

# Grand Challenges

## Project Team Role Descriptions

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### Instructions:

Review the role descriptions below. Each role description includes essential duties and “smart skills” for success. Use these team roles to inform your filling of the Team Charter assignment which can be downloaded from Canvas in the form of a fillable PDF to be used for the Team Charter assignment due 9/05. You do not need to assign each member of your team to a specific role but rather see these as inspiration for responsibilities your team can divide when filling out your team charters. Note that not all tasks are relevant for AEM 3000. However, this tool will be used in your Grand Challenges Project course, so we want you to familiarize yourself with it in AEM 3000!

### About Team Roles:

A five-person student team has the following roles:

- Primary Lead
- Operations Lead
- Client Lead
- Communication Lead
- All Star

\*On teams with four people, assign a Primary Lead, Operations Lead, Client Lead, and Communication Lead. You can also reallocate responsibilities, add tasks to the role description that fit the project, or create a new position for an additional team member.

There are many smaller tasks that come together on a team. When adding “other duties as assigned” or creating a new role description, you may want to consider the following additional tasks and roles:

Notetaker  
Timekeeper  
Reporter  
Scheduler  
Devil’s advocate  
Challenger

Facilitator  
Conflict manager  
Negotiator  
Problem solver  
Harmonizer  
Prioritizer

Connector  
Evaluator  
Researcher  
Data Analyst  
Writer  
Editor

Moderator  
Tech Guru  
Visual Designer  
Fact Checker  
Data Manager  
Cheerleader

### About Project Team Role-Alikes:

All Grand Challenges Project Teams will use this framework to assign roles. When you’re in your project course, several times each semester, the Grand Challenges Program will bring together role-alikes from all teams to share relevant role-specific information and learn from each other.



## Role Title: Primary Lead

Terms and Working Hours: Grand Challenges team project for course credit, 7-8 hours per week

### About the Role:

The Primary Lead helps others work towards shared goals and ensures that all deadlines are met. They plan practical, workable strategies to carry out the project goals as efficiently as possible. It is important that they lead by example, attend all team and client meetings, and act professionally at all times. The Primary Lead keeps the team motivated and engaged. They help guide and manage group discussions and activities in order to achieve specific goals or outcomes. If they sense problems, they take time to address concerns while balancing the needs of all stakeholders (individual team members as well as the client). Building trust is essential, and the Primary Lead is intentional about team development. They also resist the urge to act like a boss or manager and do their share of the project work.

### Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

- Overall team and project management
- Ensures that deadlines are met
- Maintains the Team Charter
- Celebrates team successes
- Raises issues with the coach, the Grand Challenges Program Team, or instructor as needed
- Grand Challenges Program Liaison (administrative point of contact)
- Attends Role-Alike Primary Leads meetings (1-2 times per semester)

### Smart Skills for Success:

Mature, trustworthy, and confident, the Primary Lead delegates readily and holds others accountable. They are likely to have a broad outlook and perspective, and they are quick to spot individual talents that serve group objectives. The Primary Lead accepts and embraces the discomfort that comes with learning, and they acknowledge that change does not happen immediately. They are grounded in their core values and believe that things can be better. They also provide the necessary drive to ensure that the team keeps moving forward and does not lose focus or momentum.

- Attention to detail and organized
- Ability to lead through uncertainty
- Ability to achieve consensus and motivate others
- Ability to balance competing needs and communicate clearly with diverse stakeholders
- Inclusive, with the ability to build trust quickly and create a sense of belonging
- Strong interpersonal skills, intuition, and empathy

Other Duties as Assigned: {{insert}}



## Role Title: Operations Lead

Terms and Working Hours: Grand Challenges team project for course credit, 7-8 hours per week

### About the Role:

The Operations Lead creates systems for team success and develops a project plan or roadmap. They submit assignments on behalf of the team in Canvas and ensure that the work of the team is archived at the end of the semester. Additionally, they provide financial oversight by coordinating all purchasing and reimbursement with the Grand Challenges Program Team. They are often the “unsung hero” working behind the scenes, and they ensure that decisions are turned into results.

### Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

- Ensures that efficient systems are in place for file management/storage
- Creates and maintains the project plan in Smartsheet
- Responsible for submitting group assignments
- Responsible for getting required forms (such as project agreements and liability waivers) back to the Grand Challenges Program Team
- Submits purchase and reimbursement requests
- Operations point of contact with the Grand Challenges Program Team
- Attends Role-Alike Operations Leads meetings (1-2 times per semester)

### Smart Skills for Success:

The Operations Lead is valued for their reliability and attention to detail. They succeed because they are efficient and have a sense of what is feasible and relevant. While some people might prioritize tasks they enjoy, the Operations Lead is more likely to do what needs to be done in a systematic way. Their high standards make them well suited to situations where precision is essential.

- Organized and task-oriented
- Attention to detail with an eye for quality work, also excels at finding errors and omissions
- Ability to prioritize work
- Adept with spreadsheets, Gantt charts, and file management
- Practical thinking

Other Duties as Assigned: {{insert}}



## Role Title: Client Lead

Terms and Working Hours: Grand Challenges team project for course credit, 7-8 hours per week

### About the Role:

The Client Lead is the primary point of contact with the client or community partner. It is their responsibility to monitor client satisfaction and ask probing questions to solve client problems and issues. They react to client needs by initiating new research, helping to synthesize key points or data, and following up with accurate information in a timely manner. They also set client meeting agendas, lead client meetings, ensure that everyone has a chance to speak/contribute, and confirm next steps with the client. The client understands that working through the Client Lead streamlines communication and they can be sure that their message will be relayed to all relevant stakeholders (which could include the instructor, MBA Coach, or Grand Challenges Program Team).

### Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

- Sends all client emails (after coordinating with the team)
- Schedules all meetings with the client using Microsoft Outlook and ensures that all meetings have an agenda
- Leads team meetings with the client (with all team members participating)
- Always responds to the client promptly (even if to say, “we will get back to you as soon as possible.”)
- In some cases, coordinates a site visit with the Grand Challenges Program Team
- After the project ends, shows appreciation to the client on behalf of the team
- Assists the Grand Challenges Program Team with client relationship management
- Attends Role-Alike Client Leads Meetings (1-2 times per semester)

### Smart Skills for Success:

Warren Buffett once said, “It takes 20 years to build a reputation, and five minutes to ruin it.” The Client Liaison understands that they represent their team, Dyson, and Cornell University, and this is not a responsibility that they take lightly. Follow-through, professionalism, and impeccable communication are essential. The Client Liaison also has good judgement and intuition, knows when to listen and when to speak, and respects hierarchies. They are naturally curious and are good at accumulating (and retaining) knowledge. When working with a non-profit or community partner, they avoid “saviorism” and work toward a true collaborative partnership.

- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Strong listening and interpersonal skills
- Ability to think strategically and creatively to solve problems and deliver outstanding results to the client
- Organizational awareness
- Ability to respond quickly and appropriately to verbal and written questions from the client

Other Duties as Assigned: **[[insert]]**



## Role Title: Communication Lead

Terms and Working Hours: Grand Challenges team project for course credit, 7-8 hours per week

### About the Role:

Successful projects require excellent communication between all stakeholders, and good communication can boost team morale, productivity, and satisfaction. The Communication Lead understands the tools and interpersonal tactics to keep the team connected. They also listen to others, synthesize information, and translate the project work into stories to create excitement and engagement.

### Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

- Ensures that efficient systems are in place for communication (systems may differ for internal and external communication)
- Schedules all meetings with the team and coach using MS outlook, creates agendas for these meetings
- Primary coach liaison
- Takes photos and develops stories for social media, LinkedIn, and other channels
- Communication point of contact with the Grand Challenges Program Team
- Attends Role-Alike Communication Leads meetings (1-2 times per semester)

### Smart Skills for Success:

The Communication Lead helps build trust within the team because they always assume good intentions and appreciate that people have different communications styles. They are perceptive, diplomatic, empathetic, and good listeners. They are highly collaborative, and they are natural negotiators who are adept at exploring new opportunities and developing contacts. They understand the best ways to get their message across, so they are excellent at storytelling, marketing, and presenting.

- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Strong listening and interpersonal skills
- Good organizational and planning skills
- Ability to synthesize information
- Ability to translate project work into stories (written, oral, visual)

Other Duties as Assigned: **{{insert}}**



## Role Title: All Star

Terms and Working Hours: Grand Challenges team project for course credit, 7-8 hours per week

### About the Role:

The All Star is the ultimate team player. They are creative problem-solvers and all-around contributors who counteract any tendency for members to sit back and be passive. They often provide needed balance and are “jacks of all trades” with skills that support and enable all the other roles. When these individuals are given the opportunity to be creative, the team’s performance consistently improves. They are adept at pivoting, filling gaps, stretching themselves, and weighing the pros and cons of different options. The All Star can also provide back up or fill in during hot spots when additional support is needed.

### Essential Duties and Responsibilities:

- Analyzes problems and steps in where needed to solve issues
- Continually assesses progress and works with the team to change course as needed
- Promotes decision-making
- Drives work forward
- Attends All Star meetings (1-2 times per semester)

### Smart Skills for Success:

If you have a problem, call on the All Star. The best All Stars know how to leverage their “sharp skills” and operate with historical understanding that is based on data and research. Their well-developed social and political skills combined with a willingness to be supportive of others helps maintain morale and rapport within the team. As someone who emphasizes breadth over depth, they can visualize the steps needed to complete the overall objectives of the project.

- Creative and versatile
- Flexible and adaptable with a positive attitude
- Level-headed and thrives under pressure
- Fosters collaboration over competition
- Genuine, authentic, and self-aware
- Ability to give good feedback

Other Duties as Assigned: **{{insert}}**

