



NBA 690 –Projects In Sustainable Global Enterprise: Business Planning for Conservation-Focused Entrepreneurial Ventures

Course History

NBA 690, Projects in Sustainable Global Enterprise, was established as an applied consulting course Spring Semester, 2004. The concept was for graduate students from various applied academic areas to work with clients on business plans for entrepreneurial ventures with a conservation focus.

In its first three years this concept was implemented with exceptional results: projects have included an assessment of energy generation options for an ecologically sensitive area of Nigeria; a business plan for indigenous group management of the World Heritage Site Park Djoudj in Senegal; and most recently the development plan for a conservation resort and biological research station on several thousand acres of coastal lands in Costa Rica.

Clients and their related stakeholders have benefited with positive business outcomes and widespread ecological and social benefits; students have gained practical and personally rewarding planning experience that would be difficult to acquire in any other manner.

2007 Course Description

In its fourth iteration the course concept remains the same, but now students have the opportunity to choose from a menu of projects, based on their geographic, topical and content interest as well as time and budgetary constraints. NBA 690 '07 offers five applied consulting projects, and participants are asked to choose among these, ranking their preferences in terms of which project they would ideally work on, and listing each of the other four projects in descending order of preference.

Each project team will be comprised of between four and ten members, with teams expected to apply a framework considering social, economic, and environmental conditions within the context of an ongoing business or planned entrepreneurial venture. The goal is for the multi-disciplinary consulting team in each project to develop a business or strategic plan with an emphasis on these sustainability criteria, with terms of reference based on consultation with the project client.

Crist Inman (Cornell MBA '90 & Ph.D. '97), founder and CEO of La Paz Group, will serve as both professor and team leader for each of the projects. He will join each team on their site visit, and will supervise those teams with weekly teleconference meetings, group email, and individual communications as required. Brief contextual background for each project, along with proposed timing for the site visit for each project, will be delivered by email for any request sent to the email address listed below.

Curriculum

This course is designed provide practical experience for participants to utilize the analytical and planning skills that they have developed during their graduate school education, bringing these skills to bear in a situation where there is an opportunity to add real value to communities and ecosystems that are connected to sustainable business opportunities. During their field work students will:

- Develop an understanding of the cultural context of the project location
- Analyze the stakeholders, markets and the financial structures involved in the development program for the chosen project
- Visit and evaluate past successes/failures within the relevant markets
- Define measures of performance for the project, and
- Create strategies to improve the success of the development program

Deliverables

The course participants will provide the client and related stakeholders with a complete written business plan document by the end of May, 2007. The exact parameters of this document will be negotiated with the investors on the first field visit to the project site. Interim reports on their work will be delivered electronically each week from Cornell to the client. The course time commitment expectations include equivalent 10 class session and preparation and consultation sessions for a total of 2 credits.

Course Application & Registration

This course is open to Cornell graduate students only. Participation in the project team is limited to only the most enthusiastic and motivated students. Ideal candidates for team membership include those pursuing degrees in business; hospitality management; agricultural, biological and social sciences; planning and architecture; engineering; policy; and economics. While participation is not guaranteed, enthusiastic and diligent students are strongly encouraged to apply regardless of prior experience. It is currently estimated that travel costs and discretionary spending for the site visit will not exceed \$3,000 per person. Students interested in participating in NBA 690 must submit a resume and cover letter by Midnight, November 15, 2006 via email directly to Professor Inman at ci11@cornell.edu.