPACT INVESTING

FACULTY:

Miriam Altman

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Eli Elsbree Emigh,
Alexander Fiorille,
Samuel Jewett,
Alexis King

Black families and communities in New York City have been left behind due to systemic racism and exploitative economic policies that have created a vast and persistent racial wealth gap. Hiring and wage discrimination, segregation, redlining, and myriad other policies and practices have prevented Black families and communities from building wealth and opportunity. The Financial Empowerment Fund is a social impact fund created by the Capstone team to tackle the racial wealth gap head-on while providing safe returns and a diversified portfolio to investors. The fund puts money in the hands of Black-owned and operated businesses and nonprofits in New York, within sectors most connected to the racial wealth gap: housing, financial services, and entrepreneurship. Through community-led decision making and a first-of-its-kind racial wealth gap impact metrics and measurement tool, the team seeks to remove barriers to opportunity by meeting communities where they are and unlocking the doors to funding and prosperity.

VENTURE CAPITAL FUND FOR FEMALE FOUNDERS

GENDER-LENS INVESTING: EMPOWERING FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS

FACULTY:

Miriam Altman

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Minji Kim, Sophia V.
Rodriguez, Simone
Shaheen, Sophia
Valner

Funding to female founders is staggeringly low, with research showing that female-led businesses received only 2.2% of global venture capital funding in 2018. Galvanized by that data, the all-female Capstone team developed a venture capital fund to address the chasm between investment capital and the female founders who are often underrepresented in venture capital. The fund will invest seed-stage capital to female founders located in under-invested regions. The mission is to activate the untapped potential of these underserved markets to strengthen their positive community impact and empower the founders. This will be achieved not only by providing access to capital, but also by coaching, mentoring, and creating connections to help women scale their enterprises beyond early-stage venture financing. By leveraging data from gender-lens investing funds, this project will lay the foundation for a new avenue of funding devoted to diverse entrepreneurial success.

ALIGNMENT HEALTHCARE

PRODUCT IMPROVEMENT IN MEDICARE

FACULTY:

Amit Loungani

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Hannah Corbett,
Wen Huang, Wahiba
Mongiello, Yolanda
Rayside, Judith St.
Louis

Alignment Healthcare (Alignment) is a population health services company that offers Medicare Advantage plan options to California residents. Alignment intends to capitalize on the growing Medicare Advantage space by increasing market share and national presence in its fiscal year 2021, targeting seniors nationwide. The client enlisted the Capstone team to offer insights on the business landscape, consumer benefits, and retention strategies. The team performed competitor and market analyses to determine potential entry opportunities in California, Florida, North Carolina, and Nevada. Additionally, the team recommended enhanced plan benefits and strategies to retain current members based on consumer feedback and federal guidelines. The team presented its findings and recommendations in an executive report and presentation to Alignment's senior leadership.

CAREBAND

PATHWAY TO INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR HEALTHCARE WEARABLE TECHNOLOGY

FACULTY:

Brian David

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Gabriela Anglon,
Farah Dahman, Lori
Houston-Floyd,
Derek Tobia

CareBand is a healthcare wearable technology company that strives to reduce death and injuries due to dementia-related wandering and to keep patients with dementia living safe, independent lives. It does so by deploying location and activity monitoring technology and leveraging behavioral and health analytics. While CareBand seeks to expand into the home care market, insurance plans do not currently cover its wearable technology. The client engaged the Capstone team to research how new medical devices are approved for insurance coverage and to develop a business case for its wearable device technology. The team reviewed the medical device market and evaluated the steps undertaken by existing medical device companies to obtain FDA approval. Further, the team conducted an assessment of current insurance trends and interviews with insurance companies nationwide. The team developed two market research reports, a toolkit with insights from its interviews, and a business case for CareBand to use while engaging with prospective insurance partners.

INGLIS

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY PLAN FOR THE COMMUNITY COMPUTING PROGRAM

FACULTY:

Brian David

CAPSTONE TEAM:

William Coit, Patty Ong, Sydney Sasanow, Hailey Siller

Founded in 1877, Inglis is a private nonprofit organization that enables people with disabilities, and those who care for them, to achieve their goals and live life to the fullest. Inglis enlisted a Capstone team to provide a financial sustainability plan for its Community Computing Program (CCP), which provides assessment, training, and support for the use of adaptive technology for community-based clients. The team reviewed CCP expenditures to analyze and determine unit costs and conducted research to identify multiple streams of earned and contributed revenue for community-based services and adaptive technology. The team explored reimbursement through managed care for dual-eligible clients, public and private institutional funding, and private philanthropy. Additionally, the team conducted landscape and stakeholder research and analysis relating to these revenue streams to identify priorities. The team's work resulted in strategic recommendations for value propositions addressing each revenue stream, as well as a five-year financial plan to support and scale CCP activities.

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

ANALYSIS OF HOSPITAL-BASED VIOLENCE INTERVENTION PROGRAM

FACULTY:

Brian David

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Hannah Akki, Lizeta El Msiyah, Yingxuan Mo, Tatiana Ouchakova

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) supports Kings County Hospital in delivering its nationally-recognized, hospital-based violence intervention program called Cure Violence. The program is an evidence-based, anti-violence program that uses a public health approach to reduce violent injury among high-risk youth and aims to change social norms that reinforce violence. DOHMH engaged a Capstone team to prepare a cost-effective analysis and investigate reimbursement opportunities for the program. To evaluate the sustainability of the program, the team conducted a literature review, performed data analysis, and assessed direct and indirect costs of violence. The team provided comparative research on similar programs in other states to assess the cost-effectiveness of the program. Based on its findings, the team compiled a final comprehensive report containing recommendations for reimbursement opportunities and a drafted policy proposal.

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

PARENTS CONNECT PROGRAM EVALUATION

FACULTY:

Amit Loungani

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Jacqueline Betro,
Johnsonie Casimyr,
Cheryl Qihui Ma,
Janelle Montales
Sauz, Marc Anthony
Starvaggi

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) protects and promotes the health of eight million New Yorkers through evidence-based programs and services. The work of the Early Childhood Health and Development Unit includes programs, policies, resources, and research to support the holistic and equitable physical, cognitive, and social emotional growth and development of young children throughout New York City. The unit furthers these aims through its Parents Connect program, which entails a series of neighborhood-based, facilitated discussions that provide an opportunity for parents and caregivers to connect and learn about early childhood health and development programs, information, and resources. DOHMH engaged a Capstone team to evaluate the programmatic impacts of Parents Connect. The team surveyed program participants to identify successes, challenges, and areas for improvement; coded and analyzed the survey data; and conducted a related literature review. The team included its findings and recommendations in a program evaluation report that it presented to DOHMH leadership.

NEW YORK CITY HEALTH AND HOSPITALS - BELLEVUE HOSPITAL MEDICAL CENTER

DECREASING EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT DWELL TIME

FACULTY:

Rona Affoumado

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Zuheir Diab, Dara
Elkholy, Nessreen
Mestari, Monil Patel,
Julia Qiaoya Peng

Bellevue Hospital Medical Center (Bellevue) aims to reduce its median 4.5 hours Emergency Department (ED) dwell time. Addressing the ED dwell time has a major impact on patient outcomes because the longer patients wait for a bed to open up at an inpatient unit, the longer necessary care is delayed. Bellevue engaged a Capstone team to develop a process map detailing the departments and individuals involved in moving patients from the ED to an inpatient unit with cycle time estimates showing how much time it takes to move a patient from the ED to the appropriate floor. Through interviews and observation sessions, the team was able to document the patient flow of the admitting, nursing, and environmental health departments, which, upon review, enabled the team to identify sources of delay. Additionally, the team produced a literature review and final report that included practical solutions, potential barriers, and recommendations for alternative solutions.

NEW YORK CITY HEALTH AND HOSPITALS – OFFICE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION FOR TRANSGENDER STAFF

FACULTY:

Rona Affoumado

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Julia Black, Lauren Eisner, Erika George, Gwendolyn Hughes, Sidrah Masood, Pamela Sloate

In 2016, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio issued Executive Order 16 (EO16), which states that persons have the right to use the single-sex facility in city-owned buildings that most closely aligns with their gender identity. New York City Health and Hospitals (H+H), the country’s largest public health system, is committed to ensuring an affirming experience for transgender and gender non-conforming (TGNC) staff and patients. In an effort to implement EO16 across the system, H+H’s Office of Diversity and Inclusion enlisted a Capstone team to research and identify best practices that support TGNC individuals. The team conducted site visits to evaluate individual facilities’ compliance with EO16, interviewed key staff members, and reviewed best practices on creating a welcoming environment for TGNC people. Based on these activities, the team produced guidelines for making TGNC-welcoming environments and an audit guide for H+H to evaluate future facility compliance with EO16.

NEW YORK CITY HEALTH AND HOSPITALS – OFFICE OF DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

IMPROVING ACCESS AND COMMUNICATION FOR PATIENTS WITH DISABILITIES

FACULTY:

Regina Gurvich

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Isabelle Duvivier, Nia McIntosh, Shelly Mei, Anjana Sreedhar

New York City Health and Hospitals (H+H) is the largest public health delivery system in America, providing services to over one million patients annually. In New York City, nearly 189,000 individuals experience deafness, 200,000 have vision difficulties, and 335,000 have cognitive difficulties. Given the diverse population that H+H serves, its Office of Diversity and Inclusion enlisted the Capstone team to identify and implement best practices to improve the quality and access of care for patients with disabilities. The team interviewed clinicians and advocacy groups, created a comprehensive literature review, worked closely with the Mayor’s Office for Patients with Disabilities to design an advocate listening session, and rolled out surveys to H+H providers and patient advocates. The team incorporated its findings—including patient experience and best practices—into a toolkit encompassing a glossary and proper etiquette guide for H+H providers’ use.

NYU LANGONE HEALTH – DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MEDICINE

OPIOID SCREENING AND INTERVENTION

FACULTY:

Regina Gurvich

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Olumide Akindutire,
Keyavash Rahnemoon,
Brian Tu

The number of opioid overdose deaths in the US has risen dramatically in the past three decades, resulting in significant medical, social, and financial consequences for the healthcare system. A large proportion of patients with substance use disorder and opioid use disorder are encountered through emergency departments. NYU Langone Health, like many other large academic institutions, has placed an increased focus on combating this epidemic. Its Department of Emergency Medicine engaged a Capstone team to evaluate care for patients with opioid use disorder, which requires a multifaceted approach. Given the various engagement and treatment pathways being explored throughout medicine, and the novel nature of many of these pathways, no single mechanism of treatment and referral has been proven superior or sustainable. The team developed several interventions for NYU Langone to implement, including opioid screening questions at triage, social work intervention, naloxone kit distribution, referral to treatment, and medication-assisted therapy.

NYU LANGONE ORTHOPEDIC HOSPITAL

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR QUALITY-DRIVEN DASHBOARD TRANSFORMATION

FACULTY:

Regina Gurvich

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Henna Agnani,
Shruti Karmakar,
Jinming Kong,
Chizoba Nwankwo,
Marguerite Schulten

NYU Langone Orthopedic Hospital (NYULOH) has a distinguished tradition of medical innovation, providing specialized care for people with orthopedic, musculoskeletal, and neurological conditions. The quality movement in medicine is redefining the delivery of health care, and the effect on orthopedic surgery is substantial and increasing in importance. NYULOH has a robust dashboard displaying a large number of metrics and significant data. The Capstone team was tasked with analyzing NYULOH's current dashboard in relation to appropriate quality metrics for orthopedic surgery, and with adding items to the current display, such as physician-specific and procedure-specific data, to make it more user-friendly. The team conducted an extensive literature review and met with multiple departmental stakeholders to understand their individual needs. Using its findings, the team developed a comprehensive list of recommendations to improve the dashboards at NYULOH.

THE BRIDGE

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE AGING SERVICES PROGRAM

FACULTY:

Amit Loungani

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Randy Cuevas,
Rebekah Lee,
Shantelle Little

The Bridge is an agency that offers a range of services, including mental health, substance abuse treatment, supportive housing, care coordination, and vocational programs. The Bridge's Aging Services Program (ASP) provides whole-person care for the Bridge's most vulnerable residents—those 55 years of age or older who have age-related concerns—using a mobile treatment approach to make it possible for clients to remain in their homes and age in place. To attract new funding sources, ASP needs to develop data tracking systems to demonstrate concrete deliverables, quality outcomes, and cost savings, as compared to other traditional systems of care. The Bridge enlisted a Capstone team to create a logic model of the program's activities, build customized reports in its electronic health record system, and conduct a cost analysis to determine the average costs of care provided to ASP residents. Upon completion of these deliverables, the Capstone team developed a list of recommendations to the Bridge to help keep ASP financially sustainable.

THE COALITION FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCED MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

FACULTY:

Rona Affoumado

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Asher Jay Arce, Tara
Cass, Meaghan Lane,
Kirti Shah

The Coalition for Behavioral Health is a nonprofit corporation governed by a board of directors that is composed of member agency executives and leaders of New York's behavioral health community. It is the umbrella advocacy association of New York's behavioral health community, representing over 100 nonprofit community-based behavioral health agencies that serve more than 400,000 consumers in all five boroughs of New York City and the surrounding counties. In an effort to retain and expand its membership base, The Coalition for Behavioral Health enlisted a Capstone team to recommend strategies on increasing member engagement and attracting new members. The team conducted a literature review, interviewed staff members, and analyzed member survey data. Based on its findings, the team developed and presented a set of recommendations to support The Coalition for Behavioral Health's efforts to sustain and grow its member engagement and membership.

CASTLE VILLAGE OWNERS

TEN-YEAR SUSTAINABILITY MASTER PLAN

FACULTY:

Elizabeth Larsen

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Felicia Akerele,
Tristessa Arthur,
Paola Moncada
Lopez, Sean Martin,
Maria Cristina Puno

Castle Village Owners, a five-building cooperative located in the Washington Heights neighborhood of Manhattan, is seeking to become a more environmentally sustainable campus. This objective was prompted by New York City's Local Law 33 of 2018, which requires property owners to display building energy scores beginning in 2020, and Local Law 84 of 2009, the city's benchmarking law that imposes fines on property owners who do not meet established greenhouse gas emission targets. In light of these local laws, Castle Village Owners engaged the Capstone team to identify technology solutions that would optimize energy scores for its buildings and meet energy targets to avoid financial penalties, while maintaining high quality living for its residents. The Capstone team presented strategies and corresponding implementation steps to meet these goals through a 10-year sustainability master plan that outlines measures for the reduction of energy-related carbon gas emissions.

CITY OF MOUNT VERNON, NY

MOUNT VERNON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

FACULTY:

Michael Keane

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Kathryn Del Beccaro,
Tamara Fou, TaiAsia
Hutchinson, Amber
Nowak, Benjamin
Warshavsky

The City of Mount Vernon, NY, works to facilitate services, activities, and projects related to enhancing the physical, social, and economic life of the city. The City of Mount Vernon engaged the Capstone team to create an economic development strategy that would identify opportunities to transform the city's economy, improve conditions for residents, and establish its regional identity. To achieve these goals, the team conducted a corridor analysis of two identified commercial/industrial areas to take inventory of existing economic, industry, and land use conditions. The project outlined strategies and recommendations that aim to encourage economic development in Mount Vernon by attracting growth industries, fostering an identity for the city within the NYC region that reflects its culture and history and supports innovation, and determines necessary infrastructure and transit improvements for long-term economic growth.

GROUNDWORK BRIDGEPORT

STRATEGIES AND TOOLS FOR REVITALIZING BRIDGEPORT, CT

FACULTY:

Elizabeth Larsen

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Susanna Aaron,
Alex Dashev, Beyza
Seflek, Samantha Yu

Groundwork Bridgeport is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to advance the regeneration of Bridgeport, Connecticut through placemaking activities centered on greenscapes and youth development. Once a regional manufacturing center, Bridgeport struggles to shed its image as a post-industrial city and seeks to develop a new identity that can attract visitors and businesses. Groundwork Bridgeport engaged the Capstone team to develop strategies that would allow this small organization—limited in capacity but with extensive inroads in the community—to expand its role in Bridgeport’s revitalization. The team reviewed Bridgeport’s comprehensive plan, analyzed existing data, conducted fieldwork, and interviewed stakeholders to develop a “placemaking toolbox,” suggesting feasible projects for Groundwork Bridgeport to undertake that would engage the community and enliven the use of physical spaces around the city.

MANHATTAN BOROUGH PRESIDENT’S OFFICE

DESIGNING AN ACTION BOOK FOR RELIGIOUS FACILITIES

FACULTY:

Michael Keane

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Daphna Ezrachi,
Luis Hernandez,
Miles Martin, Noelle
Meyers-Powell

The Manhattan Borough President’s Office works on many initiatives important to maintaining and improving the quality of life in Manhattan. As land values rise and memberships decline, many religious congregations throughout NYC struggle to maintain aging but essential properties. To support the community presence of active religious facilities, Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer convened a Religious Facilities Task Force comprising faith leaders and adjacent experts, and enlisted the Capstone team to design and deliver a comprehensive guidebook to help religious leaders explore productive ways to preserve, share, repurpose, and/or redevelop their buildings. The team observed public hearings and joined meetings of the task force. In addition, the team conducted independent research and stakeholder outreach to identify neighborhood and citywide trends, needs, and opportunities. The final action book is a user-friendly tool that offers stakeholders a process to understand their properties, identify goals, align mission and outcomes, and navigate common pathways to maximize or transform their spaces and community impact.

MTA NEW YORK CITY TRANSIT

MEASURING THE IMPACT OF STREETScape CHANGES ON BUS SERVICE

FACULTY:

Sarah Kaufman

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Adam Beckerman,
Brendan Latimer,
Jenee Malloy, Gretha
Suarez, Yiyong
Zhang

MTA New York City Transit (NYCT) is a public agency in New York State that operates public transportation in New York City. The NYCT Department of Buses manages an extensive bus network serving the five boroughs. A unique challenge facing NYCT is that buses operate on crowded, changing streets where they share space with a growing number of other users. NYCT Buses enlisted a Capstone team to analyze how streetscape changes in the past five years have impacted the speed and reliability of bus service. The team selected twenty locations citywide to study the effects of streetscape changes such as bike lanes, turn restrictions, and speed reduction treatments. The team analyzed bus performance and safety data, researched best practices in other cities, and conducted interviews with select NYCT staff and external stakeholders. Based on the compiled data, the team developed a comprehensive report with recommendations for public street changes that will enhance bus service.

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

PREPARING FOR CONGESTION PRICING: IMPROVED ACCESS AT IDENTIFIED SUBWAY STATIONS

FACULTY:

Sarah Kaufman

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Miranda Adams,
Justin Flaminiano,
Maria Free, Alejandro
Martinez, Kelsey
McGuinness

The New York City Department of Transportation (DOT) is tasked with providing safe, efficient, and environmentally responsible transport options and developing infrastructure for pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicles. In 2021, New York City will implement a toll fee for vehicles entering Manhattan below 60th Street in an attempt to decongest the city's central business district, using evidence from global examples to encourage modal shifts to mass transit. In anticipation of this shift, DOT engaged the Capstone team to identify specific subway stations with the highest likelihood for additional users as a result of congestion pricing. The Capstone team analyzed commuting behavior, travel time to the congestion zone, station accessibility, and income to determine which stations are likely to see an increase in users. Utilizing existing safety data, the team provided DOT with priority areas for infrastructure investments. The team's research culminated in a report identifying top target stations and recommendations for infrastructure that facilitate shifting modes due to congestion pricing.

NEW YORK CITY TAXI AND LIMOUSINE COMMISSION

INVESTIGATING THE EXPANSION OF BATTERY ELECTRIC VEHICLE USAGE IN FOR-HIRE VEHICLE FLEETS

FACULTY:

Sarah Kaufman

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Emma Berrebi,
Ian Leidner, Isabel
McRae, Ryan
Palkowski, Tommy
Truong

The New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission (TLC) is the agency responsible for licensing and regulating New York City’s medallion taxi cabs, for-hire vehicles (FHVs)—which provide pre-arranged transportation throughout New York City—commuter vans, and paratransit vehicles. In response to the city’s ambitious goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80 percent by 2050, TLC is in the process of investigating how to expand Battery Electric Vehicle (BEV) usage in FHV fleets. TLC engaged a Capstone team to investigate outcomes from the 2013 BEV pilot program, and research and recommend pathways toward higher BEV adoption in the future. The team studied driver incentive programs and researched BEV taxi programs and best practices around the world, cataloging existing electronic charging station infrastructure and vehicles, in the interest of providing informed recommendations to TLC in support of its sustainability goals.

BELIZE ASSOCIATION OF PLANNERS

ALIGNING CLIMATE RESILIENCE WITH SQUATTER SETTLEMENTS IN BELIZE CITY

FACULTY:

Natasha Iskander

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Larquana Bryan,
Wayne Carino, Dejah
McGibbon, Ann
Rounds

The Belize Association of Planners is a nonprofit organization committed to ensuring social justice and promoting sustainability in the natural and built environment. The client enlisted the Capstone team to conduct research on the characteristics and drivers of informal settlements in Belize City. The team was also asked to make recommendations in support of an intervention to achieve UN Sustainable Development Goal 11 to “make cities inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable” and the New Urban Agenda of “leaving no one behind.” The team developed and designed research methodologies, including interviews, surveys, and focus groups within informal settlements and across government agencies. The team’s research findings concluded that informal settlements pose a risk for Belize City because it is located on water catchment areas that provide important ecosystem services for urban development. To achieve the desired changes, the team proposed a sites and services model for the client based on the team’s institutional analysis and risk assessment framework.

EK KADAM AUR (ONE STEP AHEAD)

IMPROVING VIRTUAL EDUCATION IN NEPALI AND INDIAN HIGH SCHOOLS

FACULTY:

Kathleen Apltauer

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Laurienne Abraham,
Ana Gutierrez Ruiz,
Simran Parikh

Ek Kadam Aur, Hindi for “One Step Ahead,” is a nonprofit organization that provides education and health resources to economically disadvantaged children in India and Nepal. The client enlisted a Capstone team to help improve its virtual learning program, and to conduct a pre- and post-test evaluation of its Sister Cities Program partnership. The team traveled to India and Nepal, where its members interviewed participating teachers, school leaders, and students, and administered surveys and subject tests to participating students. After analyzing the data from surveys and subject tests, and collecting information from stakeholders and clients, the team created a comprehensive report with recommendations that includes systems to measure student learning and improve pedagogical approaches in virtual classroom lessons. The team also developed the tools necessary for Ek Kadam Aur to evaluate the effectiveness of its Sister Cities Program partnership for future endeavors.

GLOBAL INITIATIVE AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

EXAMINING CRIME RESILIENCE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

FACULTY:

Kathleen Apltauer

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Olga Golub, Natalia Martinez-Lopez, Noriella Santos

The Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (the Global Initiative) is a network of over 500 experts dedicated to strategizing against transnational organized crime in the areas of human rights, democracy, governance, and development. The Global Initiative enlisted a Capstone team to investigate why transnational organized crime and its actors are able to adapt quickly to existing interventions and continue to prosper. The team examined factors contributing to the resilience of illicit flows of drugs, arms, wildlife and animal products, gold, precious stones, and human trafficking across Southeast Asia. The team researched existing trends and policies surrounding these flows, including structural and socio-environmental characteristics that enable them to prosper. The team performed independent research, qualitative analysis of data gathered through interviews with NGOs and independent experts, and site visits in Bangkok, Thailand. The team's work culminated in a final report synthesizing its findings and evaluating patterns uncovered during its research.

INTERNATIONAL WATER MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

ENSURING SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIAL WATER PRACTICES IN ACCRA, GHANA

FACULTY:

Natasha Iskander

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Sally Bucey, Alexis Captanian, Janay Daniel, Ariel Smilowitz

The International Water Management Institute (IWMI) is a global nonprofit research organization that aims to provide water solutions for sustainable, climate-resilient development. IWMI's West Africa branch engaged the Capstone team to examine the role of industrial water use in the projected economic growth of the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area (GAMA), one of the most rapidly growing urban centers in the world. The team completed a global literature review and spent three weeks in the field conducting site visits and stakeholder interviews with government officials and industry and nonprofit representatives. The interview findings illuminated ways in which industrial growth is outpacing GAMA's infrastructure for water use and management. The team's final report explores potential implications and offers recommendations for ensuring sustainable industrial water practices, including closely monitoring water use and resources going forward. The team produced an accompanying policy brief highlighting strategies from other urban centers facing similar challenges.

MAYOR'S OFFICE OF POPAYÁN, COLOMBIA

DEVELOPING A UNESCO PROPOSAL FOR POPAYÁN'S CULINARY INDUSTRY

FACULTY:

Natasha Iskander

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Liz Hensler, Coco

Lim, Jennifer Torres

The Mayor's Office of Popayán, Colombia, identified UNESCO's International Fund for Cultural Diversity (IFCD) as a potential grant opportunity for projects focusing on economic growth, increasing community participation, and incentivizing collaboration in the culinary industry. Over four weeks, the Capstone team conducted fieldwork—interviewing 14 groups of stakeholders and making daily observations of restaurants and markets—to identify gaps within the sector. The team's findings revealed a lack of collaboration between culinary groups and a missing shared narrative, leading to difficulties in international marketing and economic expansion. To assist with marketing, the team recommended a clear articulation of the region's culinary history and integrating that history into local restaurant experiences. This narrative-based solution included two major activities—a video history project and professional development opportunities for women working in the city's culinary industry—to be shared with the IFCD in grant proposals and locally to generate economic growth for the industry.

MÉDECINS DU MONDE BELGIUM (DOCTORS OF THE WORLD BELGIUM)

DEVELOPING AND MEASURING KEY INDICATORS FOR HR MANAGEMENT

FACULTY:

Kathleen Apltauer

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Lilian Aluri, Lenny

Portorreal, Mehek

Yousafzai, Tianyu

Zhang

Médecins du Monde (MdM) in Brussels, Belgium, provides emergency and long-term medical services to some of the most vulnerable populations in the world. Its staff consists of volunteers and full-time workers. In need of an integrated tool to ensure faster and more precise management of the organization—especially its human resources (HR) department—the MdM executive team and board engaged a Capstone team to create a tool that will build on MdM's organizational risk matrix and enhance its internal monitoring, evaluation, and learning processes. The team completed a literature review and conducted a field assessment with interviews from HR, operations, medical services departments, and key board members. The team synthesized its findings in a final report, categorizing MdM's current challenges in HR and recommending a data visualization tool that the organization can use to monitor progress towards MdM's Strategic Plan 2020.

MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION

IMPROVING THE INFRASTRUCTURE CLIMATE IN INDONESIA

FACULTY:

Paul Smoke

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Timothy Chu, Jessica Kaliski, Nour Nsouli

The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), an independent US government agency, provides grants and assistance to countries that demonstrate a commitment to good governance, investments in people, and economic freedom. MCC engaged the Capstone team to research the investment climate and mechanisms for funding road infrastructure in Indonesia, at both the national and subnational levels. This research will aid MCC in developing a grant—known as a compact—to support targeted policy and institutional reforms. The team conducted an extensive literature review and in-person interviews in Jakarta with representatives from the central government agency, the World Bank, and the private sector. The final report examines the stages of the complex road infrastructure process: planning, financing and procurement, and implementation and monitoring. At each stage, the report assesses the various challenges identified by the team and offers recommendations for MCC to consider in the design of the second compact with the Government of Indonesia.

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

EXAMINING THE EFFECTS OF PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT ON SERVICE DELIVERY IN KENYA

FACULTY:

Paul Smoke

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Damilola Dauda, Sabrina Taveras, Hila Yarom

The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) is an independent, global think tank that undertakes cutting-edge research and analysis to generate evidence, ideas, and solutions for a sustainable and peaceful world. ODI is conducting work to examine how public financial management affects service delivery in developing countries, and engaged the Capstone team to support its work on constructing better practices in the context of devolution reforms. The team explored the influences of the recent devolution process in Kenya on financing and management of service delivery in both the education and health sectors. The team traveled to Kenya, where it visited various facilities and interviewed multiple government officials and other stakeholders. The team also conducted an extensive literature review on key issues and challenges in education financing in Kenya. The team produced a report examining post-devolution financial management practices on the ground, highlighting lessons from the education and health sectors, and recommending areas for further investigation.

THE SYRIA CAMPAIGN

UNITED NATIONS AID FLOW IN SYRIA

FACULTY:

Kathleen Apltauer

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Aarthi Bala, Danille Hoffer, Israel Sanchez

The Syria Campaign (TSC) is a human rights advocacy organization that supports Syria's citizens in the struggle for democracy against the regime of Bashar al-Assad. TSC enlisted the Capstone team to create a report detailing how the approach of the United Nations (UN) to the Syrian Civil War has resulted in unnecessary civilian casualties and continued human rights violations by the Assad regime. After conducting extensive background research, including interviews with experts and academics, the team wrote a report detailing the UN's failure to fulfill its responsibility to protect—explaining the UN decision-making process and making recommendations for how to campaign to pressure the UN to change its strategy in Syria. The team's report was used to generate media attention around the UN's lack of action and encouraged change when Syrian cross-border aid funding came up for renewal in the United Nations Security Council.

UGANDA VILLAGE PROJECT

EVALUATING PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS OF THE HEALTHY VILLAGES INITIATIVE

FACULTY:

Kathleen Apltauer

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Ambrosia Kau, Sesen Paulos, Jingyun Shen, Kennedy Starnes

The Uganda Village Project (UVP) works with communities to promote public health and sustainable development in rural communities of the Iganga district in southeast Uganda, through their Healthy Villages Initiative, which aims to improve healthcare. UVP works directly with community-based organizations and local governments to draw on local knowledge and maximize community ownership of public health and development solutions. UVP engaged the Capstone team to review their existing survey data collection tool against current organizational objectives, secure Institutional Review Board approval for the updated survey tool used in 2020 data collection, and analyze data collected in 2009, 2015, and 2020 surveys. The team traveled to Uganda to observe training on survey tool use and conduct field interviews with UVP staff, survey enumerators, and community respondents regarding the efficiency and utility of the updated survey tool. The team used evaluation software to analyze the impact of UVP programming against data collected in control villages and synthesized its findings in an academic report.

UNITED NATIONS CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

SOLAR ENERGY EXPANSION IN TANZANIA

FACULTY:

Paul Smoke

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Jennifer Corbridge,
Nicolas Garcia,
Mikeala Sparks, Leqi
Zhang

The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) supports local development and government reform in developing countries. UNCDF has a special interest in municipal finance, offering models that unlock public and private resources to fund investments that reduce poverty and support local economic development. A recent UNCDF effort is the launch of the International Municipal Investment Fund (IMIF) to support local governments in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. UNCDF commissioned the Capstone team to assess the feasibility of solar energy expansion in Tanzania that could be supported by the IMIF. The team interviewed community stakeholders, local and international nonprofits, and private companies to examine how energy across Tanzania is currently used, paid for, and regulated. The team's final report provides recommendations on how to develop and subsidize the clean energy sector, specifically solar, to improve access to electricity, encourage sustainable energy use, and allow for greater reliance on the national grid.

UNITED NATIONS CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT FUND

SUSTAINABLE PLASTIC WASTE MANAGEMENT IN GHANA

FACULTY:

Paul Smoke

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Zipporah Arthur,
Una Solveig
Joakimsdottir, Mark
Anthony Libatique,
Patrick Maury

The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) supports sustainable development through financial and technical assistance to local governments in the world's poorest countries. UNCDF is launching a new International Municipal Investment Fund (IMIF) that aims to support local governments in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. One of the areas UNCDF seeks to invest in is a solution for sustainable plastic waste management. As part of this new initiative, the UNCDF enlisted the Capstone team to research successful plastic waste management models and identify potential areas for high-impact investments. The team conducted fieldwork in Accra, Ghana, where it interviewed various stakeholders invested in the country's plastic waste management. An unfinished recycling plant located in the Ada East District of southeastern Ghana emerged as an ideal target of financial support for UNCDF. The team presented their research findings in a final paper at the UNCDF headquarters in New York and the country office in Ghana.

WORLD BANK

ASSESSING POST-DEVOLUTION URBAN SERVICE DELIVERY IN KENYA

FACULTY:

Paul Smoke

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Doszhan Allibekov,
Shruti Punjabi, Ayate
Temsamani, Bunnalin
Thongpim

Kenya's 2010 constitutional reform consolidated a complex array of subnational government institutions into a single tier of 47 county governments. The World Bank's East Africa Regional Unit, and other agencies, have partnered with the government on the Kenya Urban Support Program. Its goal is to help establish and strengthen urban institutions under the new county governments so that they can deliver improved infrastructure and services. The Capstone team worked with the World Bank to perform background research and conduct field research in Kenya's Kiambu, Makeni, and Muranga counties. Through data collection and interviews of national and local government officials, the team examined the structure and performance of newly established urban boards and their relationship with county governments. The team's final report, focusing on successes and challenges in urban service delivery under the new institutional arrangements, informs the World Bank's efforts to improve support to the urban reform process in Kenya.

GRACIE SQUARE HOSPITAL

EVALUATION OF THE APPLIED SUICIDE INTERVENTION SKILLS TRAINING (ASIST) PROGRAM

FACULTY:

John Donnellan

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Amanda Alfano,
Patricia Boland,
David Kuang, Emily
Pak

Gracie Square Hospital (GSH), a psychiatric inpatient facility located in Manhattan, provides advanced, patient-centered behavioral health services. GSH implemented the Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) program in 2017 to provide staff training in identifying and communicating with persons at risk for suicide and improve caregivers' professional competency in suicide first aid. In alignment with the organization's key mission and core values, GSH sought to understand if the ASIST program was providing staff with the tools and skills needed to provide quality care for their patient populations. GSH engaged the Capstone team to evaluate the method and the program's impact and efficacy. Through focus groups and surveys, the team identified expectations and gathered feedback from ASIST providers. The team further conducted a thorough review of evidenced-based research and utilized the best available evidence to propose recommendations to GSH about the ASIST program.

NEWYORK-PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL

STANDARDIZING PATIENT PROPERTY RETENTION AND LOSS PREVENTION

FACULTY:

John Donnellan

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Jennifer Dacumos,
Esther Regan, Sadie
Sandquist

NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital (NYPH) is one of the nation's most comprehensive academic healthcare delivery systems, dedicated to providing the highest quality, most compassionate care to its patients. NYPH considers patient experience its utmost priority. Uncovering a tremendous opportunity for property retention and loss prevention, it engaged the Capstone team to evaluate patient property flow within the nursing and security departments to make recommendations and improve standardization of processes across all 11 hospitals. Through employee interviews and focus groups, industry research, and online surveys, the team conducted extensive research into process flow charts, best practices, and implementation strategies and tools. The team also partnered with Emergency Department nursing staff, Inpatient Psychiatric nursing staff, and security personnel in conducting site visits at five NYPH hospitals. The team's research resulted in the recommendation of developing a standardized workflow proposal and a rollout strategy across all eleven sites.

NEWYORK-PRESBYTERIAN QUEENS

ADDRESSING NURSE ABSENTEEISM AND STAFF SCHEDULING

FACULTY:

John Donnellan

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Carmen Huynh,
Brian Edward Libed,
Michele Mui, Tenesia
Richards

NewYork-Presbyterian Queens (NYP/Q) is a Level One Trauma Center serving Queens and the New York metropolitan community. The mission of NYP/Q is to be the premier healthcare institution serving the greater community by providing excellence in clinical care and patient safety, education, clinical research, and service. The hospital has been facing high levels of nurse call-outs and no-shows detrimental to its budget, and due to the lack of standardized tracking and scheduling, it has been difficult for hospital leadership to hold staff accountable. The Capstone team conducted a comprehensive literature review on existing evidence-based best practices for improving nurse absenteeism, staffing, and scheduling; developed a current-state process map by interviewing key stakeholders; verified effective practices in other NewYork-Presbyterian facilities and out-of-network hospitals; and conducted a staff nursing survey to explore the key drivers of absenteeism. Based on its research and analysis, the team presented a comprehensive report with recommendations for an efficient, centralized nursing staffing model to address nurse absenteeism and scheduling issues.

MEDICAID EXPANSION AND ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

EFFECTS OF THE ACA MEDICAID EXPANSIONS ON ADULTS LIVING
WITH A DEPRESSIVE DISORDER

FACULTY:

Josh Merfeld

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Mifta Chowdhury,
Amanda Goorin,
Dennis Grishin,
Aggie Tang

Approximately one in five adults suffers from mental illness in the United States, and low-income adults represent a particularly vulnerable group within that statistic. Research shows that the Affordable Care Act Medicaid expansions have led to coverage gains and improvements in access to care for low-income, childless adults. However, research has focused less on Medicaid expansion effects by race and other demographic characteristics for individuals with depressive disorders. Using data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) from 2011-2018, a Capstone team estimated difference-in-difference models exploiting the quasi-experimental design of Medicaid expansions, implemented on a state-by-state basis, to estimate the effects of Medicaid expansion on measures of healthcare access and health status. The team found that Medicaid expansion contributes to a decrease in the uninsured rate and improvements in access, with no differential impact by race. The research highlights factors that further disadvantage individuals with depressive disorders from obtaining coverage and accessing care.

MINIMUM WAGE POLICY AND ALTERNATIVE FINANCIAL SERVICES IN THE UNITED STATES

ANALYSIS OF STATE MINIMUM WAGES CORRELATED TO FINANCIAL PRODUCTS USED BY LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

FACULTY:

Josh Merfeld

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Jiaqi Dong, Brittany Mazzurco Muscato, Nathaniel Nelson, Natalee Rivera

Several states in recent years have instituted minimum wage policies to address a stagnant federal minimum wage. Historically, exclusions from mainstream banking, racially discriminatory lending policies, and financial industry deregulation have contributed to communities of color and low-income workers' withdrawal from mainstream banking, increasing the use of alternative financial services (AFS) such as check cashers and payday lenders. The Capstone team explored the relationship between state-level minimum wage policy changes and the use of AFS among low-income Americans, specifically unbanked and underbanked households (those without a bank account, and those who use AFS, respectively). Using publicly-available data, the team conducted multiple regression analyses to test whether state-level minimum wage increases raise the earnings of low-wage workers, resulting in a decrease in household utilization of AFS and a reduction in the number of unbanked individuals. The final report details the study's findings and conclusions, providing a preliminary assessment of relevant policy implications for financial services and minimum wage.

VOTER PARTICIPATION

VOTING COMPETITIVENESS AND PARTISANSHIP

FACULTY:

Josh Merfeld

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Eric Cova, Michelle DiMartino, Lisa McMonagle, James Salazar

The perceived rise in political polarization in the United States, and how it has affected voter participation, was the central focus of this Capstone research project. The team hypothesis was that as districts become less competitive, voter turnout will decrease. Conversely, as districts become more competitive, voter turnout will increase. Using the redistricting cycle that took place after the 2010 census as a quasi-natural experiment, the study focused on district competitiveness and examined whether any resulting changes in district competitiveness impacted voter behavior. The team's findings, along with a body of research on elections and voter turnout, provide crucial information for parties and political candidates in determining where to allocate resources during elections.

ZONING AND NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE

EXAMINING THE EFFECT OF UPZONING ON NEIGHBORHOOD DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

FACULTY:

Josh Merfeld

CAPSTONE TEAM:

Ignacio Aravena,
Anastasia Lopatina,
Alexia Anush
Nazarian, Douglas
Rose, Yinan Yao

In the past two decades, the New York City government has responded to growing housing demand and affordability by changing the land use zoning of certain areas to allow for higher-density residential development (a process called “upzoning”). Analyzing the disparate impact of upzonings on different populations is crucial to understanding whether the city is increasing its potential housing supply at the cost of displacing low-income, non-white residents. Most studies on this subject have been qualitative or rely on the use of only descriptive statistics as opposed to empirical methods. The Capstone team’s research examined the potential displacement of non-white residents following 12 city-initiated rezonings between 2000 and 2007, controlling for racial and housing covariates. Using a difference-in-difference research method to formulate conclusive analysis, the treatment group included upzoned census tracts, and the counterfactual group included census tracts with a similar demographic makeup and historic trends, but were not upzoned.

CAPSTONE FACULTY*

Rona Affoumado, Independent Consultant

Miriam Altman, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Kinvoled

Kathleen Wetzel Aptauer, Independent Research and Evaluation Consultant

Sonia Balaram, Independent Consultant

John Ceffalio, Vice President, Municipal Credit Research, AllianceBernstein

Moschell (Mo) Coffey, Founder and Principal, Challenges and Solutions LLC and

Director, Fellowship for Emerging Leaders in Public Service (FELPS), NYU

Noelle Damico, Social Justice Director, The Workers Circle

Michael Dardia, Independent Consultant

Brian David, Vice Chair for Clinical Integration & Administration, Mount Sinai Health System

John Donnellan, Adjunct Professor of Public and Health Administration and Director of EMPA Nurse Leaders Program, NYU Wagner

Erica Foldy, Associate Professor of Public and Nonprofit Management and Director of Public and Nonprofit Management and Policy Program, NYU Wagner

Regina Gurvich, Chief Compliance & Risk Officer, OMNI Ophthalmic Management Services

Kevin Hansen, Senior Vice President and Head of Public Policy, Empire State Development

Quintin Haynes, Executive Deputy Commissioner, NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services

Natasha Iskander, Associate Professor of Urban Planning and Public Service, NYU Wagner

Sarah Kaufman, Associate Director, NYU Rudin Center for Transportation

Michael Keane, Director, Land Use & Environmental Planning, Cameron Engineering

Elizabeth Larsen, Director, Academic Development, NYU Wagner

Amit Loungani, US Health Digital Product Leader, Mercer

Joshua Merfeld, Clinical Assistant Professor of Public Service, NYU Wagner

Meridith Seife, Deputy Regional Inspector General, US Department of Health & Human Services

Alexander Shermansong, CEO, Civic Consulting USA

Paul Smoke, Professor of Public Finance and Planning and Director of International Programs, NYU Wagner

Sabine Toussaint, Founder and Consultant, Caribbean Innovation and Entrepreneur Lab

CAPSTONE DIRECTORS

Erica Foldy, Associate Professor of Public and Nonprofit Management and Director of Public and Nonprofit Management and Policy Program, NYU Wagner

John Gershman, Clinical Professor of Public Service, NYU Wagner

Elizabeth Larsen, Director, Academic Development, NYU Wagner

**The NYU Wagner Capstone faculty comprises both full-time and adjunct professors.*

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Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service
New York University | The Puck Building
295 Lafayette Street, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10012
212.998.7400 | wagner.nyu.edu



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