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Message from SIM

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Message from the SIM CEO

The SIM Academic Council represents academic leaders who are members of SIM, the Society for Information Management. The SIM Academic Council consists of faculty who are interested in bridging the gap between teaching and practice by providing students with problem-based learning opportunities which enable them to address "real-world" problems and opportunities. Most of the members of the SIM Academic Council gained industry experience before transitioning into the academic world, and that experience reinforces their commitment to problem-based learning opportunities for students.

In February, 2023, the members of the SIM Academic Council launched a survey of best practices for planning, designing, and implementing problem-based learning and real-world projects in Management Information Systems programs. Members contributing to the survey include Degan Kettles, Brigham Young University and SIM member-at-large; Rashmi Jain, Montclair State University and SIM New York; Norman Lewis, Wayne State University and SIM Detroit; Dan Mazzola, Arizona State University and SIM Phoenix; Ephraim McLean, Georgia State University and SIM Atlanta; Mahesh Raisinghani, Texas Woman's College and SIM Dallas Ft. Worth; Mary Sumner, University of Oklahoma and SIM St. Louis; Maria Zack, Point Loma Nazarene University and SIM San Diego; and Wil Wu, University of Oklahoma and SIM Portland.

The data collection for "real world" projects includes:

1. What type of "real-world" project do you incorporate into your class or program?
2. What are the mechanics of the "real world" project, including project identification, project selection, industry sponsorship?
3. Do you screen students to determine their readiness to do the project? If yes, what screening methods do you use?
4. How do you recruit industry partners to obtain projects?
5. Do you screen industry projects? If yes what screening methods do you use?
6. How do you create student project teams? (random, etc.)?
7. How do you manage scope?
8. How are student learning outcomes evaluated? By faculty mentors? By industry sponsors? By team members?
9. What are the critical success factors in these "real-world" projects? Examples: General Fit, Learning Opportunity, Probability of Success, Client Relationship, the Right Scope, Cool Factor, Overall Value.
10. Do you receive feedback from industry sponsors? Is it useful?

Based on the overall feedback, the capstone "real world" project is a vital part of the academic programs in management information systems and provides value to students, faculty, and project sponsors. Making the connection to practice, and giving students an opportunity to address real-world problems is a goal that faculty are striving to achieve. As in any real-world scenario, the projects can be a challenge to identify and to manage, and we can learn from each other by sharing these opportunities and experiences. The SIM Academic Council will be posting the survey results to the SIM web site so that other SIM Chapters can learn of the results and collaborate with universities in offering students "real-world" project opportunities. These "real-world" projects are the intersection of teaching and practice.

Mark Taylor, SIM CEO and Mary Sumner, SIM Academic Lead