

University Cooperation with Neighborhood Organizations:  
Project Management Education in Urban Neighborhood Redevelopment

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### ABSTRACT

This paper discusses one aspect of a series of cooperative projects between university researchers, teams of university students, neighborhood associations, and government organizations to assist residents of diverse population (often low income) neighborhoods to develop reliable methods for identifying specific neighborhood problems, and to use those methods to mobilize appropriate governmental and private-sector agencies to assist in remediation. The focus of the paper is on the use of project management technology by graduate students to develop project management plans and processes for various aspects of the neighborhood redevelopment program. The goals of this cooperative educational effort are examined, and the benefits to the community and the students are noted.

### INTRODUCTION

There has been considerable recent research related to ways to increase citizen/neighborhood participation in community development efforts, and to encourage community sustainable development (see, for example, Ault, Riley & Gleason, 2001, 2000; Botes & van Rensburg, 2000; Morrissey, 2000; Aigner, Flora, Tirmizi & Wilcox, 1999; Hiebert & Swan, 1999; Higgins, 1999; Kamara & Kargbo, 1999; Khan, 1999; Savaya, Moreno, Lipschitz & Arset, 1999). This article reports results of student involvement in research conducted with a variety of diverse-population neighborhoods in Omaha, Nebraska. The research was conducted as part of an on-going series of projects in which a variety of technologies (including geographic information systems, project management, decision technologies and Internet technologies) are being used to facilitate community planning and neighborhood redevelopment. The projects evolved from multidisciplinary environmental-justice research conducted in cooperation with a number of organizations and neighborhood associations. The projects focus on assisting residents of diverse-population neighborhoods to develop reliable methods for identifying neighborhood problems, and to mobilize appropriate governmental and private-sector agencies to assist in remediation.

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Students in several courses have been involved in technical experience related to this project, including undergraduate students in courses on environmental risk (Environmental Science department) and research methods and statistics (Sociology department) in the Creighton College of Arts and Sciences, and graduate students in project management and decision technologies courses (Information Systems & Technology department) in the Creighton College of Business Administration. The focus of this paper is on the use of project management technology by graduate students to develop project management plans and processes for various aspects of the neighborhood redevelopment program. The materials provide a step-by-step process that neighborhoods can use to successfully work with governmental agencies to identify and achieve neighborhood redevelopment goals. The goals of this cooperative educational effort are examined, and the benefits to the community and the students are noted. Due to space constraints that limit discussion, the goals and benefits are simply listed herein.

## GOALS

### Research and Community-Service-Related Goals

- Goal 1. Categorize the entire range of activities related to a neighborhood redevelopment project (NRP).
- Goal 2. Group the NRP activities into appropriate subprojects.
- Goal 3. Develop project plans for each of the subprojects.
- Goal 4. Develop a project plan for the overall project that incorporates and integrates all of the subprojects.
- Goal 5. Operationalize the project plans for the overall project and each of the subprojects.
  - Goal 5.1 Develop project and subproject organizational structures.
  - Goal 5.2 Develop project and subproject work breakdown structures.
  - Goal 5.3 Develop project and subproject schedules.

## Teaching-Related Goals

- Goal 6. Use the activities described in Goals 1-5 to provide students enrolled in the project management course with hands-on project management experience related to the type of socially responsible activities which are an important aspect of the Creighton educational experience.
- Goal 7. Use the activities described in Goals 1-5 and feedback from activities described in Goal 6 to develop classroom case materials for use in future offerings of the project management course.

## BENEFITS

The project management material provides a step-by-step process that neighborhoods can use to successfully work with governmental agencies to identify and achieve neighborhood redevelopment goals.

Creighton University's interest in involvement in socially responsible activities within the Omaha community will be actualized via the activities in this project.

The activities provide a means to involve students in meaningful research efforts.

The activities provide students with hands-on project management experience.

The project management efforts provide students the opportunity to be involved in socially-responsible course activities.

The activities provide students with case-based course materials.

## REFERENCES

Due to space constraints, reference material has been omitted. However, the information is available from the first author.