

MAJOR PROJECT IN A PLANNING COURSE

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The major paper/project is worth 30% of your final grade and will be due on Friday, December 10th. However, the week of December 6th through the 10th will be set aside for discussing your paper/projects. I will explain how such “discussions” will work.

The primary purpose of this assignment is to give you the opportunity to combine your interests in a given area of human services with the important skills that are necessary for you to achieve in this field. On one hand there is much flexibility in that you can choose the particular topic or field that interests you most. On the other hand, you will have to work within a structured framework established by me. There are at least 4 major guidelines that must be followed:

1. The completed paper/project will consist of about 15 pages typed double-spaced.
2. You may complete your paper/project on your own or work in a team of two people. No team can consist of more than two people.
3. Your final paper must meet the following standards:
 - A title page with your name(s), title of your paper/project, name and number of the course, and the date.
 - A page with a table of contents that identifies the sections of your paper and the page numbers where each section begins.
 - A one-page abstract or executive summary that describes what your paper is about, why you did it, what you learned, and whatever recommendations you would make to improve the issue or topic you wrote about. You will need to make a number of copies of this page because you will be sharing it with some of your classmates during the week of Dec. 6th.
 - About 15 pages (more or less) typed double-spaced. Any exhibits, examples, appendices etc. may or may not count as part of the 15 pages, depending on the topic and project that is selected. This needs to be negotiated with the instructor. Usually, such items should be placed in the back of the manuscript and before the bibliography page, the last page. Such items should be labeled Appendix A, B, C, etc. and referred to as such in your table of contents and throughout the body of your paper when you refer to them.
 - Bibliography. This is the last section on your page and consists of whatever sources you used in completing your paper/project. The length of this will vary some from student to student.

How Do I Begin This Assignment?

1. After reading this document thoroughly, grab a bag of snacks, pick up your favorite drink, find a nice big tree on campus and just sit underneath that tree and Think! Think about who you are, what really interests you, and what you would really like to do with your life. Then think about choosing a topic for completing this assignment.
2. You may not reach any conclusions in your first trip to the tree or wherever you chose to go but keep thinking and challenging yourself.
3. A good way to approach this assignment is to view it as something you would be proud of and would be enthusiastic about sharing it with those who may either be considering hiring you or admitting you to graduate school. It is common practice for some employers or grad schools to request writing samples. Therefore, try to think of working on this paper/project in those terms.

What Are My Options?

You have five (5) options from which to choose once you have identified your particular interest or topic on which you want to focus. You will, however, have some flexibility within any one of these five (5) options as you complete this assignment. But it is important that you make sure you are going about it correctly. Therefore, you should ask me questions if you have any doubts about what you are doing. Below are the options. We will need to communicate with each other throughout the semester.

1. Complete a grant proposal. Grant writing is an excellent skill to develop and something that you want to get on your resume as early as possible in your career. To complete this assignment you must first decide exactly what it is you want to do. Therefore, I suggest you operate under one or the other scenarios offered below.

Scenario #1 - Assume that you have found a small grants RFP (Request for Proposal) not to exceed \$20,000 for which you want to apply. Under this scenario the RFP is only for college juniors or seniors who want to set up a “small but effective program that helps better their community.” Community can be your home town, the Uconn campus, an elementary school in Willimantic etc. Example: Apply for a grant to fund a program designed to curb binge drinking at Uconn.

Scenario #2 - Under this scenario you must assume that you are fully employed in either a state-funded human service agency (such as DCF) or a private non-profit organization (such as the Hole-in the-Wall Gang Camp). You are more restricted under this scenario by the particular services offered by the agency or organization. Please note, it must be a real agency organization. On the other hand, there is more money to go after in that the range of the grant runs from \$50,000 to \$75,000. Example: Set up a parenting education program for female prisoners in Connecticut.

Note: To complete this assignment you need to visit the Foundation Center web site at <http://fdncenter.org/> and complete the course on writing a grant proposal. You are required to follow the format for completing a grant proposal that is presented in the course at this web site. You may also want to look at books, articles, etc. that offer advice on writing grant proposals.

2. Create an all-day workshop. Under this choice there is no need to seek money. The money is available. However, what you need to do is choose the topic for your workshop, identify your audience, state your objectives (what you expect the participants to get out of the workshop), design a pre and post-test exercise to determine if your workshop made a difference, create various exercises and explanations of exercises that you will do in your workshop, and create an evaluation form that the participants will fill out at the end of the day. You must also include a brochure that you will create that advertises your workshop and would, in real life, be sent out to human service agencies and organizations throughout Connecticut.

Example: Detecting and addressing child abuse.

Note: To complete this option you must interview a person who is experienced in creating and conducting such workshops. The name of the individual and a transcript of your interview must be included in your final packet. Also, I suggest you explore books, articles etc. that offer suggestions for running workshops.

3. Create a web page for a human service program or a social problem or issue. I see this particular option as being primarily hypothetical in nature. That is, you will create a make-believe agency or organization (i.e. Mansfield Associates: Services for Our Community’s Youth) and then describe its history and purpose, what it does, how it is structured, how many on the staff, the size of its budget, the services it provides, its current projects, examples of some success stories, links to other sites (these should be real) and so forth. I see this as being very conceptual. Thus, as I turn each page it should be organized as if I were clicking a mouse. So think about your format, even the colors you would use, the size of your print, and whether or not you want to use pictures, illustrations etc.

Note: If anyone believes they are sufficiently skilled in doing a real web page on the computer, they should see me immediately. We need to talk and put you in touch with someone who needs your services. However, I only see it on paper at this point.

4. A Press Packet for Media Day at the Agency. This option, like the one above (#3) will most likely be hypothetical in format. That is, create an agency and assume that you are in charge of media relations. Also assume that your agency is about to celebrate its 10th anniversary and, in doing so, has invited the media (press and broadcasting) to attend the celebration. What you need to figure out is how to handle this assignment. In short, you need to prepare a “press packet” that describes your agency, its structure, the services it provides, its budget (how much money it has), information about the staff and the clients they serve and some of its success stories over the years. You will need to do the following for sure:

1. Prepare a statement announcing your 10th anniversary celebration that will be circulated to the entire media.
2. Prepare a news release that will be included with the announcement you send out. The purpose of the news release is to entice the media to run a story about your upcoming celebration.
3. Prepare a press packet for the day of the event that includes another news release that describes the celebration itself and some information about your agency - its history and its services etc.
4. A schedule of the day’s events, including everything from “coffee and donut time,” the actual news conference itself

in which the Director speaks and answers questions, tours of your facilities, and opportunities for interviews with both staff members and clients. And don't forget photo op time. What picture do you want to see on the front page of the newspaper the next day.

Note: For those who choose this topic I will give you more advice on how to prepare a media packet.

5. Plan an all-day conference for the School of Family Studies. To complete this option you will need to choose a topic (i.e. parenting, child care, family law, divorce, domestic violence, child abuse, etc.), decide where on campus you want to hold it, how many people you want to attend, how you will advertise your conference, how the conference will be organized (keynote speakers, panels?), explain how much it will cost for everything from snacks and a box lunch to stipends for speakers and so forth. This is "for real" in the sense that you must include real people as your speakers and **no speaker can be from the School of Family Studies**. You will also need to explain why you picked certain people to be your speakers or panel participants and what the topics of the keynote talks will be as well as the titles of the panels will be held. You need to prepare an outline of the day's schedule and provide examples of what will be given to each person attending the conference.

Note: Conference planning can be a very challenging and exciting career. What I would like to do with the students who choose this topic is to set up a meeting with someone on campus who plans conferences. There is such a division on campus that consists of career professionals who plan conferences here.

Important Notes/Dates

1. If anyone does not find a home with any of the five (5) options presented above, then he or she should see me immediately. I am open to super creative ideas.
2. You must make your choice by Oct. 22nd. Assignment is due on December 10th.

Teaching Note

This major project was prepared for a planning and managing human services course consisting of about 50 students. Because many graduates of the School of Family Studies enter the human service field, it is important that they be exposed to some planning techniques and learn how to improve their problem solving skills. Other options for this assignment can easily be inserted, depending on the preferences of the instructor.