Organizational Strategic Assessment

 In conjunction with the Center for Non-Profit Software Services, the following project may be done in the place of the company project:  A small team of students will be sent to consult with a not-for-profit organization to perform an assessment of the consistency of their information technology infrastructure with the stated strategies and goals.  These organizations will be drawn from the CIS 320 and 420 clients. The faculty member and team will meet with the client to establish the relationship and set the parameters for the project.  The faculty member will monitor communications between the student and the organization’s reps, and will attend the students’ final presentations to the organization’s reps. Each student will develop at least a 20 page  report independent of the other students in the group. The instructor of the course will act as the project manager and will deliver the final report(s) to the client.  The final report will be a summary of the reports developed by the students.

 The deliverable will encompass, but is not limited to, the following:

     A technology inventory that accounts for all hardware and software used by the organization.

     An analysis that describes the state of the IT infrastructure and systems in relation to the organization’s strategic plan.

    An analysis that describes which of the Center’s infrastructure services and common solutions are candidates for adoption by the organization.

    A summary of the alignment of IT with the organization’s strategic plan and how the Center’s services may be used to fulfill its strategic plan.

   A gap analysis of where the present infrastructure is inadequate to address future directions.

...among other things. I expect that you will interview the appropriate IT officials (if any) and the executive director(s) within the organization. Try to limit your contact time with them as their time is usually very limited. Three or four visits to the site to interview managers should cover the data you will need. Go armed with questions and issues to facilitate the discussions. You must work into the paper the literature and theories you are given during class, text materials, etc. to receive superior credit for the project. There should be some sort of bibliography at the end of the paper.  Minimum page limit for this assignment is 20 pages, exclusive of title page, executive summary, figures, appendices, etc.  Each page less the limit is a 10% deduction of the final grade for the project.  The paper should have a title page, and must be appropriately cited, which includes any content found on the Web.

The paper must have at least 85% original content (meaning you wrote it).  I will not accept material that is copied from existing organizational documents, except as cited excerpts which support specific points you are making.  Utilization of such material beyond the bounds described above will constitute, in my opinion, an attempt at plagiarism, with its associated penalties (please see **Statement regarding Academic Dishonesty for this Course** above). Please do not end a page at the end of a section, and then begin the next section on the following page.  I will start subtracting those blank pages from the total of the paper if this approach is used, with the accompanying reduction in grade. Try not to get too creative with the spacing and fonts.  I will expect the paper to be stapled, top left corner, the pages will be numbered, and the paper will have an executive summary at the beginning.  The executive summary does not count as pages in the page total.

Twice during the term, I may ask for milestones concerning the project. These milestones will be un-graded, and used by me to judge your progress with the project. The first milestone is a one page summary which proposes what organization you are doing and some general background. The second milestone is a 1½ to 2 page summary, showing the progress from milestone one.

At the conclusion of the term, each class member may be asked to present (15 minutes) the findings of the project to the class. More on this later.