

A Proposal Concerning Practice Subjects and Project Courses at Sloan

Alex d'Arbeloff

Roberto M. Fernandez

James Orlin

Anjali Sastry

Some Good News

- **Our proposal has no implications on revising the Masters Core**
- **Our proposal has no implications on rewriting the Sloan Mission Statement**

Project Subjects at Sloan Involving Working with Outside Firms

- **25 subjects out of approximately 160 offered**
- **Range from small to large projects**
 - **Proseminars vs G-lab**
- **Covers a number of disciplines**
- **Most students take at least two significant project subjects at Sloan.**

Two Foci within a Business Education

- **Analysis vs Management**

- **Analysis focuses on what to do**
- **Management focuses on how to get things done**
 - **Implementation and execution**
 - **Concerned with organizational issues, psychological issues, incentive structures, and more**

“Business is about determining what to do and how to get it done.” -- *John Reed, 2004*

Project proposal: will have a educational component on the management side

Some Quotes on Project Courses

I think such courses are extremely useful -- but to work they require substantial instructor time.

I definitely see a need to do more project work but it is VERY time intensive, especially outside the normal class schedule. It also requires a different set of coaching skills than is usually used in the normal classroom.

It is quite time intensive to teach a project course of this type. ... The effort goes beyond normal prep for a course.

[Projects] were very time consuming to manage, and help would have been great.

Comments from faculty on how Sloan can help out with project classes

- **Maintain a database of companies**
 - **Contacts, subjects that relate, ...**
- **Help manage relationships with companies**
- **Support for faculty who need to develop a large number of projects**
- **Support for the subjects with significant projects**
 - **travel support, additional TA support, alumni monitors or mentors**

A Possible Structure for Encouraging Multi-dimensional, integrated learning

- **Permit group project subjects that take a half-semester of the 2nd year.**
- **Time Frame: possibly H2 of spring of second year**
 - one week at MIT
 - four weeks on site
 - one week at MIT
- **Advising**
 - Each group would have a primary advisor and could involve secondary advisors

How Project Weeks Might be Managed

- **Week 1. Setting the stage**
 - learn about firm and project
 - personal journals to maintain
- **Weeks 2 to 5. The Project**
- **Week 6: closing the loop**
 - follow-up with firm
 - group presentations (possibly multiple)
 - class discussions on what was learned about group dynamics, organizational behavior, corporate culture, and more and their effects on projects

Project Subjects: A Proposal on Implementation

- **The “fill in name” Sloan Business Lab**
 - manage relations with industrial sponsors
 - maintain database
 - work closely with faculty, and heads of centers in project development

- **Support for faculty**
 - points
 - help in developing and managing projects
 - faculty development

Project Subjects: Why do it?

- **FACT: many of our faculty already do it.**
- **Half-semester projects can add substantial value for students**
- **Building closer relationships**
 - with alumni, firms in the Boston area, and with not-for-profits
- **Possible valuable part of Sloan branding**
 - Fits in well with MIT Brand
 - Sloan is well positioned to do projects