

# Leveraging Students to Get Stuff Done:

How to Find and Gain the Most Value from University Teams

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# Agenda

- Goals of Today's Session
- First What Then Who
- Best Practices for Engaging with Student Teams
- Action Plan

What are your greatest motivators for being here?  
What do you most need to know?



**First What Then Who**

# When Someone Says....

There are a lot of universities around here....can't we get a student to do that?







You Ask

# What type of task is it?

1-10  
days

- Painting, landscaping, physical labor
- Financial, technology, web/social media

1-2  
months

- Job descriptions, employee handbook, financial analysis
- Real estate analysis, budgeting,

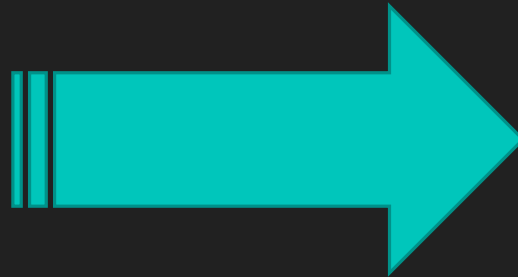
2-4  
months

- Business plan, outcomes measurement, branding, marketing
- Talent retention, financial systems, volunteer management, community engagement

6-12  
months

- Mentoring, tutoring, direct service, board fellow

# What skill level is required?





# Best match depends on task length of time and required level of expertise

Length of time required



Level of Expertise

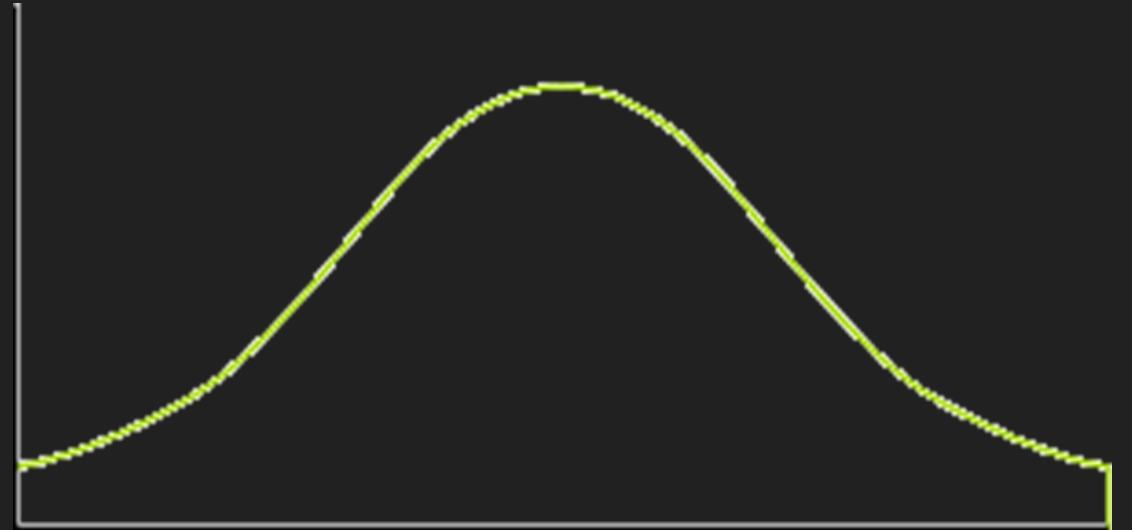
# Best Practices for Engaging Student Teams

# Timing is Everything!

There are two blocks of time during the year when students are available\*



September – December



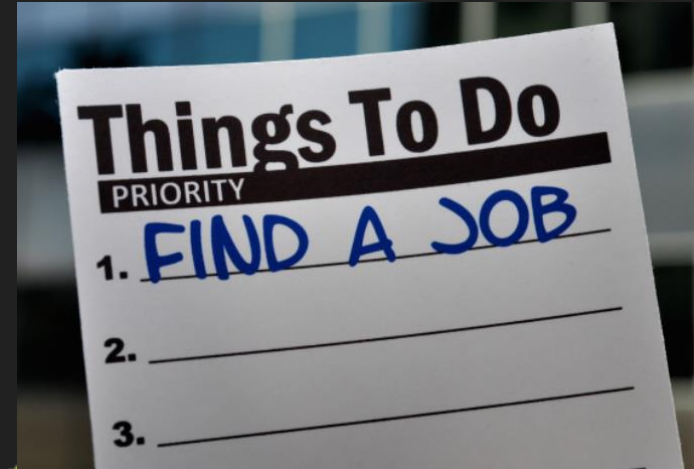
January – April

*\* Refers to a typical university semester schedule—some universities are on a different system.*

As a general rule, you will get fuller attention from seniors and 2<sup>nd</sup> year grad students in the fall rather than the spring.



September – December



January – April

# Working with Student Teams is a 50/50 Proposition

## Organization Needs

- Expertise
- New Perspective
- Work/tasks performed

## Students Need

- Coaching and encouragement
- Input and interaction – partnership
- Context



# What to Expect From Student Teams

- Professional Introduction
- Written Scope of Services or other written agreement
- Accountability and responsiveness
- Prioritizing the needs of the organization
- Objectivity
- Discretion and confidentiality



# Advice from Students to Nonprofit Clients

- Keep an open mind and be ready to go down paths you may not have considered
- Be open and transparent about organizational challenges—we are not funders
- Make an effort to get to know us; we are tomorrow's donors and board members!
- Work with us on scoping the project—we know what is possible to achieve in the time we have allocated to the project; keep checking in with us about that

# Success Factors

- Clarity of project goals
- Clarity of organization mission and goals
- Clarity of the work to be performed including final deliverables
- There is an identified project “champion”; someone who is invested in the success of the project and is available to the students on a regular basis
- Students have access to financial, fundraising or operational data (if applicable)
- Senior leadership in the organization embrace and support the work to be performed; the CEO/Executive Director supports or champions the project
- The project is finite in its scale and scope; it is reasonable to complete in the allotted time period (usually 12 weeks)

**What is a 'top of mind' project for  
your organization?**

**What project has been on the  
'back burner'?**

# Best Projects for MBA Students

- Business Feasibility, Planning and/or Expansion
- Financial Analysis
- Financial Management Systems (Accounting, Budgeting, Investments, etc.)
- Real Estate Planning and Analysis
- Marketing including Market Research and Strategy
- Information Systems, Digital Technology, Technology Applications
- Data Driven Analysis and Decisionmaking
- Operations Planning and Analysis
- Fund Development Strategy
- Human Resources, Talent Development and Talent Management

# Best Projects for Mar/Comm Students

## Undergraduate

- Designing Collateral Material
- Producing videos
- Setting up social media sites (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram)
- Producing social media protocol/procedures
- Communications Plan

## Graduate

- Branding
- Marketing Strategy
- Communications Plan

# Best Projects for Ed School – Grad

## Best Projects for Social Work - Grad

- Outcomes measurement
- Evaluation
- Grantwriting
- Protocol, policies and procedures
- Board Fellow
- Community Assessments and Engagement



# Best Projects for Public Policy or Law Students-Grad

- Regulatory analysis
- Researching laws and regulations in other states
- Legislative strategy
- Lobbying strategy
- Drafting legislation
- Initiating public policy based on research

# Best Projects for Community Service

- Project requiring physical labor
- Large scale, one time volunteer events (golf tournament, galas, etc.)
- Ongoing activity that requires some training (harvesting, soup kitchens, data entry and reporting, direct service)

# Other Disciplines to Explore

- Architecture and Design
- Landscape Design
- Engineering
- Horticulture
- Health Sciences

# Action Plan

# Working Independently

- Complete the Action Plan Outline
- Debrief with someone seated near you for feedback
- Report out, ask questions and wrap up!

# Resources

Please send additions to [kmac@bu.edu](mailto:kmac@bu.edu)!

○ <http://bit.ly/2IANWJI>