Group Collaboration

*Pros, Cons and Some Best Practices*

Here is a brief summary from our class discussion on group collaborative process. This includes some of the pros and cons of team work that we identified as well as a list of best practices. These include your contributions and some suggestions from previous classes. I recommend referencing this document in your Team Organizational Memo and specifically listing the strategies from our “Best Practices” list that you team agrees are worth following. Additionally, you will find a good deal of helpful information on teamwork in your Johnson-Sheehan textbook. I suggest reading and referencing Chapter 3, *Working in Teams*.

Pros

* A diversity of skills, interests and perspectives
* Extra hands to divide and conquer tasks
* Camaraderie
* Teammates to cover for you when you stumble
* Teammates to spur/inspire you to do your best work
* Teammates to help you generate new ideas and problem solve
* Teammates to help celebrate successes

Cons

* Having to share decision-making responsibilities
* Having to define and play by team rules
* Having to trust your teammates to do their part
* Having to deal with creative and process disagreements
* Teammates who don’t pull their weight
* Teammates who try to take over

Some Best Practices

* Start by giving yourself and your teammates the benefit of the doubt. You are in this together and will need to trust one another equally.
* Communicate clearly and kindly – often.
* Get to know one another up front: describe your style of work, your expectations of yourself, and hopes for the team.
* Listen well to each other.
* Play to each other’s strengths.
* Plan ahead and save time for editing and reflection on drafts.
* Do your work well and on time.
* Show up to meetings on time (consider a fun place to meet, bring some snacks).
* Ask for help if you need it.
* Offer to help if you think a teammate could use it.
* Collectively create and agree upon a plan for how you will work together and also solve problems. Agree to revisit this and collectively amend as needed. This plan should include:

A reliable means to communicate, share, edit and submit work products

A regular meeting time and place

A description of your individual and collective responsibilities

A work schedule for the project

A process for broaching and solving disagreements sooner than later