

COURSE:

Communication in Teams

INSTRUCTOR:

Dr. William Gorden

COURSE COMPLETED:

Fall 2009

ASSIGNMENT TITLE:

Communication in Teams: Discovering Teamwork and Alumni Importance

ASSIGNMENT PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

This is a collection of assignments. The entire semester revolved around discovering what teamwork means, connecting with Kent State alumni, and revealing how we can increase communication between current students and alumni. Question one revolved around answering the teamwork question. Question two uncovers what the school of communications could do to engage alumni and current students in a way that would mutually benefit both parties.

REFLECTIONS:

This class, as a whole, was mentally frustrating. I know I can speak for a large majority of college students when I say, "I hate group work," and this class was definitely a challenge. There was the awkward arranging of groups of students that you do not know; also, figuring out how to work effectively as a team. I did a majority of the work for my team for the entire semester and it was exhausting. However, I did learn a lot from the assignments this class had to offer. I was assigned to Team One and we were assigned four Kent State alumni. I did all the communicating with the alums and I asked them what they thought made effective teamwork. I learned a lot about what they had to say, and I believe our top ten list of ways to effectively communicate in a team was successful. The second question required us to ask communication professors and our assigned alumni how we could increase the communication between alums and current students. The answer to this question provided me and my team even more thought-provoking answers. We learned so much about the importance of our alumni, and I believe this project also showed the School of Communication that alumni have more to offer than monetary donations to the school. The other three teams seemed to have the same revelations that my team had about teamwork and the importance of alums, so I guess all the stress and frustration was academically worth it.

(Team One: Renee Elliott, Shardell Artis, Sean Larkin, Zack Siegrist, Megan Riley)

A decorative border of yellow stars surrounds the text. The stars are arranged in a rectangular frame, with a single row of stars along the top and bottom edges, and vertical columns of stars along the left and right edges.

Kent State University

Communication in Teams

Together Everyone Achieves More

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Introduction

Welcome to Communication in Teams. Our class is made up of 22 students and 1 “Coach”. We were split up into four different teams, Team 1, Team 2, Team 3, and Team 4, each having two main core projects to do. Our first question was “what makes for effective teamwork” and we were given alumni to contact to help find our answer. Each team was to produce a video and a report showing what we learned from our alumni. The first project consisted of a ‘top ten’ that each team put together based on their alumni and their coach. Our second question was “if and how might the school of communication engage alums in ways to mutually benefit them and current students”. For this project we were to create a video and final report as well. We went into a little more detail here, not only contacting our alumni, but also faculty members to help us find answers. As a final project, we were split up into three teams, Team A, Team B, and Team C, to create an event that would invite alumni and faculty to see what we have learned. Team A is responsible for talking and informing the party what we have learned all semester. Team B is responsible for the invites, food, and entertainment and so on. And Team C is responsible for putting together a report to include all the work that Team 1, Team 2, Team 3, and Team 4 have accomplished over the semester.

Chapter One

Here is an introduction to the people that made
this possible.

Class Biographies



Shardell Artis is a Senior Communication Major originally from Akron, Oh. Shardell will do whatever it takes to pursue her dreams. She wants to encourage her siblings to be determined in whatever they want to pursue.



Renee Elliot is a Senior Communication Major at Kent State University. Renee's goal is to get involved in Public Relations or Human Resources. The reason for this is because of her Personable nature.



Megan Riley is from Youngstown, Ohio and came to Kent State University to be a Communication Major. Her future plans include the possibility of becoming a Communication Director for a hospital.



Zack Siegrist is Senior Communication major at Kent State University. He hopes to have a future career in event planning. He uses the word "Dynamic" to describe himself. Zack has experience in a lot of fields, which makes him very versatile. He is well adverse in different tasks that apply to things in life making him a valuable asset.



Sean Larkin is a Communication Major at KSU. Upon graduation in the fall, Sean hopes to be involved with a non-profit organization influenced on his past Charitable causes.



Tiffany Thuma is a senior Interpersonal Communication Studies major. She originally came to Kent State University for Fashion Merchandising but switched her major to Communications because it is so broad and diverse. She is on track to graduate in May of 2010. After graduation Tiffany plans to pursue a career in Event Planning. Her ideal position would be an event coordinator for a major hotel chain, venue, or cruise line.



Kelly Lokia is a senior at Kent State University and plans on graduating in May 2010 with an Organization Communications degree. Upon graduation she plans on starting my career in Event Planning hoping to stay around her hometown, Painesville, Ohio.



Allyson Kolbl is from Canton, Ohio. She attends Kent State University and plans to graduate in the fall of 2010 with a bachelor's in Organization Communication with a minor in Sports Administration. Upon graduation she plans to pursue a career with the National Hot Rod Association as a public relations and communication specialist.



Tanner Shearer is a junior at Kent State University majoring in Organizational Communication. After earning his bachelor degree, he plans on obtaining a sales position and moving out west.



David Ramsey is from Cleveland, Ohio. He is a senior, focusing on organizational communication. Upon graduation, David will be seeking employment in the community relations field, as well as a master degree in public relations. He would like to pursue a position in professional sports molding the image of teams through their community relations department.



Sarah Weingart is a senior at Kent State University with a concentration in Organizational Communication. Upon graduation, she hopes to obtain a position in the Human Resources field.



Angela Manch is currently working in the Inside Sales Department at ForTec Medical. She plans to graduate in December. Upon graduation, she would like to continue working for ForTec Medical and increase her sales knowledge.



Peter Stancato III is a senior at KSU. He expects to graduate in December. Following graduation, he plans to enjoy his eight months off before he starts grad school. His options include an internship in Dublin, Ireland, teaching English as a second language in Seoul, South Korea, attending New York Film Academy in New York City. He intends on getting his Masters degree in Clinical Psychology.



Kim Baleno plans to graduate in May with hopes of working in Promotional Management or Human Resource Management. She would like to find a job that includes traveling so she has the ability to see the world while pursuing a career.



Stephanie Hand-Cannane is graduating from Kent State this coming May. She recently returned from Oaxaca, Mexico where she studied Mexican History and Literature. After Graduation, she plans on attending law school and hopes to pursue a career as a Prosecutor.



Chris Hughes is a Senior Communication major who is graduating in December. He plans on finding a job in Public Relations or Human Relations field either in Pittsburgh, Pa or Tampa, Fl. He plans on starting out as an entry level position and working as hard as he can to work his way up the corporate ladder.



Kelly Prefling is a senior at Kent in the Communication Studies Program. She is currently a member of Alpha Xi Delta. This semester, she is an intern for Kozy Shack Enterprises, which sells refrigerated desserts. She plans on graduating in December, with an interest in pursuing a career in sales.



Ashley Williams is graduating in Applied Communication in spring 2010. She is originally from Cleveland, Ohio. After she graduates, her goal is to work in Public Relations for a major company.



Benjamin Kitchen is currently looking for a job in a consulting firm because he feels that he could be a great asset to their organization. He has numerous hobbies such as hockey, flag football, involved in the Delta Upsilon fraternity, and currently doing an internship at the City of Commerce in Youngstown. He is highly motivated, a creative thinker, and an over-achiever. He is also always thinking of business ideas; however, he needs investors to sponsor these ideas. So, if any of you are interested in investing your money and would like to hear some of his ideas shoot him an email at bkitchel@kent.edu.



Justin Marino plans on working in the hotel industry after graduation. He is most interested in working in the sales department; however, plans on gaining experience in all parts of the hotel. He also plans on moving out of state within the next few years after he graduates, preferably somewhere on the southern east coast.



Kelly Brogan is optimistic that she will eventually find the right job for her, even though the current job market is looking grim. Kelly is hoping to get a job with a non-profit company such as The American Cancer Society because she really enjoys helping others and making a difference. She is currently gaining valuable experience working for her aunt at the License Bureau or BMV.

Brittany Satyshur

After graduation, Brittany would like to be an event planner. She is trying to get an internship with the National MS society or the greater Cleveland sports commission for her last semester. She is hoping to get a job for either company once she graduates. In her free time, she likes to hang out with her friends and family.

Alumni Biographies

Deborah A. Easton is a Communication Skills Consultant. She is involved with team communication. Although she does not offer a typical team building course, she deals with specific interpersonal issues that affect a teams functioning. She specializes in communication styles, with their characteristic behaviors. Lately she has been presenting a program, *Generations Working Together*, where she describes historical influences, work ethic, customer service expectations and management needs, of each of the four generations in today's work force. She has her Masters in Speech Communication and has also taught at Kent. Deborah currently resides in Kent OH. She earned the reputation for "practicing what she teaches." Her various services have been used in such organizations:

- First Energy Corp -FedEx Custom Critical -The Timken Company
- Bank One –U.S. Army –The Hoover Company –Summa Health
- First Merit Bank –ERICO, Inc. –A.R.E

Jeff Antoon has his Masters in Clinical Counseling and was more than happy to help us. He just recently graduated from Ashland Theological Seminary and is studying for the state-counseling exam to receive his license. In his free time from school, he is also a skydiving instructor. In his counseling courses he was involved with many group exercises as well as a group counseling class. Jeff currently resides in Hudson, OH.

Susan Christopher is a PhD Archaeologist and works with teams of researchers in the Arctic and Africa. She currently resides in New York, NY.

Don Gibson is an individual consultant to Business and other Organizations. His work focus's on communication in teams. He creates, sustains, and improves organizational processes within organizations. Don currently resides in Dover, OH.

Dan Kearney currently works as a Manager of Human Resources for the Harvest Valley Bakery in Illinois. He has learned a lot about teams from his working experiences, and has helped provide excellent framework for team success at Harvest Valley Bakery.

Roger Howe PhD: Roger is an Entrepreneur and Organizational Consultant for Stemedica Cell Technologies, Inc. He currently resides in San Diego, CA. Roger is an officer of three major corporate 500 companies, which have co founded six companies total. He has also co written a couple of books, and articles.

Lenny Ralphs PhD: is a busy man. A fun fact about him is that he gets involved with one of his nearby church and loves the community. Lenny is currently the Sr. Leadership Consultant, LDS Church, located in Salt Lake City, UT.

Beth Elaine Snode Zbasnik is currently employed as a part time Adjunct Faculty Member at Kent State University. She also works for Gas Drilling Co. and is a Flower Shop Owner/Manager. Beth currently resides in Malvern, OH and her current goals in life include:

1. Wanting to rear kind, healthy, well-educated children.
2. Continue to nurture a loving, life-long friendship with her husband.
3. Further her career by either pursuing a doctoral degree or securing full-time employment elsewhere.
4. Continue to grow spiritually, the highest of all priorities.

Gerald John Sargent is currently employed by Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc. and currently resides in Spring, TX. Some 50 years ago Jim Challenger founded the concept of outplacement. “We are hired by former employers as a part of their benefit program to help released employees move their lives ahead. That transition can be to full-time work, part-time work, starting a company, or enjoying retirement.” His life Goals are as follows:

1. To continue to grow and find new challenges which interest him and can help others.
2. Continue to provide his family with a high quality of life.
3. Continue to grow spiritually and try to better understand the world around him.

Craig Tengler has worked with teams across many different organizations for nearly 30 years and has been a member of the same team for nearly 25 years! He believes that there are guiding principles and practices that foster, support and sustain effective teams. Craig is the Co-Founder,

VP of Marketing and VP of Human Resources for Entrepreneur & Information Technology. He currently resides in Boston, MA.

Larry Long is a professor at Illinois State University who works very closely with the Dean, the Alumni relations office, and the Development office.

Jim Williams: Jim Williams is a professor at Kent State University in the College of Business. Jim Williams has served on many honorable positions such as: Director of Competitor Intelligence, Organization Development Team Leader, Manager of Organization Effectiveness working for Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company.

Jeffrey Bolt: Jeffrey Bolt is currently working towards his doctoral degree in Communication Studies while teaching many courses here at KSU. He has taught over eight different course topics multiple times each, and his research has been included in eleven different scholarly journals and three different research projects. In his spare time he likes hanging out with his friends and watching *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*.

Judith Johns: Judy Johns is a professor in the college of Health Education. She attended Slippery Rock University, Penn State University, and the University of Georgia. She teaches Drug Use and Misuse here at Kent State University and is considered to be an instructor and not a professor due to the degrees in which she specializes in.

Andrea Peck: Andrea works for Tri-C, and currently resides in Mayfield Heights, OH.

George Fai PhD: George Fai is a Physics professor at KSU. He has contributed in over 105 scientific scholarly journals. Not only has he taught over twelve courses here at KSU, but he is also currently working for the Department of Energy located in Washington D.C. He has also held many chairman positions in science based programs, has reviewed many books, and taken part in thirty different research projects.

James Trebing PhD: James Trebing teaches many communication courses here at Kent State University. In his free time he enjoys riding and working on his motorcycle.

Carolyn Offutt PhD: Carolyn Offutt is the Director of Human Resources for AMERIMARK DIRECT, L.L.C. and a professor here at KSU. She has had a hand in helping her company double in size and instructs many different courses. In her free time she enjoys spending time with her family.

Robert Kelley PhD: Robert Kelley works at the Eli Lilly Company. There he is a Senior Consultant. He loves Indianapolis's environment. He currently resides in Indianapolis, IN.

Laura Mazur: Laura Mazur founded a non-profit organization called All Together Now, Inc. where she attempts to promote diversity between races within humanity. She occasionally has a dinner with several people whom represent a different race or religion. There they talk about how people can unite. She currently resides in Kent, OH.

Ann Petrella: Anna works for Babcock & Wilcox. She is still the Telecommunications Manager and has been for 10 years. She enjoys talking with her staff of 5 that report directly to her. She currently resides in Akron, OH.

Katie Ramunni: Katie currently volunteers for Habitat for Humanity in Columbus, OH.

Ken Steele: Ken is a Knowledge Consultant for Vangent Inc. out of Lenexa, KS

Christopher Clark PhD: Christopher is involved in Information Management and Employee Education for the Veterans Administration in St. Louis MO.

William Gorden PhD: William, or “Coach” as we like to call him, has accomplished many things in his life. Not only has he coined the term “WEGO”, meaning learning together, but he has also instructed many people to work together for the good of the project. He has taught us to put our differences aside and to work together to achieve a common goal. William has written many books and has even patented two games based on bringing people together. He currently teaches and coaches here at KSU and resides in Kent, OH. We are grateful we had the opportunity to learn from him. Thank you Dr. Gorden, Coach, for a wonderful semester.

Chapter Two

Core Question One:

What Makes for Effective Teamwork?

Core Question One: Team Responses

What makes for effective teamwork?

Our class was divided into four teams, each team having different alumni to contact. The first question that the teams had asked their alumni was what makes for effective teamwork. As the teams obtained the feedback from their alumni and from their coach, they used the feedback and their own experience to come up with a top ten reasons for effective teamwork and explain what they have learned during this experience.

Team 1

Top 10 Reasons

1. **Shared Credit:** Sharing credit is good when everyone in the group has put forth their effort to get the project done. If there is one person doing all of the work and the rest of the team taking credit, everyone else in the group sacrifices their integrity when it comes to finalizing a project.
2. **Conflict Resolution:** A good thing with conflict resolution is you have to find the source of a conflict. Don't place blame. Try to find the source and effective way to resolve your conflict in the most sufficient manner possible.
3. **Leadership:** Leadership is something that every team must have in order to complete the task at hand. Team leader should have skills to create and maintain a working culture that is positive. Focuses on team and not just themselves. Promotes positive team morale so team feels supported and valued. **Ex.** Every major sports team has leaders and without them the team would not be able to accomplish what they set out to do. Tom Brady of the New England Patriots is a good example. Year in and year out they are a dominant team and without guys like him on the team they wouldn't be able to win championships like they do. Tom displays all the characteristics of what a leader should be by building relationships with other team members, empowering people, and leading with a purpose. "Leadership is

ultimately about creating a way for people to contribute to making something extraordinary happen." Alan Keith

4. **Defined Roles:** It's necessary for each team member to know clearly what their purpose is. What role each member of the team has to play. What each person is responsible for, what is not within their scope. The resources they have to achieve their goals.
5. **Communication:** We chose communication as one of our top 10 ways for effective teamwork. In order to get anything accomplished, we have to communicate efficiently and effectively. If we do not communicate with one another, nothing will ever get done. Communication is also important because all workplaces have become more and more diverse, and it is very important to communicate with those who are from a different country, religion, or ethnicity.
6. **Active Listening:** Active listening is a very important skill to have. Not only does active listening help us obtain information, it also helps us listen to learn and understand messages sent to us.
7. **Goal:** Cohesiveness for a group. It allows everyone to be on the same page while working towards their end goal. Having a team goal may also involve assigning team roles to work on specific tasks that build towards the goal.
8. **Open Brainstorming:** Open brainstorming consists of allowing group members to openly share ideas no matter how large or small, important or minuscule. Open brainstorming allows all group members to expand their projects to all possibilities.
9. **Ego:** While working in a team, people's egos tend to get in the way. When this happens, it forces the team constantly to reevaluate itself. Leave your egos at the door.
10. **Constantly Reevaluate:** The team needs to be able to step away from the project periodically and reevaluate each other. We need to be able to go over together what things we are doing well, what we have accomplished, what we are struggling on, and what has yet to be completed. This allows the team to maintain a common goal.

Lessons Learned

After working on Core Question 1, “What makes for effective teamwork?” as a group we felt that we did a good job but could have done better. First, we could have communicated the separate tasks given by the coach more effectively. We felt that the instruction given could have been more detailed oriented. Instead of working on the assignments as a team, we decided to do each assignment separately. As a result, our work did not show cohesiveness as it should have. Second, we could have worked on being more prepared. For example, as a group we always seemed to be late or absent from class. If we were more prepared, we could have done a better job on the video and written portion of the assignment. Third, as a team we could have utilized class time more efficiently. Instead of working on the assignment outside of class, we could have used our class time to utilize our coach while he was readily available for questions or comments. Lastly, as a whole, the team needs to take the class and assignments more seriously. As seniors, finding the time to meet as a group was extremely difficult compared to prior years. Work and organizational priorities made it difficult for us to meet as a TEAM, and that was the reason why we decided to divide each task.

Going into Core Question 2, we have decided to dedicate ourselves to the class and to our assignments. We are going to utilize our time wisely to be more productive in and outside of the classroom. In class, we will take full advantage of the coaches knowledge and guidance as a way to lead us to a more successful and solid project. We will also put forth the effort to be more prepared by coming to class on time and coming to class period. Working on the video, we learned that we could have included our alumni’s responses and thanking them for their time and information. For the next video, we plan to rehearse, give creditability to the alumni’s, and improve our speech etiquette on camera. We hope to do better on Core Question 2 by learning from our previous mistakes mentioned above.

Team 2

Top 10 Reasons

1. Practice Organizational skills inside and outside the group
2. Your group should share a Clearly Identified Goal
3. Keep Effective Communication throughout the process
4. Always Listen Actively to others within your group
5. Practice Unity within your group
6. Always be a Team Player
7. Practice Participative Leadership
8. Trust your teammates
9. Be sure to be Reliable
10. Always Confront your Emotions Openly within your group

Lessons Learned

We have learned many terrific lessons from identifying our top ten ways to make an effective team because teamwork is very important on a day-to-day basis. We learned that teamwork is part of our day-to-day living and in order for an effective team to meet its objectives we must understand exactly what job each individual has within the team. We have also learned that we need to participate within our groups because our interactions affect the outcome of the objective. Throughout this assignment we had our ups and downs, but most importantly we were able to finish the objective together as a team. What we all can take away from this assignment is that we all need to clearly identify our goals and keep the objective on the task, and work through each step together as a team. In conclusion, we have learned that effective teams have a tremendous interpersonal relationship that allows them to collaboratively communicate how to meet the objectives, tasks, and issues they may be having at hand.

Team 3

When answering the question, “What makes for effective teamwork”, we are able to find multiple answers. The book, *Communication in Groups and Teams: Sharing Leadership*, the *KSU Alumni*, *Ask the Workplace Doctor*, and *Coach* all have key concepts on how to make an effective team. There are certain roles that each group member must take on to contribute to the group.

- The leader must be someone who is willing to gather the group, guide the group into forming an agenda, follow through with the agenda, keep constant communication within the group, and hold group evaluations to see where the group is, where it should be going, and how the group members feel they should get there.
- The group must be able to recognize and overcome obstacles while still working towards the completion of the goal. Work expectations must be made known to the group prior to the group dismissing for the day.
- People need to be constantly reminded of their role in the group and communication is vital for any goal to be accomplished.
- When working as a team a timeline must be established. This way the members of the team know when things are to be completed by and the expectations of them are established. If expectations are not established of a team member, that team member will feel left out of the group, or not complete his or her assigned task.
- Constant evaluation of the timeline is vital.
- Because each individual brings something new and different to the team it is important to keep each member involved in the group and make them feel that their ideas matter.
- When gathering the ideas of the members of the group, one must also ask for feedback from the members on how they feel the group is doing.
- Compromising is important to the group and each member must feel that they are valued.
- Assigning tasks to team members helps them feel more attached to the group and helps with the cohesiveness within the group.

- When brainstorming, it doesn't matter what kind of ideas comes out, but how many, and how they are used.
- Working together with hands, head, and heart takes and makes big WEGOs!

Top 10 Reasons

1. **Clear, established goals.** It is important that the goals are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely.
2. **Team Player.** All team members must act as a team player to help the group move towards the goal efficiently and effectively.
3. **Motivation.** Keep the team's motivation high by making sure everyone has a role in the group.
4. **Open-Minded.** Everyone has a different idea and a different train of thought. Having your thoughts respected by the team is necessary to establish trust within the team.
5. **Leadership.** Leaders should energize, establish, motivate, set agendas, priorities, and achievable goals for the team to accomplish.
6. **Organization.** Every team must remain organized so that the timeline that was planned out can be accomplished.
7. **Professional.** Behavior between the team members should be professional at all times. This includes respecting everyone's thoughts and ideas at all times.
8. **Constructive Communication.** There should be reasoning behind what is being said and why it is being said. Communication channels should remain open throughout the process.
9. **Reflection.** It is important to reflect on the goals and achievements of the team. What the team is doing well in and what the team is doing poorly in should be examined and changes should be made accordingly.
10. **Diverse.** This allows for other's opinions, attitudes, experiences, etc. to be applied to the team so that the team members feel open and everyone's thoughts are taken into consideration.

Lessons Learned

Working together for the entire semester, our team has developed strong norms and roles. We have also learned valuable lessons, such as communicating together to achieve goals, constant evaluation of the team and using constructive criticism to strengthen our bond.

After meeting each other, our team immediately started communicating about what the group goals should be. Through this, we developed our objectives and we also learned how best to talk to each member. We have created a strong union between us all and have even created team symbols which communicate special meaning within the group. By communicating our desires, experiences and fears, we have grown into a functioning unit that accomplishes everything we set out to do.

Our team also constantly evaluates our progress and connection. Because of this, we are able to recognize when there is a problem within the group. This helps us to learn from our mistakes and focus on future goals. Since we are skilled at evaluating our team and our accomplishments, we are able to use these past experiences to prepare for future tasks.

Another lesson that our team has learned is being able to use constructive criticism to strengthen our group. We have learned to combat issues that may arise not by putting another member down, but by recognizing their contribution and building from it. By this, we are able to save face for the group as a whole and continue to make progress towards our goals. This enables all members to feel comfortable enough to add to discussion and feel as though they are valued as an experienced individual.

Working together as a team, we have learned many important lessons that are useful for our futures. We now understand the value of communicating together to achieve common goals, consistently evaluating our progress and being able to use constructive criticism to strengthen us as a unit.

Team 4

As we were finishing up our first question, what makes for effective teamwork, our team came up with ten elements that we thought were the most important. After working together as a team, hearing feedback from our alums and our coach it was fairly easy to choose our ten.

Top 10 Reasons

1. Strong leadership
2. Clear goals and deadlines
3. Defined roles and tasks
4. Open yet controlled meetings
5. Desire to achieve goals
6. Respectful and un-bias forum\
7. Loyalty to the group, the project, and the end result
8. Desire to participate (difference between volunteers and employees are people with vested interest)
9. Share the workload (everyone will do a different amount of work, but each part is as important as the next)
10. Motivation and reward for successful group work

Strong leadership is important because it sets a path for the team. There are different types of leaders according to our book. I would say that our team uses a laissez-faire leadership. Our team is very laid back and we let everyone do what they choose. This works for our team and we all work well with each other to get everything done.

Clear goals and clear deadlines along with defined roles and tasks can make or break the final outcome. It is very important that everyone in the team knows what the goal is and when the deadlines are. If these are not clear the team will become confused and not get anything accomplished. This goes along with roles and tasks. Every team member has specific roles and tasks. With having these roles and these tasks everything gets done by the deadline and will be set for the final goal.

Open and controlled meetings are very important for a team. With our team we have six different members. We all have different schedules, and have to work around each others and be flexible to make the meetings. Having these meetings open gives us a chance to decide when will work for everyone and having them controlled will let us know what we have to accomplish at that meeting.

The desire to achieve goals and should include all the team members. If one team member does not want to achieve the goal the final outcome will not be as good as it could be. Since everyone has their own tasks, everyone needs to put 100% to get the best outcome.

A respectful and un-bias forum is important for a team. In order to get respect you must give respect. In a team, members are working together to accomplish a goal. In order to do this you have to listen to what every member says, even if they may think differently than yourself. You need to treat your team members as you wish to be treated.

Loyalty to the team, project, and end result are very important as a team member. This brings out character in you. When everyone in the team is loyal, it shows that they are reliable and do what is asked of them.

The desire to participate is important because it gives everyone a chance to say what they want. Within a team there is more knowledge to be shared, and if everyone participates that knowledge can be shared throughout the team.

Sharing the work load is important so that the team involves everyone and not one person or two people have to do all the work. Sharing the work load creates a less stressful environment for the team as a whole.

Motivation and rewards for successful work. Motivations and rewards are helpful to keep team members going. Motivations are good way to support your team and keep them focused on what they have to be doing. Rewards are good to give them something to look forward too. When a prize is in the picture, team members will work harder to achieve the goal and receive the prize.

Lessons Learned

Throughout the term of our project on core question one, our group believes that we have all learned a number of valuable lessons. Teamwork can be difficult for some individuals, because of the constant demands it requires. As a team, we believe that in order for a team to work effectively there must be a plan of action and a potential back up plan if a situation arises. A prime example of this was a technological difficulty we had with a jump drive, however the situation was handled and a fellow group member did have the needed jump drive. Communication is a key element in any circumstance and our group has learned that deadlines, requirements, and expectations must be clear and all group members must understand. Schedules can often become difficult to work around especially when you are working in a group of six, our team has learned from this experience and we have successfully managed to adjust to meet the demands of the group. Working in a group we have also learned that one needs to be flexible, and realize there will be times when the team must collaborate on the task, and establish when that time will be and stick to it. Establishing roles within the group is crucial, a team leader is needed to help guide the group, yet the workload must be shared. Our group was fortunate to have a strong leader, yet the group needs to function equally together towards the common goal. We believe that we have learned it is important to have knowledge about each of the group members and the Alumni in order for the team to run smooth; the open lines communication allows for feedback. Our team has also been taught through this project that it is important to know what the task is and ask questions if problems or concerns arise. Finally, it is vital to not procrastinate, because time is valuable and enables the group to work together to accomplish their goals.

Core Question One

What makes for effective teamwork?

Alumni Responses

TEAM 1

Deborah A. Easton

1. Describe a time when you have run into conflict while working in teams.

Truthfully, I don't think any team can function for any period of time without conflict. It's the nature of teams—bringing together people with different knowledge, perspectives, attitudes, etc. in order to make better decisions than an individual can make alone. Even our families are a type of team and we all know how conflict is a part of everyday living with people we love!

2. When do you think that working in teams could have downfalls?

When an expert has more information, experience or knowledge than anyone else, it is sometimes better to let that person work alone at least in the early stages of a project. Then, when others become more informed or when it is time for others to implement the decision, they should become involved.

3. What are the dos and don'ts of working in a team?

There's a team-building activity I like to use in training that illustrates the following guidelines for teams:

- Sometimes when I think I have my act together, I am really in the team's way.
- I may have to be willing to give it (information, ideas, credit, etc.) all away in order for the team to win.
- Instead of focusing on what others are doing, I should focus on what I can do to help

the team win.

Just because I have achieved my goals, doesn't mean the team is winning. Think about how these "do's" lead to what the "don'ts" must be.

4. What are some of your biggest pet peeves while working in teams?

Game-players: team members who are concerned about receiving credit, but who have all kinds of excuses for not giving equal time, effort or dedication. It is a team leader's and every team member's responsibility to hold everyone accountable for completing their work assignments.

5. How are some ways you can achieve team cohesiveness and develop team spirit and enthusiasm?

Even before addressing the team's task, establish the rules for how this team will interact. Some examples are:

- What are the best ways and times for communicating with team members?
- How will we agree to handle the inevitable conflict we will experience?
- How will we handle (at least perceived) differences in effort being given to the project?
- What is our tolerance for failure (what can we risk trying and are we all okay with that risk)?

6. What motivated you to volunteer to help with this class?

Over my 27 years of consulting and training, I have seen many traditional/hierarchical-structured companies try to implement teams instead of dictatorial management practices. Some have succeeded after much trial and error. Others think they have teams, but they're really nothing more than smaller work groups being told what to do by their boss. Your generation understands teams better than any preceding generation because your education experience so far has been

very team oriented as opposed to the lecture format that the rest of us experienced. If you learn about team communication and leadership now, you will be major assets to your future work environments... and then maybe in 10 years I can retire!

Jeff Antoon

1. Describe a time when you have run into conflict while working in teams.

When haven't I? There is always some kind of conflict that will arise. Whether it's interpersonal, over ideas, getting stuff done, or simply finding time to meet! I've run into all these types of conflict.

2. When do you think that working in teams could have downfalls?

Depends on your outlook of the team and what needs to be done. If there is something you can easily handle yourself and you are equipped to do it, but are forced into a team, that just a waste of time and productivity. Furthermore, being in a team with a member you have ill feelings towards, that doesn't help.

3. What are the dos and don'ts of working in a team?

Someone will almost always emerge as a team leader. Don't let them have all the say in who does what and what gets done. It's a team for a reason. Try to be democratic in what you do, authoritarians suck. Don't keep to yourself, if you have an idea, share it, if there is something you are concerned about, share it, if you are doing something you don't agree with, share it. Make sure the group is always communicating and everyone understands their parts. It's no good when there is confusion or people just aren't talking to one another. Always talk.

4. What are some of your biggest pet peeves while working in teams?

Immaturity and lack of integrity. We're in a team; we have to get something done. Joke around and have fun, sure, but don't be stupid and hold up the progress of the team. And if you say you

are going to do something, do it. Don't give me this, I forgot or, so and so was supposed to do it crap.

5. How are some ways you can achieve team cohesiveness and develop team spirit and enthusiasm?

Do something that has nothing to do with work or the team goal. Go out, get food, talk, laugh, and simply enjoy being with each other. Discuss your fears and perceptions, be open with one another and have some fun.

6. What motivated you to volunteer to help with this class?

I had a great time in my communication classes and I think its fun to look back and help out if I can. I'm also not some stuck up, serious, I'm better than you cause I already graduated kind of guy. I'm hoping this will be a fun opportunity for you all and myself and I like sharing my perspective on things. I'm further hoping to come off as approachable because I don't want this to be an uncomfortable assignment for you all!

Susan Christopher

1. Describe a time when you have run into conflict while working in teams.

I think that in general conflict arises in my arena when ego become involved or people are making a power play. We had a young man, new to the archaeology program, decide that he wanted, what he thought to be, the prime living arrangements for an overnight dig in southern Virginia. The location was to be shared by two young female undergraduates (about his age), another professor and myself. He kept going on and on about the "fact" that the location was his. This would have left the coeds and me in the same sleeping quarters as all the men (11). We dug in our heels and refused to relinquish the location because it would be an awkward situation for the remaining individuals. We resolved it by not disclosing the location!

2. When do you think that working in teams could have downfalls?

When there is not enough work for everyone on the team and when egos are too highly involved. This leads to dissension amongst the troops. Also, when there is no clear leader of guideline for the group to follow.

3. What are the dos and don'ts of working in a team?

Do make sure there is enough work for the team and that there is a clear leader or supervisor. Do leave your ego at the door (you don't know what you may learn). Do allow for everyone to participate. Do know what all the different strength of the group members are. Do allow time for the work to be accomplished. Do brain storm in the beginning to ensure that there is a game plan in place before starting. Don't forget to ensure that everyone participates as equally as possible.

4. What are some of your biggest pet peeves while working in teams?

One person doing all the work and everyone taking all the glory. Pompous and arrogant know-it-alls who really need to stop talking!

5. How are some ways you can achieve team cohesiveness and develop team spirit and enthusiasm?

Make sure that everyone is heard and that there is equal participation. Make sure that the game plan is written out and it includes due dates with the names of the responsible parties. This game plan should be distributed to everyone in the group and there should be follow up meetings to make sure that everyone is on track. Make everyone accountable for their part of the project.

6. What motivated you to volunteer to help with this class?

Dr. Gordon is a charmer and talked me into it. Plus, I enjoy mentoring undergrads.

TEAM 2

Don Gibson

1. We would like to know what you think makes an effective team. Team mission and team communication.

- Teams cannot function without a clear, identified mission--where everyone is on board. By far, the number one contributor to effective team work that I have experienced in my years as a team member, leader or performance consultant is a clear mission--where everyone is on the same page with an identified, communicated measurable result. It is unity, where everyone is willing to contribute to the cause, and be willing to sacrifice time and desires for the good of the mission--the outcome.
- The second most significant contributor is effective communication within the team and with others outside the team. Communication supports identifying the mission and it supports carrying out the mission.

Both of these are developed with some detail in my answers to your next two questions. I address other contributors below, but they all link to these two.

2. What types of problems have come along with working in teams?

Team problems vary in business. But they probably stem from about three basic causes, from my experience:

- The greatest cause, I believe, is weak understanding of the team mission and/or goals (by any or all team members)--and therefore confusion and low commitment. Sometimes because of this weak understanding, it is the inability of one or more team members to commit to or to work towards goal identification, role assignment and their resulting accomplishments. Why? Because they just don't understand it. They may think they do, but they don't have THE same understanding that others do. Why? Because communication in the team is inadequate. Consequently, they spend far too much time

arguing about actions that people should take (or about actions people should or should not have taken) before they completely understand what accomplishment they will deliver to their organization (or to whomever). This wastes time and creates frustration, which de-motivates people. It's why people hate meetings. Teams should focus first on what accomplishments they want, and how they will measure those accomplishments to determine success, e.g. quantity, quality of what the team will deliver to whom. After that is understood and agreed upon by all stakeholders, then the team can plan its strategies. If the team plans strategy first, without clear knowledge of the mission (its measurable result), or simply starts working on things without collectively knowing the mission, goals, or strategy, it will not be a team--and team members will constantly be at odds with each other. This happens in business, believe it or not. More often than you might expect.

- Another cause is disagreement across team members about the mission or goals. In that case, I wonder why that particular team attempted to become a team. Maybe it was mandated by the boss. However, the point is that unless the team can agree on its mission and its strategies/processes to accomplish its mission (result), there will not be harmony, or team accomplishments, or effectiveness, or efficiency. There may be some results. But often not what they should be or could be. Disagreements may stem from personal agendas, political motives, naivety about a specific aspect of a goal or how to achieve an accomplishment, etc. And, as stated above, disagreement often comes from simply not understanding the mission or goals. Communication is what opens the door to agreement and understanding--communication by responsible employees, managers or volunteers who will yield to the communication objectives, and not their emotions. The opportunity for communication is paramount.
- A third and very common cause of problems with working in teams is the team's unclear relationship with its resources or its recipients/beneficiaries. In business, teams are often commissioned to support an organization's objectives by providing products or services to other parts of the organization. Sometimes teams are requested. Sometimes, workers just naturally form a team because they work together. Many companies call work groups

"teams."

Regardless, teams are dependent upon resources outside the team for authority, data, guidance, need clarification, supplies, funding, etc. When the team attempts to access these resources without the supplier/resource's clear understanding and agreement, problems arise. People feel pressured, uninformed, helpless, mad, and imposed upon.

Teams also can experience problems when they attempt to research and supply the recipients/beneficiaries of the team's deliverable outputs. Teams in business may be very clear in their objectives. But if whoever is expecting the team's output has a different understanding of what will be delivered, problems occur. Such problems surface not only at the time of delivery (one time event or ongoing), but also during the team's process of producing the results when it accesses the recipient with questions or other expectations.

These kinds of problems occur when the team, its recipients/beneficiaries, its resources/suppliers, and the rest of the organization are not aligned together with their respective missions and goals. This falls under what is called organizational planning--often called strategic planning, and is the accountability of overall management.

3. What were the advantages you have had working in teams?

Unity towards goal identification and achievement. Harmony across team members, team resources/suppliers, and team recipients.

I often work in teams, but I consult to performance teams as my job. I have seen effective team work involving timely and clear communication move right through complex projects. When all the stake holders and team members understand and agree with each other, cooperation is tremendous. Working in teams enables people to:

- create/ID/clarify
- missions/goals (in terms of accomplishments), strategies/processes, role

- Accountabilities, etc. But it goes beyond that. I will explain 2 advantages I have personally learned from experience. They are also in the literature.

Advantage:

- Team members depend upon each other because they bring to the table different experiences, perspectives, and skill/knowledge sets. In other words, as team members, you and I are interdependent upon each other in order to produce results. More and more, as people in organizations develop expertise in specialty areas, team work is more critical. Communication is critical. Absolutely a must. Team members need to value that others on the team often know more about something than they do. But, each team member usually (not always) knows more about his/her own expertise than other team members. But every team member must be open to learning what other team members already know from previous experience. Team members support each other towards goal accomplishments, which is why organizations form teams. So they can complement each other. Team members must commit to the team mission. They will be able to accomplish missions and goals by recognizing (and talking about it) what each member can contribute. They will accomplish things that none of them could do individually outside of the team. Collaborative communication within the team and outside the team is what makes teams work. Members must talk this out, and understand that their individual role is to contribute from their own perspective but cooperate from the team's mission's perspective. Teams create this understanding. It doesn't just happen.
- Team members help each other improve/develop performance, together. It's not just an aggregate of people in the same room or online together. It's teamwork. By communicating, members sharpen their own skills and improve team results. How? You contribute something. So do I, we work in parallel or in series. You explain to me that by me adjusting my performance, I can make your job more efficient and we save the company or customer money. Or, we discover collaboratively that the end deliverable output is superior if you and/or I adjust something. By being a team member, I am dependent upon you to point this out to me because I am so much of an expert at what I

do that I cannot see objectively what is obvious to you. Why? Because I have always done it one particular way. But I never had a reason to make the adjustment before, because the adjustment did not apply in previous situations--but here it does. Your eyes help me see. My eyes help you see. That's teamwork brought about only by respectful communication in teams, where you and I have given each other permission to coach or challenge each other in order to explore for effectiveness or efficiency. Performance improves. Performance becomes innovative. But changes **MUST** be in alignment with the organization's mission and the goals/processes of other teams, departments. That calls for additional communication--all towards the organization mission. If we don't have this alignment, our changes will create new problems for others--either within the team or others elsewhere in the organization, or the customer. This calls for communication within teams and communication across teams. Meaningful, interactive communication, with specific outcomes.

Dan Kearney

1. What makes for an effective team?

If you ever happen to see one or be part of one, then cherish it because they don't occur very often in this lifetime. But I digress.

- First and foremost, all members of the team must reach consensus as to the goals and mission of the team. There must not be dissent at this initial stage; otherwise personal agendas will sabotage the goals/mission of the team. For example, our manufacturing plant had many debts so we, as the mgmt team, agreed that all debts must be paid prior to purchasing any new equipment or giving raises and bonuses. This improved credit rating which would enable us to purchase new equipment thereby becoming more efficient and allowing us to attract more customers. Unity on the purpose and goals of the team are first and foremost. Everyone must be on board at all times or failure looms in the near future.
- Second: Update group mission as goals are met. Always keep moving ahead, never stall.

Our next goal was redefining ourselves as to whether we wanted to become nationwide or regional. (The key factor here is shipping costs inhibit customers from buying from you and you buying from wholesalers). Regional was the best option, as it keeps costs down.

- Third: Strong Leadership. Participative leadership? In a growing organization, participative leadership, especially at the top echelon weakens the leader and the perceptions of him or her simply because the "participation" is easily misinterpreted as weak leadership. When this occurs, you can be sure the participants will invoke their own agenda. Can you have a strong leader and still have participative leadership? No. It creates a dysfunctional relationship between the designated leader and the team.
- Fourth: Communicate what you are doing and listen to what other team members are doing. Find out what problem areas they are having that you can help with and never be afraid to ask for help. Confronting emotions? Everyone must keep their emotions in check. Why? Because when you confront an obstacle/problem and you try to establish a course of action to take, you must look at whether your arguments are emotional or logical. If emotional - then abandon that idea. If logical then present it.
- Fifth: And final - congratulate yourselves on your successes and spend as minimal amount of time wallowing in your failures. After all goals are accomplished to everyone's satisfaction, and if you have the time, then go back and try to identify areas that failed or were problematic and find out why it happened and what actions would you take in the future to prevent it from happening again.

Roger Howe

1. What makes for an effective team?

First, I think that the number one criteria for effective teamwork is that each member of the team must be committed to the same "mission" which must be clearly stated to the team both in written form and in verbal communication. Conflict is not a bad thing for a team if the conflict:

a) is over ideas; b) does not become personal; and c) is resolved. Numbers 6-10 are important. However, in some countries (e.g. Russia, China, Korea) teams do not function effectively unless there is a clear understanding of the hierarchy; they are deferent to the “top person” or anyone on the team that has a “superior” position to theirs. In many Asian cultures, it is highly inappropriate to “confront emotions openly” (your #10). If a team member is perceived to be too demonstrative of their feelings, their input will be minimized or completely ignored by the team’s leadership and usually by the team members themselves. The above are my preliminary thoughts. Over the years, I have had experience in working with teams in many countries throughout the world. In so doing, I have come to understand that our criteria for effective teamwork may be very different than that of other cultures. However, I do believe that having a clear mission, well defined goals and an organized structure to carry out the tasks of the team crosses cultural lines. I would be happy to discuss the differences in cultures and how these differences are manifested in team effectiveness in future communications if you are interested.

TEAM 3

Dr. Robert Kelley

1. When you are working in a team setting, how do you ensure that all members are able to be heard by the group?

I typically begin a team engagement by setting ground rules. One rule is to staff a team with diverse points of view and interpersonal styles. Another is to optimize the diversity in the group. I will then tell the group that I will "bring out" people who are participating less frequently than others. So, I will occasionally intervene to ask "if you were speaking, what would you be saying?" After group engagements, we conduct learning cycles to reflect on the meeting, learn and decide on improvements. We might then ask targeted individuals why they are not participating and how we can help to engage them.

2. When it is clear that the need to change the approach that your team has been taking, what are some of the ways that team members can approach those opposed to change in order to potentially make them understand the need to alter the plan?

Great question. It is imperative to lead a group through adjustments to approach. We call a "time out" and do a learning cycle. We ask: What was supposed to happen? What just happened? What can we learn from this? What do we propose to do differently? Sometimes we do this real-time in the group. Sometimes we take it off line and do one on one interview. We then communicate the new approach to the team and call the question: Can you live with this? We do not ask for agreement.

3. When you have a long term member of a team who is set in their ways, how can the other team members work to make sure the long term member does not feel excluded or ignored with ideas of potential change to the team or its processes?

We believe in merit, not tenure. We try to engage everyone. If someone is set in their ways and

it is hindering the team, the team leader or the consultant will speak with the individual, describe the situation and ask the member to collaborate and adapt.

4. How do you deal with an over-bearing boss?

If I engage an overbearing boss, I do so in a private one on one coaching intervention. It is critical to be descriptive, not evaluative. It is critical to create a win-win solution. If the boss is not willing to engage and the problem impacts the business, we will engage the boss' boss and HR.

5. How do you get your voice heard if you're not so outspoken?

Business requires people to be "players." It is a performance thing. Players learn to participate regardless of their personality. If you are not a player, you will not succeed.

6. How do you handle being discriminated because of your sex?

Discrimination is a most serious problem. It requires a delicate intervention process. You must diagnose the situation carefully and engage proper authorities e.g., HR. But, you must be able to demonstrate that there is indeed a discrimination problem.

7. Have you ever come across a lazy teammate? If so, how did you handle him/her?

I frequently encounter "lazy teammates." The question for inquiry is "why are you not engaged?" There may be good reasons. Do not assume anything. People are valuable resources. It is my job to optimize resources.

8. How do team members move past an argument where one colleague tells the boss every mistake you have made in an effort to either sabotage you or to encourage more work?

Non-linear thinkers can be very creative. I use ground rules, an agenda and I keep time. I also

use a great model: The diverge - converge model. So doing, I suggest that we start with everyone focused on the same objective. I then suggest that we diverge to gain a variety of viewpoints. When I see that we are getting into the weeds, I intervene and suggest it is time to converge i.e., prioritize what we have heard and make decisions.

Laura Mazur

1. I am willing to meet with you in person the last week in the month, or next month to answer 5 questions. Typing is problematic for me. You may call 330-678-8760 to set up a meeting, if this works for you.

Regards, Laura Mazur

Ann Petrella-Guariniello

1. When you are working in a team setting, how do you ensure that all members are able to be heard by the group?

In order to establish fairness on a project, the project manager or team lead must establish 2 things:

- A good PM will assign action items to all team members allowing them to discuss their findings and share with the group during appropriate times.
 - "Go around" time at the beginning or end of each meeting will allow for open discussion by all team members. This is a great opportunity for discovery on things that may not have been identified during the project too.
2. Have you ever come across a lazy teammate? If so, how did you handle him/her?

Laziness is not tolerated at the corporate level and as long as you have a seasoned project manager running the project and assigning goals/action items you are less likely to have an issue. The PM's goal is to recognize the lazy team member and keep them engaged by either assigning

extra tasks to the individual or more relevant tasks of interest to the individual. Either way it is easy to recognize and fix the lazy teammate.

3. Have you ever had a teammate who dumped his/her work on you in a way that you did not know how to say no? If so, what were the results?

If you are victim of a teammate dumping work on you, the project manager must be made aware and can help delegate the work back to the teammate. Also there may be a bigger issue as to why the teammate is dumping his/her work on you. Maybe the teammate has too many action items or is over extended on too many other projects. Again the PM or team lead can easily rectify this problem if addressed.

4. What should one do when other team members, or colleagues on an adjoining team, refuse to work together?

Personality conflicts often arise on team projects in the corporate world. Again it is the responsibility of the project manager to recognize and engage the teams and or team members through meetings, phone calls or one on ones. If egos aren't addressed early on they can taint and divide a project thus causing failure.

5. What is the most effective way of establishing structure in a group without acting "high and mighty"?

It's very easy to want to control a project with your ideas and your thoughts but you will come off as high and mighty and will lose respect quickly during a project. There is a time and a place to voice your opinion during a project without coming off too strong. Engage the project manager for advice on things prior to the meeting to make sure he/she is on board with what you need to discuss.

Lenny Ralphs

1. Mr. Ralphs was never able to respond to my initial e-mail. We also tried calling him, he ensured that he'll check his e-mail and we look forward to his response.

TEAM 4

Beth Zbasnik

1. What do you believe makes an effective team?

A desire to participate cooperatively, a desire to be successful and a generous portion of mutual respect are essential to making an effective team.

2. What rules should be implemented in order for the team to progress smoothly?

Instruction and guidance should be given with regard to the goals of the task. Often, however, groups function the smoothest when they are able to find their own rules, define their own hierarchy and structure.

3. When conflict arises within a team, how do you suggest managing the issue?

While difficult and sometimes undesirable, conflict is usually unavoidable. Conflict often produces the real leader. Sometimes conflict further defines a group's purpose. Conflict is often the real test of the group members' communication skills.

4. What are the "do's" and "don'ts" for a team to be successful?

DO your best to maintain cohesion, otherwise you are not a group. DON'T contribute to the grapevine.

5. What have you learned from working with teams? What worked and what did not?

I have learned that a team of volunteers communicates differently than a team of paid persons. Competent communicators generally produce competent groups.

Gerry Sargent

1. What makes an effective team?

- Understanding and acceptance of task or mission.
- Good communication between members vertically and horizontally.
- Clear leadership which coordinates functional activities and keeps focus of group on total goal not just individual goals.
- Inspirational leadership which provides vision to group objective as well as motivation to individuals.
- Measurement and communication of progress pertaining to group's goals and contribution toward group goal by individuals.
- Ability to adjust to change caused by change in environment, situation, or learning which has occurred during activity.
- Provide individuals with all tools and knowledge required to accomplish goals.

2. What rules should be implemented for team to progress smoothly?

- Acceptance of supremacy of group goals and objective to individual agendas.
- Recording and formal procedure to communicate accomplishment toward goals.
- Clear understanding and acceptance of change if it is required.

3. When Conflicts arrive how do you manage the issue?

- Analyze cause of conflict (interpersonal, unclear leadership, professional disagreement, unwillingness to accept change, change in life of members goals or objectives).
- Discuss in open environment with member or members impacted.
- Obtain understanding and acceptance of clearly defined change that is needed.
- Be prepared to make changes if U&A cannot be obtained that will accomplish group meeting defined goal.

4. What are dos and don'ts for team to be successful?

- Need for understanding and acceptance of group's goals and what individual must accomplish in order to meet those objectives.
- Clear communication before, during, and after project completion.
- Perception that environment is fair and reasonable for all members.
- Actively and objectively monitoring progress.
- Providing tools, time and talent required to meet objectives.

5. What have you learned from working with teams?

- They can be the best of times and the worst of times. A great deal of their success depends on leadership. I have worked to build 2 mid size corporations. In one case it depended on a team to grow and had a very charismatic leader. He was able to attract high quality, competitive people. He had vision and was a great motivator. Those qualities allowed him to succeed and hire people under market. The other is a case of attracting high quality people but paying them far more than market to retain them based on a lack of leadership direction and control. Examine SW Airlines. You will see what I meant about charismatic leadership and getting people to work for under market rates. Leadership provides vision, keeps focus and controls politics and personal agendas. In terms of happiness it usually a better place to work, but it depends on how money motivated you are. Although your questions are aimed at teams I still feel that the most critical variable is the leadership they are provided with along with adequate tools to accomplish the task.

Craig Tengler

1. What do you believe makes and effective team?

- Shared values
- Leadership

- Shared vision, goals, and objectives.
- Communication...inclusive, transparent and pervasive as possible.
- Loose/Tight organizational and operational structures...tight on values and flexible on most everything else.
- **Inclusion:** Team members want and need to be included to participate and contribute.
 - Reward
 - Recognition
 - FUN!

2. What rules should be implemented in order for the team to progress smoothly?

For me rules are situational and contextual....that being said, I would go for simple, clear and understood values that live and breathe within the team and the organization. If you place your values in a Lucite plaque...they are dead.

I am big fan of pervasive and transparent communication. So the rule is...communicate (tight). How teams communicate is up to them (loose).

Teams need to be rewarded for performance as a team and recognized as individuals for contributions. Fair is not necessarily equal and equal is rarely fair.

Find a way for everyone to contribute.

Make effort and take the time to have FUN.

3. When conflict arises within a team, how do you suggest managing the issue?

Supportive confrontation with win-win outcomes. No other options work.

4. What are the "do's" and "don'ts" for a team to be successful?

Depends on the team and what the team's mission or objective. I would imagine that a team that is saving a life has a lot in common with a team making a meal...with some significant differences.

5. What have you learned from working with teams?

Responding to this question is like stuffing 10 lbs of sand into a 1lb sand bag.

People are people, and most have a significant and meaningful contribution to make to a team. Effective teams find a way for everyone to contribute their very best.

Teams are dynamic....they change. Period.

Value based leadership is always important, and more of a challenge than it should be.

When attitudes and behaviors are congruent it is good, when incongruent it is very bad.

Creating an environment for teams and individuals to thrive in teams is an adventure....challenging, textured and fun.

What worked?

- Values that have clarity and consequences.
- Communication that is pervasive, clear and supportive.
- Recognition and having fun is so very important...more important than being rewarded financially (although that always a nice addition)
- Fail fast forward...keep trying, keep failing and you will continuously learn, improve and prosper

Teams 1, 2, 3 &4

Larry Long

I work very closely with the Dean, the Alumni relations office, and the Development office. We host periodic events, e.g.

We just completed an alumni & friends reunion in Chicago (held at the same time as the National Communication Association conference since we have alums from across the country who attend NCA); about 300 people attended to relive old times, network, and help us recruit grad students from other universities.

We have 2 advisory boards - one for the school and one for forensics. These boards meet twice a year. There are about 30-35 people on each board; about 20-25 are able to make the meetings - the last one was held at White Sox stadium - after the meeting, we were treated to a Sox game and stadium food. I'm setting up some additional events with the Chicago Blackhawk's and we will host the first annual School of Communication golf tournament this coming July.

We have created a School of Communication - Chicago Alumni Professionals Pipeline - this provides face-to-face contact between our current students and those in the professional working world; the pipeline facilitates theory to practice for students, internship & employment opportunities, etc. We have over 3400 alums in Chicago, so that's a pretty important group.

We also bring alums to campus annually during communication week to be on panels, etc.

The purpose of these activities and boards are to facilitate a "value-added" feature to our alums for keeping in contact with the school (e.g., networking, socializing, etc.), stimulate internships for our students, and develop relationships and opportunities for our alumni to donate their time and talent to the school, in general, and our students, in particular. We have also experienced an increase in donations to our foundation and the number of endowed scholarships - but, these are long term goals, not short run.

Chapter Three

Core Question Two:

How might the School of Communication Studies engage Alums in ways to mutually benefit them and current students?

Core Question Two: Team Responses

How might the School of Communication Studies engage Alums in ways to mutually benefit them and current students?

For our second core question, we were asked “If and how might the school of communication studies engage alums in ways that would mutually benefit them and current students?” We responded by interviewing our alumni resources, communication professors, as well as faculty that are not communication specialists in order to find out how they have or have not been able to interact with alumni of their universities as well as what we can do better to maintain relationships with those who have impacted our lives in the past.

Team 1

Our team has learned that there are many different aspects that make up a team, including different team dynamics. I have come to find that everyone is different. We have different cultures, ideas, backgrounds, all of which make for individuals who are not always going to work the same way. For example, each team member is not always going to be on the same page. We have come to realize that not everyone desires to have full control of a project and that you will have some group members who are willing to strive for more. Because everyone brings their own egos and personalities, you need to find a way to come together to resolve issues. After receiving feedback from the alumni, faculty, and our coach, we feel that this class has taught us teamwork, not with the use of a textbook, but rather through experience. These experiences will allow our team to grow as individuals and as team members.

Team 2

- Overall in regards to question two we have learned the importance of keeping a relationship with both alumni and current students. It has the potential to create a lot of opportunities for students and grads alike. The networking between the two will create a pattern, and further help out students and grads into the future.

Team 3

- After working together for the second project, our group has followed the mold that we had previously set for core question 1. As a group we have furthered our skills when it comes to communication, constantly evaluating our group as well as its work, as well as furthering the bond that holds us, as a group, together. We have previously established general norms and member roles that individuals in our group have accepted whole heartedly and all are very happy with which had emerged while working on our last project.
- After receiving our set of directions for core question 2, our group immediately established a criteria of what we were going to follow for the project. After that, we began to brainstorm the ideas that we had in order to make a list of potential ways to approach the final solution to our question. We learned significantly more about one another after playing the WEGO board game in class which only helped us to further build on the knowledge that we had about one another and how to approach as well as how to best communicate with each individual team member.
- One of the most important things that our group learned how to do so far this semester is that a successful group needs to be constantly evaluating itself. We have improved upon this even further from the last project because every class period that we have had to work on our project as well as when we meet outside of the classroom, we first discuss our progress so far and make sure that we are all still on the same page before moving on to the next step of the project. We have been able to learn from past mistakes to better improve the outcome of this particular project.
- By doing this project, Angela has reflected upon her responses and feels that neither professors nor students take the time to really use one another. She believes that this could be changed by adding in a mentor or advisor program where each student picks a professor and uses that professor as their advisor; this forms a bond and eliminates the long line at the walk in advising hours. Forming a bond with a professor not only educates the student, but offers insight into the life and experience of the professor; it's always good to learn from those who go before us. Angela's favorite quote from Dr. Carolyn Offutt is: "Communication degree has allowed our majors to excel in the

- workplace. My most important piece of advice to soon-graduates would be to keep you options open and consider different careers, and learn all you can along the way."
- Stephanie emailed Professor Bolt, asking him about the importance of Alumni and student/professor relations and he had a lot of great advice for us. Most importantly, she thought it was great what he said about how the alumni are proud of their degrees from Kent State. He mentioned how the alumni want to meet students from their former school and are very willing to help them with job hunting simply because they have KSU in common. She thought it was very insightful and also very useful for her when broadening her network. I hope that all of her time speaking with alumni will help her find a job after she graduates and Dr. Bolt seems to believe that it will. His advice is making her see how all of her work in this class speaking with alumni and trying to reach out to them could open doors for her and make it so that she has an easier time finding a job after graduation. This is definitely the most important thing that she has learned from her speaking with Dr. Bolt.
 - During the course of core question 2, Kelly has learned that it is very important to connect with Alumni and professors in all areas. It really gives us the opportunity as upcoming graduates to establish contacts, and possible employers. If we had not worked on core question 2, we may have not had the same opportunity. Many students feel discouraged, or shy when given the chance to walk up to their professor to develop a relationship. She personally feels that this question may have forced some students out of their comfort zone, for the better. Meeting new people, especially those of authority makes life more interesting, and can lead to many more opportunities. They have all lived the life of a student, and can talk from experience, which makes for great advice. As she graduates in December, she will still remember these people, and even ask for advice in the future.
 - After doing his part in core question 2, Peter does not think Kent State has a good program that allows students and alums to benefit from each other. It would be beneficial if there was a system in which students knew all of the contact information of KSU alumni within their field of interest. This would help students get a "foot in the door" in business America. Moreover, after personally talking with alumni, he learned that the alumni would benefit from this program too because of the feeling of

helping somebody, especially a student, is fulfilling. Alumni have shown him a lot about their willingness to give back to their alma mater.

- Core question 2 has made Kim feel that communication between students to past professors dwindles down after graduation. However, the professor she interviewed, Jim Williams, still sends her e-mails and keeps in touch with her. She thinks that it is important to keep in touch with past professors and past students and that it would be beneficial to students, alumni, and faculty to utilize an internet site designed specifically for communication. It would a program in which would serve as a network and a "go to" if a student has a question or if an alumni needs to find a newly graduated college student to fulfill a position in their company. This would benefit and engage students to alumni and alumni to students.
- By doing core question 2 I, Chris Hughes, have learned that not all professors seems to feel that close contact with past students, professors, or alumni is necessary in order to advance one's life after graduation. I interviewed Judith Johns who is my Health Education Professor. She went to universities in Georgia and Pennsylvania and does not keep in contact with many people from her scholarly past. She said it is too hard to keep in touch with people who live so far away with the schedules that they both have as well as the difficulties of the distance between them. My favorite thing that I learned from her was "that nothing lasts forever and there is no such thing as the perfect job. Everything has its opportunities and challenges. It pays to be flexible, resourceful, and respectful. Set goals for yourself, both professionally and personally and hold yourself accountable to meeting them even if it appears that no one else seems to care". She has made it very far in her life and has moved around the country quite a bit. She is proof to me that people can just about anything as long as they have the mentality that she expressed in her response to my question.
- After doing this assignment, we have all learned from the responses that we got from our vast assortment of professors and alumni. We have come to the general conclusion that it is very important to make an effort to reach out to those who have been through the same processes that you have as well as reach out to those who have helped you along the way. There is always something else to be learned or something that someone else can do to help you in this world, as well as things that you may be

able to help them with in return. I know that our group has learned a few very important life lessons after completing this project and are all very happy that we have had the opportunity to do this.

Team 4

- As we were finishing up our second question regarding communicating with Alums, our team came up with multiple elements that we believe were the most important. After working together as a team, hearing feedback from our alums, interviewed faculty, and our coach, it was quite obvious the elements to answer question two.

1. Join a network
2. Inviting Alums to speak in class
3. University Newsletter
4. Inviting Alums to University events
5. Alumni mentorship program
6. Send e-mails to Alums
7. Engage the faculty and students in intramural sports teams
8. Having Alumni Luncheons

- Joining a network is always a great way to meet people. Most of the Faculty who has sent us responses has suggested that the Alums sign up to join a network, such as Facebook, to keep in contact with the University. More and more faculty is becoming a part of face book which makes it easier for them to keep in contact with their old students.
- Inviting Alums to speak in class is a great way to keep them involved with the university once they've graduated. Faculty have recommended this because the Alums could spend some time speaking to students who are close to graduating and let them know what the "real world" is like outside of school. They could give students advice on things such as job searching. Many alumni would be thrilled to come back to their alma mater and help students who are ready to graduate.
- Sending out a university newsletter, either through e-mail or postal mail, is a great way to keep the Alums updated on University happenings. It let them know about any professors they possibly had when they were a student, or any new buildings being built, and even things like tuition changes and opportunities to give monetary gifts to the university.

- Inviting Alums to University events is yet another great way to keep them involved with the University, whether it's a football or basketball game, Fraternity or Sorority event, or even Homecoming. When the Alums were still at Kent State, going to University events was probably a big deal for them, so being invited to University events even after graduation, probably means even more than before.
- Allowing Alumni to mentor incoming students, whether they are freshmen or transfer students, would be a great idea for getting Alumni involved with the University. They could help those prospective students feel more comfortable about the University that they chose. The Alumni could give them a tour around campus, tell them stories about their good times at Kent State, and show them all the exciting activities to be a part of on campus.
- Sending e-mails to Alums is also another good example of how Alumni could still feel a part of the university. Just like the newsletter, the e-mail could serve as not just an update about the university, but it could come from some of those Alums old professors who could update the Alum about the classes that professor is teaching or any other news that may be relevant.
- By engaging the faculty and students in intramural sports teams there would be available opportunities for greater relationship. Sports are a common ground that many of the students and faculty have in common and could be a perfect icebreaker. Some of the boundaries between a student and teacher could be let down and allow a friendship to grow, if they are given a common ground to break the ice. Lasting relationships could be made while having a good time.
- Most of the time when a faculty member is asked to a luncheon there is always a catch, that catch usually is the fact that the only reason that the faculty is being invited is to donate money back to the university. Many of the professors feel like they are being taken advantage of. We believe that each school should have a luncheon where the entire faculty and student body of that school is invited to interact and get to know each other a little better.

Core Question 2

How might the School of Communication Studies engage Alums in ways to mutually benefit them and current students?

Faculty/Alumni Responses

Team 1

Pamela Grimm

1. How do you think email has changed the interpersonal communication between faculty and students?

Email has made interpersonal communication between faculty and students great. For example, compared to years ago, the volume with students has doubled more interaction due to email.

2. How does your school keep in contact with alumni? What are some good techniques?

The department of Management and Marketing is not doing a good job with contacting alumni. However, we (the department) are in the process of creating an alumni network on Facebook. Other good techniques would be annual alumni events.

3. What are some good ways you can increase alumni and student interaction?

- Networking events
- Appearance as guest in class
- Internships

4. How would alumni benefit from student interaction and vice versa?

Alumni get to find out what's going on and experience nostalgia. Alumni also get to find out what's new around campus. And students get to find out what happens after they leave college.

5. Across the years, have you been in contact with any of your former professors and in what ways? Did they contact you or did you initiate contact?

Yes, former advisor

6. What have you learned along your career path that might be of interest and value to our current students? And for those of us who soon will graduate?

Leaving school is the beginning, not the end. You always have a chance to learn something new.

7. Can you see any value to alums for faculty maintaining contact with our graduates?

Yes, alumni know faculty members like to see and be around current students and graduates.

8. Are they too busy to even consider maintaining contact with alums?

No, students should not be too busy because people (alumni) could potentially hire them.

Paul Haridakis

1. How do you think email has changed the interpersonal communication between faculty and students?

Email makes interpersonal communication between faculty and students more convenient. Email makes it easier for the faculty and students to stay in touch. Not like the old days where students had to either call the professor at home or attend the professor's office hours.

2. How does your school keep in contact with alumni? What are some good techniques?

The School of Communication Studies at Kent uses Listserv to stay in contact with alumni. The problem is identifying alumni and keeping up with their current information.

3. What are some good ways you can increase alumni and student interaction?

Periodically have an alumni event during big events on campus like homecoming. Other ways to increase alumni interaction includes social events and appearances in class. It would be nice to have alumni come and talk to classes about where their degree took them, and what current students can do with a communication degree.

4. How would alumni benefit from student interaction and vice versa?

Alumni get to see how good students are and increase alumni involvement. Alumni also get the practical experience of being a student once again.

5. Across the years, have you been in contact with any of your former professors and in what ways? Did they contact you or did you initiate contact?

No, have not been in contact with former professors from my undergraduate studies. Have been in contact in Professors from my doctorate program, and most of them are now colleagues.

6. What have you learned along your career path that might be of interest and value to our current students? And for those of us who soon will graduate?

Every career is a communication career.

7. Can you see any value to alums for faculty maintaining contact with our graduates?

Yes, networking opportunities. Also, alums have something in common with graduates because of their majors and interests; it is like an exclusive club.

8. What, if any specific knowledge, might students present to alums?

Diverse kinds of skills used and developed. Change in what current students learned versus what the alumni learned.

9. What benefit might cultivating a relationship with some of our alums be to them as faculty and to current students?

The more alumni involved, the richer the College of Communication and Information will be.

10. Are they too busy to even consider maintaining contact with alums?

Students are not too busy all the time. Students can give ideas to the school (CCI). Faculty is responsible for carrying the ideas out.

Rozell Duncan

1. How do you think email has changed the interpersonal communication between faculty and students?

Email has helped to improve the interaction between students and faculty. Now students have more access to their instructors. Not only do they interact with instructors during class, they can also ask questions and expect a response 24/7. The nice thing about email is the clarity and length of the response. The drawback is the lack of clarification and length of the response as well as being at the constant disposal of students. Unfortunately email can be a double-edged sword.

2. How does your school keep in contact with alumni? What are some good techniques?

The School of Communication Studies at Kent could do a better job of keeping in contact with its alumni. Generally an alumni-wide email is sent out about a week prior to the NCA conference each year inviting alumni to the annual Kent reception. Otherwise one or two individual instructors contact select alumni for periodic class visitation or activities such as the Communication Expo. Having annual picnics, or establishing an alumni council, or sending out a monthly newsletter would be some good ways to stay in touch.

3. What are some good ways you can increase alumni and student interaction?

Additionally, having a Big - Little relationship with alumni in the field students want to pursue would be a positive way to build relations and network.

4. How would alumni benefit from student interaction and vice versa?

The positive networking and building lifelong relationships is perhaps the most positive outcome of these relationships.

5. Across the years, have you been in contact with any of your former professors and in what ways? Did they contact you or did you initiate contact?

I have had select relationships with a handful of my professors from Muskingum (my first bachelor's degree) and three from Akron U (my Master's and second bachelor's). I still maintain a good relationship with most of the professors from my Ph.D. program. I think the reason I have such a positive relationship with the latter is because I work at Kent (where I got my doctorate).

6. What have you learned along your career path that might be of interest and value to our current students? And for those of us who soon will graduate?

I have acquired many practical skills that can and have been useful along my career path. Transferable skills such as critical thinking, decision making, effective listening, and logical development have been useful in my previous job as well as my current position. These skills help to make me a more effective and compassionate teacher.

7. Can they see any value to alums for faculty maintaining contact with our graduates?

The ability to make a difference in both current and future students' lives and careers is perhaps the most important reason for alumni to maintain contact with students.

8. What, if any specific knowledge, might they present to alums?

Networking and the ability to provide career assistance is sufficient reason to maintain contact with alumni.

9. What benefit might cultivating a relationship with some of our alums be to them as faculty and to current students?

See 8 above

10. Are they too busy to even consider maintaining contact with alums?

Are who too busy? Current students should realize that contact with alumni is a valuable resource that cannot be duplicated. Faculty should realize that alumni are a reflection of the faculty's abilities as teachers. The success of alumni points directly to the success of the faculty and the program.

Team 2

Questions asked to their alumni:

1. In what ways would Alumni benefit from being involved with undergraduate students of the School of Communication?
2. Has there been anything in the past that worked?
3. Is there anything you would like add about these benefits?
4. How beneficial do you think Alumni and undergraduate networking system is in the job field?
5. Have you personally helped assist an undergraduate student?
6. In all seriousness do you think this networking program will work for both the Alumni and undergraduates? If so why?
7. Do you think this networking system will be something the School of Communications would be interested in? If so why?
8. Would you be willing to help organize this networking system?
9. How will this system be setup?
10. How long would something like this take to set this networking system up?

Roger Howe

One of my executives recently was invited as alumni to speak to undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Kansas on the subject of “How to start and manage a new company.” The general subject was on entrepreneurship.

I think it would be useful to students, and alumni as well, to invite business leaders, government leaders, scientists, politicians (well...maybe not) as guest lecturers. We also, on occasion, have students do internships for varying periods of time (some are two week, some as long as 3-6 months) in one or more of our companies.

I have just hired a student that is in between his B.A. degree and law school to do some in-depth research for a documentary and a book I am currently working on and plan to complete in 2010.

Dr. Larry Long

I work very closely with the Dean, the Alumni relations office, and the Development office. We host periodic events, e.g.

We just completed an alumni & friends reunion in Chicago (held at the same time as the National Communication Association conference since we have alums from across the country who attend NCA); about 300 people attended to relive old times, network, and help us recruit grad students from other universities.

We have 2 advisory boards - one for the school and one for forensics. These boards meet twice a year. There are about 30-35 people on each board; about 20-25 are able to make the meetings - the last one was held at White Sox stadium - after the meeting, we were treated to a Sox game and stadium food. I'm setting up some additional events with the Chicago Blackhawk's and we will host the first annual School of Communication golf tournament this coming July.

We have created a School of Communication - Chicago Alumni Professionals Pipeline - this provides face-to-face contact between our current students and those in the professional working world; the pipeline facilitates theory to practice for students, internship & employment opportunities, etc. We have over 3400 alums in Chicago, so that's a pretty important group.

We also bring alums to campus annually during communication week to be on panels, etc.

The purpose of these activities and boards are to facilitate a "value-added" feature to our alums for keeping in contact with the school (e.g., networking, socializing, etc.), stimulate internships for our students, and develop relationships and opportunities for our alumni to donate their time and talent to the school, in general, and our students, in particular. We have also experienced an increase in donations to our foundation and the number of endowed scholarships - but, these are long term goals, not short run.

Kenneth Steele

Dr. Gorden asked me to send you some thoughts regarding your Core Question #2. He was one of the Professors that were most influential to me in my time at KSU, and his time spent with me has turned out to contain the most relevant knowledge I received from the program as I look

back on my career. I'm very happy to contribute and hope you find this information useful. If not, well, no harm no foul.

BACKGROUND FOR MY SUGGESTIONS:

- My background? My entire career (30+ years) has been spent in the T & D/Performance Improvement/OD/Internal Change Consultant roles inside various Fortune 500 companies, covering the telecommunications industry, the Insurance industry, and the Federal government. As such, and this is how I will approach my thoughts, I've seen the difference between the "proper" approach to things as we hear in formal instruction and professional seminars, and how that matches to the practicalities of business applications.
- There is most often not a good match.
- Why? The step-by-step approach and rigors of well done interventions as we all know should be followed, frequently break down due to operational necessity, political agenda, work priority, under communication (or miscommunication), and incomplete implementation plans.
- If you are an outside consultant and have access to key decision-makers, chances for long-term success increase geometrically. Most of us are not going to be in that role, even with an advanced degree. And, even that degree will not guarantee the ability to influence a business if you are inside it. Once there, political considerations far outweigh OD knowledge or practical experience. I can give you numerous examples. Students in the program (perhaps even yourself) may be able to verify this from their own experience.

(If their experience has been different, please ask those students to forward me the name and address of their HR department as I'd like to forward my resume' to them immediately....) J

OK, SUGGESTIONS ON CORE QUESTION #2....

- Guest lecturers for any and all classes that might even remotely apply to business concerns, up to and including courses that emphasize empirical design. This will help with program evaluation and lend credibility if a person goes on to work in a business

environment. Having the guest alum live and on-site is most helpful. For ones that cannot be there in person, Web meeting with a conference call in the classroom is a viable option if well moderated. Not as suitable for a panel discussion.

- Continued SME/mentor participation as team members in projects such as this one.
- I might suggest one change, however. Instead of asking the alum if he/she is interested in participating and leaving it up to the group to randomly contact a person on their own, it might be more effective to have a moderated conversation between a selected SME alum (or two) and the team to build a relationship and set a schedule for communication between the team and the SME(s). That's a standard business practice, so why not use it here?
- Both parties could and should then be held accountable for living up to that commitment.
- It helps the SME budget time and schedule more effectively and would allow for more in-depth information to be shared by building a relationship. I teach part-time at a local University here in Kansas City. That's how we work with guest SMEs to build long-term relationships and it works fine for us. It respects the SME's time and teaches students to be accountable for keeping commitments...a requirement for success in business.
- I've seen frustration in "newbies" because things just don't work the way they are told to expect them to. Graduates need to be armed with not just expectations but also with workable strategies for reacting to requests to "do it faster, cheaper, and with less resources". And I mean real stuff. Not theoretical and not high-level discussion. I mean frontline in-the-trenches stuff. Alums are a tremendous resource for that when engaged as mentors and not just as SMEs. Re-think their role in certain activities and make them work harder (of course, let them know this up front and when they agree, they will be eager to help...trust me). Of course, I don't know the content of the course you are completing, so if I'm suggesting here something you are already doing, the kudos to you and to Dr. Gorden.
- Establish an online database/FAQ that can be used for students that reflect these subjects,

and get a stable of alum SMEs willing to contribute to it on a regular basis, either as they find a topic that might be of interest or whenever a student of a professor finds a topic that they feel would be of importance to include. There are enough of us to provide a substantial body of information that can be used for case study work or for research purposes.

- Make the above database available to students post-graduation as a value-add for having the privilege of attending KSU.
- Professors may choose to solicit issues and trends from alums on a regular basis to determine specific challenges that are cutting-edge or recurring and work to build them into curricula real-time. This should be done across all courses in the School because all alums are not just in business (and I want to avoid tunnel vision on my own part here.) Potential solutions can be surveyed as well for case study purposes, and alums can then be brought in for discussion or participation per this group.
- Short-term internships with alums in local businesses & universities (ex. Dr. Andrew Rancer, and if you do talk to him mention the Rocky Horror Picture Show...inside joke) whenever possible, if it can be done equitably.

Katie Ramummni

Let me start by saying it is just nice to hear about the undergraduate program and students in it simply because it reminds me of how much I enjoyed being a communication major at Kent. I worked in the office for a year and loved being a part of students' academic experience. It was very fulfilling to be able to solve problems when needed or give advice about which classes might be most interesting to each student who asked. Aside from the nostalgic benefits, after leaving to enter the working world, our classes stop and we are responsible for staying sharp and informed. Students are constantly learning. What better way to stay in touch with the ever-changing fads and perspectives we study in communication? You are all growing in wisdom that we have passed the opportunity to be taught.

I would be interested in a networking system for alumni and communication undergrads. When I graduated, I tried to utilize the KSU alumni networking system. If there was a more targeted

group using this networking system, we might get a more consistent rate of response from our participants. The easier it is and the more habitual a networking system can be, the more likely its users will be to utilize it.

I am hesitant to take on too much responsibility in helping develop a networking system. I am in my first full time position since college and find myself often biting off more than I can chew. That being said, if I were to be contacted I would definitely consider providing my assistance.

Quite honestly, I wouldn't know how to begin going about compiling a contact list for this project. I would like to hear a plan of attack if there is one. Please keep me informed as to what this would entail. What information would you like to have of the students/alumni? Do you know if we could access the school's database? The alumni association most likely has some sort of database from which they could run a report of alumni information.

Networking with undergraduates would allow alumni to create contacts just as we do with our fellow alumni. Everyone knows someone. Regardless of your age, the relationships you have built in your life may be opportunistic for someone other than just yourself.

I hope my insight has been of use to you and your classmates. Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in on the development of this project.

Team 3

Jeffrey Bolt

Allow me to apologize for the lateness of this reply. I have been feeling rather ill and just kept putting it off. As for your overarching question, I think professional growth is the single best answer. Alum from Kent State are (and should be) very proud of their degree and know future grads will leave this University with a very similar strong education. Even with this difficult economy, employers are always looking for well qualified individuals they can invest with. Our Kent State alum needs to remember the top quality education given here and invest in that. Likewise, or soon to be graduating students need to make an effort to connect with these same individuals and demonstrate the excellence instilled at this University. For discussing with other faculty, it's very similar to any other professional organization. I'm constantly asking my colleagues for advise (or to get things off my chest) about students, exams, publications, and current research. The family here at Kent State is very open and allows for us to freely discuss with others our trouble, worries, and accomplishments. I think my answers may be different from others because I am a new Alumni and still work for the department. The replies you receive from older Alums I'm sure will be quite different from mine. I do feel all of us will agree with the top education we received from Kent State. I would be more than happy to mentor and assist with any Kent State students. I am currently involved in Academia and believe every day we must try to reach out to our students. This can be accomplished in many different fashions and I would be interested to see what results you gather from this project. I wish you the best of luck and thank you for involving me.

James Trebing:

As for the general question, I think that if we could get more alumni back here to talk to upper division classes about not only their experience at Kent but their successes (and perhaps pitfalls) following graduation it would benefit current students. I don't know what that would do for the alumni, but if certain alumni were to help do some professional recruiting that would be a benefit to all concerned.

- It's been a long time since I have been in contact with former professors except Dr.

Gordon and contact with him and a few others has generally been accidental.

- I have learned that life is full of surprises, twists and turns that are difficult to anticipate. I've lead many lives up to this point and never expected to be where I am today. One should remain open to possibilities and take advantage of opportunities as they present themselves. Learn from your mistakes. If you can't find a job after graduation try graduate school.
- Probably a narrative about the above and further philosophical explication.
- I'm pretty much up on things in the School right now. I'm not much interested in people from the past but I am interested in what former students are doing (I was recently contacted by a former student from Hiram who graduated in the late '80s and found that interesting).

Carolyn Offutt

1. Across the years, have you been in contact with any of your former professors? Did they contact you or did you initiate contact?

Yes. The contact went both ways. I contacted them on occasion, and sometimes they would contact me.

2. What have you learned along your career path that might be of interest and value to the students, and for those of us who will be graduating?

Much, as you know, I am both an instructor and alumnus of Kent's Communication school. I feel I am a much better teacher now, because of my outside career experience. In my role in Human Resources I have seen the variety of careers that Communication Majors go in to, and I have also seen how the generalist nature of the Communication degree has allowed our majors to excel in the workplace. My most important piece of advice to soon-graduates would be to keep you options open and consider different careers, and learn all you can along the way.

3. If you were invited to speak to our faculty and students, what stories and thoughts might you share with them?

I would share the stories of successful Communication majors I have known. Former classmates of mine are Professors and department heads. Some have started successful communication consulting businesses. Former students of mine are a Dean at DePaul, an E-Commerce Specialist at Hyland Software, a Sales Manager, and an Import Compliance Specialist. Since I am also an instructor, I have lots of opinions on changes I would make to some of the courses offered, but I will spare you those. However, I would strongly recommend an internship. I think it should be required.

4. Is there anything you would like to know about former classmates, professors, or what has recently happened in the School of Communication Studies?

Since I am here, I am pretty well informed. I always am interested to hear what Kent Communication alumni are up to. I think we could make a lot more of our networking opportunities in the school--especially in support of the school. I would add, I always appreciate the alumni that agree to come back to talk to current students--share their experiences--good and bad, and open their doors to discuss the future career plans with students. I feel that this contact with the "real world" is incredibly valuable for students.

Professor Williams

1. Across the years, have you been in contact with any of your former professors? Did they contact you or did you initiate contact?

Yes for three professors made a real difference in my life. We now have email linkage.

2. What have you learned along your career path that might be of interest and value to the students, and for those of us who will be graduating?

Stay focused, understand the concept of the issues and get the job done.

3. If you were invited to speak to our faculty and students, what stories and thoughts might you

share with them?

I would use the myriad lessons learned in Poland, Slovenia, and South Africa as I led the acquisition integration of those huge tire plants into the Goodyear world of tire manufacturing working through translators, communist mindsets and narrow perspective of the world.

4. Is there anything you would like to know about former classmates, professors, or what has recently happened in the School of Communication Studies?

N/A

Judith Johns

1. Across the years, have you been in contact with any of your former professors? Did they contact you or did you initiate contact?

The only professor I seemed to remain in contact was my old field hockey coach and PE professor at Slippery Rock University. My master's degree is from the University of Georgia and that was too far away and before the internet was so useful.

2. What have you learned along your career path that might be of interest and value to the students, and for those of us who will be graduating?

I guess that nothing lasts forever and there is no such thing as the perfect job. Everything has its opportunities and challenges. It pays to be flexible, resourceful, and respectful. Set goals for yourself, both professionally and personally and hold yourself accountable to meeting them even if it appears that no one else seems to care.

3. If you were invited to speak to our faculty and students, what stories and thoughts might you share with them?

I am not sure I have anything particularly unique to share.

George Fai:

- So I think there is no silver bullet in the student-faculty relationship. But if I had to name one or two major components, I would say the willingness to work hard (both sides) and trust. You have to trust your instructor, and the instructor has to trust the students that they are not trying to fake or cheat. Of course, a student who does not work hard and honestly is cheating themselves first and foremost. This is something that the instructor needs to make the students understand, mostly through the attitude the faculty takes and the image he/she projects to the students. And, you know, trust is easy to break and very hard to restore. But I am always optimistic and believe that if the students see that the instructor is willing to work hard for them and with them, they will reciprocate and put in serious work themselves. This is then the basis of the relationship that you can build on.
- As far as Kent State, you cannot make a general statement about student-faculty relations. It is a very individual thing, we are all different. I can tell you that most of my colleagues in physics spend a very large amount of energy on both undergrad and graduate teaching. With graduate students, it takes countless hours of research advising; sometimes more than doing the work yourself....I would try to give faculty a little more freedom from administrative duties and make teaching somewhat of a higher priority. But this has to be done carefully, so that their research efforts do not suffer. I would also try to give a little less structured load to students, so that they can feel more in control when they study a particular subject. Here the challenge is of course to make sure that the student does still spend the time working (studying). [See my first paragraph.] In this earlier e-mail from you, there is a question that I found particularly interesting. Yes, I have been in contact with my former professors. The contacts were initiated in both directions. Now that I count, I realize that in fact I invited three of them to Kent for colloquia throughout the years. Of course I was in a somewhat special situation with going to school in Hungary.

Laura Mazur

1. How does KSU get you involved?

Laura's passion is diversity. She talks with people and organizations to establish a more united community. To do this, Laura is very selective about the subjects she brings up. She wants people to be open with one another and have the ability to speak with others about touchy subjects. Laura stated that, "being diverse is better because it enriches our life". With this view, Laura always attempts to break down barriers when it comes to meeting new people, even her own. She feels that stepping out of your comfort zone is very beneficial to yourself and to others. She recently hired a vice president of diversity for KSU. The role of vice president is to encourage university to be more welcoming to all people.

2. Have you been contacted by students before?

Never

3. How do you directly benefit from Kent students?

Laura likes to be involved on the diversity committee at Kent State University. She feels important because Kent listens to her proposals i.e. hiring a vice president of the diversity committee. KSU is carrying out what she is passionate about and Laura feels that when the college gives to the community and the community gives back, that everyone wins. Kent is going to do a diversity website for her.

Lenny Ralph

1. At some point in your career, was there ever a topic on which you would have sought advice from or would have simply chatted with one of the other faculty? What was the topic?

I typically look to my work colleagues for that kind of chat rather than the former faculty. Even at the time I was going through school I was already a working professional so I did not look to the faculty for advice even then. If I had been looking for more information on current research in the field I might have gone to the faculty for that kind of chat.

2. If not, can you think of any way some of our faculty or our school might be of help to its

other alum?

Maybe they publish a monthly newsletter that would have a few short paragraphs on current research findings in the field. It would have to be written in a very practical and simple way. Most of the research in the journals is written in a language that the academician gets used to reading but it does not sound as clear to the business person. The faculty could summarize the research in a more business like language and that would be good. In business we just don't take the time like we should to keep on the research from the journals and so that kind of summary would be very helpful. It doesn't need to be longer than a page each month. The easier to read and digest the better.

3. How do you evaluate serving as an Alum Resources to our team?

I am not sure I understand the question.

4. Would you be willing to mentor a class or a few students again?

Sure, depending on how much time it takes and what is involved?

Robert Kelley

- Early in my career I was on the faculty at Miami University. John Pacilio was on the faculty at that time. He hosted a meeting on the methodology and competencies for conducting a "communication audit" for an organization. Communication Audit was a new methodology and KSU provided an opportunity for learning across schools in Ohio. I attended and found the meeting very helpful.
- Serving as a resource to your team is a welcome opportunity for me. I believe that the School of Communications would increase the value proposition of its curriculum for students if it developed and maintained a network of alum mentors for KSU students. I believe that there is value for bridging the "academic" excellence of the University and the "practical application" of alums is their professors or practitioners like me.

- I would be willing to mentor a class or a few students so long as it is structured to make it easy for me to do so. This exchange is nicely structured and therefore user friendly for me.

Team 4

Beth Zbasnik

1. How has the relationship between yourself and past professors continued since your graduation? What method of communication has been most useful?

Contact with one really terrific mathematics instructor, Jill Beer, has continued over the years. We write letters, drop cards to one another on special occasions and email each other. She and her husband, also a professor at Kent, attended our wedding, baptisms of children and significant birthdays.

2. How has the relationships with former instructors helped your professional careers?

Our relationship helped me secure a slot in Graduate School as she wrote a letter of recommendation on my behalf.

3. What advice do you have for those who will become alumni in the next few months?

My advice to you: remember the ones who were especially kind to you and emulate them as you go forward.

4. What topics were instructors able to discuss with you outside of coursework? Were the conversations helpful/enlightening?

My relationship with Jill Beer started because she invited me to lunch at the end of the semester. She continued that tradition every semester until I graduated! She always treated me to the "nicer" restaurants in the surrounding area, we talked for hours, she was, and still is, really special to me! Now we get together a couple times a year.

5. How do you feel the experience as an Alumni Resource has gone? Was it successful? Would you do it again?

I have enjoyed participating in this study; I hope it continues.

Quality relationships matter most!!

Dr. Gean Pendleton

1. How do you keep in contact with your alums? If so, how?

The alums usually contact me. Usually they people that want recommendations. He also, said that since he has graduated from college that most of his professor are retired, so it is harder to stay in contact. Sometimes, students will randomly just drop in and say hi.

2. Are you involved with any alumni events either at Kent or your alma mater?

Not involved in any events. He said that he would be involved in more events, but there are not any events usually that don't involve donating money back to the university.

3. What do you think is a good way to get/keep alumni involved with the university?

In a way someone has to initiate it and give a means of keeping in contact. Values privacy too much to have an account on Facebook or any other social network. He mentioned that a good way might be to set up a monthly luncheon in each department to get the students and alumni more involved.

4. What do you think the university could do to improve contact with alumni?

To improve contact with alumni, he mentioned there could be some kind of messaging system through email that was easier to use. Like AOL on your email that you could tell who was on and just drop a quick message to them or vice versa.

- Say in general: He gets emails and usually they are just asking for money. Said when he first came here he had to pay to use the bus. He also said that professors

have to pay to use the recreation facilities. He said that the university should help the professors out since they are a very important part of the university, also.

Closing

Our class would like to thank the alumni, faculty, and our coach for giving us an opportunity to learn helpful information from them and thank you all for taking the time to come see what we have accomplished. We hope that someday we will be able to return the favor to the future undergrads of Kent State University.

Thank you,

Communication in Teams Class of 2009

Shardell Artis
Renee Elliot
Megan Riley
Zack Siegrist
Sean Larkin
Tiffany Thuma
Kelly Lokia
Allyson Kolbl
Tanner Shearer
David Ramsey
Sarah Weingart
Angela Manch
Peter Stancato III
Kim Baleno
Stephanie Hand-Cannane
Chris Hughes
Kelly Prefling
Ashley Williams
Benjamin Kitchen
Justin Marino
Kelly Brogan
Brittany Satyshur