2020 PPC/ISRC
Student Survey Results

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Sample Size

226 Potential Participants from Center of Advancement List

3+ Months Working

175 Potential Participants

Pool Emailed

33 Participants Responded

1+ Minute Completion

Complete Half of Survey

Final Sample

27 Quantitative

33 Qualitative
Student Status

Are you a previous or current student at the Public Policy Center or Iowa Social Science Research Center?

2/3 of the sample were previous students
Student Role

What role do/did you have at the Public Policy Center or Iowa Social Science Research Center?

60% of the sample were research assistants at the PPC.
What degree were you pursuing during your time at the Public Policy Center or Iowa Social Science Research Center?

50% of the sample were pursuing an undergraduate degree.
Compensation

Were you paid for your work at the Public Policy Center or Iowa Social Science Research Center (Ex. hourly rate, stipend, scholarship)?

All of the sample were paid
Current Occupation or Academic Standing

Please tell us about your current occupation or academic standing.

2/3 of the sample are still in research.
Race or Ethnicity

How do you racially or ethnically identify?

Most of the sample were white/Caucasian
What is your gender identity?

2/3 of the sample were female
Sexual Orientation

Do you identify as being lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, or asexual?

2/10 of the sample were lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, or asexual

- LGBQA
- Not LGBQA
- Sexual orientation not specified
Survey Results
Satisfaction with Experience

How would you rate your satisfaction with the experience you had working or doing research at the Public Policy Center or Iowa Social Science Research Center?

- Satisfied, 89%
- Somewhat Satisfied, 11%
Completed Activities

Considering only your work at the Public Policy Center or Iowa Social Science Research Center, please select the activities you completed.

- Was a member of research team
- Worked on interested projects
- Collaborated with faculty to improve project
- Expanded experience with under-served populations
- Did projects outside of normal job duties
- Published research
- Presented at conference
- Received financial benefits (e.g. award, grants)
- Contributed to grant writing
- Led research team
Wanted to Complete Activities

Please select the opportunities that you would have liked/would like to complete if they were available to you.

- Contribute to grant writing
- Publish research
- Lead research team
- Receive financial benefits (e.g. award, grants)
- Present at conference
- Expand experience with under-served populations
- Do projects outside of normal job duties
- Collaborate with faculty to improve project
- Be a member of research team
- Work on interested projects
Training

The Public Policy Center or Iowa Social Science Research Center...

- Prepared me to complete tasks: Agree
- Ensured I understood how my role fit into project: Agree
- Taught research methodology: Agree
- Taught human subject protocols: Agree

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90%

Agree  Neither agree nor disagree  Disagree
My initial interest in working at the Iowa Social Science Research Center or Public Policy Center was because I wanted to...

- Gain research experience
- Work closely with faculty or research staff
- Make money
- Gain experience in field of interest
- Build professional network
- Network with peers
Importance of Work

How important do you feel your work was to fulfilling the broader missions at the Public Policy Center or Iowa Social Science Research Center?

- Very important, 33%
- Somewhat important, 19%
- Unsure of importance, 11%
- Important, 37%
My work at the Public Policy Center or Iowa Social Science Research Center was full of meaning and purpose.
Work Intellectually Challenging and Engaging

My work at the Public Policy Center or Iowa Social Science Research Center was consistently intellectually challenging and engaging.

- Agree, 75%
- Neither agree nor disagree, 15%
- Disagree, 7%
Consideration for Job or Academic Opportunity

Do you believe that your exposure to research through the Public Policy Center or Iowa Social Science Research Center helped you to be considered for a job or academic opportunity?

Yes, 70%

Not Sure, 30%
Sense of Belonging

During my time at the Public Policy Center or Iowa Social Science Research Center I felt a sense of belonging.
Celebrate Work and Accomplishments

During my time at the Public Policy Center or Iowa Social Science Research Center my work and accomplishments were recognized through praise, events (e.g. pizza parties) or awards.
**Life Enhancement**

My experience at the Public Policy Center or Iowa Social Science Research Center enhanced my life in the following ways:

- Earned references from supervisors
- Gained experience for related work
- Increase confidence in work or school
- Network with peers
- Socialize with peers
- Collaborate with peers
- Contribute more to class discussions
Life Enhancement

Would you recommend working at the Iowa Social Science Research Center or Public Policy Center to a friend?
Mentoring: Had Mentor

Did you feel that you had a person you considered a mentor (either formal or informal) at the Public Policy Center or Iowa Social Science Research Center who shared their professional knowledge, facilitated networking, provided training, and provided career guidance?

- Mentor, 74%
- No mentor, 26%
Mentoring: Mentor Position

What type of person was your primary mentor at the Public Policy Center or Iowa Social Science Research Center?

- Faculty member, 70%
- Supervisor, 30%
Mentoring: Mentorship Rating

How would you rate the mentoring you received from this person at the Public Policy Center or Iowa Social Science Research Center?

- Excellent, 75%
- Very good, 25%
- Good, 5%
High Impact Jobs (Iowa Grow vs. PPC/ISRC)

My job at the Public Policy Center or Iowa Social Science Center has done or improved the following...

- Conflict negotiation skills
- Learn about career options
- Improve writing skills
- Make connections between work and life
- Improve time management skills
- Improve verbal communication skills
- Improve critical thinking skills
- Prepare for full-time employment
- Find connections between job and school
Qualitative Responses: Mentoring

Please share any specific ways in which your mentor(s) helped you plan to achieve your career goals, learn skills to succeed in school or in your career, network with other students or professionals, assess your skills and abilities, or achieve your personal goals.

Leadership through supervision or specific traits (N=14)

Favorable Supervision Style (N=5)
- Accountability
- Autonomy
- Encouragement to seek new research opportunities
- Assistance with exploring new projects or work field

Positive Leadership Traits (N=9)
- Open to questions
- Supportive
- Encouraging
- Patient
- Authentic
- Invested in student success
- Helpful
- Responsive
- Flexible with student schedule
Qualitative Responses: Mentoring

Increased student engagement and success (N=20)

Advice or Guidance (N=8)
- Graduate school
- Marketing skills
- Research tasks
- Academic coursework
- Reaching career goals

Academics (N=5)
- Writing letters of recommendation
- Assisting with applications
- Becoming committee member

Increased Student Involvement (N=4)
- Contributing to research projects
- Encouragement to attend national meetings

Support Student Needs (N=3)
- Emotional needs
- Learn about student life
- Increase student confidence and passion
Qualitative Responses: Mentoring

Student growth (N=12)

• New personal or research skills
• Reached academic or career goals
• Increased knowledge of certain population
• Broadened professional network
Qualitative Responses: Suggestions (N=18)

What suggestions do you have to improve the experience of students who work or do research?

Increase Student Involvement (N=8)
• Increase undergraduate involvement in research
• Expand research experience for graduate students
• Assist students with learning new skills
• Start a summer research institute
• Pay students to take on projects outside of normal job duties

Improve Specific Job Aspects (N=6)
• Create standards for ISRC staff mentorship and supervision
• Create model for student-to-student mentorship
• Gather feedback from students more frequently and anonymously
• Be more flexible with work schedules
• Have students conduct more work remotely

Strengthen Connections (N=4)
• Between faculty and students
• Between students who work at the PPC and ISRC
Desire for Communication

Would you like to be kept up-to-date about Public Policy Center or Iowa Social Science Research Center news and events?

Yes, 59%

No, 41%
Which of the following communication methods would you prefer to learn about Public Policy Center or Iowa Social Science Research Center events and activities?
Key Findings and Recommendations
Key Findings

1. Student experiences at the Public Policy Center are overwhelmingly positive.

2. Students were highly interested in completing tasks associated with grant writing, publishing research, and leading research projects.

3. A majority of students chose the Public Policy Center for employment at least partially because they wanted to expand their research experience.

4. Most students feel their work is full of purpose, intellectually stimulating, and important to the Public Policy Center.
Key Findings

4. A substantial number of students do not feel they belong at the Public Policy Center (15%)
5. A significant minority of students do not consider the training they received from the Public Policy Center on human subject research or research methodology to be adequate (~20%)
6. For the 3 out of 4 of students who had a mentor at the Public Policy Center, their mentorship experience was overwhelmingly positive.
Recommendations

1. Increase student engagement with desired tasks (e.g. grant writing) by providing opportunities for them to give project input, learn new skills, and take part in decision-making scenarios.

2. Highlight the potential for gaining research experience while increasing advertising for Public Policy Center positions.

3. Remind students through weekly meetings, praise, and accomplishment recognition that their work is worthwhile and critical to the success of the Public Policy Center.

4. Increase connections among students and between students and faculty.
5. Improve training on human subject and research methodology by helping students to realize how their work fits into these topics and offering opportunities for them to learn additional information.

6. Create formal mentorship among students and between students and faculty.

7. Expand opportunities for undergraduate students to become involved with research in their daily work, or through activities taking place outside of the school year (e.g. summer research institute).

8. Institute a yearly student survey.