The Association for Information Systems (AIS) Special Interest Group for IT Project Management (SIGITProjMgmt) will globally promote and facilitate the creation, presentation and publication of research examining all facets of IT project management, including pedagogical issues. SIGITProjMgmt will also strive to be the global leader in linking and integrating IT project management research and practice.

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Letter From the President
Thank you to all that attended, participated, submitted, and reviewed papers for the Fifth International Research Workshop on IT Project Management that was held in St. Louis, Missouri, USA on December 11, 2010.

We learned about our colleagues’ research via presentations from 14 researchers, sharing ideas during networking breaks, and enjoying a nice Italian dinner at a local restaurant. Also during the workshop was our annual business meeting in which we held our first officer elections. Alanah Mitchell was elected as the Communications and Publicity Chair, Lorraine Lee was elected as Treasurer, and I was elected as President.

This upcoming year holds many exciting opportunities for those that are interested in sharing their research or becoming more involved with our SIG. SIGITProjMgmt is sponsoring a track at ECIS 2011 in Helsinki, Finland, and we appreciate all of those that submitted papers and are reviewing manuscripts for the track. We hope you will participate by attending sessions at ECIS. SIGITProjMgmt is also sponsoring a minitrack on IT Project Management at AMCIS 2011 in Detroit, Michigan. Submit your research papers by February 17th. Our Sixth International Research Workshop on IT Project Management will be held in Shanghai, China in December in conjunction with ICIS. Submissions will be due August 15th. We will share more information with you about the workshop in the coming months.

I hope that you will be involved in the SIG by submitting your research, participating in the pedagogy sub-committee, reviewing manuscripts, or sharing your ideas for the SIG with any of the officers.

Stacie Petter (spetter@mail.unomaha.edu)
SIGITProjMgmt President
University of Nebraska at Omaha
SIG ITProjMgmt Updates

SUMMARY OF THE 5TH ANNUAL IRWITPM

The 5th International Research Workshop on IT Project Management (IRWITPM) included 11 high quality completed research papers and three research-in-progress papers. This workshop was held December 11th, 2010 in St. Louis, MO. Select papers from the workshop were fast tracked for consideration in a special section of an issue of the Scandinavian Journal of Information Systems.

Visit the IRWITPM archive website to review the Workshop Program, the Workshop Proceedings, and photos from the event (http://sites.google.com/site/irwitpm/).

ELECTION NEWS FROM THE MEMBERSHIP AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS CHAIR

This year, three leadership posts were up for election: President, Treasurer and Communications Chair. Voting took place this past December at the preICIS workshop on IT project management. The following SIG members were unanimously elected:

President: Stacie Petter, University of Nebraska at Omaha  
Treasurer: Lorraine Lee, University of North Carolina Wilmington  
Communications Chair: Alanah Mitchell, Appalachian State University

PEDAGOGY WORKING GROUP BEGINS

Following extensive interest at the December meeting of the SIG at ICIS, the pedagogy working group has begun with an initial group of six people. The object of this working group is to encourage the spread of good pedagogical practices and materials throughout the SIG. Hopefully, this will be a self-organizing group, but Mike Cuellar, Secretary of the SIG (mcuellar@nccu.edu), is acting as the coordinator pro tem.

As a beginning, an outline for a wiki on the aisnet.org site has been created. The initial thinking is that it could be a place to post various items of interest such as syllabi, textbook reviews, articles etc. The link is as follows: http://education.aisnet.org/pedagogy/index.php?title=Project_Management_Course_Resources_Page

You will need to be an AIS member to access it. We encourage all members of the SIG to contribute to this page. To do so, follow the instructions on registering as an editor and make your changes in the best open source manner! We look forward to your contributions! Let 1000 flowers bloom!

VIRTUAL PEDAGOGY CONFERENCE INTEREST

Another thought that was discussed at the SIG leadership meeting is how to facilitate a meeting next year when ICIS is going to be in Shanghai. Since many of us will not be able to get funding or self-fund a trip to China, it might be of interest to have a virtual Project Management Pedagogy conference around that time. By using Elluminate or other such technology, we could have virtual presentation sessions on various teaching techniques, etc. If you are interested in participating or helping to organize such a conference, please let Mike Cuellar know. He can be reached at mcuellar@nccu.edu.
**Upcoming Events**

**ECIS 2011 Track on IT Project Management**

SIGITProjectMgmt will be sponsoring a track on IT Project Management (ITProjMgmt) at ECIS 2011 in Helsinki, Finland. For more details about the conference and the track visit the ECIS website: [http://www.ecis2011.fi/](http://www.ecis2011.fi/). If you have any questions, please email: Stacie Petter, University of Nebraska at Omaha, spetter@unomaha.edu

**AMCIS 2011 Mini-Track on IT Project Management**

SIGITProjectMgmt is sponsoring a mini-track on IT Project Management (ITProjMgmt) at AMCIS 2011 in Detroit, MI. You can find more details about the conference and the track at the AMCIS website: [http://www.amcis2010.org/home/](http://www.amcis2010.org/home/). The deadline for paper submissions is February 17, 2011.

If you have any questions, please email one of the track chairs: Alanah Mitchell, Appalachian State University, mitchellaj@appstate.edu or Deepak Khazanchi, University of Nebraska at Omaha, khazanchi@unomaha.edu

**MWAIS Call for Papers**

The Midwest Association for Information Systems is holding its sixth annual conference on May 20-21, 2011 in Omaha, Nebraska. The conference will consist of papers on state-of-the-art pedagogy, research, and service from researchers across the Midwest and beyond. Papers are peer-reviewed and will appear in the conference proceedings that will be published in the AIS eLibrary.

Topics range across a variety of topics that include, but are not limited to: Accounting Information Systems, Business Process Management, Database Management Technologies, e-Collaboration, Human Computer Interaction, IT Project Management, Information Technology Education, IT Management in Healthcare, IT Teaching Cases, Strategic IT Management, among others.

The keynote speaker will be Dr. Moez Limayem, Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Programs, from the University of Arkansas. His research interests include IT adoption and usage, CRM, Knowledge Management, and electronic commerce. His work has been published in journals such as *Management Science*, *Information Systems Research*, *Communications of the ACM*, and *IEEE Transactions*.

The submission deadline for Full Length Research, Research-in-Progress, Panels, and Tutorials is March 15, 2011. More information about paper submission as well as a paper template is available via the conference website: [http://mwais.ist.unomaha.edu](http://mwais.ist.unomaha.edu).

**6th Annual International Research Workshop on IT Project Management**

We are holding our 6th International Research Workshop on IT Project Management (IRWITPM) (in coordination with ICIS 2011) in December 2011 in Shanghai, China. Completed research, research-in-progress, and panels may be submitted to the workshop. Selected completed research papers will be fast-tracked for possible publication in the *International Journal of Information Technology and Decision Making*.

The deadline for submissions is August 1, 2011 and should be submitted via email to UNOIRWITPM@unomaha.edu.

Questions about the workshop or submissions can be directed to Workshop Program Chair, Stacie Petter (spetter@unomaha.edu) or the Workshop Proceedings Chair, Alanah Mitchell (mitchellaj@appstate.edu).

For more information about this workshop, visit our IRWITPM website ([http://sites.google.com/site/irwitpm/](http://sites.google.com/site/irwitpm/)) or the SIG website ([http://www.sigitprojmgmt.org](http://www.sigitprojmgmt.org)).
RESEARCH OPINION

SUMMARY OF IRWITPM 2010 BEST PAPER AWARD: MOTIVATING AGILE TEAMS: A CASE STUDY OF TEAMS IN IRELAND AND SWEDEN

Orla McHugh (orla.mchugh@nuigalway.ie), Kieran Conboy (kieran.conboy@nuigalway.ie), Michael Lang (michael.lang@nuigalway.ie); Business Information Systems, NUI Galway, Ireland

The use of agile methodologies by practitioners is growing every year. As the adoption rate of such methodologies increases it is important to gain an understanding of how such methodologies affect the management and control of software development projects. It is well recognized that good project management is one of a number of key factors for the delivery of a successful software project. However, in agile software development (ASD) the team is empowered; they self-organize and self-manage and are allowed to control their work in the way they consider the most appropriate; and they deliver working software to the customer every few weeks (iteration). The traditional role of project manager, who delegates work to their team and monitors the adherence of the team to the work assigned, no longer exists. Consequently, management must ensure that an ASD team is sufficiently motivated to make the right decisions and complete tasks in a timely manner.

Each agile methodology details various practices that distinguish it from other agile methodologies. It is not necessary for an ASD team to adopt all the practices of an agile methodology. They can choose which practices are most appropriate for their project or for their environment. Our research investigates how the following three agile practices motivate ASD teams to deliver a successful software project:

- **Iteration Planning** - Meeting that takes place at the start of each iteration where the team collectively define and plan tasks that must be completed during the next iteration
- **Daily Stand-up** - Short daily status team meeting lasting a maximum of 10-15 minutes typically conducted at the same time each day with team members standing up. During the meeting team members explain briefly what they accomplished since the previous meeting, what will be completed by the next meeting and indicate any impediments that may prevent them from completing their current tasks
- **Iteration Retrospective** - Meeting that is held at the end of each iteration where the project team reflects on what went well in the iteration, what did not, and what could be improved for future iterations

These three agile practices are three of the more commonly used agile practices; they require the participation of all team members; and they are related to the management and control of the software project.

We used a qualitative approach for this study and conducted case studies in two different organizations, one based in Sweden and one based in Ireland. We obtained access to one ASD team in each organization. Each team had experience of implementing and using the three agile practices required. The team based in Ireland was using the practices for approximately two years and the team based in Sweden was using the practices for nine months. A total of 17 interviews were conducted across the two teams. The participants in the study held the following roles: Scrum Master (1), Product Owner (1), Developers (12), Business Analyst (1), Technical Architect (1) and Project Manager (1). We also observed the agile practices in action over a limited period of time, which helped the researchers understand how these teams implemented the practices; how control was managed internally within the team; and whether the team demonstrated signs of motivation or de-motivation when these practices were in use.

The results of the study show that the agile practices contribute to both motivation and de-motivation in
ASD teams. They provide greater visibility on tasks in progress and they increase personal accountability to the team as members undertake to complete tasks for the team within a specific timeframe. While this is beneficial from a management and control perspective this can cause stress and pressure for individuals to deliver what they agreed even though there may be circumstances outside of their control, which affect their ability to deliver. They also encourage more communication with team members required to participate in short, daily meetings. While some consider these meetings disruptive to the day and feel that they take time away from doing real work, others are uncomfortable speaking openly to their peers regarding progress on their tasks even though they are a means by which the team can monitor and control the progress of tasks internally and provide support to individuals if necessary. The use of these agile practices over a long period of time can present other difficulties as experienced by the team based in Ireland where the practices have become routine with less interaction amongst team members. This may be because the team is working on the same project for over two years and are knowledgeable about the project and each others competencies and abilities so they do not feel the need to question each other or do not require the same level of support or discussion on tasks. While the practices are still considered important the team may find them de-motivating. The team must work together to address this, if it does occur to ensure the benefits of using the practices continue to be realized.

It was reported that the practices initially caused difficulty or anxiety for team members when requested to share information and report on personal progress at daily meetings. However, this has become a positive practice over time with team members motivated to openly share information and seek help when required. They have also become more familiar with each others abilities and competencies, which assists with the management of tasks within the team. Individuals have the opportunity to verbalize their preference to work on a particular task order to improve their knowledge and skills in a certain area, which can be accommodated by the team. The team occasionally provides verbal praise and recognition to a team member during meetings, particularly when a difficult task has been completed. This receipt of praise from their peers is considered motivating for team members even though they do not actively seek praise and recognition. Individuals also commented that they now felt more like a team with everyone feeling involved in and part of the team. These changes were more noticeable in the Swedish team rather than the Irish team as the implementation of the agile methodology was quite recent and interviewees were able to recall how the team had functioned previously.

Our case studies highlights to managers how these three agile practices can cause some frustration and apprehension amongst team members and it is important that managers are aware of these so that they can be avoided or addressed where possible. However, they can also be hugely positive and motivating for an ASD team with the team having the power to change how they function as a team, how they implement the agile practices, how they control their work, and how they reward themselves. Even though an agile methodology has only been recently implemented in one team (nine months ago), both teams were well established and familiar with each other. The findings may be different with a new team that has no prior experience working with each other. Future research should examine these three practices in other teams with varying levels of experience in agile methodologies across different cultures and it should also investigate other agile practices to determine if they also contribute to team motivation and de-motivation.

**Reference**

**PROJECT MANAGEMENT PRACTICE**

**CLAN CONTROL IN IS PROJECTS**

Cecil Chua (aeh.chua@auckland.ac.nz); University of Auckland

Many project managers tend to overemphasize the importance of formal control when dealing with a vendor. However, it is sometimes important to apply clan controls to motivate vendors. Indeed, too much formal control may impede project progress. Consider the following two examples:

- In one project, the user had some last minute requirements they needed to insert into an IT artifact. The vendor bill for those requirements was in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, and the user did not have the budget to add the requirements in. However, there were also various design defects that users wanted addressed. While the user could work around these design defects, the rework would cost the vendor a lot of manpower. The project subleaders in charge of each of these respective issues could not resolve them. The one in charge of the new requirements could not get the vendor to agree to a lower price. The one in charge of the design defects could not get the vendor to move faster, because the issues were complex to resolve. In the end, the project and vendor manager met and traded off the two issues. The user would drop the design defect issue and in exchange, the vendor would implement the new requirements. The high level meeting took five minutes, and was resolved with a handshake.

- Another project was late. As with many projects, the responsibility for problems lay with both the user and vendor. In particular, user requirements kept on expanding. However, the project manager insisted on penalizing the vendor for late delivery. As more penalties were incurred, and the requirements scope grew, more vendor staff quit, and the project timeline stretched further. Eventually, remaining junior vendor staff revolted – they secretly changed the locks on the project office, and refused to meet users on new requirements.

The two above examples illustrate the importance of clan control in IS projects. Typically, when we think of controlling projects, we think of formal controls that use organizational power to manage project subordinates. Examples include the aforementioned Gantt and PERT chart, project contracts, and promotions. However, those are not the only controls available to the project manager. Negotiation, open discussions, a show of sympathy, and give and take are powerful tools that a project manager can also use to move a project forward.

Clan controls serve as both substitutes and complements of formal controls. In our first example, we showed how clan controls serve as substitutes. Project subleaders focusing on contract terms could not get their issues resolved. However, the project manager and vendor manager resolved the issues with a handshake. Our second example showed how clan controls can complement formal controls. Instead of penalizing the vendor for nonperformance, the project manager could have talked to the vendor manager while gently reminding the vendor manager that while the client could assign penalties for nondelivery, the client was opting for a more conciliatory approach.

Clan controls are also fragile, and require effort on the part of a project manager to build. Research has generally shown that three things are required to make clan control happen: (1) strong structure- the physical project work site must encourage interaction between vendor and user. Thus, for example, users and vendors can be co-located, instead of being in separate rooms. (2) shared cognition- users and vendors must have things in common. Typically, the project will be one point of commonality, but coming from the same academic institution, being of the same cultural background, sharing meals, facing a joint dressing down by both the project and vendor manager, and experiencing...
shared activities are some ways cognition is built. Finally, user and vendor must have (3) a trusting relationship.

All these elements of clan control must be managed by the project manager. Strong structure requires careful planning of work arrangements. Shared cognition can similarly be managed by work structures (e.g., assigning particular vendor and user personnel to always work together). Finally, it is critical for a project manager to ensure users begin the project with the mindset that the vendor is there to help the project. In many ways, a vendor relationship is like a marriage. One must be careful to study a potential spouse before marriage. After marriage, one must do one’s best to work with the other party in spite of flaws. This doesn’t mean one trusts the vendor after demonstrable non-performance. However, too often, users approach a vendor with mistrust immediately after contract signing. Such an approach creates a negative atmosphere at project inception, which can cause project difficulties.

In conclusion, effective vendor management has much in common with raising children. As much as one must be willing to discipline a child, one must also be willing to nurture and discuss issues with them. Both too much and too little discipline can be detrimental to childhood development. Similarly, both too much and too little formal control can compromise project progress. Sometimes, a better way than discipline is to have a frank and open discussion.

**BOOK REVIEW**

**BOOK REVIEW: PROJECT MANAGEMENT FROM SIMPLE TO COMPLEX**

John F. Tripp (tripp@bus.msu.edu); Michigan State University


As Project Management becomes a more mainstream core-curriculum course, textbooks continue to proliferate. In general, these textbooks are similar in several ways. First, they teach the basic PMI-based concepts and techniques relatively well. Second, they use less-than-realistic project examples that trivialize the work of project managers. Third, they are often content-poor and need significant augmentation in activities developed by the professor, or taken from other sources. Finally, these traditional textbooks are expensive. Because of this, identifying differentiation between these texts is often challenging.

*Project Management From Simple to Complex* by Darnall & Preston is the first project management textbook offered by Flat World Knowledge. This, in itself, differentiates it from alternative texts. Flat World is a leading provider of Open-Source textbooks, mostly in Business & Economics. These textbooks are published using a creative commons license, rather than under copyright, and have two significant advantages over traditional textbooks.

The textbooks are available on a tiered pricing model, ranging from a free online edition, to a color-print edition for $59.95. This allows students to make a decision as to their investment in the text. Additionally, the textbook is fully customizable. Where other publishers might allow for the assembly of pre-written chapters, Flat World allows the professor to completely customize the text, rearranging chapter order, adding sentences or paragraphs, adding learning objectives, and assignments directly to the textbook. This allows for instructors to make very nuanced customizations to the core text, for different courses, different learner profiles, and even different sections of the same course. Specifically, customization allows the instructor to “fix” the textbook, which is something that many, if not most instructors have dreamed about at some point.

While the customization aspect is important, as is the relatively low price point, the core project management information that is a required feature in any introductory PM course is covered well. Like
other Project Management texts, Darnall & Preston cover the basic PMI-centric concepts, with chapters dedicated to Scope Management, Time Management, Cost Management, Quality Management, Risk Management, and Procurement & Closure. Additionally, the book is organized similarly to other PM texts, with an introductory chapter on the PMI definition of project management, and several early chapters on how to profile projects and recognize complexity.

The authors introduce the “Darnall-Preston Complexity Index” (DPCI), which they explain is “a proprietary project profiling technique” that Darnall developed. While the existence of a proprietary technique within the pages of an open-source textbook seems strange on its face, the DPCI is represented as what it is – namely an example of a project profiling technique. The text might be more explicit that there are numerous other examples of these tools, and that the use of the DPCI is for teaching purposes. Of course, because the book is completely customizable, if an instructor believes that this point should be clarified, a clarification can be added (or the references to DPCI removed completely).

Like other Flat World texts, the type is set well, and the printing quality is equivalent to traditional textbooks. Unlike some other PM texts, the presentation in this book is very clear, written in plain English, and assumes that the reader has little to no knowledge of project management. Unfortunately, a significant number of the included exercises at the end of chapter sections begin with the statement “choose a project with which you are familiar”. While the questions are often very good, too often they assume a knowledge and experience of projects that is most likely too advanced for a core, undergraduate course.

An additional weakness (or feature, depending upon your point of view) of the text is that it is exclusively focused on traditional, plan-based project management. There is no discussion of alternative project management methodologies such as agile approaches. Additionally, there is little discussion as to tailoring the level of project management activity to the size and complexity of the project. It should be noted that these particular weaknesses are not unique to this text.

While there is an entire chapter that reviews software available for various project management tasks. This chapter describes the use of Email, Microsoft Word and Excel templates, Microsoft Visio, and Microsoft Project among others. However, there is no discussion of Web 2.0 technologies such as wikis or discussion forums, or of knowledge repositories. Additionally, the text does not include a trial copy of Microsoft Project, which many other texts provide, although it does reference OpenProj as an alternative to Microsoft Project.

Overall, the book seems to be a step below more established texts when taken directly as provided by Flat World. As described above, there are some weaknesses with the book, although many of them might be mitigated by the customizable nature of the text. A second edition of the book would be welcome if it included more specific discussion of change management, as well as addressing Project Management 2.0 and Social Project Management, and agile project management. In addition, the book seems to expect too much from undergrads, but at the same time it is too rudimentary for an advanced graduate class.

While I am a proponent of the open-source textbook movement, and have utilized the Flat World title Information Systems by John Gallaugher in my intro to IS course, Project Management From Simple to Complex seems to need additional work before it reaches the same level. I believe that most instructors will feel the need to provide customizations before adoption.

In summary, Project Management From Simple to Complex is in many ways a typical textbook as described initially. It covers the core concepts well, is lacking on some topics, and doesn’t have a good, integrated example project that illustrates the topics discussed. However, the continued evolution of this
textbook is something to be watched in the future, as is the entire open-source textbook movement. For today, if an instructor is looking for a basic PM text, and has substantial additional material, such as an integrated case that might be worked throughout the text, using this textbook with substantial customization could be an interesting opportunity.

TEACHING OPINION

REFLECTIONS FROM A FIRST-TIME IT PROJECT MANAGEMENT PROFESSOR

Laurie Schatzberg (Laurie@mgt.unm.edu); UNM Anderson School of Management

While I’ve taught a variety of IT courses for a number of years, fall 2010 was my debut with a graduate project management course. Our long-time instructor, himself a seasoned IT project manager before retiring to teach for a decade or so, had retired once again. I’ve participated in dozens of large and small projects, led some small ones, and was eager to learn more about the field. To keep the learning curve manageable, I planned to adopt the approach and the materials of my predecessor for this first-time offering. Using proven materials would allow me to concentrate on the various ways of engaging the students in Project Management during the term.

Almost immediately, however, it was clear that the academic materials were thorough in coverage and yet devoid of substantive, chew-on-the-tough-issues content. The primary text is practical, well-researched and well-written and contains many recipes for success and disaster, and many small vignettes and case examples. While not a traditional academic text, Fast Forward MBA in PM is a popular offering from Eric Verzuh (www.versatilecompany.com). The supplemental text, by Russell Darnell and John Preston, Project Management from Simple to Complex (www.flatworldknowledge.com) offered more traditional academic perspectives and excellent, current real-world examples from the field.

UNM had recently implemented MS Project 10, and so – of course – students would gain experience with that tool. None of these important resources, however, impart even a modicum of real-world viscera, the ups and downs of project life that confront every project manager. Seasoned IT Project Management instructors undoubtedly recognize the need for a project around which to include the theories and tools of project management.

As I considered options for projects, the artificiality of a 16-week semester collided with the opportunity for students to participate in a meaningful project from beginning to end. Few substantive projects are scoped for 16 weeks, even fewer are scoped to coincide with the particular 16 weeks that define the UNM semester, and fewer still are scoped to coincide with the UNM 16-week semester and are taking place in Albuquerque, NM. And then, there’s the detail of finding those project managers and garnering their enthusiasm to include a small team of students who – initially anyway – know nothing about project management and nothing about their organization, their mission or their environment.

No, it’s not feasible to engage MBA student teams, semester after semester as project participants in a meaningful community project.

A natural alternative was to seek out an affordable simulation that could provide some of the thrill and angst within a “canned” context. Through serendipity, happenstance or divine intervention, I met an alumnus of our program while in line at the opening of a new market. Unbeknownst to me until that moment is that he is president of the Rio Grande Chapter of PMI, and has a strong interest to help teach PM and mentor new students in the field. We decided to solicit PMP professionals from his organization to mentor small teams of my students. In turn, my students would analyze these real-world experiences by applying the concepts and techniques they were learning about in class.
In the sections below, I briefly describe the simulation package we used and also the unique partnership we formed between teams of students in my class and certified PM professionals in our community. Both experiences were rated highly by the students, who also reported learning “… a lot that isn’t covered in the text” and valued “meeting PM leaders and learning from exposure to their real projects.” Similarly, the PM professionals learned from and enjoyed their roles as well.

Experiences with SimProject in an Academic MIS PM Course

I sought an affordable project simulation that students could work on individually or in teams. I chose SimProject ($29.95 per student for my class of 25) by Fissure (www.fissure.com) who also conducts a variety of workshops and certification training seminars for professionals. This version of the simulation is PC-based and the project is to develop a prototype for a marketing web-site. Depending on the choices students make, there are 7+ tasks over a simulated duration of 11+ weeks.

Students plan out the project and the project budget, plan resources for each task, assign resources (normally according to the plan) and then respond to an assortment of partially random events and management or staff issues. To help set the context, students read (fictitious) company information and also performance and skills reports about each of the staffing resources potentially available to them. Their goal is to complete project on time, within budget, and with fewer than 12 quality defects.

Students plan out the overall project, and then on a weekly basis, they staff for the coming weeks, “work” the week (which typically involves responding to a series of system-generated management directives or issues raised by staff), and analyze the resulting status reports.

While I assigned the students to complete a few simulated weeks at a time, in hindsight, it would be better to focus for a week or two on this simulation so they can become more fully immersed in the issues and individuals. It is also possible to have teams prepare before class, and then complete the entire simulation in a single, long class session (perhaps 2+ hours). However, that would limit the time for discussion and debriefing.

For the future, I will select this simulation again, particularly because students will be able to work from a version in the cloud. Rather than spread the 11+ simulation weeks through the entire semester, I will focus on this simulation for two class periods early in the term. This focus will expose students quickly to key PM issues: budget management, proper utilization of staff resources, communication, communication, and communication.

Experiences with PM Hosts in an Academic MIS PM Course

With the enthusiastic support of the PMI president in town, we identified six certified PMI professionals from the PMI-Rio Grande Chapter (www.pmirgc.org) to serve as community hosts and mentors to small teams of students (3-5 students per team). While each pairing evolved somewhat uniquely, the fundamental expectation was that (1) the host would allow the students to observe the host in action on one of his current projects, (2) the host would allow students to see the planning and management artifacts she uses, (3) the teams would analyze these observations and materials through the lenses of the principles, theories and templates they were learning about, and (4) students would create an MS-Project 10 plan either for their own team work during the term – or for a portion of the host’s project. Some projects were ramping up, others were near completion; some were in federal and state government agencies, some were in private industry. Hosts could also involve students in completing project deliverables for the host-organization, if there was a good opportunity. As a result, one team created a Statement of Work, another team created a MS Project plan for the host’s sub-contractor, and yet another team created a risk analysis for their host. Other teams had no deliverables for their hosts.
This partnership was an invaluable educational experience for the students. Participating in authentic project management work that really matters, they were challenged to approach the work with a level of professionalism that is harder to elicit when the assignments are “just” academic exercises. Much like the fabled blind people describing an elephant, each team experienced just a piece of an ongoing project. However, they experienced that piece with all its depth and complexity and ambiguity. From this narrow but deep exposure, it seemed easy for them to extrapolate their rich experience to gain a sense of the organization, management, political, and technical skills needed to sustain a project from beginning to end.

This course is part of a general MBA program, and UNM has no PM degree program. As a result of this experience, a few students are more passionate about pursuing a career in PM and adding PMI certification to their MBA credential. At least two students have concluded that PM is not for them. I consider both outcomes as success.

The mentors, who participated in the teams’ final presentations to the class, were pleased with their experience. I didn’t realize it when we began this initiative, however, certified PMPs are required to give back, mentor, or teach in order to maintain their certification. This professional requirement helps inform why so many talented and busy PMPs stepped up to participate with my class, and bodes well for our ability to sustain this model of community host/mentor in the semesters ahead.

In Conclusion

Every academic course in Project Management needs some authentic project management. In fall 2010, we found that a computer-based simulation tool provides students with valuable exposure to the gotchas, known unknowns, and unknown unknowns of real project life while also imparting modest budgeting and data analysis skills. Further, tapping into the expertise of community Project Management Professionals afforded students an excellent opportunity to evaluate the strengths and limitations of textbook theories and templates. The partnership with PMIRGC members instantly expanded students’ professional network and afforded PMIRGC host mentors the chance to see some of our best students in action. All hosts intended to consider the strongest student contributors for possible internships or job offers. Because students were well-aware of this intent from beginning, they seemed to strive for that larger goal and, in doing so, they did very well in the course.

CALL FOR NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

SIG ITProjMgmt members are all invited to offer items to the upcoming issue of the AIS SIGProjMgmt newsletter (Volume 3, Issue 1), to be published in September 2011. If you are interested, please send your submissions to Alanah Mitchell, mitchellaj@appstate.edu, by August 2011. Possible topics include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Short essay/opinion/research study (800 – 1700 words).
2. IT Project Management book review (800 – 1700 words).
3. Teaching Project Management (up to 1700 words), teaching ideas or cases, sample syllabus, etc.
4. Industry voice (800 – 1700 words), we welcome PM related essays from industry professionals.
5. Brief introduction of Project Management research tools (up to 300 words).
6. Brief introduction of interesting IT Project Management journals and/or special issues, including citation information, brief description, table of content (for special issues), etc.
7. CFP for IT Project Management related journals or conferences.

To view previous newsletters, please visit http://ais.affiniscape.com/displaycommon.cfm?an=1 &subarticlenbr=801
SPONSORS

We would like to extend a thank you to the sponsors this year, including:

SIG ITProjMgmt Networking

SIG information is posted on our website as well as our IRWITPM website:

http://www.sigitprojmgmt.org
http://sites.google.com/site/irwitpm/

AIS has put together a listserv for all of the Special Interest Groups, including ours. To sign up for our mailing list please visit the following website:
http://www.aisnet.org/AIS_Lists

Additionally, we have established a LinkedIn group for increased networking among our SIG members. Therefore, with your LinkedIn accounts you can now join the Group/Association titled: AIS SIG IT Project Management:

We hope to stay connected through these various networking opportunities!

OFFICERS

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SIG ITProjMgmt INFORMATION

We hope that you will consider participating in the activities of this group. When you apply or renew your AIS membership, select SIGITProjMgmt from the list of special interest groups when prompted. You can also add SIGITProjMgmt to your current membership at any time. The following websites provide additional information.

AIS website
http://home.aisnet.org

SIGITProjMgmt website
http://www.sigitprojmgmt.org/