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Sponsoring a Student Project at Stanford: The Management Science and Engineering Senior Project Course

Stanford has various opportunities for student teams to work on projects with local organizations. Seniors majoring in Management Science and Engineering take part in the Senior Project Course (MS&E 108) in the Winter Quarter (January through March). Students work in teams of four with ongoing faculty guidance, acting as consultants to independently address a client organization's real-life problem. The problem is selected and defined by the client organization and approved by the faculty. The students study the problem, conduct interviews, perform research and analysis, and propose and/or assist in the implementation of a solution. The experience is highly rewarding for both the students and the client organization: students gain experience and see first-hand the application of their skills, while the client organization gets free advice from a highly talented and competent group of Stanford seniors.

An ideal project for the students in the Senior Project Course involves a problem that is important to the client organization but is manageable in scope for a team of students. The course faculty have experience in assessing whether or not the scope of a proposed project is sufficiently rich to provide a challenge, yet sufficiently well defined to be attacked and analyzed within a ten-week quarter.

Students in the Senior Project Course are equipped to address a wide range of topics. Their basic curriculum equips them to study, design, and improve organizational and decision-making structures in a data- and technology-rich environment. Beyond this framework, students specialize in one of seven areas: Financial Analytics, Operations and Analytics, Technology and Engineering Management, Computational Social Science, Decision and Risk Analysis, Energy and Environment, and Health Systems Modeling. Thus, a large variety of skills and talents are available from Senior Project Course students. Teams of students with the appropriate background and skills will be matched to projects based upon the nature of each project.

From the client organization's viewpoint, sponsoring a student team requires a brief project proposal; a point of contact who will be available to answer student questions during the quarter; and student access to data and information about the project. At the end of the quarter the client organization will receive a written and oral report on the team's results, findings and recommendations, all without charge and prepared under faculty guidance. Projects take place during Winter Quarter and project proposals are evaluated during November-December.

If your organization is interested in proposing a project, please email a brief (one-paragraph) project proposal to:

Prof. Ross Shachter, Department of Management Science and Engineering, Stanford University (shachter@stanford.edu), 650 353-7456.

A response prior to December 5 would be most helpful.

Lastly, if you know of any other people in your organization or other organizations that may be interested in proposing a project, please forward this e-mail.