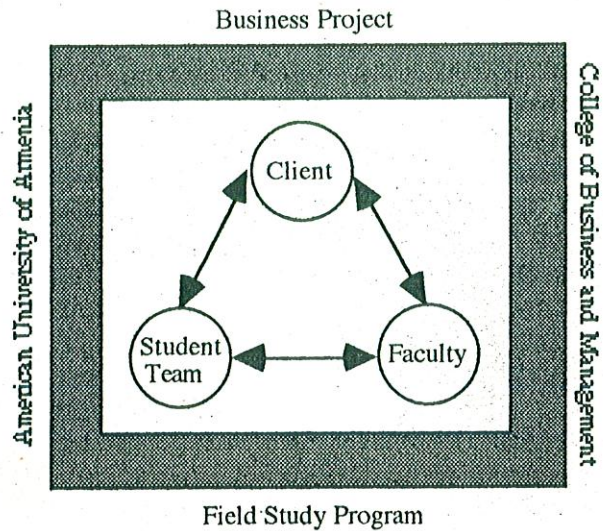


Prospectus for the Business Project Award of Excellence

The purpose of this prospectus is to solicit support for establishing an endowment to fund an award for the most outstanding project that is produced each year in the Business Project Course taught in the American University of Armenia's (AUA) College of Business and Management. This prospectus includes a description of the award, the evaluation criteria, the judging process, and a brief overview of the course.



Objective of the Award

The award will recognize excellence in the AUA/CBM's management field study program based on a competition of projects that are undertaken by teams of students enrolled in the second-year MBA business project course.

Use of the Endowment

The endowment will be used to fund annually the cash award for the "best" project, prepare certificates recognizing the three finalists' accomplishment, and prepare a plaque, that will be on permanent display at the AUA, commemorating the three finalists and their sponsors. The endowment will also cover part of the instructional cost of the course.

The Competition Process

The faculty advisors for the AUA/CBM's Business Project Course will screen all of the projects submitted in the course and select the "top" three to six projects. An independent panel of judges will review the project final reports and select three "finalists." The three finalists will present their work at a widely publicized seminar at the AUA. Based on each team's report and presentation, the judges will select a winner. The award will be made at the conclusion of the seminar. A reception will follow for all of the student teams and their client organizations.

Evaluation Criteria (not in order of importance)

- Convincing and clear recommendations (Are their recommendations supported by evidence? Do they present a convincing argument for recommendations?)
- Writing and Presentation (Are they concise, clear, persuasive, well-organized?)
- Appropriateness of problem (Is the study topic well defined?)
- Appropriate methodology (Does the team give a convincing explanation of why methodology was chosen? What is the suitability to solving problem?)
- Thorough and logical data collection and analysis (Is the data credible? Is the research sound and the analysis and interpretation of the data thorough?)
- Overall integrated development of logic (Are the conclusions evolving from the data and methodology appropriate? Are there seemingly correct and logical? Is the solution insightful?)
- Agreement with proposal (Does the work performed, as described in the final report, agree with what was proposed?)
- Importance to Armenia (Is the work significant to helping Armenia?)

Jurors and the judging process

- A team of at least three but no more than five jurors will be selected by the course coordinator in consultation with the Dean of the CBM and the project course faculty. The jury will be composed of at least one AUA administrator (either the Dean of the CBM or the Provost), at least one faculty member that has not been involved with any of the projects, and at least one outside reviewer that is not affiliated with the AUA or any of the client organizations. The names of the jurors will be confidential until after the review and recommendation process is complete.

- Based on the draft of the final report, the faculty advisor(s) for the course will nominate a total of at least three but no more than six projects. The nominations will be confidential.

- Each juror will receive a copy of the final report and proposal from the course coordinator.

- The jury will have one week to judge the projects in Yerevan. Each juror will individually review and rank the projects and then the entire jury will meet and collectively decide on the best three projects, i.e. the "finalists." At this time, the only criteria for selecting the best project that the jurors will not have considered is the presentation. The finalist groups will be notified by the course coordinator.

- The three finalist groups will present their projects at an open seminar at the AUA. The seminar will be open to the public, simultaneously translated, and be widely advertised in the local media (TV, radio, newspapers). At the conclusion of the three presentations, the jury will adjourn to make the final selection of the most outstanding project. While the jury deliberates, the course faculty will present an overview of the course, summarize the other projects, and introduce the members of the other teams and their client organizations. The winning project will be announced and the awards presented. Following the seminar and awards presentation, all those associated with the projects -- faculty, students, and representatives from the client organization -- will attend a brief reception at the AUA.

Timetable for the 1993 Award

The first annual award will be given in August 1993 to the first class of MBA students at the AUA. The tentative timetable for this year's award is as follows:

July 19 All student teams submit their draft report to the faculty advisors.

August 5 Judges receive reports for the teams that are nominated for the award.

August 12 Judges name the three finalists; the course coordinator informs the selected teams.

August 16 Seminar at the AUA -- presentation by the three finalist teams, selection of winner, and presentation of the award.

Course overview

The two-quarter project course is the experiential learning component of the MBA degree where material learned in the first year of course work is applied in a real-world business situation. Theory and practice are integrated to produce a professional product designed to solve a complex management problem, as well as educating those entering business and management in the responsibilities and obligations of the profession. Students, working in teams under faculty supervision, act as consultants to an organization (manufacturing, government, or service) in order to analyze and solve an actual problem that the organization is currently facing. The project spans problem definition, data collection, analysis, generation of alternative solutions, development of actionable recommendations with successful communication to management, and the development of plans for implementation of recommendations.

The main deliverables in the course are a proposal, final report and presentation, and a complete project file. Most of the course involves field work at the client's site with periodic progress reporting to the faculty advisor and client. There is also a classroom component that focuses on project management and administration techniques, as well as written and verbal communication skills.

During the project students are expected to demonstrate their ability to do the following:

- improve the performance of the client's organization,
- communicate effectively, through both written and oral expression,
- work effectively as a team, set goals, make decisions, allocate work, resolve conflicts, and meet deadlines, and
- plan, organize, track, and manage a project.