Name: Mojan S. Ahmadi (Other: Labor)
Title: Best Practices between Career Centers and Employers
Abstract: Underemployment has arguably become a growing concern among college graduates in the United States since the 1970’s. Contributing factors for underemployment are debated by scholars, yet universities struggle to provide employment prospects that are commensurate to students’ academic skill levels. Using career centers as the primary agent of change, this project will identify the most prevalent relationships and strategies exercised toward the eventual provision of employment opportunities for students and graduates. Follow-up research explores whether employers' financial participation in career center activities affects interactions or re-characterizes the intensity of their relationships. A one-time cross sectional analysis using national career center data will ascertain emerging patterns and allow us to identify potential benefit or harm in career center-employer relations. Findings are likely to suggest areas for future improvement for both actors. Moreover, this capstone strives to foster dialogue and efforts that will ultimately alleviate underemployment among university graduates.

Name: Bryan Austin (Other: Labor)
Title: Union Solidarity verses Union Democracy: Why Private Sector Unions are struggling to survive in the United States
Abstract: According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the private sector union membership rate fell to 6.6% in the United States in 2014. This paper will briefly review the history of labor laws that have affected the Labor movement in general and the union movement specifically in the United States since the passage of the National Labor Relation Act in 1935. My research will demonstrate that the familiar rallying calls of solidarity and union democracy do not work well together and may actually be contributing to the decline in union participation as played out through the latest collective bargaining agreement (CBA) between The Boeing Company and the IAMAW. The objective of this paper is to examine the constitution structure of the top ten United States unions [based on membership] to better understand how they play a major factor in a union’s ability to recruit new members through membership drives and or preserve current membership through support and collective bargaining.

Name: Kelly Berg (Other: Foreign policy)
Title: Democracy, Strategic Interests, and U.S. Foreign Policy in the Arab World: A Multiple Case Study of Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan & Saudi Arabia
Abstract: The purpose of this research is to examine the question, “how do democracy and strategic interests shape U.S. Foreign Policy towards the Arab world?” In order to explore this hypothesis, an inductive multiple case study of Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia was performed. These four
Arab nations were chosen due to their vastly different political stances and relationships with the U.S., both historically and currently. I argue that the prioritization of various strategic interests repeatedly trumps the U.S.’ desire for democracy within the context of U.S. foreign policy in the Arab world, and that democracy is only pursued when it serves our desire for stability and hegemony throughout the region. Examining Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia concretely demonstrates that that political stability in the region, resistance to terrorism and unrest, the success of Israel and peace between Palestine and Israel, and economic gains through free trade agreements, oil, and weaponry are the U.S.’s key priorities. The results of this study will contribute to the existing literature by providing a comprehensive assessment of complex interdependence and political incongruences in U.S. foreign policy in and towards the Arab world.

Name: Megan Conaway (Environment)

Title: Environmental Advocacy within Non-Governmental Organizations

Abstract: This case study develops an analytical perspective that emphasizes configurations and trade-offs of the non-governmental organization (NGO), the Puget Sound Sage. The Puget Sound Sage is a local organization whose mission is to “build communities where all families thrive.” They identify their process as working towards more equitable and sustainable objectives through research, policy initiatives, and community engagement.

Further, this case study will provide analytical observations as to how an NGO’s organizational structure affects their relations (strategic interactions) and their activities. There are numerous responses to climate change, and varying levels of intervention (local, national, and global). In addition, NGOs engage in a variety of issues. Researchers identify non-governmental organizations as participants in political arenas and in closing gaps in environmental initiatives. Although not highly generalizable, the purpose of this case study is to better understand how non-governmental organizations assess climate change in their advocacy.

Name: Tosin Dada (Health)

Title: Why can’t I have an Orange? Public-Private sector policy and fresh produce production in Nigeria

Abstract: It is widely believed that healthy diets rich in fruits and vegetables (F&Vs) offer significant benefits for people’s well-being. This is based on the tenet that a nourishing diet must contain varieties from several food groups. Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa but has one of the highest levels of micronutrient malnutrition in the world, which could be partly attributed to inadequate consumption of F&Vs. The food consumption pattern is primarily caloric based; people rely mainly on inexpensive staples to meet daily energy requirement. With the assumption that consumption of F&Vs increases with availability, people should benefit nutritionally from increased production of F&Vs.

Although agricultural yield has increased in recent years, the increase is mainly for staple foods, which are primarily starchy cereals and tuber crops. Farmers have not been motivated to grow more F&Vs due to lack of economic incentives. Production is a function of demand, which is influenced by the dynamics of private sector value chain. This project analyzed the effect of public-private sector policies on production of F&Vs in Ogun State, Nigeria with main focus on land, seed, and safety policies within advocacy coalition framework. Washington State institutional policies on land, seed and safety with respect to F&Vs production were reviewed for insights on modern practices. It is anticipated that the
outcome of this study would be instrumental in formulating generalizable assumptions that could facilitate strategic alliance among the stakeholders, and to provide information for evidence-based decisions to address insufficient supply of F&Vs in Nigeria.

Name: David Doyle (Other: Technology)
Title: Open Government Data: an analysis of the potential impacts of an Open Data law for Washington State
Abstract: Open Data is a developing movement that encourages governments to open up as much of their data as possible, making it freely available and machine-readable, in order to promote and facilitate governmental transparency and accountability, increased civic engagement and economic growth. The purpose of this study is to perform a policy analysis on the possible implications of a proposed Open Data law for Washington State. Such a bill was submitted to the Washington State Legislature (House Bill 2202) in the 2013-2014 biennial legislative session, but failed to become law and to date has not been resubmitted in the 2015-2016 biennial legislative session. To perform the analysis, existing data from the HB 2202 bill proposal will be examined, including testimony by the key supporters and opponents of an Open Data law for Washington State. Other secondary data will be gathered regarding the implementation of Open Data laws in other US States, and their outcomes to date. These data can also provide insights into possible barriers to the successful passing and implementation of an Open Data law for Washington State in the future.

Name: Eritrea Habtemariam (Social/social justice)
Title: Perceptions of Crime and Policing: A case study of Ethiopian and Eritrean Immigrants in Seattle
Abstract: Despite a fast growing immigrant population, public opinion research on police perceptions rarely highlights the sentiments of immigrant minority groups. Since negative perceptions of the police can ultimately undermine their ability to enforce the law, this raises particular concern for law enforcement agencies in immigrant destination cities. The purpose of this case study is to examine Ethiopian and Eritrean immigrants’ perceptions of crime and policing in Seattle. Using a mixed method approach, survey and interview data were used to assess perceptions of local police given immigrant specific factors such as: length of time in the United States, English language proficiency, opinions of home country police, and immigration status. Results indicate a favorable opinion of police despite a fear of crime. Underlying differences in immigrant specific factors were found to have minimal effect on overall perceptions of the police and a willingness to report crime. In addition, ideas around racial and ethnic profiling were found to have no relationship on perceptions of police behavior and attitudes.

Name: Megan M. Hammond (Social/social justice)
Title: An Exploration of the Relationship between Perceived Social Support and Academic Success in Former Washington State Prisoners
Abstract: The literature states the benefits of social support for cognitive and behavioral functioning, personal achievement, academic success, and successful prisoner reentry into the community; however, there are gaps that this research explores and builds on. Beyond welfare or other aid programs, creating policy that incorporates social support into prisoner release planning is still a relatively new and
morphing concept. To explore this, data from 181 participants of the Fresh Start Program (FSP) in Seattle, WA will be analyzed to examine perceived social support in relation to academic performance. The purpose of this research is to employ a social cognitive framework to gain insights into the ways in which a community organization, such as the FSP, might serve as a social network for this target population. This study takes a mixed methods approach and uses both a survey and interviews. Data collected from participants indicates that former inmates with high levels of perceived social support from either a community organization or their personal social network also have greater success in postsecondary education.

Name: Stephanie Hughes (Human rights)
Title: What are the critical indicators of effectiveness of a VGAL? An evaluation of the Snohomish County Volunteer Guardian Ad Litem Program
Abstract: Currently the child welfare system in the United States is experiencing an increasing number of cases of abused and neglected children and a lack of Volunteer Guardian Ad Litems (VGALs) available for each case. A VGAL is a court-appointed special advocate who represents a child’s best interests in dependency cases. The purpose of this study is to address a gap in literature that explores the effectiveness of VGALs by gathering data from the volunteers themselves instead of case outcomes. This study interviews ten VGALs in Snohomish County with the intent to produce a more in-depth picture of what indicators of effectiveness were common to successful volunteers. The potential factors of effectiveness identified in this study are personal development, belief in program, support systems, balance and objectivity, and personal identity. A better understanding of what makes a VGAL effective could lay the groundwork for future quantitative studies, as well as be used to identify areas of strength or weakness for future program improvement and policy.

Name: Cole Jensen (Other: Disability)
Title: The International Symbol of Access: The perception of disability
Abstract: The International Symbol of Access (ISA) is one of the most recognized in the world and for last 45 years has been used to show the boundaries of accessibility. Arguably ISA has become a symbol of disability and not of accessibility. ISA’s unrepresentativeness for all forms of physical disability and mobility impairment suggests that any person using these designated areas of access must also require the use of a mobility assisting device or be subject to a process of validation based on stereotypical assumptions and preconceived notions surrounding disability. Misconceptions regarding categories of disability shape the perceptions and expectations of society about physical disability, which lead to the questioning of whether or not an individual is actually disabled. To understand if the perception of disability is influenced by symbolism, a free-response methodology was used to capture the written responses from a questionnaire with an image of ISA from participants at the University of Washington Bothell.

Name: Adrian Lindekugel (Social/social justice)
Title: Alabama Judicial Override: Is One Greater than Twelve?
Abstract: Currently Alabama is one of three states that allow a judge to sentence a defendant to death despite a jury’s decision of a life sentence in capital murder cases. Alabama is the only state to regularly
exercise its ability to override and has done so 111 times since 1978 after the United States Supreme Court ruled 5-4 in Furman v. Georgia that the death penalty is capricious in nature and thus violates constitutional rights. Critics of the override law say that by making the jury’s decision of life extraneous if deemed fit by a judge, it then takes the decision power from that impartial jury an in the hands of one person. Proponents of the ability to override say that judges are often privy to information that the jury may not have heard. Initially, states that adopted these laws saw their purpose as a "second chance at life" after a death sentence but Alabama has used the override 101 of the 111 times to commute a life sentence decision to death.

With a large income disparity in Alabama and limited funding from the state for defendants to be afforded an adequate public defender, opponents of the current system argue that the lack of competent representation is a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment with regard to a guaranty of due process. With an African-American population 14% higher than the national average, the current system is potentially setting itself up for disproportionate sentencing.

This case study looks to find these disproportionalities particularly with regard to race by analyzing the override decisions. Additionally this study looks at sentencing on and off election years in order to determine potential ebbs and flows of the override application during years of Alabama’s partisan judicial elections as elected officials may potentially need to back up "tough on crime" campaigns.

Name: Ismaila Maidadi (Education)

Title: Beyond access and thinking about success: In search of potential policy-driven imbalance in success and completion rate for underrepresented minority students in STEM and high demand majors.

Abstract: This paper considers how institutional policies and practices may be impacting the experiences and outcomes of under-represented minorities (URM) (URM for the purpose of this paper is defined as persons of African American, Hispanic American, and Native American racial/ethnic descent). Access to higher education in Washington State public institutions has reached an unprecedented level; completion rate for URM in STEM and high demand (HD) degrees, however, lag behind other groups nationwide. Job growth is increasing in the STEM fields faster than in other fields and, according to the US Census bureau, URM are the fastest growing ethnicities nationwide. As job growth for STEM and HD degrees graduates increases, our policies need to support the reality that an innovative economy in the future will require leveraging a diverse workforce. This study uses an explanatory mixed methods approach to survey Washington State’s higher education public institutions outcomes for underrepresented college students regarding access and completion of STEM and HD majors. The quantitative design uses longitudinal data from academic year 2007/08 to 2012/13 from public higher education institutions in Washington State to determine URM’s level of access and success; the qualitative case-study design focuses on the 2007/08 cohort of first time full time college goers admitted at the three campuses of the University of Washington, contrasts their actual majors versus their intended majors, and attempts to analyze how policies and practices may have affected their outcomes.

Name: Agazit N Ocbazgi (Other: Foriegn Policy)

Title: Opinion Survey of the Eritrean Diaspora in the United States: Perceptions of the United States and Eritrean Relationship
Abstract: The relationship between the United States and Eritrea is difficult and filled with contention. Since the Cold War and well before its sovereignty was considered or granted, Eritrea was perceived by western powers as a country to accommodate its interests. This as well as its relationship with its preferred ally Ethiopia, has dictated the majority of US responses related to Eritrea. Despite Eritrea being in a strategic location and the United States having an interest in the Horn because of terrorism there are numerous reasons why these two countries have struggled to corroborate. Bad policy decisions, inaccurate media representation and limited interpersonal skills due to cultural differences have also contributed to straining US Eritrean relations.

Although the relationship between Eritrea and the United States can play a significant role in the Horn of Africa, there is much to be known from the people themselves as to how this can happen. Aside from what is presented from governmental factions, organizations, historical records, media outlets and in a handful of depth individual interviews, no other form of research on the present day diaspora has been done. There is no survey research that has been done to understand the ambiguity and misrepresentation that still occurs. This pilot study was designed to attain information from the Eritrean diaspora in the United States. This exploratory study will provide information about what the diaspora thinks. This study will shed light as to what the diaspora considers imperative to the relationship between these two countries.

Name: Heidi Schauble (Education)
Title: Public School Choice and Supplemental Education Services: Exploring K-12 Education Reforms in Washington State
Abstract: The purpose of this pilot study is to explore what providers are available in the Supplemental Education Service and Public School Choice marketplace, and what factors contribute toward a potential SES providers’ decision whether or not to accept federal funding. In 2014, Washington State lost its No Child Left Behind waiver and adopted education incentives and standards in accordance with Race to The Top. As a result, 20% of federal Title I funding that was previously allocated to Title I public schools must be reallocated toward implementing Public School Choice and Supplemental Education Services. A mixed method study was conducted to answer the research question. Quantitative data was collected and analyzed on the demographic information of available SES and PSC providers. Interviews with potential providers were conducted and analyzed through cost benefit analysis. This study adds to current literature on Supplemental Education Services and the theories driving current federal education reforms, exploring the feasibility and implications of these two policies in Washington State. It will position these two policies within the context of national trends in education reforms and examine the level of choice, diversity, and competition within the SES and PSC market.

Name: Elizabeth Theaker (Social/social justice)
Abstract: Discourse surrounding prevention of child sexual abuse relies heavily on the frameworks of secondary and tertiary prevention, both of which fail to incorporate research and therapeutic intervention potential of non-offending pedophiles. The purpose of this study was to examine the existing frameworks, determine where the pedophile is situated in the discourse, and examine the
potential in reframing primary prevention to include the non-offending pedophile. To identify the terminology, themes, and overall sentiments that emerged in public response to Luke Malone’s This American Life segment titled “Help Wanted,” a Content Analysis of over 750 public comments was conducted. Analysis of these comments revealed the presence of sentiments not traditionally associated with pedophilia, including sympathy and the critical distinction between the terms “pedophile” and “child molester.” Results suggest that the non-offending pedophile may eventually make a lateral move on Ingram’s matrix of social construction, moving him or her away from the negative status of deviant and toward the more positive status of dependent. This study may help policymakers and researchers anticipate possible public response to future legislation and research that incorporates the non-offending pedophile as an ally in the fight against child sexual abuse.

Name: Melissa K. Watkinson (Environment)

Title: Tribal Capacity for Climate Change Adaptation: Identifying the Impact of Fractionated Land for a Coastal Community

Abstract: Coastal Washington tribes are experiencing loss of land due to sea level rise, flooding, and land erosion as a result of global climate change. However, acquiring fractionated land through the Land Buy Back program may build the capacity for tribal governments to make decisions on how to adapt to the loss of land. A case study analyzed how the Quinault Indian Nation could improve their capacity to adapt to climate change by acquiring fractionated land on the reservation. Using secondary spatial data, a spatial analysis was conducted to identify the extent to which available suitable land on the Quinault reservation, determined as areas not vulnerable to climate change and that lie outside of community identified cultural lands, are fractionated. An additional analysis was conducted to identify the most cost-effective potential evacuation route. Lastly, this study interviewed experts in the Quinault community to find how the results of the spatial analyses can enable the Quinault tribe to make decisions about climate change adaptation. Acquiring fractionated land can increase the adaptive capacity for tribes impacted by climate change. Additional funding and similar programs should further be made available to tribes that have fractionated land on their reservations and who are impacted by climate change.