Master of Professional Studies in Information Science

Sponsored Project Proposal Form – Spring 2018

Please complete the following project proposal form to sponsor an MPS Project. This form will be used to determine if your project is appropriate for MPS students and whether it is of sufficient scope for a semester long project (~400-500 person-hours). We will assign teams with complementary skills based on the skills and experience you list in this form. We will also share most of this form with the students to help them make their top project choices before we assign the projects.

Please direct any questions to the MPS Project Coordinator: is-mps-projects@cornell.edu

Sponsor Name	The Signal, LP			Date	12-28-2017
Contact Name(s)	Harsh Singh	Email(s)	Harsh.singh@assurant.com	Phone	770-763-1951

Description of the Sponsor

The Signal, LP is a subsidiary of Assurant, Inc. Assurant, Inc. is a global provider of risk management products and services with its headquarters located in New York City. Its businesses provide a diverse set of specialty and niche-market insurance products within the property, casualty, extended device protection, and preneed insurance sectors. The company's three operating segments are Global Housing, Global Lifestyle, and Global Preneed.

Please indicate which academic year and semester you would like to propose your project.

Year	2018	Semester	☐ Fall	☒ Spring

Project Title

Assurant Digital Design System Development

Project Goal or Description

The MPS team will directly support the development of a Digital Design System in partnership with Assurant's User Experience and Design team.

A design System is a unified set of design principles and usability standards; paired with the UI design kits (patterns and components) to help teams build coherent products. It covers brand guidelines, voice and tone, layouts and grids, iconography, reusable components, coding conventions, style-guide and documentation. Examples of a few established design systems to align with the project vision – Microsoft Fluent, Lightening Design System, IBM Design Language, BBC GEL.

The MPS team will research and recommend the elements of a design system covering industry best practices, usability and compliance standards; supported with applicable research data to deliver highly adaptable digital solutions across the globe. The design system will support enterprise wide products that are spread across multiple geographies (North America, Latin America, Europe and APAC); which will provide an opportunity for the team to gain industry insights from various international markets.

Creating an efficient design system will allow Assurant to reduce the time required to design and develop new products thus resulting in significant monetary benefits for the organization.

Project benefits:
- ✓ MPS team's efforts will impact Assurant's digital transformation within the organization
- ✓ MPS team will contribute to the delivery of global enterprise solutions with best in class UX and visual design strategies
- ✓ MPS team will promote reusability of design assets for rapid product development
- ✓ MPS team's work will contribute to a strong brand awareness by maintaining consistency across products

What activities are necessary to achieve the project goal?

- Perform an analysis of the existing UX and design process to understand the gaps that can be solved by using a design system
- Research industry best practices, standards and latest trends (Nielsen Norman Group, HFI, Usability.gov and other recommended organizations)
- Partner with the Assurant UX and design team members to analyze the research findings and define design system elements
- Create a structure/architecture of the design system
- Utilize the Assurant supported technical solution to setup all the elements of a design system
- Define all the required artifacts (Brand elements, Content, Graphics, UI code etc.)
- Define and setup any supporting templates for the design system (Personas, Journey mapping, User Research, Usability Testing)

What outcome would determine that the project is a success? Do you expect specific deliverables?

- **Assessment** - Create a report that summarizes the analysis of the existing Assurant design process
- **Research** - Present the research findings and recommendations to the Assurant team on the format and structure to be followed for the new design system
- **Ideate** - Students will define each of the design elements that should exist within the digital system and document how they should be used across various web platforms
- **Design** - Create a high-fidelity prototype of the recommended design system
- **Develop** - Support with setting up the online design system platform

What are the skills and experience must the students already know to start work on the project?
Please be specific and keep in mind that students will be building their skills during the duration of the project.

- Advanced understanding in any of these specialized areas - User Experience and Usability, Human-Computer Interaction, Information Design, Visual Design and Front-end UI technologies
- Knowledge of user experience research techniques

What are the skills and experience required to complete the project that the students may learn while completing the project?

- Gain further understanding of the User Experience process and its application to create innovative digital solutions.
- Acquire hands-on experience on a Design System Management tool supported by Assurant.
- Opportunity to learn and work on various industry preferred design and prototyping tools (Sketch, Invision, Axure, Adobe Creative Suite); and develop a practical skill set.
- Paired design sessions working with award winning industry experts with 10+ years of experience in the industry.
- Participate in live peer review activities to discuss how to improve digital experiences.
- Learn how to facilitate a user testing session by shadowing user research professionals in our usability lab.
- Gain an understanding with research on latest trends in the user experience and service design areas.
- Gain and/or enhance their presentations skills when sharing information to the rest of the team.
- Gain insight into the challenge of aligning user needs with business objectives.

The project representative must be available 30 minutes per week for status reports, the interim report, and the final presentation. As the project sponsor, are you able to make this time commitment?
    ☒ **Yes. Please elaborate.**

Yes; we'll have a schedule of periodic checkpoints with the team to track progress and review any updates.

Some sponsors may choose to spend additional time with the student teams, e.g. phone contacts for monthly status discussions, reviewing research results, providing midpoint project feedback, and offering input to the final deliverables in advance of its completion. As the project sponsor, are you available to participate in these or any additional activities?
    ☒ **Yes. Please elaborate.**

Yes; the students will collaborate with the Assurant UX management and design team for several brainstorming sessions including review and feedback. The sessions will be proposed in alignment with the deliverables.

We also have several on-going peer-review sessions within the team and we will encourage students to participate on those sessions to expand their learning on real-life UX design challenges.

We will also support an onsite visit to our office in Atlanta for the students to further collaborate with the experienced team members.

The project representative needs to facilitate access to company resources as needed and approve expenses. As the project sponsor, are you able to facilitate access to such resources, should the need come up?
☒ **Yes. Please elaborate.**

Yes; we will provide assistance as necessary to access company resources dependent upon the students' needs.

Please consider other contributions listed below. Are you willing to make these contributions? (check all that apply)
   ☒ **Provide existing industry and company data as background at the beginning of the project.**
   ☐ **Pay one or more team members to travel to your location for initial briefing / work session / final presentation.**
Please elaborate.

Yes, we will share all available company data relevant to the project in order to help the students to achieve a successful project outcome.

Please send your completed project proposal to the MPS Project Coordinator: is-mps-projects@cornell.edu