# MBUS203: INDUSTRY PROJECT

## **Week 4 Progress Report**

**Cambridge International College**

**Group 2**

**Submission Date:** 27 April 2025

**Instructors:** Dr. Bereket & Dr. Quan

## 

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

[TABLE OF CONTENTS 2](#_heading=h.bq2wobfwivlv)

[1. Project’s Proposed Title 3](#_heading=h.88k2r6ivh7du)

[2. Team Details 4](#_heading=h.b7n28dwvdfxl)

[3. Introduction to the Problems - Rationale, Purpose, and Scope of the Project 6](#_heading=h.1kmrflkq4w4c)

[Background: About CIC Higher Education 6](#_heading=h.owndmraovulw)

[3.1 Rationale 6](#_heading=h.97d0lusz75s0)

[3.2 Purpose 7](#_heading=h.z1uqgwajt01s)

[3.3 Objectives 7](#_heading=h.s4u3dgljnv99)

[3.4 Target Audience 8](#_heading=h.lm3qswui8xax)

[3.5 Scope 8](#_heading=h.9me0cfxat8la)

[4. Review of Current or Existing Resources/Solutions 9](#_heading=h.rzzqo0fjr5yb)

[4.1 Review of Existing Solutions 9](#_heading=h.5y7qf11tykkz)

[4.2 Proposed Framework for Implementation 10](#_heading=h.6j3vfqgu3t86)

[5. Project Implementation 11](#_heading=h.7qqlw99pijq)

[5.1 Work Completed Since Initial Report 11](#_heading=h.bsm7pp32ug8c)

[6. Risks/Challenges Identified and Needed to Address 13](#_heading=h.z7tlorfz6x3a)

[6.1 Identified Risks 13](#_heading=h.1512lk1x0rk6)

[6.2 Proposed Actions to Address Risks 13](#_heading=h.s3nrqslbrcmd)

[7. Further Work Planned for the Project 14](#_heading=h.dcocuu3c7dff)

[7.1 Planned Work and Deliverables 14](#_heading=h.u6xnbjilkrzp)

[7.2 Estimated Timeline 16](#_heading=h.v2lgworqihio)

[8. Project Outcomes 17](#_heading=h.zb0nd9d0b1i8)

[8.1 Measurement of Outcomes 17](#_heading=h.gv2gxgt5cpai)

[8.2 Follow-Up Actions 17](#_heading=h.59fn62hyeg5i)

[9. References 18](#_heading=h.g1z2lpoiy1)

[10. Appendices 20](#_heading=h.84964of07nwv)

## **1. Project’s Proposed Title**

**Revitalizing Connections: A Strategic Plan to Revive the CIC Higher Education Alumni Association**

This title, finalized during our 1 April 2025 meeting (see Appendix C), captures our mission to reconnect alumni with CIC Higher Education and build a vibrant community. It’s been our guiding star since Week 2, and we’re thrilled to see it coming together.

## **2. Team Details**

Building on the team details from our Initial Report, we’re Group 2, a dedicated team of six MBA students at Cambridge International College. Here’s an updated look at our roles and contributions, incorporating the responsibilities assigned during our 1 April 2025 meeting:

* **Kennedy Kipchumba (S84967)** – Team Leader, responsible for overall coordination, stakeholder engagement (e.g., meeting with Milan, as assigned on 1 April), and resource estimation alongside Stan. Kennedy’s Healthcare Informatics background helps him manage complex projects with a focus on community impact.
* **Nimanthi Wanniarachchige (S84819)** – Lead on rationale, objectives, target audience, and scope (assigned 1 April), Nimanthi has also taken on research into competitor strategies, providing a strong foundation for our project. She’s studying Healthcare Informatics and brings a thoughtful perspective to alumni engagement.
* **Yiu Wing Kwok, Stan (S84289)** – Stan handles meeting minutes and publications, such as marketing flyers and posters (initially brainstormed as brochures on 1 April), and assists Kennedy with resource estimation. His Project Management focus ensures our efforts are well-organized and visually appealing.
* **Brian Kipruto, KOIMA (S84922)** – Brian oversees digital solutions, focusing on social media outreach (e.g., Instagram campaigns) after pivoting from website development (an idea discussed on 1 April). He also assisted with formatting the Initial Report and shares responsibility for deliverables and timelines with Evans. His software engineering experience and Healthcare Informatics studies make him our tech expert.
* **Evans Kirwa (S84790)** – Evans manages deliverables, milestones, and timelines (assigned 1 April, with Brian), and has taken a lead on event planning logistics, including arranging the room and ushering for the alumni event. His Project Management specialization keeps us on track with a realistic schedule.
* **Rubina Sedai (S85811)** – A new teammate welcomed on 1 April, Rubina focuses on measuring outcomes and follow-up actions (assigned 1 April), ensuring our project has a lasting impact. She’s also planning a student focus group meeting for Week 7 (13 May 2025) to gather data. Her Project Management background helps her think strategically about sustainability.

Our collaboration has deepened since the Initial Report, with each member contributing significantly, as evidenced by the task allocations in our meeting minutes (Appendix C).

## **3. Introduction to the Problems - Rationale, Purpose, and Scope of the Project**

### Background: About CIC Higher Education

CIC Higher Education (CIC HE) is a new-age Australian education establishment with its hub in Melbourne, that offers undergraduate and postgraduate education in business, project management, healthcare informatics, accounting, and leadership. With an explicit emphasis on creating global citizens as well as work-ready graduates, CIC Higher Education encourages practical application, critical thinking, and leadership abilities (CIC Higher Education, 2024).

Given its diverse student body, with enrollees from across Asia, Africa, and Australia, CIC places particular emphasis on fostering a strong community both during and after study. However, despite its reputation for academic excellence, CIC currently lacks an active and structured alumni engagement platform. There is no formal alumni association offering graduates opportunities for networking, mentoring, volunteering, or continuous professional development. Building a strong alumni association is critical to modern higher education institutions, acting as a support system for lifelong learning, career advancement, and institutional advancement through advocacy and philanthropy (Weerts & Ronca, 2008).

### 3.1 Rationale

As noted in our Initial Report, alumni associations play a critical role in establishing lifetime relationships among graduates and institutions and offering advantages like networking, mentorship, and institutional growth (Cole & Egan, 2010). However, the CIC Higher Education Alumni Association has been inactive for the past few years, and therefore, the gap hurt alumni and the institution. Alumni relations are a key differentiator for higher education institutions operating today in the marketplace. Universities such as Monash, Deakin, and the University of Melbourne maintain active alumni portals offering mentorships, scholarships, and job boards—reinforcing the institution's prestige and student value proposition (Monash University, 2023). Alumni success stories serve as authentic, powerful marketing assets, influencing prospective students' decisions (Stephenson, 2015). We identified three key issues in our 1 April meeting: a lack of organized activities, outdated communication methods, and unmet demands for professional development opportunities (Appendix C).

Since Week 2, we’ve deepened our understanding through research. A 2024 survey found that 49% of institutions report declining alumni engagement since COVID, with public institutions like CIC facing the steepest declines (VAESE, 2024). Additionally, 47% of alumni professionals note a lack of value offered to alumni as a major barrier (CASE Alumni Relations Innovation Survey, 2023, as cited in VAESE, 2024). This aligns with CIC’s situation—no structured engagement means alumni don’t see a reason to stay involved. Reviving the association addresses these gaps, reconnects alumni, and enhances CIC’s reputation, elevating the value of our degrees (University of Utah, n.d.).

### 3.2 Purpose

Our goal, as described in the Initial Report and discussed on 1 April, is to revive the CIC Higher Education Alumni Association, offering a revitalized setting for networking, mentorship, and institutional support. We will strive to improve alumni relations, enhance professional development, and assist with CIC's long-term stability and growth. It has been our mission guiding us, and we have further defined our strategy based on feedback to make it both practical and effective.

### 3.3 Objectives

Our objectives, set out in the Initial Report and refined through discussions, are:

* Revitalize and intensify alumni relations to foster lasting connections, starting with a Week 10 event on 3 June 2025.
* Establish a sustainable alumni organization through leadership strategies.
* Enhance professional and career development opportunities via networking and mentorship programs.
* Enable institutional growth and reputation through alumni contributions.
* Create a sense of community among alumni and students.

These objectives were shaped by our 1 April meeting, where we brainstormed ideas like raising events and improving communication (Appendix C), and later refined to focus on a tangible event per feedback.

### 3.4 Target Audience

Our target audience, unchanged from the Initial Report, includes:

* **Alumni:** CIC graduates across all disciplines and years.
* **Current Students:** Beneficiaries of mentorship and networking.
* **Staff, Leadership Teams, and Faculty:** Facilitators of alumni initiatives.
* **Industry Partners and Employers:** Potential professional sponsors of CIC grads.
* **Potential Sponsors and Donors:** Supporters of alumni activities and scholarships.

We’ve since identified specific alumni segments (e.g., recent graduates vs. long-term alumni) to tailor our outreach, inspired by research on personalized communication (Ruffalo Noel Levitz, 2023, as cited in VAESE, 2024). Additionally, by targeting recent graduates more actively, CIC can achieve higher engagement rates, a practice shown to be highly successful in international alumni programs (Weerts & Ronca, 2008).

### 3.5 Scope

The scope from our Initial Report, discussed on 1 April, includes:

* **Alumni Engagement:** Reconnecting alumni via direct communication and in-person events.
* **Event Planning:** Organizing a networking session on 3 June 2025 in Week 10.
* **Communication Strategy:** Developing marketing flyers and posters (initially considered a website, but scaled back per feedback; Appendix C).
* **Sustainability Planning:** Establishing governance for long-term viability.

We’ve prioritized a single in-person alumni event and a sustainability proposal for continued alumni organization after Milan’s feedback.

## **4. Review of Current or Existing Resources/Solutions**

### 4.1 Review of Existing Solutions

Building on the Initial Report and our 1 April discussion to research other alumni associations (Appendix C), we’ve conducted a detailed review of current solutions, focusing on Australian universities to better contextualize our approach for CIC. The table below summarizes key strategies, outcomes, and relevance to CIC.

| **Institution/Study** | **Strategy** | **Outcome** | **Relevance to CIC** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Monash University** | Integrated alumni portal with mentorship programs, alumni awards, events | High engagement; alumni feel valued through tangible benefits (Monash University, 2023) | CIC can adopt similar mentorship programs and events to enhance engagement. |
| **Deakin University** | Private Facebook communities, regular in-person networking events | Strengthened alumni connections through regular updates (Deakin University, 2023) | CIC can use social media communities to foster informal engagement. |
| **University of Melbourne** | Annual entrepreneurship summit involving alumni, active LinkedIn groups | Enhanced networking and institutional reputation (MAP, 2023) | CIC can organize panel discussions with alumni to build networks. |
| **RMIT University** | Alumni-led career workshops, industry networking events | Improved student employability and alumni involvement (RMIT University, 2023) | CIC can leverage alumni for career support, aligning with our mentorship goals. |
| **La Trobe University** | Alumni volunteer programs, regional networking events | Strengthened community bonds across regions (La Trobe University, 2023) | CIC can plan regional events in the future to engage diverse alumni groups. |
| **Ruffalo Noel Levitz (2023)** | Personalized communication using data analytics | 40% increase in engagement through tailored outreach (Ruffalo Noel Levitz, 2023, as cited in VAESE, 2024) | CIC can segment alumni by graduation year or industry to improve outreach effectiveness. |

CIC’s current state—lacking an active engagement structure and relying on outdated communication—mirrors the 47% industry-wide challenge of offering value to alumni (CASE Alumni Relations Innovation Survey, 2023, as cited in VAESE, 2024). Our research, initiated on 1 April, confirms that personalized outreach and community-building events are key to success, especially in the Australian context.

### 4.2 Proposed Framework for Implementation

Our framework, refined from the Initial Report, now focuses on two deliverables:

1. **Organize an Alumni Event:** A panel discussion and Q&A session to reconnect alumni and students on 3 June 2025 in an in-person format. The detailed schedule is in Section 7.1.
2. **Sustainability Proposal:** A proposal for CIC to maintain the association, including a governance structure (e.g., a committee, as recommended by ElectionBuddy, 2023), regular communication via marketing materials, and funding via sponsorships rather than membership fees, per feedback.

This framework addresses CIC’s challenges by modernizing engagement, offering value, and ensuring sustainability, aligning with Australian best practices.

## **5. Project Implementation**

### 5.1 Work Completed Since Initial Report

Since submitting the Initial Report in Week 2, we’ve made significant progress, building on the foundational work from our 1 April 2025 meeting (Appendix C). Here’s a detailed overview:

* **Project Topic Finalization:** On 1 April, we finalized our project title as *Revitalizing Connections: A Strategic Plan to Revive the CIC Higher Education Alumni Association* and brainstormed initial ideas, including raising events and creating a website or app for communication (Appendix C). These ideas shaped our early approach, though we later scaled back on the website due to feasibility concerns.
* **Initial Report Preparation:** The 1 April meeting allocated responsibilities for the Initial Report: Nimanthi handled rationale, purpose, and scope; Kennedy and Stan estimated resources; Evans and Brian outlined deliverables and timelines; Rubina focused on measuring outcomes; and Brian assisted with formatting and member details (Appendix C). This division of labor ensured the report was comprehensive and set the stage for our Week 4 progress.
* **Stakeholder Engagement:** Following Dr. Bereket’s suggestion on 1 April, Kennedy met with Milan, CIC’s contact point for the Alumni Association, to discuss our topic. Milan confirmed access to alumni records and CIC branding but noted no funding for a website, aligning with industry budget constraints (VAESE, 2024).
* **Research Expansion:** Nimanthi led research into competitor strategies, as planned on 1 April, identifying trends like personalized outreach (Ruffalo Noel Levitz, 2023, as cited in VAESE, 2024). This informed our event planning and communication strategy.
* **Refined Focus:** Per feedback, we split the project into a tangible in-person event and a long-term proposal, scaling back on website development after Milan’s input.
* **Event Planning:** Evans drafted the agenda for our Week 10 event on 3 June 2025, and Rubina scheduled a student focus group meeting for Week 7 (13 May 2025) to gather data on topics like career advice, soft skills, and CIC’s impact (Appendix A). We’ve planned a 1-hour in-person event with activities including Welcome and Introduction, Panel Discussion, Q&A Session, Survey Feedback, Closing Remarks, and Networking. The team will handle all aspects, including arranging the room, distributing flyers, and ushering attendees (Section 7.1).
* **Communication Strategy:** Stan began designing marketing flyers and posters, a priority task to be completed at the earliest, building on the 1 April idea to create promotional materials (Appendix C). Brian planned an Instagram campaign, focusing on personalized outreach (Ruffalo Noel Levitz, 2023, as cited in VAESE, 2024).
* **Budget Revision:** Evans adjusted the budget, removing $5,000 for website costs (an initial idea from 1 April) and focusing on $100 for refreshments and marketing flyers for the event, reflecting cost-effective strategies (VAESE, 2024).

The detailed allocation of tasks and evidence of our collaboration can be found in the combined meeting minutes in Appendix C, which demonstrate how each member has contributed to these advancements.

## **6. Risks/Challenges Identified and Needed to Address**

### 6.1 Identified Risks

* **Funding Constraints:** Limited financial support from CIC, with only $100 allocated for refreshments and marketing flyers, risking event quality (VAESE, 2024).
* **Alumni Participation:** Outdated records may lead to low turnout, a common issue with 49% of institutions reporting declining engagement (VAESE, 2024).
* **Time Pressure:** Coordinating the Week 10 event on 3 June 2025 is challenging with stakeholder delays and the need to complete planning and marketing materials early.
* **Engagement Risk:** Students may not attend if topics aren’t relevant; social media engagement is low industry-wide at 30% (MStoner, 2024, as cited in VAESE, 2024).

### 6.2 Proposed Actions to Address Risks

* **Funding:** Seek sponsorships from industry partners (e.g., CPA) during a roundtable meeting for project funding, as suggested by instructors and seen in successful initiatives (Research.com, 2025).
* **Alumni Participation:** Use updated records from CIC and personalized Instagram outreach (Ruffalo Noel Levitz, 2023, as cited in VAESE, 2024).
* **Time Pressure:** Prioritize tasks like marketing flyer and poster design, and delegate effectively, with Kennedy overseeing coordination.
* **Engagement:** Use the Week 7 student focus group meeting (13 May 2025) to ensure event topics are relevant and promote via Instagram and flyers, highlighting benefits.

## **7. Further Work Planned for the Project**

### 7.1 Planned Work and Deliverables

We’ve got a busy few weeks ahead as we gear up for our big alumni event on 3 June 2025. Here’s what we’re focusing on to make this project a success:

* **Selection of the Student Focus Group and Meeting:** Rubina will finalize the selection of 10 students for the focus group and conduct the meeting on 13 May 2025 to gather their input on event topics (Appendix A).
* **Selection of the Date of Alumni Event:** We’ve confirmed the alumni event for Week 10, 3 June 2025, to reconnect alumni and students.
* **Alumni Guest Listing:** Stan will compile a guest list of at least 20 alumni to invite, using updated CIC records.
* **Marketing Flyer and Poster Design, Printing, and Distribution:** Stan will complete the design of marketing flyers and posters at the earliest, ensuring they’re printed and distributed across campus and online by Week 6 to promote the event.
* **Roundtable Meeting for Project Success:** Kennedy will organize a roundtable meeting with Milan and potential industry partners to secure sponsorships/mentorships for the event, with a budget of $100 allocated for refreshments and marketing materials.
* **Project Funding for the Day:** Secure $100 for refreshments on 3 June 2025, ensuring a welcoming atmosphere for attendees.

**Planning for the Day – Activities by Each Individual:** The team will handle all aspects of the event, including arranging the room, distributing flyers, and ushering attendees. The event will be a 1-hour in-person session with the following activities:

**Alumni Event Schedule (Week 10, 3 June 2025)**

| **Time** | **Duration** | **Activity** | **Task Allocation** | **Details** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 9:00–9:05 AM | 5 minutes | Welcome and Introduction | Kennedy (Team Leader) | Welcome attendees, outline event purpose, introduce panelists, arrange room. |
| 9:05–9:25 AM | 20 minutes | Panel Discussion | Evans (Event Coordinator) | Moderate panel of 3-5 alumni discussing career paths, soft skills, CIC impact; usher attendees. |
| 9:25–9:40 AM | 15 minutes | Q&A Session | Kennedy and Rubina (Outcomes Lead) | Facilitate student questions, ensure engagement, manage time. |
| 9:40–9:45 AM | 5 minutes | Survey Feedback | Brian (Rationale Lead) | Distribute survey forms to gather feedback from attendees. |
| 9:45–9:50 AM | 5 minutes | Closing Remarks | Nimanthi and Brian (Rationale Lead) | Thank attendees, invite networking. |
| 9:50–10:00 AM | 10 minutes | Networking | Stan and Rubina (Publications Lead) | Distribute refreshments, manage informal networking; team ushers attendees. |

* + **Venue:** CIC Level 5 Conference Room (in-person).
  + **Target Attendance:** 20 alumni, 30 students (in-person).
  + **Budget Allocation:** $100 (refreshments: $50, marketing flyers: $50).
* **Draft Feedback Survey Questions – Post Event:** Rubina will draft survey questions by 15 May 2025 to collect feedback after the event, focusing on satisfaction and future preferences.

### 7.2 Estimated Timeline

* **Week 5:** Finalize student focus group selection; design, print, and distribute marketing flyers and posters.
* **Week 6:** Conduct student focus group meeting (13 May 2025); compile alumni guest list; promote event via Instagram and flyers.
* **Week 7:** Organize roundtable meeting for project funding and success; confirm alumni speakers.
* **Week 8–9:** Finalize event logistics (room setup, refreshments); continue promotion.
* **Week 10:** Host the alumni event on 3 June 2025; conduct survey feedback.
* **Week 12:** Submit final report with outcomes and sustainability proposal.

## **8. Project Outcomes**

### 8.1 Measurement of Outcomes

* **Alumni Engagement:** Track event attendance and online interactions (e.g., Instagram comments on event posts), aiming to exceed the 7.8% industry average (Council for Aid to Education, 2024, as cited in VAESE, 2024).
* **Event Success:** Survey attendees on satisfaction and value, targeting a 75% positive response rate, and use student focus group feedback to refine future events (Appendix A).
* **Financial Stability:** Monitor sponsorship contributions from the roundtable meeting to assess sustainability.
* **Community Impact:** Count alumni-student mentorship matches post-event, aiming for 5–10 matches (AppliedHE, 2024).

### 8.2 Follow-Up Actions

* Share event feedback with CIC for future planning, incorporating insights from the student focus group (Appendix A).
* Update Instagram with engagement metrics to maintain momentum.
* Submit a sustainability proposal for the alumni association to CIC.

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## **10. Appendices**

**Appendix A: Student Interview Summary**

| **Aspect** | **Details** |
| --- | --- |
| **Plan** | Interviews will be conducted with a student focus group of 10 in Week 7 (13 May 2025) to gather data on their interests and feedback. |
| **Expected Key Interests** | Based on preliminary discussions, we anticipate students will prioritize career advice, soft skills development, and networking opportunities, which will inform the Week 10 event and future engagement strategies. |
| **Purpose** | This data will help refine our approach to alumni-student interactions, ensuring we address student needs effectively in future initiatives. |

**Appendix B: Marketing Flyer and Poster Plan**

| **Aspect** | **Details** |
| --- | --- |
| **Objective** | Promote the Week 10 alumni event on 3 June 2025 to attract at least 20 alumni and 30 students. |
| **Design Elements** | Include CIC branding, event date (3 June 2025), time (9:00–10:00 AM), venue (Level 5 Conference Room), and a call to action to RSVP via Instagram (@CICAlumni). |
| **Timeline** | Design to be completed by Week 5; printing and distribution across campus and online by Week 6. |
| **Budget** | $50 allocated for printing 100 flyers and 10 posters. |
| **Distribution Plan** | Flyers distributed on campus noticeboards and student hubs; posters placed in high-traffic areas; digital versions shared on Instagram. |

**Appendix C: Meeting Minutes (Weeks 2–4)**

| **Date** | **Item** | **Notes** | **Action** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 April 2025 | Finalize Project Topic | Title set as *Revitalizing Connections: A Strategic Plan to Revive the CIC Higher Education Alumni Association*. Ideas: raise events, create app/website. | Kennedy: Consult Milan (CIC contact). Nimanthi: Research competitor strategies and benefits of alumni communities. |
| 1 April 2025 | Initial Report Preparation | Task allocation: Nimanthi (rationale, purpose, scope), Kennedy/Stan (resources), Evans/Brian (deliverables/timeline), Rubina (outcomes), Brian (formatting/member details). | All: Complete sections by 6 April for Initial Report compilation. |
| 6 April 2025 | Stakeholder Feedback | Milan confirmed access to records/branding, no website funding. Brian pivoted to Instagram for outreach. | Brian: Plan Instagram campaign. Kennedy: Follow up with Milan for records. |
| 6 April 2025 | Event Planning/Research | Event set as 1-hour panel discussion with Q&A on 3 June 2025, in-person only. Rubina scheduled student focus group for 13 May 2025. | Evans: Draft agenda. Rubina: Plan focus group. Nimanthi: Continue research. |
| 13 April 2025 | Event and Communication | Evans finalized agenda: 1-hour event, includes welcome, panel, Q&A, survey, closing, networking. Team to arrange room, distribute flyers, usher attendees. Kennedy to contact alumni. Brian suggested personalized Instagram posts (Ruffalo Noel Levitz, 2023). Stan started flyer/poster design. | Kennedy: Contact alumni by 15 April. Evans: Finalize logistics. Brian: Create Instagram posts. Stan: Design flyers/posters by Week 5. Rubina: Draft survey questions by 15 May. |

**Meetings Closed:** 1 April, 6 April, 13 April 2025

**Next Meeting:** 29 April (Tuesday)

**Minutes Confirmed:** [Signature] [Date]

\_\_Kennedy\_\_K\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_27/04/2025\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_