



By MBAResearch

# High School of Business™

## Role of the Steering Team: Year Two

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### **Building on the 8 Charges for Steering Teams**

As your High School of Business™ Steering Team moves into its second year of service, the group's role begins to shift. With implementation complete, improvement becomes the focus. The group now has the knowledge and history to take more responsibility for the program's success. Below are examples of how Steering Teams can continue to improve the program via the eight charges that guide each team.

**Mission: Actively lead and continually improve the program**

#### **Charge #1: Advise of current education needs for business professionals in the workplace**

Assign a current subcommittee (or assemble a new one) to research this topic. A good starting point is The Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills ([www.21stcenturyskills.org](http://www.21stcenturyskills.org)). This organization, comprised of leaders in business and education, has compiled a list of skills that students need to be successful in the workplace. High School of Business™ has incorporated many of these into the program design. In addition, each course guide includes a crosswalk of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills with each performance indicator covered in the course. Results of the subcommittee's work should be delivered during a Steering Team meeting. Be sure to make this work actionable by including a discussion of key points and how each can be addressed within your school's High School of Business™ program.

#### **Charge #2: Mold the program to fit your community**

Many of your High School of Business™ graduates will return to your hometown to work after college. Prepare them for jobs in your area by tailoring the program to fit your community's occupational needs. This is another task that can be handled by a subcommittee. Begin by using the project plan included in your Implementation Plan. This is the same document that is used by High School of Business™ students to plan and manage their projects. Start the project by conducting local primary market research via surveys or focus groups to identify local needs for business administration professionals. Some communities will also have secondary research available from local civic organizations, such as an economic development council. Based on the workplace data, construct a plan that addresses how the High School of Business™ program can be tailored to meet those needs. For example, if your school is located in Silicon Valley, your Steering Team would want to include a heavy dose of technology in the program to prepare students for jobs in that field. Ideas to achieve this include requiring that advanced communications technology be included in student work, inviting guest speakers from the technology field to speak in classrooms, organizing field trips to tech companies, or even offering an optional computer programming course as a program add-on. Once the research is complete, try these steps.

- Present the findings first to the Steering Team. Follow the report with a discussion. Other Steering Team members will have comments that can expand or validate the results.

- Prepare presentations for students. Share your results in presentations and materials that explain the future high demand careers in the community.
- Outline education plans. Partner with the guidance counselor to develop sample education plans for grades 9-16. Share these with students, parents, and faculty.
- Promote your work. Students, parents, administrators, and the community can benefit from the work you're doing to build a stronger community through education. Be sure that this work doesn't become the best kept secret in town.

### **Charge #3: Promote the program in its community**

Now that your High School of Business™ program is established, there are many opportunities to showcase student benefits and student work. Challenge the promotions sub-committee to create a promotion plan for the year. The sub-committee members will need to talk to teachers to learn about projects that students will undertake in the school year. They should also:

- Determine who benefits from knowing about High School of Business™. These may be parents, local business leaders, junior high students, etc.
- Discuss which areas of the program should receive promotional emphasis. For example, if students are participating in observational internships, the sub-committee may choose to focus on promoting those experiences through a series of articles, emails, and school radio spots. Almost every project in the High School of Business™ curriculum is a chance to showcase the program to the community.
- Promote the program with an emphasis on the importance of the business-relevant knowledge and skills students learn in the courses. For example, a business executive from the Steering Team may be chosen to explain how the skills learned in the program are used in his/her workplace. His/her discussion could be featured in a newspaper article, on the school's website, during a Parents' Night assembly, etc.
- Use technology-based promotional vehicles. Even if your main message isn't technology, using up-to-date promotions serves two purposes: 1) it emphasizes the program's focus on student use of the latest technology, and 2) when communicating with students, it reaches them via their medium of choice. Some examples to consider include:
  - Posting a video on the school's website. Subject ideas include:
    - Shorts from end-of-project presentations
    - College faculty member discussing how the knowledge and skills learned in the program will translate into college success
    - Students participating in a unique team-building activity, such as a tower-building competition
  - Including a short article in the school's regular newsletter. Don't forget photos of students working on projects.

### **Charge #4: Promote the program in its school**

Capitalize on the experience of having completed the first year of the program. Here are some ideas for continuing to build a strong, positive presence for the program at your school.

- Share student stories. Ask current students to help promote the program in many ways, including
  - Joining school staff at information booths and sessions
  - Writing an article for the local newspaper, school newspaper, or website

- Assisting in developing promotional materials, such as brochures and posters. After all, students know their peers best.
- Display project artifacts. Use school display cases and other public venues to showcase the work that High School of Business™ students have completed.
- Gather testimonials. Quotes from students, teachers, administrators, parents, college faculty, and the business community should be gathered continually. These add validity to promotional materials. Consider compiling a quote bank from which statements can be pulled for use in promotional items.
- Invite Steering Team members to participate in student recruitment. Join school staff and a current student at information booths, presentations, etc.
- Show local company support. Encourage businesses that support the program in any way (serving as guest speakers, employees on the Steering Team, informational internship hosts, etc.) to donate a sign or banner with their corporate logo. Posting these in prominent locations shows support for the program. You may choose to hang these near the High School of Business™ banner to create a large display.
- Purchase High School of Business™ promotional items to distribute. The Steering Team can choose to raise funds or ask businesses to donate items with the High School of Business™ logo. This may include student-focused items, such as pens, carabiners, or drawstring knapsacks. You may also choose to purchase items for parents and community members. High School of Business™ logo items are periodically available on the High School of Business™ website. Schools can also choose to create their own materials by using the High School of Business™ logos and logo use instructions provided on CD in each school's welcome packet.

#### **Charge #5: Bring real business into the classroom**

Emphasize the *real* and *relevant* aspects of the High School of Business™ program. Students are energized by advice from business professionals. Let executives come into your classroom to emphasize that High School of Business™ projects are excellent preparation for the business world.

The sub-committee that handles this topic may choose to start by holding a brainstorming session with the entire Steering Team. Start by generating ideas for topics before you move into finding people. Avoid the easy route of asking people you know, unless they are the best fit. Here are some ideas to consider.

- Identify team-teaching opportunities.
  - Bring a business professional into class to add real examples to classroom concepts. This goes beyond being a guest speaker. The business executive partners with the teacher(s) to create a lesson or series of lessons for use in the classroom.
  - Form a partnership between a High School of Business™ teacher and a math teacher. Identify and emphasize the use of math in a High School of Business™ project.
  - Team with a guidance counselor to stress business administration careers and paths via two-year or four-year post-secondary education.
- Get out in the field
 

There's nothing quite as motivating as a visit with an accomplished company or with a successful individual in your field of interest. Here are some ideas for setting up these experiences for students.

  - Visit a large, bustling warehouse. Track a product through the warehouse. Discuss logistics and planning with key personnel there. Continue reflection in the classroom the next day.

- As a component of *Principles of Marketing*, visit an ad agency and participate in creative brainstorming with a team there.
- Visit a company that uses project managers to lead new product development. Have the manager lead the students through a project, starting with how he/she determined there was a need for the project. Follow the steps through to the finished product. Make the experience as visual as possible by showing prototypes, visiting the design department, etc.

### **Charge #6: Find observational internship opportunities for students**

Challenge your Steering Team to find great observational internship opportunities for students. Start this process by sharing the observational internship information from Appendix F in your handbook. Then lead a group discussion about what great internships look like for your school. These parameters may include the types of businesses selected, level of professionals selected (e.g., VP or above; at least 15 years of work experience), travel restrictions, etc. Once the ground rules have been established, spend time during the meeting compiling a list of all possible internship contacts. Even though students in your program may not yet be ready for their internship experience (this typically occurs just prior to or during senior year), making these contacts early will make the process of finding internships for a large group easier. In addition, the contacts made could lead to other opportunities for the program, such as guest speakers or field trip destinations.

Create a process for the subcommittee to take full responsibility for internship organization. Finding and monitoring groups of students through internships is more work than one or two teachers should have to handle. Determine now how you can accomplish these tasks as a Steering Team.

### **Charge #7: Ensure that students graduate with more than a diploma**

Students who complete High School of Business™ have worked hard to learn advanced-level materials. They have made a significant commitment to their education. In return, it is important that your school have in place value-added options to reward their efforts. A subcommittee should be in charge of this. Start the process by asking the subcommittee to examine the value-added options described in the Implementation Plan. They should then present to the Steering Team their recommendations for which of these options (or others your team discovers) to pursue. Once selected, the subcommittee works to develop easy-to-use procedures and materials to assist students in taking advantage of each value-added option. Below are examples that could be used.

- Develop an easy-to-use CLEP guide for students. A small subcommittee should develop a process for making the CLEP exam an easy option for students to pursue college credit. Here's how:
  - Learn about the program at [www.collegeboard.com/clep](http://www.collegeboard.com/clep)
  - Read about how CLEP fits with High School of Business™ in the handbook and Implementation Plan. In short, students who complete High School of Business™ should be encouraged to take the *Principles of Marketing* and *Principles of Management* CLEP exams.
  - Purchase CLEP study guides for classroom libraries
  - Make it fit your community. Since the procedures for CLEP differ for each college that accepts CLEP credit, it is essential that students are aware of exactly what they will receive for passing the exam. To do this, start by identifying the colleges in your area that students are most likely to attend.

Then use the CLEP website to identify the processes and credit-granting information for each college. Create an easy-to-read chart that outlines this information. Be sure to let students know that hundreds of other colleges also accept CLEP. Those students wishing to attend colleges outside of the local community should be directed to the CLEP website for more information about how their selected school will use CLEP.

- Consider financial assistance. Currently, the cost for taking each CLEP exam is \$72 per student. To encourage students to take advantage of this resource, consider raising funds to cover some or part of the CLEP exam fee (currently \$72 per exam). Remember that the \$70 used to earn college credit will translate into hundreds of dollars in savings for the student.
- Make articulation a priority. With courses in progress at your school, you are now better able to share program information with local colleges and universities. Articulating will require meetings between a sub-committee of your Steering Team and college representatives. Other pointers:
  - Request a Course Descriptions and Learning Outcomes document from *MBAResearch*. College representatives will need to see this document to determine if High School of Business™ content matches courses the college offers.
  - Some colleges will need to see all of the completed course guides. All except the last two (Principles of Management (due June 2009) and Business Strategies (due November 2009)) are currently available. If possible, start meetings now to discuss the courses that are currently available.
  - Keep in mind that there are many options when writing articulation agreements. While some colleges may find that individual High School of Business™ courses match up with individual college courses, other colleges may find that the material students learn in the High School of Business™ program as a whole translate into credit for one or more college-level courses.
  - Articulation can be a lengthy process. Be tenacious and creative. Talk with more than one college. Learn about your state's articulation rules. Find experts in the area to consult with. But keep at it. Once articulation is in place, it becomes an easy-to-use, long-term benefit for students, parents, and the High School of Business™ program at your school.

### **Charge #8: Support teachers**

In the last year, you've seen the commitment your school's teachers have made to be a part of this program. Learning a new style of teaching, attending semi-annual professional development, logging in long hours preparing to teach new courses, playing a major part in promoting and organizing the program, etc., etc., etc. As a Steering Team, it is time to take a step back and determine how you can improve your support of the teacher(s). This should be an agenda topic for a Steering Team meeting. During the meeting, list on the board all of the teacher's High School of Business™ -related tasks. Don't forget the small things, which may include calling or sending out reminders to the Steering Team, securing permission slips for field trips, and creating a PowerPoint presentation for use in promoting the program to eighth graders. Then for each task listed, discuss how or if the Steering can assist or support. Remember that the best help is help that eliminates that task from the teacher's to-do list. But don't leave out the teacher entirely. He/she still needs to approve activities done on his/her behalf. Here are some ideas for supporting your teachers.

- Sub-committee takes complete responsibility for coordinating guest speakers and field trips. Start the school year by asking the teachers use High School of Business™ curriculum to identify the subjects or ideas that should be supplemented with guest speaker or field trip experiences. The sub-committee then handles all aspects of the experience, from making the initial contacts through scheduling and logistics to after-event follow-ups. Be sure to get the teacher's approval on each idea.
- Ask a Steering Team member to serve as the group's secretary. He/she becomes responsible for taking meeting minutes, sending meeting reminders, coordinating food (if applicable), etc. The secretary may even choose to take his/her role a step further by creating a website or a wikispace for the group.