Wagner/NYU
CAPSTONE: for Management Students

P11.3890-3981
2009
435 East 70, Sub-basement
Tuesdays 4:30-6:10 p.m.

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Course Summary and Objectives

Capstone is learning in action. Part of the core curriculum of the Masters program at the Wagner School, it provides students with both a critical learning experience and an opportunity to perform public service. Over the course of an academic year, students work in teams—either to address challenges, solve problems and identify opportunities for a client organization. Capstone contributes not only to the students’ education, but is a school resource for the public good.

In architecture, the capstone is the crowning piece of an arch, the center stone that holds the arch together. Wagner’s capstone integrates and enhances student learning is several areas: a content or issue area, key process skills including project management and teamwork, and methods for gathering, analyzing and reporting data. Capstone requires students to interweave their learning in these areas, and to do so in real time, in an unpredictable, complex real world environment. Although each student will be assigned to a team, the class will work as a learning community dedicated to the success of all projects.

We have identified an array of potential projects. Students will be assigned to a project team based on a number of factors including student preference and expertise as well as team size. Teams are usually comprised of 4-6 students who bring a mix of skills and experience and have expressed interest in a project. To the degree possible, students will get their first or second choice of project.

The model chosen by the professor is student ownership of the project with the client as customer and the professor as expert consultant to the student team.
Learning Objectives

Classroom discussion and team coaching (14 classroom sessions during two semesters) will focus on three major areas:

(1) Using an Evidence-Based Approach to Design and Implement a Management Intervention. This includes these steps:
   • Framing the question
   • Finding sources of information
   • Assessing the accuracy of the information
   • Assessing the applicability of the information
   • Assessing the actionability of the information
   • Determining whether the team has adequate information

(2) Managing the team in its relationships with an external client and other stakeholders. This includes:
   • Responding appropriately to client needs, requests and expectations
   • Understanding how the client organization works and its prevailing culture
   • Preparing Interim and Final Reports both oral and written for the client

(3) Functioning as a Member of a Client-facing consulting team. This includes:
   • Managing communication between the team and the client
   • Contributing effectively to the team
   • Resolving internal team conflicts

Process Skills
Students should demonstrate the ability to: (1) carry out project management, (2) manage client relationships and (3) manage themselves as a team.

Skill Sets:
Students will demonstrate the ability to:
   • Identify and carry out data collection methods appropriate to the project.
   • Identify and carry out appropriate analytical methods for the project
   • Situate their findings in the broader related literature
   • Draw conclusions as warranted by their data.
   • Communicate their work effectively both orally and in writing.
Course Requirements

The class will include presentations from the instructor and guest speakers, discussion and team meetings. Course requirements include:

- Enrollment both semesters
- Attendance and participation in class activities and team meetings
- Completion of assignments on time
- Participation in field work
- Participation in meetings with clients
- Participation in preparation and presentation of findings
- All team members do NOT have to be present in all activities and meetings, some of which, unlike class, may be subject to scheduling difficulties.

Evaluation Criteria

Final grades are assigned at the end of the second semester. Learners are graded as a team, as adjusted for individual performance. Learners are graded on:

- Work products/submitted assignments. Product and project management include deliverables—team charter, kick-off agenda, work plan, client contract, progress reports, interim client presentation, final work plan, literature and data collection, analysis and recommendations and timeliness.
- Client satisfaction, as determined by final written evaluation done by the client.

The team grade will be adjusted by individual performance that will include: participation in class and in team activities, peer evaluations and self reflection memo.

Required Readings


Recommended Readings

Some Due Dates for Course Deliverables

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<td>September 16</td>
<td>Team Charter</td>
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<td>September 26</td>
<td>Kick-off Meeting Agenda</td>
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<td>October 10</td>
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<td>October 17</td>
<td>Draft of Client Contract</td>
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<td>November 21</td>
<td>Team Work Plan</td>
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<td>December 12</td>
<td>Interim Presentation to Client</td>
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<td>February 20</td>
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<td>March 13</td>
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CLASS SCHEDULE-First Semester (8 Classes, 14 weeks)

Class 1  Course Overview  (September 2)
- Review of syllabus and course expectations
- Clients present their projects to the class.
- Record student project preferences
- Attempt to finalize team assignments
- Complete bio-data sheet (in class).


Class 2  Evidence-Based Approach  (September 9)
- Finalize team selection
- Review six steps of evidence-based approach
- Submit team information/contact sheet
- Hold first team meeting to discuss projects and set team standards
- Draft description of problem and brainstorm alternatives.


Deliverables: Team charter is due no later than Monday, Sept. 16, of Class 3 at noon via e-mail.

Class 3  EBMgmt Experience  (September 16)
Readings: KDF, Rundall et al, “Using Research Evidence When Making Decisions…” Block, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 18 and Appendix.
In Class:
- Review of charter with teams.
- Guidance will be provided to help each team prepare for its first client meeting.

Deliverables:
- Assemble background information on your client (keep track of data sources)
- Schedule kick-off client meeting (to scope project) by Class 4. (Schedule professor to attend.)
- Submit kick-off meeting agenda via e-mail by noon of September 26.

Class 4 Framing the Question: Shaping the Project (September 30)
Readings: KDF, "Leadership Development at St. Boniface Health System," and "Forming a Corporate University...." Block: Chapters 4, 5 and 19.
- Project Management
  - What does the client want? What are the client’s expectations?
  - What is the research question(s)?
    - Narrow vs broad expectations about outcomes
    - Distinguish between symptoms and underlying problems
    - Understand multiple views of the problem within the organization
- Discuss how consultants identify stakeholders, develop a view of the organization, and define problems to be solved in developing a framework for the meeting.
- Discuss how the client’s culture may affect the team’s approach to the project.
- Preparation for upcoming kick-off meeting with the client
  - Consensus on what would constitute a successful client engagement
  - Define the overall problem, its parts, and possible approaches
  - Discuss the role of each team member at the initial meeting
  - Follow up tasks: set expectations regarding what happens after the meeting

Deliverables:
- Prepare a two-page, double-spaced summary of kick-off meeting findings (due to professor by October 10 via e-mail at noon.

Class 5 Getting and Validating the information. (David Sandman, Guest Lecturer) October 28

In class:
- Discussion of project work plans: Purpose, Structure, Content
- How do we help the client solve the problem and get what they want?
- Project objectives, milestones, resource requirements for a successful work plan
- Discussion of data collection methods

Deliverables:
- Prepare draft of client contract and work plan (due to professor by noon on October 17, via e-mail), to be discussed during class of Class 6.
Deliverables: Schedule the work plan presentation with the client by November 7. Make sure to include the professor in the attendee list.

Class 6  Teamwork (November 11)
Readings: Wheelen, Chapters 5-9
In class:
- Each team presents its work plan and contract (formal rehearsal of presentation to the client)
- Relevant data collection and where data can be found (interviews, surveys, on site observation, literature and Internet searches)
- Why teams succeed and fail.
- Difficult conversations

Deliverables: Revise and finalize meeting agenda, work plan and client contract, as necessary.
Mid-semester course evaluation (in class)

Class 7  Work Plan Presentations (Nov 25)
Readings: Block, Chapter 14
In Class:
- Each team will present the results of their work plan meeting to the class.
- Discussion of teamwork related issues
  - Types of problems that arise in teams
  - Conflict resolution techniques
  - Revisit and revise team charter as necessary

Deliverables: Prepare a two-page, double-spaced summary memo of work plan meeting findings (due to professor by November 21 noon via e-mail). Submit signed client contract.

Class 8  Applicability and Actionability of the Evidence (December 9)
Readings: KDF: The Business Case for a Hospital Palliative Care Unit,” and “Improving the Health Status of Underdeserved Children in Houston’s East End.”
In Class:
- Key milestone check: review initial stages of client work and brainstorming
- Issues of applicability and actionability
- Client problems that teams are confronting
- Approaches to develop and sustain effective working relationships with clients

Deliverables:
- Schedule interim presentation by December 12, include professor in attendee list.
- Draft interim presentation due to professor December 12 by e-mail at noon.
- Discussion of approaches/modifications for semester break and second term
- Professor available to meet with students on 1st semester progress and 2nd semester goals.
- Revise presentation based on class/professor feedback in advance of presentation to client.
- Self-evaluation/self-reflection memo and peer evaluation form filled out in class.

SPRING SEMESTER 2008

The two major products of this term are the project presentation and the project final report.

The presentation is the event at which the team presents the client with a summary of findings and recommendations and an overview of the methodology used. It is often an interactive session during which the team may be asked to explain or discuss findings, recommendations, or methodology.

The final report is the final document that states the problem, describes in more detail the methodology used to address the problem, proposes and explains the conclusions, and includes the source material used to support the report. It may contain other relevant information, such as the results of a literature search on the topic or other data that the team thinks will be valuable to the client.

Class 9    Class Presentations (EBMgmt Approach to Your Capstone)    January 20
- Review syllabus for spring semester.
- 3 Teams Present
- Progress report and milestone check-in
- Team meetings/professor consultations

Class 10   Class Presentations (EBMgmt Approach to Your Capstone)    January 27
- 2 Teams Present
- Work in teams.

Deliverables:
- Draft outline of final report is due via e-mail by February 20 at 5pm.
- Draft presentation slides for final report.

Class 11   Final Report and Presentation Skills    February 17
Readings: Lutheran Final Report and Presentation 2007-2008
- Final Report Requirements
- Presentation skills
Class 12  Teams Working Session  March 3
  • Work in teams.
Deliverables:
  • Rough draft of report is due via e-mail by March 13 (draft should include executive
    summary, background on organization, overview of methodology)
  • Send second draft of report to client for review and comment.
  • Draft of presentation slides due via e-mail by March 27.

Class 13  Preparation for Final Report and Presentation  April 7
Deliverables:
  • Schedule final presentation to client before April 28 and include professor in attendee
    list.
  • Class presentations of 3 final reports.

Class 14  Final Presentations and Wrap-Up
  • Class presentations of 2 Final Reports
  • Final evaluation of class and client to be done in class.
  • Pick up poster board from David Schachter and submit project abstract (details to
    come)
  • Final report and presentation are due by April 28.
  • Final course evaluation (in class)

Capstone End Event-  May 6, 2008  5:00- 6:30 p.m.