Department: Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy

Supervising Faculty Member: Eric Patashnik

Specialization: Public policy

Research Focus: Professor Patashnik is currently writing a book on the politics of evidence-based medicine. A key goal of the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) is to learn what medical treatments work best for different patients, so as to improve health care quality and reduce costs. This initiative is politically controversial – because some fear it will lead to the rationing of medical services. The book project seeks to illuminate the politics surrounding this initiative through case studies, public opinion surveys, and interviews with policymakers.

Job Description: Provide research assistance for Professor Patashnik’s book: 1) Study the role of the U.S. Congress and the executive branch in the implementation of health care reform; 2) Track and summarize media coverage of public policy issues; 3) Investigate the activities of medical societies, drug companies, and patient advocacy groups; 4) Provide background research for case studies; Maintain a bibliography of relevant books, articles, and documents.

Required Skills/Knowledge: Good organizational and writing skills. The ability to produce tables and graphs would be a plus. Student should have a working knowledge of Microsoft Word. Cover letter should focus on student’s background and interest in public policy and/or health care. Prefer students who have declared or intend to declare major or minor in public policy, sociology, government, or history.

Required Courses: Any introductory course on public policy or American government/politics

Training: None

What You Will Learn: Through this research-work opportunity, you will: 1) become familiar with both the substance and the politics of the Obama Administration’s health reform agenda; 2) gain an understanding of the role that different institutional actors (politicians, doctors, drug companies, etc.) play in health reform debates; and 3) Gain skill in researching public policy issues.

Suggested Reading:

Shannon Brownlee, Overtreated