Purpose of the Lab
The purpose of Education Consulting Lab is to help school districts, charter school networks, and other educational organizations devise processes and policies in pursuit of their strategic and educational goals. The experiential learning class is an opportunity for students to hone consulting, marketing, organizational design, HR, and data analytical skills, while giving back to the community. Working closely with the instructors, teams of 3-5 students work with senior administrators at the client organizations to agree upon project scope, objectives, and analytical approaches. Student teams work independently to conduct research, data analysis, and interviews (as appropriate). At the end of the quarter, teams present their findings and recommendations to senior leaders at the schools and organizations.

Clients and projects for spring 2020

- **LEAD Public Schools**, a charter network in Nashville (Adrienne Useted, Chief Financial Officer)
  - **Topic**: LEAD is interested in expanding into elementary schools that would be feeder schools to four middle-school campuses; LEAD is also considering offering Pre-K services. The team will examine best practices at other charters and will help develop a financial model and a landscape analysis.
  - **Question**: What must be true for LEAD to successfully expand its impact by operating elementary and Pre-K level schools?

- **Chicago Public Schools** (Lauren Feldman, Director of Strategy)
  - **Topic**: CPS is looking to create a world-class knowledge management system and set of practices to ensure that all employees can benefit from the learnings of those who came before them. The team will examine best practices at other large school districts and will develop a set of recommendations and an implementation plan.
  - **Question**: How can CPS effectively manage institutional knowledge over time, particularly as talent turns over?

- **Erie Elementary Charter School**, a Chicago charter school (Jaclyn Fierro, Director of Development)
  - **Topic**: EECS is interested in collaborating with community services organizations to help parents and families address challenges at home that impact in-class behavior and outcomes. The team will conduct an analysis of family needs and community supports and will develop a strategy for EECS teachers and staff to connect families with community organizations.
  - **Question**: How can EECS collaborate with community groups to provide better holistic wrap-around services (counseling, therapy, health services, etc.) for families, resulting in increased parent/family involvement and reduced on-site behavioral issues?
Rhythm of the class
- The class has a dedicated class time and classroom: Monday evenings 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm in KGH 2410.
- Some Mondays we will have formal class meetings; other Mondays we will not meet formally. On Mondays when there is no formal class meeting, the room will be available should teams wish to use the room and the time for working on their projects. By prior arrangement, on any Monday evening when teams choose to meet, an instructor is available to join the teams to provide feedback and guidance.
- The teams will arrange conference-call meetings with the clients on a mutually agreed upon schedule.
- The teams will meet onsite with the client at least twice during the quarter and possibly more often. The two required onsite meetings will consist of one near the beginning of the quarter (to meet members of the client’s team and to gain familiarity with the context for the project) and one near the end of the quarter (to make the final presentation to the school’s leadership). For clients not located in the Chicago area, Skype meetings may replace onsite meetings.

Student grades
There are four components to each student’s grade:
- Instructors’ assessment of the quality of the deliverables and the student’s contribution to the deliverables
  - Four assignments (see calendar)
  - Secondary research related to the problem of client focus
  - A final presentation to the client
  - Client deliverables as required to successfully fulfill project requirements (e.g. report, slide deck, spreadsheet, etc.)
- Class participation
- Peer evaluation
- Client evaluation

Calendar
We have access to the classroom 6:30 pm until 9:30 pm every Monday. On Mondays when we meet formally, we will meet from 6:30 pm until we have finished business for the evening. Attendance at all formal class meetings is mandatory.

Monday, March 30, 2020 by 4:00 pm (CT) – Assignment #1
- Please email both instructors the following:
  1) A draft scope of work processes, expectations and deliverables for your project, and;
  2) A one-page introduction of your team members (for each team member, a few bullets of relevant information from your resumes)

Monday, March 30, 2020 – No formal class meeting
- Teams will meet with instructor(s) April 1-3, 2020 to review draft scope of work and address project-specific questions. Instructors will provide additional guidance on scheduling before the start of the Spring Quarter.
Monday, April 6, 2020, 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm
- Consulting 101 – Pranav Kothari, Founder & CEO, Revolution Impact, LLC; former Managing Director, Mission Measurement, LLC; and Adjunct Lecturer of Social Impact
- The K-12 Education Landscape in the U.S. – Therese McGuire, Professor of Strategy
- Introductions and plans for the quarter
- Teams meet 1-on-1 with their clients to agree upon:
  - Processes
  - Expectations
  - Deliverables and timeline
  - Plan for regular communications and schedule of check-in meetings
  - During the time with your client, you will also revise the draft scope of work you developed for Assignment #1

Thursday, April 9, 2020 by 4:00 pm (CT) – Assignment #2
- Please email both instructors the following:
  1) One paragraph on the context and problem of focus for your project
  2) Questions for secondary research
  3) A work plan for the quarter
  4) A rough, preliminary draft outline for your final report
  5) Challenges you are facing with the project and identification of high-risk points along the work plan

Monday, April 13, 2020, 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm
- We will welcome three guest visitors with experience consulting in the education sector
- One guest visitor will be assigned to each team for a problem-solving session

Monday, April 20, 2020 – No formal class meeting
- Classroom available 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm for team working-session

Monday, April 27, 2020 – No formal class meeting
- Classroom available 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm for team working-session

Monday May 4, 2020 by 4:00 pm (CT) – Assignment #3
1) For instructors only: Please prepare a skeleton slide deck of 6-10 slides. The skeleton slide deck should consist of a series of slides that are blank except for the title or a lead sentence. Each slide should present one argument in the arc of the story of your project. If, in the course of your analysis, the arguments prove to be true, they will be the building blocks of a convincing story for the final deliverable. The purpose of this part of the assignment is to ensure that your team is coalescing around a compelling deliverable for your client. (Note: you should not consider the skeleton slide deck as being set in stone. It will almost surely change before we are done.) Please email your skeleton slide deck to both instructors by 4:00 pm on Monday, May 4, 2020.
2) For classroom discussion: Develop a brief document that covers the following topics: a) your client problem statement, revised as needed, b) what you have done so far, c) what you have learned so far about the issue of focus, d) what you are planning to do next, and e) what is working well and what is presenting a challenge. There is no need to email anything in advance of class; this document will form the basis for your cross-team problem-solving session.
Monday, May 4, 2020, 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm
- Cross-team problem-solving session
  - Teams will come to class with questions and challenges they face
  - Team members from other teams will help problem solve
- Feedback from the instructors on your skeleton slide decks

Monday, May 11, 2020 – No formal class meeting
- Classroom available 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm for team working-session

Monday, May 18 – No formal class meeting
- Classroom available 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm for team working-session

Monday, May 25 – Memorial Day Holiday (no class; we will not meet on the make-up Friday)

Monday, June 1, 2020 by 4:00 pm CT – Assignment #4
- Prepare a presentation for your classmates that conveys the client question, findings and recommendations of your project, and lessons learned along the way about the issue, the client, and the field more broadly (the “ah ha!” moments). You may draw elements of this assignment from your final client presentation, but you should emphasize your team’s insights from the project about the client and the field and you should share insights about what it takes to provide high-caliber services to educational and nonprofit organizations. As you prepare, bear in mind that you will have only 20 minutes for your presentation and any Q&A. Please email your presentation to both instructors by 4:00 pm on Monday, June 1, 2020.

Monday, June 1, 2020, 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm
- Course and peer evaluations
- Brief presentations of the findings, recommendations and, especially, lessons learned for each project based on assignment #4
  - Presentations, one by each team
  - 20 minutes devoted to each project including Q&A and discussion

May 26 – June 5, 2020: Presentations during work hours at clients’ offices*

*Teams will work with their clients early in the quarter to schedule these final presentations. Please coordinate with the instructors as well.