Teamwork Guidelines

Business activities involve group effort. Consequently, learning how to work effectively in a team is a critical part of your business education. While you will continue learning communication and interpersonal skills necessary to be an effective team member in your management and communication classes, here are some introductory guidelines that you will find helpful.

Team Work Evaluation and Issues

There will be a single grade given to the team for each project. This leads to some students having a concern about working in teams and about team grades. The concern is usually based on the issue of equity. If you work harder and do better work than your peers, why should your grade be dependent on their performance? Yet, business settings require effective coordination of activities of many people who are evaluated based on team outcomes. A manager reading a team report is often uninterested in individual contributions. Group tasks are given group rewards

Everyone is expected to carry an equal share of their team's workload. We will not supervise the process any more closely than a manager would in similar circumstances. In the infrequent case where you feel that a team member is not doing his or her fair share of work, you are urged not to let problems develop to a point where they become serious. The problems of teammates not showing up for meetings and coming up with excuses not to do their work only get worse if they are not dealt with. Try to address these problems amongst yourselves. If you cannot solve the problem, bring it to the attention of your teaching assistant.

Finally, we will ask you to use a peer evaluation form to evaluate the contribution of each of your team members (including your own contribution) to projects after each project. If there is consensus that a team member did not contribute a fair share of work to the project, we will consider this feedback during grading.

Guidelines for Effective Team Work

Research on teams shows that outcomes do not depend on team members liking each other personally, but they do depend on effective team processes. Here are some guidelines:
- **Focus on achieving the best performance rather than getting caught up in interpersonal issues.**
- **Become aware of and respect differences among each other:**
  - Demographic (gender, national culture)
  - Professional (values, skills, personalities)
- **Meet as soon as possible to:**
  - Agree on your team's ground rules (we've provided a set of possible rules)
  - Decide on the process of collaboration: when you will brainstorm ideas/approaches, collect data, analyze data, write up the results
  - Assign tasks and identify specific deliverables for each meeting and each person
  - Schedule subsequent meeting times
  - Agree on how you will exchange work and by which dates
  - Determine how all your teammates will read the team's combined report and approve it

Knowing the Content of the Project

Finally, it is in each student's interest to be involved in all aspects of the project. If you divide the work up rather than discuss each piece together, you are still responsible for knowing how each part has been done, and how the pieces fit together. Your exams may contain questions that are based on group projects.