

Revised January 7, 2025

2024–2025 Public Policy Analysis Challenge Guidelines

The Public Policy Analysis Challenge

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include a white paper, executive summary, and a formal presentation by the team to a panel of judges.

Eligibility

All Lake Forest College students who are studying on campus or In The Loop in Spring 2025

1. The white paper should typically be 10–15 pages in length, including all tables, graphs, and references but not including the title page or executive summary. White papers cannot be fewer than 8 pages nor more than 25 pages. The white paper should be double-spaced with one-inch margins, use 12-point font, and have numbered pages.
2. The white paper includes an unnumbered title page that identifies your issue, the names of all team members, and the name of the team's faculty mentor.
3. Although the white paper's structure is left to each team's discretion, white papers typically have the following content, in whatever order is most logical.
 - a. Clearly explain the problem/opportunity you address and how it falls within the scope of this year's topic.
 - b. Describe the nature and dimensions of the problem/opportunity. It is not necessary to identify a problem or opportunity with global or even national reach. Local problems deserve good policy too. Data, tables, and graphs are likely key tools to convey importance and urgency.
 - c. Using research and analysis, identify the root causes of the problem or the opportunity's untapped potential. The aim is to convince the reader that you have identified the root causes or opportunity and connected them to the experience. A ú

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- ii. Identify key performance indicators against which you will measure success.
- iii. Make clear how the effects of the recommended policy and any key assumptions, key risks, and key success factors should be monitored over time and who will do this monitoring.

Executive Summary

The executive summary comes immediately after the title page of the white paper. The executive summary is a “talking points memo” meant to bring the reader quickly up to speed on the most important facts, arguments, and recommendations. In particular:

1. The executive summary should be 1–2 pages; one is preferable and three is not allowed. Bullet points are acceptable. The executive summary should be double-spaced with one-inch margins, use 12-point font, and have numbered pages.
2. Whereas the white paper is written for any interested party, the executive summary is written specifically for a decision maker. The objectives are to provide the key points about the problem/opportunity, to review the tradeoffs associated with the recommended policy, and to explain why the recommendation is preferable to other possible courses of action. The executive summary should include arguments and evidence at a high level.
3. The structure of the executive summary should lead the reader through the problem and recommendation in a logical way. The executive summary should be detailed enough to allow the reader to understand the key points of the white paper and should anticipate questions from an audience.

Presentation

All teams will formally present their white paper to a panel of judges during the preliminary round. In particular:

1. All team members must participate in the presentation. Teams should deliver their prepared presentation professionally and demonstrate command of the issues and their analysis during the question-and-answer session with the judges.
2. Each team will have a strict limit of 10 minutes for their prepared presentation. Accordingly, the team likely cannot present the entire content of the white paper and will have to decide what to include. Teams should keep in mind that the judges

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will have received their executive summary and white paper prior to the presentation.

3. The purpose of the presentation is to summarize the team's analysis of the issue, the policy options considered, the tradeoffs associated with each, and the reasoning behind the specific recommendation.
4. The presentation should include a brief review of a practicable implementation process should the policy be adopted.
5. Teams should prepare a slide deck (PowerPoint), which makes effective use of visual aids (e.g., graphs, tables, diagrams, visual points). The slides should not include an overabundance of words.
6. Immediately following the prepared presentation, the judges will ask questions about the executive summary, the white paper, and the presentation. Judges can also ask questions on any topic they feel is appropriate regarding the issue at hand. The question-and-answer period will be 5 minutes for the preliminary round and 10 minutes for the final round.

AI Policy

You are responsible for the accuracy and originality of the ideas, language, and content of the work you submit. At Lake Forest College, we foster the development of creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills that often extend beyond the capabilities of AI. Relying on AI technology may impede your capacity for intellectual engagement and innovative thought. Furthermore, AI-generated content may be inaccurate, incomplete, or pose other challenges.

Consequently, the written work you submit and the text of your presentation should express your own ideas in your own words, with proper citation for any language or ideas that are not your own. In no case should you ask an AI to write x words on y topic and submit that work, or a revised version of that work, as your own. Work which appears to be AI-generated will result in disqualification from the Challenge and, for students in PPCY 200, a referral to the Academic Honesty Judicial Board.

Although AI cannot

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If you have any questions about whether a particular use of AI is permitted, please contact the coordinator of the Public Policy Analysis Challenge.

Judging Criteria

The judges will focus on the quality of the team's analysis and presentation, how well the team supports its recommendation, and the team's overall command of the subject it has chosen to address.

Teams should familiarize themselves with the scoring rubrics for the preliminary and final rounds and the AI policy.

Progressing to the Finals

Based on the scoring rubric, the judges of the preliminary round will select three teams that will advance to the final round of the competition. After scoring the executive summaries and presentations, the preliminary round judges will conduct a quality check of the white papers for the teams with the top three combined scores to ensure that these three teams' white papers substantially satisfy the white paper guidelines as laid out in the final round scoring rubric and do not appear to be AI-generated. If the preliminary judging panel agrees that the white paper for any team does not meet these requirements, that team will be disqualified, and the preliminary judges will evaluate the white paper for the next highest scoring team.

The coordinator of the Public Policy Analysis Challenge will forward the white papers and executive summaries of the three teams selected by the preliminary round judges to the judges for the final round. These three teams will then present their white papers to the final round judges.

Prize Pool

The prize pool is \$10,000. Typically, when there are no ties, the prizes are distributed as follows:

- x First place team: \$5000 (split evenly among all team members)
- x Second place team: \$3000 (split evenly among all team members)
- x Third place team: \$2000 (split evenly among all team members)

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Permission to Share Submitted Materials and Presentation Recordings

Participants in the Public Policy Analysis Challenge agree that their submitted materials can be shared with judges and with current and future Lake Forest College students, staff, and faculty,