Duke’s Sanford School of Public Policy serves us all by preparing the next generation of smart, ethical leaders to solve the greatest policy challenges of today and tomorrow. Increasing resources for financial aid is essential to fulfilling that mission.

Sanford School founder and former Duke President Terry Sanford urged students to set “outrageous ambitions” and work diligently to achieve them. Our bright, motivated students strive to do just that by seeking solutions to problems that include health care, education, environment and energy, and international development.

But pursuing these passions comes with a price: Many of the professional opportunities in the policy sector pay modestly at best. To encourage top students to pursue professions where they take on complex public policy challenges, we must offer resources that will make their Sanford School experience both superlative and affordable.

Philanthropic support during our campaign will make all the difference in bringing outstanding students at the undergraduate and graduate levels to Duke and providing them with the foundation necessary to become effective public policy leaders. By investing in Sanford’s talented students, you can help them move the world forward.
Undergraduate Scholarships

The best policy solutions aren’t developed in a vacuum. The same is true of the best policy students. The chance to interact in the classroom with peers who represent a diversity of opinions and backgrounds is a hallmark of the Sanford educational experience.

That’s why Duke’s need-blind admissions policy is particularly important to ensuring the excellence of our undergraduate public policy programs. Our pledge to meet 100 percent of admitted U.S. students’ demonstrated need provides the most promising applicants access to a Sanford education. It also helps ensure that our classrooms are filled with rich and lively debate.

Following through on our undergraduate financial aid commitment carries a significant and ever-increasing cost. New endowments created during the Duke Forward campaign will help us keep our doors open to students from all financial circumstances and will make an enduring difference in the lives of individual students and their families.

Your gift of $100,000 or more can create an unrestricted scholarship that helps exceptional students reach their potential.

Your gift of $250,000 or more can create a restricted scholarship endowment, such as a fund that gives preference to students pursuing a particular field of study, like media or education policy.

THE KEY TO SAYING “YES” TO OPPORTUNITY

“I don’t think I can afford to take it.” That was one of Lauren Hendricks’ first thoughts when she was offered a place in the White House’s prestigious—but unpaid—summer internship program. “My mother is a teacher, and my father died shortly before I started college,” the South Carolina native explains. “I wouldn’t be here at Duke at all without financial aid.”

Fortunately, Lauren was able to obtain enough financial assistance to cover the basic living expenses associated with a summer in Washington, D.C., in part through internship funding provided by the Sanford School. She spent the summer working in Vice President Joe Biden’s office, gaining a new perspective on the legislative process and conducting research related to public safety, public works, and domestic violence.

“Internships have been such a valuable part of my time at Sanford,” says Lauren, who previously interned at CNN as a production assistant and completed a DukeEngage project with a human rights organization in South Africa. “They help you understand why policy solutions that sound so great in a textbook don’t always work on the ground. They also help you apply the skills you’ve learned in class in a way that really can make a difference.”
Graduate Fellowships

Our professional students will go far—often very far. Our master’s programs in public policy and international development policy help smart, passionate students develop the foundation of skills they need to become leaders in their fields. Their studies become a launching pad for them to make a difference in areas as wide-ranging as energy, immigration policy, child development, national security, and global health.

But to enroll the very best master’s students, we must offer funding packages competitive with other top public policy schools. Many of those schools offer to fully fund the educational costs of candidates who demonstrate the greatest potential; the Sanford School currently is unable to make similar offers. Increasing endowment support for our professional degree programs also creates the strongest platform to catapult our students into the field, helping to minimize their debt and maximize their ability to pursue careers where they can have the greatest impact.

YOUR GIFT OF $100,000 OR MORE can establish an unrestricted endowed fellowship to assist some of our most talented graduate students.

YOUR GIFT OF $250,000 OR MORE can create a restricted fellowship endowment, such as a fund that gives preference to graduate students pursuing a particular field of study, like global health or energy and environmental policy.

THE TOOLS TO DIG IN

Master of Public Policy student Kevin Tsay spends his days thinking about creative ways to fund public education. For example, what are some ways public schools could tap into their alumni networks to find additional financial resources? For his master’s project, he’s working with an education-advocacy group in Oakland, California, to evaluate a funding model that ties individual school budgets to student needs rather than total enrollment. For instance, it might cost more to educate a student with a learning disability.

Before enrolling at Sanford, Kevin spent two years with Teach For America at an elementary school in Charlotte. The funding package that the Sanford School offered him was a critical factor in his decision to choose Duke over other top schools that offered him a spot in their programs. Additional financial resources Sanford has provided for professional development and travel have also proved essential to fostering Kevin’s success, enabling him to meet with his clients in Oakland, conduct substantive research, and help establish a new social entrepreneurship effort for public policy students at Duke. “I wouldn’t be able to do the work I have without the level of support I’ve received, both from my professors and financially,” Kevin says.
Summer Stipends

We don’t just encourage our public policy students to get out in the field. We require it. Internships are a vital part of our curriculum at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. They offer an important opportunity for our students to broaden their horizons and apply classroom learning—from statistical analysis to leadership development theories—to an array of real-world concerns.

But many of the most dynamic and prestigious public policy internships are unpaid, especially those with financially constrained government agencies and nonprofits. Many of these organizations also happen to be located in cities with high costs of living or in far-flung regions of the world with significant associated travel expenses.

Philanthropic support for summer internships allows us to provide stipends that help cover travel and basic living expenses for students as they work on issues ranging from child welfare policies to conservation strategies. This critical assistance opens up a world of possibilities for Sanford students, enabling them to focus on the most compelling issues and projects, rather than on how they’ll pay the bills.

YOUR GIFT OF $100,000 OR MORE can establish an endowment to support summer internship stipends for undergraduate and graduate students.

Annual Fund Support

Gifts to the Sanford Annual Fund are pooled with donations from like-minded donors to address the school’s most critical and time-sensitive needs. When you give to the Sanford Annual Fund, the dean can put your gift where it’s needed most, whether that is financial aid grants, research opportunities, or internship support. Your Annual Fund gifts fuel our ability to meet the needs of Sanford’s students and play an important role in advancing all of Sanford’s highest priorities.