

MODELS OF CLIENT BASED PROJECTS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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INTRODUCTION

This session responds to the call for papers topic of student development through client-based projects. Hennessey, Cours, and Heisley have extensive experience with and insights into an impressive multitude of models of client-based projects. This session reviews the general experience of the three presenters with a variety of models. The presentation offers a comparative analysis of best practices and outcomes in terms of student learning experience, quality of outcomes, relative workload on the faculty involved, and goodwill to be leveraged in the community.

TEAM SIZE, NUMBER OF CLIENTS, AND TYPE OF OUTPUT

Heisley presents three models of client-based projects she has supervised. She has frequently served as an advisor for small teams of UCLA MBA students in The Anderson School Field Study Program. Each team of four students has its own client and produces its own report. The second model entails an interdisciplinary faculty team supervising 60 UCLA MBA students' field study project for a Fortune 500 client. Students cooperatively produce a single report. In the third model, 150-280 CSUN undergraduate Introduction to Marketing students engage with a single client to produce a marketing plan. Students work in teams of 4-5 and each team presents its own report. Heisley presents her experience with these three models along with her evaluation of the various strengths and weaknesses of each model.

COMMUNITY SERVICE LEARNING AND TWO TYPES OF CLIENT-BASED FIELD PROJECTS IN MARKETING

This discussion will focus on two types of client-based community service learning projects. The first is a Small Business Consulting course that is completely oriented around a project completed for a local small business owner, entrepreneur, or not for profit organization. Under this model, students deliberately choose the course because of the service learning opportunities. In the second type of project, a client-based marketing plan project is

used in the principles of marketing course. In this case, students typically enroll in the course without a priori knowledge of the experiential service-learning component. Highlighting comparisons and contrasts will permit a discussion of lessons learned and best practices. A review of service learning in the marketing field will be included.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS

Discussion will focus on two hands-on learning opportunities made possible through local government partnerships. Both projects teamed faculty from a variety of disciplines and students in a variety of courses working under competitively bid contracts. In the first project, teams developed a business plan and prototype model for a retail store chain to showcase the Los Angeles area. Subsequently, under a similar team approach, a larger scale multi-year project was undertaken to assist the City of Los Angeles in redeveloping a run-down commercial district. Plans and programs to revitalize a commercial area next to campus were adopted after several years of government delays. Work has now begun in accordance with these plans and programs. Similar work is now continuing for a second district but with development of programs emanating from iterative work across semesters and courses taught by fewer faculty team members and with contact centered on the grass-roots beneficiaries rather than government contact directly.