Introduction

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In academic year 2022/2023 the Public Policy Studies undergraduate major at the University of Chicago introduced a new option for fourth-year students to complete their required "Capstone" experience. The idea was to allow them to marshal and showcase their skills within a single quarter-long course – christened the Policy Project Seminar. The initial offering of this new Capstone course took place in the Autumn quarter of 2022, and Chicago-related policy became the organizing theme. The students in the Project Seminar were tasked with generating a lengthy policy essay and an associated op-ed, both with a Chicagoland angle. Most of them chose topics for which they had little in the way of previous experience, and they had only ten weeks to produce something valuable. As the essays collected here demonstrate, the students rose to the challenge.

I had the honor of coordinating that initial Project Seminar, and I also was blessed with the support of Public Policy's outstanding Instructional Assistant, Ms. Esther Ng. The essays that comprise *Chicago Through a Policy Lens* benefitted from Ms. Ng's careful readings, helpful comments, and editorial suggestions. On behalf of myself and all our classmates, Thank You, Esther!

The students who "penned the appended" essays graduated from the University of Chicago in 2023 and are now entering the next stage of their upward trajectories. As members of the Class of 2023, they are the final cohort (of many) to undertake their full four years of study at the University of Chicago's "Boyer College": Professor John Boyer has just moved to a new position on campus after having spent more than 30 years as the Dean of the College! The inimitable Dean Boyer presided over a remarkable growth and renaissance of the College of the University of Chicago. Our Project Seminar classmates, like so many others, owe him our profound gratitude. So thank you, Dean Boyer: we dedicate this initial Public Policy Project to you, with best wishes for your own new trajectory.

Finally, thank you to the students who took on the challenge of participating in a new experiment, one that shared a premise with our incipient essays, that it would somehow converge upon something valuable in the doing, a result of human action, but not of human design. Well done: you builded better than you knew.