



**datatopolicyproject**

**Report for Spring 2019**



# THE DATA TO POLICY PROJECT

## PUBLIC DATA FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD



### ■ EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Data to Policy Project (D2P) seeks to create meaningful learning experiences for students and generate equity and evidence-based policy proposals addressing local community needs. In collaboration with instructors, D2P is integrated into credit-bearing courses where students explore issues like policing and affordable housing in the Denver region. Centered in the Auraria Library, D2P provides planning support to the instructors, identifies, organizes, and cleans data, and provides resources and research workshops to the students throughout the project. The project culminates in a D2P Symposium where students present research posters to their peers, faculty, staff, and community members. By focusing on student-initiated concerns and using real data to try and address them, D2P forms a connection between the courses students take and the communities they live in, increasing its meaning and impact. D2P is also a way for the campus to partner with the community to produce relevant research, establishing mutually beneficial relationships that center equity in policy and practice. D2P's core focus areas are student learning, undergraduate research, digital scholarship, open scholarship, and community partnerships.

## ■ VISION

**Students are empowered as researchers and advocates to create more equitable communities**

## ■ VALUES

**Equity:** Identifying oppressive systems, policies, and people, centering marginalized voices, promoting social justice, and framing the conversation through an intersectional perspective

**Education:** Complicating ideas and expanding methodologies through interdisciplinary collaboration, data literacy, policy literacy, providing students research experiences and developing their scholarly identities

**Civic and Community Engagement:** Building relationships with community organizations and government agencies and combining their perspectives with public data analysis to create more effective policies

## ■ MISSION

- To counter oppressive policies and practices, especially those that disproportionately impact marginalized people
- To advocate for equitable and evidence-based policies that elevate community voices and concerns
- To use higher education's research infrastructure to benefit the community
- To develop a collaborative cycle of research and community engagement
- To analyse and anticipate how policies impact target populations
- To promote public scholarship, transparency, and accountability

D2P's Vision, Mission and Values directly align with the stated values of Auraria Library, Community College of Denver, University of Colorado Denver, Metropolitan State University of Denver, and the Auraria Higher Education Center of equity, inclusivity, diversity, respect, and community.



## ■ ORIGINS OF THE DATA TO POLICY PROJECT

In 2015, students on the Auraria Campus were deeply upset by several high-profile shootings of black people by police that were happening not just on the news, but in our own community. In response to this, a collection of campus leaders organized several conversations with the Auraria Police Department and concerned students to talk about issues of racism and policing. These events were emotionally charged, and throughout the meetings students expressed a desire to be able to advocate for policy change on their own, but said they felt like they didn't know how to do it or where to start. These consequential few weeks, and our students' desire to lead in the efforts to effect real change, led to the creation the Data to Policy Project, an interdisciplinary collaboration where students use real data about policing to identify ways to develop evidence-based-policies to be shared with local law enforcement, lawmakers and other stakeholders to improve equity and public safety. The community response to this initiative has been extremely positive. Since it began, faculty members from multiple institutions and disciplines have volunteered to integrate D2P into their courses, over 150 students have participated, and several community organizations, cities, and law enforcement agencies are now partnering with D2P to share their data and insights, connect with our students, provide feedback on their proposals, and potentially implement new policies and practices.

# PROGRAM SNAPSHOT

## Number of students

Spring 2018 50  
Fall 2018 56

## Number of posters

Spring 2018 24  
Fall 2018 26

## Number of classes

Spring 2018 6  
Fall 2018 6

## Total participating faculty

12

## Number of datasets compiled

Prepped Datasets 10  
Raw Datasets 56

## Symposiums

Fall 2017:  
Pilot with math department  
Spring 2018  
Fall 2018

## Community panel discussions

Spring 2018  
Fall 2018

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

CU Denver School of Public Affairs funding Graduate Research Assistant

Financial support from CU Denver Steam Consortium

Partnership with Research And Creative Activities Symposium

Partnership with Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities office

## PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS



## ■ CORE FOCUS AREAS

### STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Participating in the D2P project gives students an opportunity to gain research experience, explore issues that impact their community, and present their findings to both their peers and their community. D2P is inherently interdisciplinary, exposing students to theories and methods from other disciplines that all attempt to understand a similar issue. This approach increases literacy in new subjects while promoting a contextual understanding of data and policy. The symposium experience allows students to develop their ability to communicate across disciplines and provides practical perspectives from leaders in diverse fields. Participating students have also expressed that the symposium experience helps make the project more meaningful and relevant and has opened opportunities for jobs and internships.



### COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

D2P partners with local community organizations, governments, and nonprofits to identify and frame research questions students can explore. Our goal is to intentionally include community voices, especially from the outset of every semester, so that the research we work on is relevant, context-specific, and in the interest of the community it will impact. Relationships with community partners were initiated through the first two symposiums and we're looking to grow and deepen those relationships to increase community presence in the project. Our goal is to incorporate all three campus institutions and we are actively recruiting faculty whose courses align with the learning outcomes and mission of D2P.

## ■ CORE FOCUS AREAS CONTINUED

### UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

While graduate students are welcome to participate in D2P, research experiences in undergraduate courses are less common and can be especially important for students without the time or opportunity to participate in them outside of their required classes. The project helps undergraduate participants build their own research skills and scholarly identities, and by the end of it students will have created a tangible product that contributes to a personal scholarly body of work. Conducting research on local issues with an opportunity to present to the academic and local community at the symposium also gives undergraduates a forum to establish professional connections with faculty and community partners.

### DIGITAL SCHOLARSHIP

Data literacy, data visualization, and digital media can be vital tools in creating and disseminating scholarly work. D2P provides students opportunities and support to learn these skills in the context of project-based coursework. Over the course of a semester, students will participate in finding and citing data, data cleaning, analysis, visualization, and creating digital media - usually in the form of a research poster - to communicate their research. We also encourage a critical approach to data literacy that questions the objectivity and neutrality of data and situates it in a social and political context.

### OPEN SCHOLARSHIP

Open Scholarship is the practice of making research, educational resources, and research data freely available to the public. The Data to Policy Project supports and participates in open scholarship by promoting the use and publication of open research data in student projects, and encouraging depositing D2P research posters and data into the Auraria Institutional Repository, an Open Access digital collection. Open scholarship also means that communities and organizations that partner with D2P (or anyone in the world) has full and perpetual access to the research it produces and can use it how they want.

## ■ FUTURE GOALS

- Facilitate interdisciplinary collaboration by pairing qualitative and quantitative courses, integrating students from both classes on project teams.
- Increase encouragement/requirement of submitting posters to repository and providing access to the poster repository on the D2P website.
- Expand the D2P program to include all three campus institutions.
- Increase involvement of community partners through outreach to create long-term relationships between D2P and the community, while also gathering feedback and community questions to help direct student research.
- Inclusion of equity frameworks into curriculum to encourage students to consider diversity, inclusion, and marginalization as driving factors of the issues they are investigating.
- Grant application to NSF-IUSE in progress, seeking \$300,000 to support program and associated research as an interdisciplinary STEM course model.

## ■ SPRING 2019 PARTICIPATING COURSES

### **University of Colorado Denver:**

HDFR 3100 - Jennifer Grieving - Adolescent Ecology  
HDFR 4300 - Jennifer Grieving - Families in Later Life  
HDFR 3020 - Jorge Chavez - Black and Latino Children in Families and Schools  
MATH 4779/5779 - Steve Billups - Math Clinic  
MATH 4387/5387 - Joshua French - Applied Regression Analysis  
MATH 4830/5830 - Audrey Hendricks - Applied Statistics  
MATH 5320 - Erin Austin - Introduction to Mathematical Statistics  
MATH 7594 - Steffen Borgwardt - Integer Programming  
PUAD 5008 - Pamela Medina - Evidence-Based Decision-Making  
SOCY 3020 - Edelina Burciaga - Race and Ethnicity in the U.S.  
SEHD - Antwan Jefferson - Graduate Seminar

### **ADDITIONAL PAST AND FUTURE PARTICIPATING COURSES**

#### **Metropolitan State University of Denver:**

GEG 3720 - Sara Jackson Shumate - Global Sustainable Development  
GIS 2250 - David Parr - Introduction to GIS

#### **University of Colorado Denver:**

ETST 3254 - Omar Montgomery - Race and Ethnicity in the Inner City  
ETST 3211 - Omar Montgomery - Hip Hop Music & Culture  
RSEM 7140 - Ken Seidel - Management and Secondary Analysis of Large Datasets