

COM 223 - Semester Project Assignment & Portfolio Submission

Your assignment is to create, plan and organize, implement an event that will help to raise funds and/or awareness for your organization. Each group will set minimum goals and you will be graded on your progress in achieving them.

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Evaluation breakdown:

Your work on this project is 500 points and equals 50% of your semester grade. The breakdown for the project grade is (assignments are detailed later in this document):

- Instructor Project Assessment (achievement of team goals and assessment of role performance) - 75 points
- Team Portfolio - 50 points
- Campaign closeout meeting / presentation - 50 points
- 3 Peer Evaluations Written - 75 points
- Final Peer Evaluation Received - 25 points
- Agendas and Minutes (12 meetings) - 100 points
- Project proposal - 50 points
- Midterm assessment - 25 points
- Application paper - 50 points
- Organization evaluation - deductions for poor performance or communication

Step 1 – Develop your group identity.

Part of pushing through the Forming stage is to figure out who is on your team, what skills you all bring to the table, and start forming a group identity. The following items must be included in your **Project Proposal** and showcased on your portfolio website (items may be revised and improved as the semester progresses)

- **Decide on a team name.** Your group number will be supplemented by your team name.
- **Design a group logo.** I don't expect that you have a graphic designer in your group. The logo can be professional grade or a crayon drawing. You just need to design one, turn it in and post it to your website (I'd be happy to scan a digital copy for you if you need one).
- **Decide on team jobs.** There are 6 required team jobs. Groups with more than 6 people may elect (but are not required) to have two Webmasters or create other positions as needed. Groups with 5 members may have individuals share the Historian job in addition to their other job. Each job has an impact on the group's Instructor Assessment score, but the group is responsible for ensuring that all work is completed and submitted on time. Jobs may change during the project, and individual job holders may delegate to other group members as needed. Poor work by these individuals will reflect on the entire group and impact the group's final project grade.
 - **Liaison** - the person who communicates on the group's behalf with the instructor / teaching assistants / organization. The point here is to make sure that communication between the group and outside entities is professional and coordinated well. Liaisons should follow the syllabus policy for emailing your contact person. *How this person may impact your grade:* the Liaison represents you. Poor or impolite communication, un-retuned messages, commitment to appointments without follow through can all negatively impact your Organization evaluation and Instructor evaluation.
 - **Webmaster** - the person who is in charge of maintaining the website. This person doesn't necessarily have to do ALL the updates, but s/he is in charge of ensuring everything is done and submitting the final product for grading. Groups may opt to assign up to two webmasters. *How this person may impact your grade:* The website portfolio should be regularly updated and counts for 10% of your final grade.
 - **Recorder** - the person who preps agendas and takes minutes at meetings. S/he is also responsible for making sure that agendas and minutes are submitted to ReggieNet and the team website. *How this person may impact your grade:* Agendas and Minutes are a category in the Instructor Evaluation. Moreover, the submission of incomplete and/or inaccurate information falls within the course's Academic Dishonesty Policy.
 - **Treasurers** - this is a two-person job. The treasurers are responsible for collecting and keeping track of the group's fundraising money, donor information (for tax purposes) and the volunteer time log. They are also responsible for submitting deposits to the organization and keeping track of purchase receipts to ensure that individuals who spend money on the project are reimbursed. Both Treasurers must sign off on all group financial transactions. In the Resources section you'll find a sample ledger you may download and use. *How this person may impact your grade:* funds should be properly accounted for and the achievement of fundraising goals is a major component of the Midterm Evaluation and the Instructor Evaluation. Moreover, the submission of incomplete and/or inaccurate information regarding fundraising falls within the course's Academic Dishonesty Policy. This is a big job and requires two reliable, honest people to complete it.
 - **Historian** - this person is responsible for getting pictures and/or video of the group's work as well as collecting project artifacts for the webmaster to post to the website. This must include all of your fundraising adventures and your work for the organization. The Historian ensures that all claims in the Portfolio are supported by evidence. *How this person may impact your grade:* photos and an accurate depiction of the group's work will be necessary for both the final presentation grade and the

website grade. Without this visual evidence of your work, all your claims are in question.

- **Establish your ground rules.** Each group should write up a list of agreed to rules and expectations for working with the group. We'll do this in class, but please make sure to post it to your website.
- **Set your goals for the semester.** Be honest and realistic about what your group wants / has time to accomplish this semester. It's better to set achievable goals than to set yourselves up for more work than you can handle. Make sure you are correctly utilizing the SMART goals guidelines discussed in class. You're graded on the quality of the goals you set. Your primary goal is \$100/person (or item equivalent if you do a donation drive) or 10 hours/person. Secondary goals are up to you and we will discuss these in the Goal Setting activity.
- **Build a team portfolio website.** Once your jobs are assigned, your Webmaster should oversee construction of the team site. I suggest you use Google Sites or Wix for this (it's easy and free). You could also use a Google Drive folder. I would discourage a Tumblr page or Facebook group (they are limited on how you can organize documents). Please email me a link to your website/portfolio so I can add it to our list on ReggieNet. I strongly suggest that everyone on the team has the access and ability to update the site. Because of all the free options available, I cannot reimburse any hosting expenses your team might choose to incur. *Please do NOT post the following to your team site:*
 - Team contact info (especially phone numbers – you will likely get spam texts).
 - Your last names
 - Names or contact info for your donors
 - Peer evaluations
 - Exact meeting location

Step 2 – learn about the organization and write your proposal

This semester, your team will be working with one of three possible organizations: Wishbone Canine Rescue, Boys and Girls Club of Bloomington/Normal or Home Sweet Home Mission. All three are based locally and are run by folks who understand the course and are responsive to the needs of the project. You are welcome to talk to or visit the organizations before you submit your proposal (but it might be difficult to schedule a time that works for the whole team).

Your project will require that you identify a need of the organization (or the community it serves), strategize a way to address that need, and then implement your plan. Your proposal will serve to introduce yourselves, and then present and justify your plan. The proposal will be submitted in a survey (one per team), but you should be prepared to address the following questions:

- What is your team name?
- Where will you be meeting?
- Who will be performing each required role?
- What is the URL of your portfolio / website?
- What are your team rules?
- Rank the three organizations in terms of preference (1 = first choice)
- *The rest of these questions only apply to your first choice organization:*
 - Present, in your own words, an overview of the organization – who is the community they serve and what services do they provide? This should be about 300-500 words.

- Address a problem or social issue this organization deals with. Where do they need help? Here you will probably need to do some research to help explain the issue (make sure you cite your sources). This should be about 500-700 words.
- What would your team like to do to help combat this problem / issue? Here is where you connect your plan to fulfilling a need of the organization.
- What are your three SMART goals?
- What is your plan for achieving these goals?
- What is your *rough* timeline for achieving these goals?
- What potential problems do you anticipate?
- What is your fallback plan? What is your “point of no return” date for implementing the fallback plan? (ex: “if we have not achieved 50% of our goal by March 1, we will switch to Plan B.”).

Don't worry too much about committing to a plan – you can revise it based on feedback from the organization, and you'll have another opportunity to revise during the midterm assessment period.

Step 3 – Enact your plans and assess as you go.

As you formulate and execute your project, you will be asked to post the following to your website (some require cross-posting to ReggieNet for grading. Please be aware of submission requirements).

- **Construct a PERT or GANTT chart of your plan.** We will cover PERT in class and this assignment is intended to serve as a revision to your initial timeline (although your team may use GANTT if you're more comfortable with that format). You will be expected to post your PERT or GANTT chart to your website and update it throughout the semester. The team's PERT or GANTT chart should be posted to your website about a week after we discuss how to do them in class. Don't be picky - you can always refine and improve them as the rest of the semester progresses.
- **Submit Agendas and Minutes** – for your weekly meetings you will be asked to submit an agenda no less than 1 day in advance and minutes no more than 1 day after the meeting to me and each member of the group. My copies will be submitted to ReggieNet for ease of grading.
- **Evaluate your peers** – three times throughout the semester you will be asked to evaluate each of your group mates. In order to get credit, you must complete evaluations for each member of your group; no partial credit will be given. (for obvious reasons, peer evals will be kept between me and individuals - you will not post these to your portfolio site) To see how your peers rated you, check the "Feedback" section on ReggieNet about 2-3 weeks after submission. Don't forget, your groups can earn extra credit for submitting every peer eval on time all semester (refer to the syllabus for more info).
- **Midterm Assessment** – At midterm your group will sit down evaluate your progress thus far. Your assessment and establishment of new goals and benchmarks will be evaluated to give you an idea of the grade you're earning and prompt you to develop strategies for improvement. A hard, honest look at your work to date is crucial to ensure that your final outcome is solid.
- **Keep track of all project artifacts** – Make sure you keep copies of all of your flyers, brochures, etc. Take pictures or short video clips often and add them to your site (make sure you get pictures of your team meetings, any fundraising events). You'll have a few small assignments where you're asked to video record meetings - make sure you keep those videos for your site!

Step 5 – Analysis and synthesis

After your group has achieved its goals, you will then reflect on the total experience and report back to the class on what happened and what you learned via your website portfolio (which you have been diligently updating all semester). Portfolios may be submitted as soon as your group is finished with the project. If you're on top of things all semester, all you'll need to add at the end of the project is your final assessment.

Portfolio Checklist:

You may submit your Portfolio to the Assignments section of ReggieNet **by pasting a link to your website in the submission box**. I will be able to view your portfolio anytime, but will not grade your portfolio until I receive that link. Format and layout of your site are up to you; just make sure everything is easy to locate on its own, not just as part of the proposal or video.

- Group Information ([Step 2](#))
 - Team members (first names only) and formal roles
 - Team name and logo
 - Team Charter and Mission Statement.
- Required Project Information (Steps 2-5)
 - A copy of your Project Proposal
 - A link to your team's fundraising site (if applicable)
 - Your team's original and revised goals, with an explanation of why they evolved
 - Original proposed timeline and PERT / GANTT Chart (with changes and revisions to your plan noted)
 - Agendas and Minutes (minus location detail and last names)
 - A copy of your Midterm Assessment report
 - A clear breakdown of the funds raised by each team member and log of volunteer hours (it should all add up to the project total you're reporting). This can be your ledger, but make sure it's CLEAR what everyone did. The total reported should match the total on your donation site or volunteer hour total reported by BGCBN. Don't inflate numbers here.
 - A copy of your Campaign Closeout Report
 - Video presentation (if applicable). **Figure out how you plan to post the presentation before you start working on it.** I can offer some suggestions for hosting your video if you don't want it to be public, so talk to me about options.
 - Correspondence between group members and the organizations that you think highlights the quality or quantity of your work. (Make sure to remove / redact all last names and personal info. You don't have to include anything on your site that you think is too personal, but please File Drop anything you think should be considered as part of your grade).
 - All advertising you did for your event (flyers, press releases, facebook groups, etc.)
 - Copies of any press coverage you received (if applicable)
 - Photos, videos and artifacts from your meetings and events (sign in, programs, etc.) - remember your historian must be able to produce photographic evidence of your events if asked.
 - Anything else that might illustrate the quantity / quality of your work.

It takes quite a bit of time to calculate and post project grades at the end of the semester. I'm always happy to critique your work up to 4 days prior the due date to help you earn a higher score. Once grades are released for an assignment you have 10 days to appeal using the policy in the syllabus.

Project Rules

Needless to say, the expectations are high and achieving our goals takes a lot of hard work. Cutting corners becomes tempting but as explained in the syllabus, we have some simple ground rules for the project. If you violate these rules you will be in a world of trouble (penalties include point deductions, failure on the project, failure in the course and code of conduct disciplinary hearings which can lead to University sanctions).

1. Do the work to meet your goal

- All teams have the same initial goal of \$100/person in the team. That can mean volunteer hours, in-kind donations (like a clothing drive), or contributing a service the organization would otherwise have to pay for. Your treasurers should work with me to determine the value of the work you do.
- Everyone in the group should make equal-ish contributions to the group's goal.
- You may not accept family donations to achieve your goal. Talk to me if you have a family member who is determined to give, but I'd prefer that you not rely on family alone. They do enough already.
- Volunteer hours may not account for more than 50% of your group's goal achievement
- Sponsorship from a single donor may not count for more than 50% of the group's goal achievement (although once you reach your goal, sponsorship money will be considered as part of the exceeding goals bonus).

2. Be honest in your group work - all group work submitted for evaluation must be accurate

- You may not spend money out of pocket - if the group needs to purchase supplies check with me first about the procedure and to get a tax exemption form. All purchases must be reimbursed out of group profits, and receipts must be posted to the team site and noted in the team ledger. Members may not "donate" their purchases to the group goal. Please don't pressure a team member to do so.
- All funds collected must be donated to your organization
- All credit cards must be processed by the donor with the organization. You may not take or handle credit card transactions (you really, really don't want that liability).
- All team documents must accurately reflect what is happening in the group. If you misrepresent events and then need my help later, it will be difficult for me to do much. Any incorrect information - even something as simple as marking a team member as "present" when they miss a meeting - violates the course's academic honesty policy.

3. Represent the University and the organization well - the events you host must not reflect poorly on them or yourself.

- You must follow the University's Code of Student Conduct when hosting on- and off-campus events for this class. This includes the alcohol policy. There are ways to host events with alcohol that won't earn you a zero on your project or get you thrown out of school. Please talk to me if you have an idea so I can help you stay out of trouble.
- Keep yourselves safe. Think carefully about ways to raise funds that do not put your team members in danger. I cannot allow Designated Drivers (they violate city ordinance and are unsafe) and strongly advise against late night food sales.
- Please keep track of the names and contact info for donors over \$25 and anyone who asks for tax documentation for their donation. It wouldn't be a bad idea for your group to send personal thank you notes to your donors, too.
- Because this is a class project, please err on the side of planning early and asking a lot of questions. Students who have had trouble with their projects did so because they didn't

plan ahead and didn't get the necessary signatures to do what they wanted to do on campus. **Please note that to book space on campus you need to have the paperwork finalized 10 business days before your event. Make sure you plan ahead!**

- Please be gracious to the on-campus folks who help us with this project - a lot of people go out of their way to help and not charge us for things we should be paying for. Please be considerate about returning calls and meeting deadlines and be kind if they occasionally have to tell us no.
- When interacting with the community and volunteering at the organization, remember that you're dealing with folks who might donate a lot of money to the organization and might be in a position to offer you a job or an internship in the future. Look at it that way, and you'll find it's easier to be polite and professional.

4. Plan to attend your team's events

- Obviously there are conflicts that take priority like a family wedding or military service. If you have a legitimate conflict, then talk to me and your group early (and plan on providing documentation of this conflict). Otherwise, you are expected to be present and participating at all of your team's events.
- With few exceptions, work is generally not considered a legitimate conflict because you have enough notice to make arrangements. I'd be happy to provide a letter if you need proof of attending a class event. But again, plan ahead - talk to me and your team and hopefully we can work something out.
- I will expect you to provide photographic evidence of your attendance on your portfolio site.
- You are expected to attend lecture and attend ALL team meetings. I am giving you class time for meetings, so you have zero excuses for missing anything. Please make sure you understand the syllabus policy on absences at team meetings.