

DUKEENGAGE IN WASHINGTON, DC

Contributing to national science policy

Program Dates: June 13 - August 10, 2019

(Dates subject to change up until the point of departure.)

Service Themes

- Public Policy
- Science & Engineering
- Technology & Media
- Environment & Conservation
- Health & Human Services

Program Focus

Addressing policy making in, and related to, the sciences.

Curricular Connections: While all students are welcome to apply, this program may be of particular interest to students studying public policy or natural sciences, or completing the Science & Society certificate program. (See below for additional details about connecting this program to your academic work.)

Program Leaders

- Thomas Williams, J.D./M.B.E., Lecturing Fellow at the Duke Initiative for Science & Society and Duke Law School.
- Nita Farahany, Ph.D./J.D., Director of the Initiative for Science & Society, Professor of Law & Philosophy is a leading scholar on the ethical, legal, and social implications of biosciences and emerging technologies, particularly those related to neuroscience and behavioral genetics. From 2010-2017, she served on the Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues.
- Michael B. Waitzkin J.D./L.L.M., Deputy Director of the Initiative for Science & Society. Michael “Buz” Waitzkin is a Senior Lecturing Fellow at Duke Law School and the Deputy Director of the Duke Initiative for Science & Society. He is part of the core faculty for the Duke MA in Bioethics & Science Policy and teaches courses at Duke Law School.

Program Overview

During their eight weeks in Washington, students will intern with governmental agencies, think tanks, or nonprofit organizations where they will assist with analysis of policy questions and formulation of policy options regarding science and technology policy and ethics. In addition, students are expected to fully engage in enrichment programming and reflections related to public opinion and science policy, gentrification and its impact on Washington, DC, and weekend volunteer events benefitting the local community.

The purpose of the program is to draw on what you have learned at Duke and elsewhere to contribute to and engage in the process of creating science policy. We expect students to bring knowledge gained back to Duke in order to inform and enrich their academic and service commitments. The Duke Initiative for Science & Society has a long-standing commitment to exploring the connections between science and technology and the policy-making process. The DukeEngage Washington program complements their undergraduate offerings at Duke, which includes the Huang Fellows program and Science & Society Certificate.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

The goal of the program is to engage Duke undergraduates with opportunities to participate in experiential learning in the federal and state level policy making processes, with a specific focus on the sciences and the unique challenges that work in this niche presents, including effective science communication. During the eight weeks in Washington, the program fosters an ethic of service and civic participation in students.

By the program's end, students should be able to:

- Communicate science concepts in an accessible way
- Understand the structure of policymaking, with a more specific understanding of how science is impacted by and can impact policymaking
- Generate alternative solutions to policy problems they have worked on over the summer
- Believe they can achieve a thorough understanding on social problems on a local level, and that they have the tools to impact those problems
- See the connections between their academic work and their internship experiences
- Engage effectively with those of differing points of view, working towards creating effective solutions together

Partnership Opportunities

Organizations that might host DukeEngage students include:

- National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine
- National Institutes of Health (National Human Genome Research Institute, National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke)
- Conservation International
- Center for the Study of Social Policy
- Niskanen Center
- Duke Margolis Center for Health Policy
- Anacostia Riverkeeper
- American Association for the Advancement of Science
- The BROAD Institute

Examples of projects that student groups have carried out include:

- Explored caregiver burnout and possible solutions for cancer care providers
- Wrote items for online newsletters and online information resources disseminated by an agency policy office
- Prepared a presentation and background papers for staff about the Bayh-Dole Act and university indirect costs reimbursement. Students also prepared case studies of nonprofit disease research advocacy organizations that described their modes of operation in preparation for a 60-expert workshop.
- Developed projects focused on the experiences of children in foster care systems, including children of color, LGBT youth and immigrant children, folding in the work of neuroscience as applicable

The program director works with community partners to arrange student placements after acceptance into this program. Students with specific placement ideas should raise those in their DukeEngage interview. In applying for this program, students must understand that placement could be at any one of the community partner organizations, or others that later become available. Students need to be aware that: (1) some placements may require a separate application process or further interviews, and (2) final decisions will be made by partners and the program director, not by students.

Program Requirements

Language: None.

Coursework: It is helpful but not essential to have taken courses in the sciences, political science and public policy, bioethics, or science communication.

Other Skills: Policy research; oral and written communication.

Personal Qualities:

- Willingness to help others – be willing to engage in research, writing or other policy related work to help government or nonprofit organizations to analyze or formulate their policy platforms. Examples of work include background research, writing policy documents and memorandums, and engaging in professional policy networks. This requires acute listening skills, being willing to take direction from supervisors, and seeking out guidance when uncertain.
- Awareness of what you know and what you do not know – students should take initiative to track down information, but also be willing to ask for help.
- Ability to work productively as a junior member on a supervised team committed to solving a problem. This requires maturity and openness to criticism, and responding with patience and perseverance to unanticipated situations and obstacles.
- Using good judgment – students must be mindful of what information can and should be shared publicly and exercise discretion with respect to information not yet appropriate to be made public. Washington, DC, is focused on *politics* and policy; because of this, maturity and good judgment are vital while working in this environment.
- Self-reliance and self-confidence – understand your role and ability to contribute ideas in new environments with an appropriate mixture of optimism and realism. Be sensitive to hierarchy and expertise yet willing to speak truth to power when appropriate.
- Problem solving and goal orientation – use strong analytical and research skills in producing deliverable end-projects for a team trying to address policy in the sciences. Contribute to complex policy reports. Listen and contribute at meetings. Be creative in thinking through policy.

Curricular Connections

This DukeEngage program is connected to the Undergraduate Certificate in Science and Society coursework and class offerings. For more information about Science & Society visit <https://scienceandsociety.duke.edu> and <http://sciencepolicy.duke.edu>.

Related courses and experiences students can explore include:

Courses

- Genome 498S Certificate Capstone
- Bioethic 502 Communicating Science & Bioethics
- Biology 255 Philosophy of Biology
- Bioethic 591 Topics in Science Policy
- AAAS 261D Race, Genomics and Society

Experiential Learning

- Science, Law and Policy Lab (SLAP Lab)
- Duke SciPol

Program Details

Description of Community: Washington, DC, is a vibrant city filled with a diversity of people, ideas, and cultures. At the same time, the city is also undergoing an unprecedented set of changes, including population shifts. We will engage within a diverse set of communities that call Washington home, while also considering how a number of factors at play are changing it.

Housing and Meals: Students will live together in a university or apartment-like setting with kitchen facilities. Rooms,

kitchens, common rooms, and bathroom facilities will be shared. There will be Internet access. DukeEngage students may reside with other Duke students or with students from another college.

Students will have a meal allowance. This meal allowance will cover groceries to cook in temporary housing. Washington is an expensive city in which to eat out, and the DukeEngage meal stipend is not intended to cover numerous meals outside of your apartment.

If you do not eat certain types of food for cultural, religious or personal reasons, please contact the DukeEngage office, dukeengage@duke.edu, to discuss whether or not your dietary needs can be reasonably accommodated at this program site.

Transportation: DukeEngage provides or arranges transportation to and from service placements and program activities. In Washington, students will get a SmarTrip card, which can be used on Metro trains and buses for transportation to and from their placement sites. Cars are not permitted.

Communication: We assume all students will have a personal cell phone for program-related and emergency communication. Internet will be available through the internship site and the residential facility.

Local Safety and Security; Cultural Norms, Mores and Practices: DukeEngage strongly advises all applicants to familiarize themselves with the challenges travelers commonly encounter at this program site in order to make an informed application decision. We recommend starting with the [Diversity, Identity and Global Travel section](#) of the DukeEngage website.

Opportunities for Reflection: We will meet weekly as a group for dinner to discuss work-related concerns and issues impacting science policy. Outside speakers will be selected in an effort to address student interests, host social events (with some emphasis on health policy, science, and human rights), and cultivate a strong emphasis on laughter punctuated by insight.

Other Opportunities: Students in the Washington program work full-time Monday through Friday at partner organizations. One night a week they take part in a speaker series with a professional working at the intersection of science and policy. A second night each week will be devoted to group reflection sessions. The group will devote five to seven weekend days and three or four workdays to volunteer opportunities in the Washington community and enrichment programming in the Washington metropolitan area. Most weeks, students will have at least one weekend day to themselves, as well as three or four weekday evenings. Open water swimming will not be a sponsored activity in any DukeEngage program.

This summer concludes with an end-of-summer science policy mixer with alumni, partner organizations and students celebrating their hard work and collaboration.

More Information

To learn more about the topical area and to consider the ethical and policy dimensions at hand, consider watching one of the following:

Documentaries: “Merchants of Doubt,” “How to Survive a Plague,” or “Twitch”
Films: “GATTACA” or “Project X”(1987)