

MBA CAPSTONE COURSE

PUT RICE MBA STUDENTS TO WORK ON YOUR
TOUGHEST MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES



An Invitation and Application for Houston's Community Organizations to Participate in the Rice MBA Capstone Course.



RICE

JONES GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

business.rice.edu/Capstone



CAPSTONE COURSE OVERVIEW

The Capstone Course at Rice University's Jones Graduate School of Business brings together teams of MBA students and their professors to develop recommendations that can help community organizations solve critical strategic challenges, such as major growth or expansion plans, organization turnaround strategies, and new ventures by the organization in need of a business plan. The course is offered during the spring semester.

Capstone Professors Work with You during the Fall to Frame the Problem for the Student Teams

An 8-12 page written "case" that provides details about the business challenge and your organization is developed collaboratively with you by the professors before the spring semester as a starting point for the student teams.

Student Teams Develop Comprehensive Strategic Solutions during the Spring Semester

From January to early May, student teams work through a series of assignments focused on your organization that build from initial assessments of your situation to strategy development to detailed strategic designs and implementation plans. A Capstone Course professor supervises and guides the student teams and is in regular contact with your organization throughout the spring semester to help facilitate a satisfactory experience and outcome for your organization.

Capstone is Highly-Collaborative between Students, Organizations and Professors

Student teams will interact with your organization throughout the spring semester. Your initial interaction

with the student teams working on your project will be a 2-hour, on-campus session in which you and other leaders from your organization will interactively discuss your situation in detail with the teams. Then, students may participate in site visits, conduct follow-up interviews, and request additional data as they develop their recommendations. The investment of your organization's time is critical to the students' ability to develop rich, detailed strategic recommendations that you may adopt and implement.

Community Organizations Receive Multiple Near-Term and Long-Term Benefits

Participating community organizations realize many benefits from their Capstone experience:

- Provides you with fresh ideas and multiple solutions for your strategic challenges
- Taps both student and Capstone professor expertise for the strategic recommendations
- Exposes your organization to up-and-coming Houston executives
- Builds and strengthens your organization's long-term relationship with Rice University

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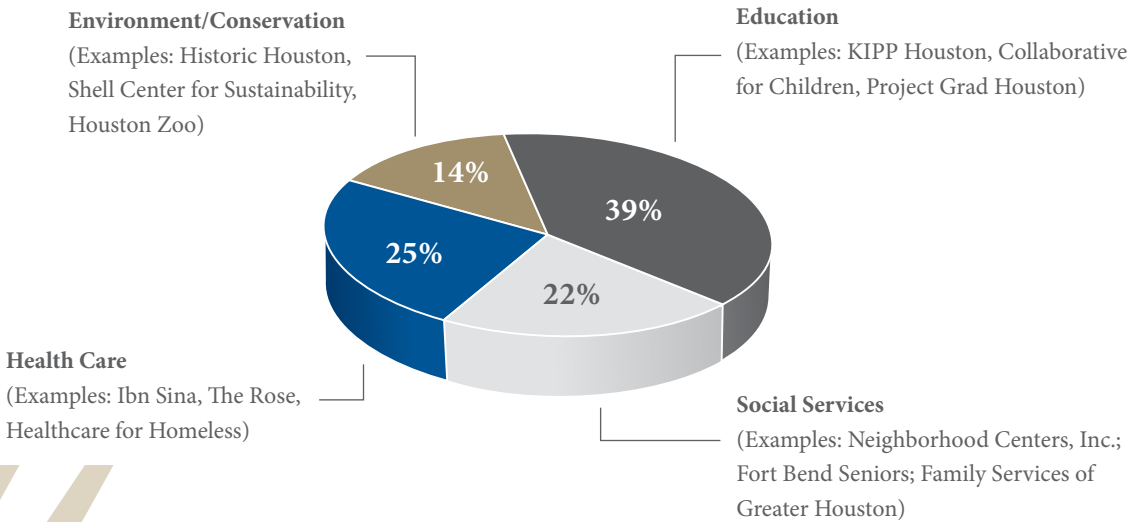
KIPP Houston is a network of 15 public, college-preparatory schools committed to helping PK-12 students from Houston’s underserved neighborhoods go to and through college. In our schools, teachers, families, and students sign a learning pledge called the “Commitment to Excellence.”

During KIPP Houston’s participation with the Rice MBA Capstone Program, we found that the MBA student teams made the same commitment to excellence as they sought the best solutions to our fast-paced, ever-changing, and growing organization. With their fresh vantage point and structured approach, the teams addressed our projects in ways that were both innovative and practical such that we could implement their recommendations directly.

Mike Feinberg, KIPP Co-Founder and Superintendent of KIPP Houston

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CATEGORIES OF COMPANIES SERVED: 2009 – 2011



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Ibn Sina’s mission is based on providing affordable access to healthcare for those who would otherwise have none, including the over one million Harris County residents who are currently uninsured. The Rice MBA Capstone student teams understood the spirit of this mission and crafted growth strategies and associated implementation plans that not only provided an actionable blueprint for our expansion plans but also provided professional presentation materials that we used to procure a sizable funding grant from Houston Endowment.

Dr. Aijaz Ali Khowaja, Chief Executive Officer, Ibn Sina Foundation

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HOW CAN CAPSTONE BENEFIT MY COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION?

During the last two years, twenty-six organizations have participated in the Capstone program. Cases have spanned the spectrum from high-level strategic growth plans to more targeted business plans for a single service line or division and included:

- Multi-year growth strategies
- Turnaround strategies for distressed organizations
- Business plans for new ventures or major programs
- Enterprise strategies for organizations facing major strategic threats
- Privatization strategies
- Replication strategies

WHAT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS ARE A GOOD FIT FOR CAPSTONE?

- Mid-sized organizations or a division/segment of a large organization
- Houston-based (no student travel should be required to complete the course)
- Multiple staff members – usually a combination of full-time, part-time and volunteers
- Facing complex, multi-functional strategic challenges
- Either self-sustaining or external funding-supported
- Open-minded to potential new strategies and solutions



WHAT ARE MY COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION'S RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CAPSTONE PARTICIPATION?

Is there a cost to my organization?

- No, there is no fee associated with your participation.

What is the time and resource commitment from my organization?

- The time commitment will vary during the semester and depends on which assignments the students are working on during that time. However, critical commitments for the organization include:
 - Participate in Community Organization Day to meet the teams (~2 hours)
 - Attend the student teams' final presentations
- We ask that you dedicate a member of your organization on a part-time basis during the spring semester to serve as a liaison for student teams and professors to respond to questions, support data requests and coordinate visits/interviews. Active senior leadership support is critical for the success of the project.
- During the fall of 2011, prior to the 2012 spring semester, your organization will be asked to support the professors in developing the initial case by reviewing drafts of the case (written by the professors) and gathering data or other internal information.

ADDITIONAL FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Are the course and this opportunity only offered during the spring?

- Currently, yes.

How many teams will be working on our case?

- Typically 2 - 4 teams work on a case, providing you with *multiple* perspectives.

What materials will my organization receive after the course?

- You will receive copies of each team's strategic analysis and detailed plans as well as participate in their final presentations in late April/early May.

Will our confidential business information be protected?

- Yes, maintaining confidentiality of your proprietary business information is an important aspect of our work with your organization during the Capstone project.

CAPSTONE COURSE TIMELINE FOR THE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

Mid-Summer to End of September 2011

Organization proposal and selection process

- Complete the Community Organization and Project Proposal and submit during that timeframe (final deadline is Friday, September 9, 2011)
- A subset of submitting organizations will be invited to present the project idea to Capstone professors during this selection process prior to final selection decisions
- All organizations will be notified of selection decision by the end of September at the latest

Early September to End of November 2011

Creation of an 8-12 page “case” document on your organization and business challenge

- A Capstone professor will be assigned to your organization to draft the case with your input
- Provide professors with the required internal data (i.e., financials and budgets, your community served, organizational structure, competitive landscape, alliances, etc.) to be included in the case write-up
- Plan to review the case drafts with the professors during this phase

January 2012

Attend Community Day

- Key organization leader(s) and/or the project liaison to attend – 2-hour session for Community Organization Day
- Session designed for organization representative(s) to answer questions about your organization for the students

January to Late April 2012

Be available to students and professors for questions and follow up

- Project liaison works with students and professors, including providing additional data, facilitating interviews for students, answering follow-on questions, etc.

Late April and Early May 2012

- Organization leader(s) and/or project liaison to serve as judge during the students’ final presentations in late April and/or early May

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION APPLICATION AND PROJECT PROPOSAL

This form will be used to assist the Jones School in identifying appropriate projects for the 2010-2011 Academic Year Capstone Course. Please provide as much information as possible.

To obtain an electronic version of this application or to complete the application form online, please visit: business.rice.edu/capstone

The application is due by Friday, September 9, 2011.

Community Organization Name _____

Physical Address _____

Website Address (URL) _____

Person initiating participation on the organization's behalf

Name _____

Title _____

Telephone Number _____

Email _____

Community Organization Brief Description

Please provide a brief description of your organization (i.e., mission, services provided, clients served, facilities, annual revenue/budget, number of employees, year organization was founded, etc.):



Please describe the project briefly:

Please attach a one to two page Word document detailing the proposed project.

I have reviewed the Capstone Course Community Organization application and information packet and understand the responsibilities of Capstone Course host organizations.

Signature _____

Name _____

Title _____

How did you hear about the Capstone Course? (circle one)

Colleague	Rice/Capstone professor	Rice Student
Board or other advisory/employee	Rice University Website	Other

Contact Information:

Please feel free to contact the lead Capstone professor directly.

Dave VanHorn
e-mail: davanhorn27@yahoo.com

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Please mail this form to:
Brooke Bond, Director of Student Services,
MBA for Professionals
Jones Graduate School – MS 531
Rice University
PO Box 2932
Houston, Texas 77252-2932

Physical delivery address:
Room 103E - McNair Hall – MS 531
Rice University
6100 Main St.
Houston, Texas 77005-1892