

Faculty Professional Development Grant Final Report

**Grant to Attend Seminar: "Project Management:
Competencies and Structure Including an Introduction to
PMI's *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge*"
July 16-19, 2007, Orlando, FL**

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by**

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Professional Enhancement Opportunity

B. Restatement of problem researched, creative work, or professional enhancement opportunity

I received a professional development grant to attend a four day seminar covering the current requirements, topics, and body of knowledge in the area of professional project management. The seminar was titled "Project Management: Competencies and Structure including an Introduction to PMI's *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge* (PMBOK® Guide)." This seminar was offered by the Project Management Institute, the premier professional organization and certifying authority for practitioners in this discipline. The grant was intended to assist me in preparing to teach a senior-level business course and a graduate-level engineering course on this topic in Spring 2008. My objective in attending this seminar was to update and extend my current knowledge about the management of software development projects to more general project areas. The grant also paid for an annual membership fee (reducing the cost of the seminar) which provides additional publications and access to information that can be used in preparation for the project management course.

C. Brief review of the professional enhancement opportunity, creative work, or research procedure.

I attended the seminar offered in Orlando, FL, in July rather than the seminar in San Jose, CA, in June. (The June seminar filled and closed about the time I received notification of the grant award). One advantage was that the Orlando event coincided with the organization's national meeting so that there were more attendees from the U.S and abroad. The Orlando conference had several additional keynote addresses, a networking event, and a breakfast speakers series that I otherwise would not have had the opportunity to attend. Finally, there were other seminars occurring at the same time and place. This aspect gave me an opportunity to network with and learn from the experiences of a wider variety of professionals.

D. Summary of findings, outcomes, or experiences had.

Robert St. Germain, the instructor, is certified Project Management Professional (CPMP). He is also an experienced consultant, accountant, and information systems professional. Specific topics covered in the seminar included the project manager's role, project documentation and contracts, scheduling processes, estimating methodologies and budgeting practices, quality planning/assurance/control methods, risk management, communication, procurement, team structure and practices, and variance and change thresholds for

scope, time and cost control. In addition, Mr. St. Germain offered an additional session describing the CPMP certification process and requirements, which I attended.

The instructor used a variety of both individual and group exercises. He kept the class sessions active and participative (not easy to do for a seminar meeting from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. with only a half hour lunch break). Most of these exercises can easily be adapted to my project management course, allowing for a more active learning approach.

The participants shared experiences and difficulties encountered in a number of organizations from different industries and different parts of North America. These examples included a large defense contractor, a manufacturing company, several healthcare organizations, a pharmaceutical development company, a major soft-drink company, a large national bank, an oil and gas exploration equipment company, a risk-management consulting company, a general consulting company, a city government, an electric utility, two court systems, a public school system, and several universities. This background depth and variety of the participants as well as the instructor allowed me to achieve the objective of broadening my background of examples beyond software development.

At the conference 'bookstore' I found several books recommended by the instructor for certification exam preparation or for supplemental material. Those books included

- *No-Nonsense Advice for Successful Projects* by Neal Whitten, PMP (recommended for individuals studying for the project management certification exam; \$29)
- *Tools and Tips for Today's Project Manager* by Ralph Kliem and Irwin Ludin (a reference book of resources and tips that will be useful in preparing course lectures on project management; \$23.72)
- *My Life Is Failure: 100 Things You Should Know to Be a Successful Project Leader* by Jim Johnson (report on research into project failures, particularly information technology projects; \$71.11)

E. Conclusions and recommendations

The "Project Management: Competencies and Structure" seminar was well run and exceeded my expectations. I achieved my objectives of updating and extending my current knowledge of project management and preparing to teach this topic to senior business administration majors and graduate students next spring. The seminar provided me with a well-grounded understanding of the basic subject matter and skills that current project managers need to successfully plan and execute a variety of projects. In addition, the participants provided me with a wealth of examples and exercises I can use in my course.