Group Communication
Semester Service Learning Group Project

This semester-long group service learning project will result in a group presentation and paper. It counts for 15% of your final course grade (see the course syllabus). The project is completed in phases that are designed to help you to learn, experientially, about group processes that include: information management, decision making, managing leader-follower relationships, conflict management, developing group presentations, and more.

What follows are a specific description of phase one (timing & tasks) as well as a general outline of the basics of the end-of-the-term project write-up and final presentation. The specifics of phases Two and Three will be given to the group in class.

Phase One (Weeks 3 – 4)

Beginning during class time in Week 3 your group will be given time in class to meet and begin the project. The first step of the project has two parts: (a) design a plan to facilitate your group's level of cohesiveness and (b) conduct a brainstorming session, following the guidelines in Myers & Anderson (MA), page 131), in response to a task prompt (see below).

a. Develop an informal plan to increase your group's cohesiveness. What kinds of activities might the group engage in to help increase feelings of closeness? As we progress in the readings you will notice there are downsides to feeling too close as well as too distant. Informal plans are typically not written, but for this assignment the group should list at least **five** activities that if executed would likely result in an increase in group cohesion.

b. Conduct a brainstorming techniques (see MA, p. 131) to generate a **written list of five responses to the prompt**:

> **Old Dominion University would be a better school for current and/or future students if _____.**

Notes:

- **All** members should agree that these five responses are actually warranted (i.e., there is a perceived warrant for change in the particular area)—a consensus.
- Each of the five responses should worded in such as a way that is limited enough so that the group could, if asked, actually develop and execute a formal plan to begin to realize the goal(s).
- Each of the five choices is meaningful-enough keep the entire group interested in addressing the issue over the course of the term.

Submit your group's list of responses by the end of class (Week 5). It should contain the names of the group's participants, their UIN #'s, and your group identifier (number or the new name you plan to use as a group identifier.

Phase Two (Weeks 5-6)

This phase is designed to increase the groups' information management skills as well as critical-analytical thinking skills and to continue to advance the project. Details will be provided to the group in a handout to be given in class.

Phase Three (Weeks 7-13)

This phase is designed to increase the groups' decision-making, task allocation, task management, time management, as well as problem-solving, and presentation skills. This phase brings closure to the project in a final observed meeting as well as a written report.

Presentation and Report (Weeks 14 & 15)

During weeks 14 & 15 groups will be given 30 minutes to conduct a final group meeting (observed by the class in a fish bowl format) where they present their findings and come to closure. The meeting requires a formal agenda and submission of a group paper that is executive summary of not more than 5 pages (not including references, tables, figures, and title page). Specifics of the paper will be provided in a handout given to the group in Week 7.

Grading Criteria for the semester project:

- Project demonstrates that the group has addressed the required elements of each of the three phases.
- Project demonstrates that the group has attempted to integrate course concepts and theories into each phase of the project
- Group attempts to model optimal group communication and decision making skills during final discussion.
- Agenda follows formats given in class and is well-written.
- Paper is well-written, contains the required elements, shows input from all group members, is creative, and properly documented (using APA style).