

OM 386.4 (03895)
OPERATIONS PRACTICUM
Monday 3:30-6:30 p.m. , CBA 4.342
Spring 2007

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Operations Practicum provides a hands-on experience in tackling real-world consulting projects in supply chain and operations management. The projects are typically sponsored by members of the University of Texas Supply Chain Consortium. Although each project is unique, they all involve analyzing processes for creating and delivering products / services and recommending improvements. Groups of 3-6 students will manage a substantial project with a well-known firm in order to hone their abilities in operational strategy, process analysis and design, supply-chain management, and total quality management. The spirit of the class will be very much “learning-by-doing.”

COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. Provide the student with an understanding of the operational challenges faced by managers in the industry through a hands-on project.
2. Enhance the student’s skills in solving problems in collaborative environments.
3. Prepare the student for managing projects with demanding deadlines in a complex organization.
4. Develop your skills in managing a consultant-client relationship.

You should take this class if you would like to . . .

1. Learn more about operations after taking the core class.
2. Solve practical problems in process analysis or supply-chain management.
3. Integrate your operations and information management toolkits.
4. Differentiate yourself for the job market with real-world experience in the application of cutting-edge techniques.
5. Take a closer look at some promising prospective employers.

LEARNING METHODOLOGY

From the beginning, we will focus on making rapid and substantial progress on projects through regular one-on-one meetings with the instructor and project sponsors. I will work very closely with the teams to offer help in solving the problem. However, it is your job to meet the high expectations of our project sponsors.

PROJECT ASSIGNMENTS

I try to allow students to work on projects in which they are most interested. In mid-November, information about the specific project proposals will be distributed. Any student that is interested should submit a list of preferences among the projects and a copy of his or her resume by 27 November, 2006. My goal is to assign students to teams by the first week of December, 2006. The purpose of this is to allow the student teams to reach out to their project sponsors to schedule kick-off meetings as close to the beginning of the Spring Semester as possible.

CLASS MEETINGS

After the initial class session, we will have only a few sessions as an entire class. Instead, I will meet for one hour each week with each group to discuss progress on their specific project. These meetings will be scheduled during the scheduled class time, M 3:30-6:30.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

The final grade in this class will be based on your demonstrated performance as determined jointly by the collaborating firms and myself. Because each project will be performed as a team, all members of a team will receive the same score for all criteria except for the peer review, the evaluation of which is described below.

The criteria are weighted as follows:

- Project document of understanding and Gantt Chart (see description below) 20%
- Project progress reports (weekly) 20%
- Mid-term project review 10%
- Final project presentation 10%
- Final project final deliverable 10%
- Peer review 30%

Project document of understanding and Gantt chart (rough draft due February 5, final draft due February 12)

A key deliverable for this class is the document of understanding. This document is a statement of work outlining the project scope and detailed schedule (including deliverables for each week). It describes clearly what the project is and what it is not. The Gantt chart graphically outlines when each task will be performed. *A first draft of the document and the Gantt chart will be submitted to the project sponsors (the company sponsors and myself) by 9 AM on the first date listed above.* Discussions with the projects sponsors during the following several days will help

you finalize the document. The final version of the document is due on the second date listed above. Example DOUs and Gantt charts are on my web page.

Project progress reports

Beginning the week immediately after the final version of the DOU is turned in, each team will e-mail me a weekly one-page progress report (as a Word attachment) that outlines the tasks completed during the week, percentage of the project work completed, roadblocks encountered, and outstanding issues. This will be due by 5:00 on the day before our weekly meetings. These reports are a major mechanism by which you communicate to me and the client about the value that you are adding. Therefore, they should be taken quite seriously. *Late progress reports will only get partial grades.*

Mid-term project review (targeted for the week beginning on March 19)

A mid-term project review meeting will be held with the company executive sponsors as well as myself. The team will present its progress to obtain feedback and suggestions for the direction of future effort.

Final project presentation (week beginning on April 30)

Each team will present its results during the last class session for the benefit of the other teams. In addition, the team will present its final results for the project sponsor. The presentation grade will be based on both content and delivery. The purpose of these presentations is to develop the skill to make professional presentations.

Class project final deliverable (week beginning on April 30)

The project final deliverable may be a report, a white paper, a case study, or a decision support tool, or some combination of these items. The quality of these tools will be assessed jointly by the company sponsors and myself. The process followed during the project will also be considered in awarding the final grade.

Peer Reviews (March 19 and May 4)

Teamwork is a crucial element of this class. Each consulting practicum will be performed as a team. Your evaluations will also depend on how well you work as a team. That said, your final individual grade on the team project will also depend on **an evaluation of your team participation** by your fellow team members. The team evaluations will be anonymous and confidential (seen only by the instructor). You will assess each team member (including yourself) based on the following criteria:

- **Participation in team events:** did the team member participate in most, if not all of the assigned team assignments?
- **Fair workload:** did the team member take on his or her share of the overall work load?
- **Quality of work:** was the quality of the team member's work high, adequate, or inadequate (required re-working by another team member). Evaluate written work, presentation skills, and in-class exercises.
- **Team interaction skills:** did the team member interact effectively with other members of the team? Did the member handle conflicts constructively? Did the member communicate often with other team members?

We will perform one peer review at the mid-point of the semester and another at the end. The purpose of the first review is to give team members who are not making an adequate contribution an opportunity to improve.

ADDITIONAL CLASS POLICIES

- *The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you have a condition (e.g., learning disability, chronic medical condition, etc.) or holiday that needs accommodation, please see me early in the term so that we can take appropriate steps. For more information about the University's policy, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-4641 TTY.*
- The team project requires you to assess the performance of others. This assessment is a privilege and a responsibility. Your assessments must focus on specific behaviors or issues, not on the personality of others. Irresponsible assessments will be discounted and removed from consideration in calculating individual team project grades.
- The responsibilities for both students and faculty with regard to the Honor System are described in the Graduate School of Business Survival Guide, pages A-22 through A-27. By teaching this course, I observe all of the faculty responsibilities as described in the Survival Guide. By enrolling in this class, you have agreed to observe all of the student responsibilities described in that document.