

Senior Capstone Project Guide 2009-2010



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Senior Capstone Project – Definition

What is the Senior Capstone Project?

The Senior Capstone Project ("Capstone") is a graduation requirement for all seniors attending AllPrep Academies & Early Colleges ("AllPrep"). Students will receive one (1) credit upon successful completion of the Capstone.

The mantra of the Capstone is TRANSITION. The intent of the Capstone is to transition students away from subject-centric learning to a real-life experience that the student believes may be relevant to their next stage in life. Each senior will utilize the knowledge and skills they have acquired over the past 12 years in school, as well as many 21st century skills, to successfully complete their Capstone.

The Capstone will showcase the student's abilities in reading, writing, public speaking, critical thinking, planning and implementation, self-discipline, problem solving, and organizational skills. The goal of the Capstone is to stretch the student to participate in and demonstrate a new area of learning and growth. The student cannot select a Capstone project that relies solely upon what the student already knows.

Students will select from one of the three project strands defined below. Each strand is unique and provides students the opportunity to explore areas of specific interest, as well as demonstrate their personal strengths. The intent of the Capstone is to encourage and motivate the student to engage in a project that has direct applicability to their post high school goals and aspirations.

Most importantly, the Capstone should represent an area of focus that they are passionate about and will have FUN doing!

Senior Capstone Project – Strand Descriptions

Service-Oriented Strand

Students choosing this strand will devote a minimum of 40 hours toward a community service project. For instance, students may develop and implement a unique promotion for raising funds for the local food bank; a community clean-up effort of a public area such as a park, beach or school; a field-trip or seminar of interest for members of an elderly home; a clothing drive for a homeless shelter; or perhaps even begin their own non-profit to address an unmet community need.

Self-Development Strand

Students choosing this strand will spend a minimum of 40 hours working to develop a new skill and demonstrate it; to construct or to create something they have never had the skill base or knowledge to do before. For instance, students could design and build a model of a physical product such a park or building; perform or produce a play they have written or choreographed; develop a technology or mechanically-based idea for actual use; write a computer program for practical application; write, edit and produce a video; organize a major public event; or begin a business.

Career-Exploration Strand

Students who choose this strand will complete an internship, of a minimum of 40 hours, in the career field the student intends to pursue after high school. Students will begin by researching a career area of interest. After identifying a career area of interest, the student will research and identify a local company or organization that will sponsor them for internship. If the student is unable to identify a company or organization, the Capstone Administrator will attempt to assist with this search effort.

Selecting a Senior Capstone Project

You may already know exactly what Capstone you wish to pursue or perhaps you don't know where to begin. We have provided an approach for brainstorming and selecting a topic. Remember, this is a project that you will invest a significant amount of time and energy. It should be something that you are passionate and excited about topic so that you will learn from the experience and have a great time doing it.

The following steps are guidelines for brainstorming and selecting an exciting and interesting Capstone.

Step 1 – Generalize

Explore a general area of interest.

- Subject area should be relatively broad and something you are interested in.

Examples:

- Environmental Science
- Classic Literature
- Visual and Performing Arts
- Computer Science
- Industrial Arts
- Agriculture
- Business/Tourism
- Human Services

Step 2 – Narrow the subject area down

What are your reasons for interest in this subject area?

- Why does this subject area interest you?
- Does this subject area have long term interest? Why?
- Do you have particular skills and/or knowledge already in this area that you are looking to expand?
- Are there people around you or that you have access to that may be interested in getting involved or assisting you?
- Specifically, what parts of the subject are you curious about or are most interested in?

Step 3 – Choose a topic within the subject area that is most appropriate for the Capstone

In this step, it is important to consider your access to the resources that you will need to complete Capstone. The Capstone should stretch your abilities and create new learning opportunities, but it should not stress you out because you don't or can't get access to the resources you need to complete it.

- Do you have some general skills and/or knowledge in the topic?
- Will the topic challenge you? Is this challenge surmountable? Be creative in your resolution of the challenge.
- If you believe your topic may include community service activities or an internship, do you have organizations or companies within your area that you can approach to work with, or


could you travel and stay with a relative to achieve access to an organization or company of interest?

- Do you have access to other individuals that may have some expertise in the topic area? Remember, this is your project, but it is quite acceptable to learn from others and their experiences.

Step 4 – Picking a project stand


Consider the best method to showcase the topic of your Capstone by reviewing the description of the requirements of each project strand. Below are examples of how a student might arrive at a project strand selection. It is critical to understand that any Capstone could fit into any project strand. The ultimate decision of how you arrive at your selection is how you best learn and how enjoy spending your time. Consider the following:

Example 1

- 
- Step 1: Computer Science
 - Step 2: Network Management
 - Step 3: Student has taken computer classes and develops small websites as a hobby. Uncle or friends father works for a local computer consulting company that is open to an internship.
 - Step 4: **Career-Exploration** with an internship working with the Information Technology team at the local computer consulting company.


Or perhaps . . .

Example 2

- 
- Step 1: Architecture
 - Step 2: Modern Design and Construction
 - Step 3: Student has always enjoyed or been drawn by this particular design of buildings. Perhaps the student is an artist, with a passion for drawing building and landscapes. The student may have even taken classes where they have been introduced to CAD software.
 - Step 4: **Self-Development** with a specific focus on designing and building a model of a small private residence using modern architecture design techniques.

Or perhaps . . .

Example 3

- 
- Step 1: Human Services
 - Step 2: Elderly Care
 - Step 3: Student currently volunteers at a local retirement center and has observed the interaction between the residents of the center and children that have visited other residents in the center. Student senses value in these interactions.
 - Step 4: **Service-Oriented** with a specific focus on the development of a new socialization program for residents at the retirement center. Program may include a monthly event in partnership with a local elementary school where students “adopt” and visit a resident of the retirement center.

Senior Capstone Project – Work Components

The Capstone project consists of 4 components that include the following:

Proposal

The student will select a project strand and develop a Capstone Proposal (**see Proposal Format - page 10**). Students should review the proposal with parent(s)/guardian(s) and gain approval prior to the submission to the Capstone Administrator. The proposal will be reviewed and approved by the Capstone Administrator before any work may begin by the student.

Service-Oriented and Career-Exploration projects will require prior approval by the participating non-profit organization or company. Each student must identify a Capstone Advisor from his/her community (responsibilities described below). One of the objectives of the Capstone is to encourage the student to engage with members of the community that they may otherwise not, thus the Capstone Advisor should not be a parent/guardian or family member of the student. A Capstone Advisor should be someone with specific expertise related to the subject matter and topic of the Capstone, as they will serve in an advisory role, as needed, for the student.

Execution

The execution component of the Capstone is when the FUN BEGINS – when the student transitions from the world of subject-centric learning to real-life relevance and application. This is when the student gets to apply everything they have learned over the past 12 years, as well as when students will be stretched to learn and apply new skills and/or knowledge.

Student's selecting **Service-Oriented** and **Career-Exploration** Capstones will be completing a minimum of 40 hours of community or work-based experience with their sponsoring non-profit organization or company. In conjunction with their sponsoring non-profit organization or company, the student will develop a work plan that includes a work schedule and assigned tasks and duties.

Students selecting **Self-Development** Capstones will most likely perform research, participate in training or seminars, or learn from a local expert, the skills and/or knowledge necessary to complete their Capstone. In this case, the student will be required to document their sources for obtaining the new skills and/or knowledge, maintain an activity log, and provide other relevant documentation as appropriate to document activities associated with the completion of the Capstone.

All students will be required to maintain a detailed activity log that includes; the major activities, time spent on each, successes and challenges, as well as any other "aha moments" worthy of note. Finally, the student will maintain a collection of work product evidence for use later in the Capstone (see Portfolio below). Students are encouraged to be creative in the work products they provide as evidence of their efforts.

Portfolio

Students will assemble a portfolio that includes a collection of work product including the proposal, as well as those items described above. The student should select work product that they believe best represents their experience. The portfolio must include the proposal, work plan (if appropriate), activity

log, and may include electronic copies of power point presentations, photographs, videos, music, models, websites, podcasts and/or other work product resulting from the student's efforts.

In addition, the student will write a reflection paper that describes the experience, the results compared to their expectations, how the Capstone impacted them personally and their perspective toward their future. The reflection paper will be a minimum of 1200 words in MLA format (Ariel or New Times Roman 12pt. font, 1" margins, double-spaced, page numbers and first/last name in top right margin). A guideline for the reflection paper is provided below.

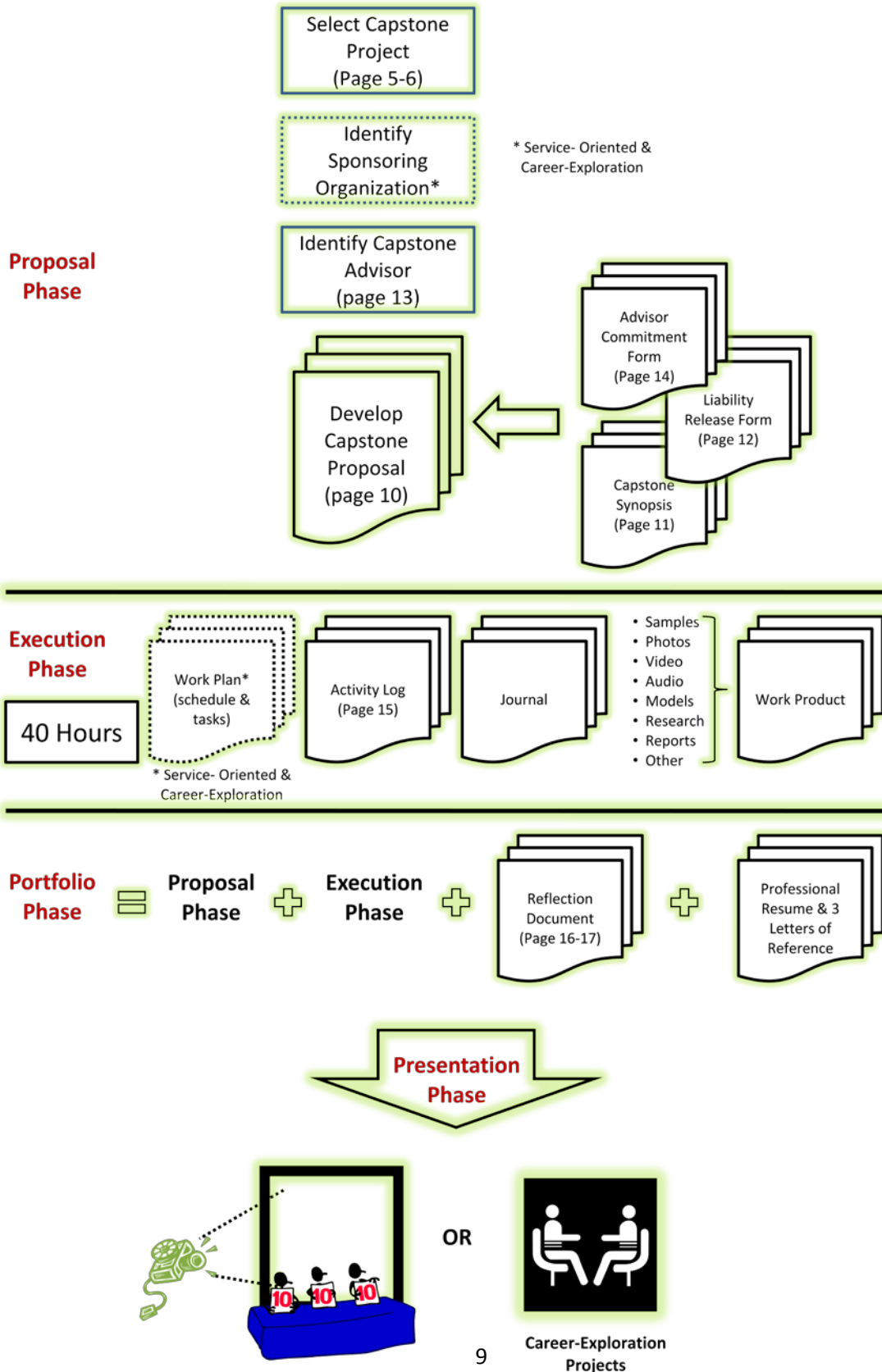
Finally, the student will prepare a professional resume that describes their educational and work related experience. The resume should also incorporate a description of their Capstone. Student will also obtain 3 letters of reference from previous employers, teachers and/or community members that can speak to the student's strengths, skills, knowledge and expertise.

Presentation

In the final step of the process, the student will deliver an 8-10 minute presentation to a review panel comprised of AllPrep staff and community members (**see Presentation Guidelines – page 18**). The presentation should incorporate components of the portfolio and delivered utilizing multiple mediums. Upon completion of the student presentation, the Review Panel may ask the student questions related to Capstone.

Students that participated in a **Career-Exploration** strand may substitute a professional interview conducted by their sponsoring organization or company instead of the presentation. Please contact the Capstone Administrator.

Senior Capstone Project – Flowchart



Senior Capstone Project – Proposal Format

Your street address
City, State, Zip Code
Date

Capstone Administrator
AllPrep Academies & Early Colleges
8800 SE Sunnyside Road, Suite 300N
Clackamas, OR 97015

Dear Capstone Administrator:

In this paragraph, describe the general area of interest for your project (step 1 of page 5 above) and why you are interested in this area. Next describe the process you went through for narrowing the subject area to a specific topic (step 3 of page 5 above). Why does this topic interest you?

Begin this paragraph with a transitional sentence showing the relationship between your subject/topic and the actual proposed project. Then describe your project. Give it a name that we can all use as a reference. What project strand did you select and why? Describe what project will be, what it will entail, who's involved, potential costs, potential time spent, and possible resources you will utilize. If you are proposing a community service or internship, identify what organization or company you will be working with.

In this paragraph, describe what you already know, your experience that may apply, or areas of accomplishment that may be relevant, etc. Explain why this proposed project will be a stretch for you. Describe what areas you are not familiar with and what skills and knowledge you expect to acquire and how you expect to acquire them.

In this paragraph, describe how the proposed project connects to your post-high school endeavors. Discuss briefly what impact you anticipate this project may have on you or your community.

Sincerely,

Your signature goes here

Type your full name
Senior – Student,
List the name of the school you are attending

Enclosures (3)

Note: The enclosures you will need to include with your Proposal are the; Senior Capstone Project Synopsis, Senior Capstone Project Parent/Guardian Consent/Liability Release Form and the Senior Capstone Advisor Commitment Form. These forms are provided below.

Senior Capstone Project – Synopsis

Contact Information

Student Name: _____

Student Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____

Parent Phone: _____ Email: _____

School Attending: _____

Senior Capstone Project

Project Name: _____

Subject: _____

Topic: _____

Senior Capstone Project Strand

☐ **Service-Oriented**

Organization Name: _____

Organization Address: _____

Organization Phone: _____

☐ **Career-Exploration**

Company Name: _____

Company Address: _____

Company Phone: _____

☐ **Self-Development**

☐ **Project Approved** _____ **Date:** _____

Capstone Administrator

☐ **Project Approved with the following modification:** _____

☐ **Project Denied – Please contact Capstone Administrator**

Senior Capstone Project - Parent/Guardian Consent/Liability Release Form

To the parents/Guardians of _____:

Your son/daughter is about to embark upon an exciting educational journey! The Senior Capstone Project will provide enormous benefits for your child now and for the future. Successful completion of the Senior Capstone Project is a valuable tool in determining their mastery of the educational content they have learned over the past 12 years, as well as providing them the opportunity to learn and practice critical 21st century skill that they will need for their future endeavors.

Please take some time to discuss the project with your child, and initial each of the items below indicating that you have read, and approve each.

_____ I approve of my child's selected Senior Capstone Project.

_____ I acknowledge that the intent of the Senior Capstone Project is to stretch my child to learn and demonstrate new skills and/or knowledge. I agree that my child's Capstone project will achieve this goal.

_____ I understand that some of the work required to complete the Senior Capstone Project will be completed outside of normal school hours.

_____ I understand that all transportation for work related to the Senior Capstone Project is the responsibility of the student or parent.

_____ I understand that all costs and risks associated with the Senior Capstone Project are the responsibility of the student or parent.

_____ I understand that my student will be required to keep an activity log that outlines time spent on major tasks of the Senior Capstone Project.

_____ I understand that integrity and honesty are just as important as all other aspects of the Senior Capstone Project. Any suspicion that my child has plagiarized or has been dishonest in any aspect of the Senior Capstone Project process may result in a referral to the Capstone Administrator or other school administration.

I understand that the school, State, and their agents are not responsible for any potential risks resulting from the Senior Capstone Project. Accordingly, I release _____ (the School), the _____ State Department of Education and their agents from all claims arising from any financial obligation incurred, and damage, injury, or accident suffered while my child participates in the Senior Capstone Project.

Parent/Guardian's Name (Print) _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature _____

Date: _____

Senior Capstone Project – Advisor & Parent/Guardian Guidelines

Each student will select a Capstone Advisor who can advise and assist throughout the Capstone experience.

A Capstone Advisor should be:

- A person who is knowledgeable/experienced in the subject area of your Capstone,
- A person who is willing to assist and advise you in the Capstone process,
- A person you can have regular contact with for a short period of time, either face-to-face or via other synchronous means such as telephone, email, web conference, etc. ,
- A person who will give you constructive feedback and will challenge you to think “outside the box”, and
- An adult, no longer in high school, who will encourage you.

One goal of the Capstone is to encourage the student to meet and interact with new people and members of their community. The student is also encouraged to stretch and grow while working on the Capstone. Part of that growth comes from interacting and working with another adult in the community. Therefore, a Capstone Advisor cannot be a member of your immediate family.

Family members are, however, encouraged to assist the student in the following ways:

- Assist the student in thinking creatively about the Capstone selection process and how it best aligns with their experience, skills and expertise,
- Approve by signature your agreement of the Capstone selection
- Complete the Senior Capstone Project Parent/Guardian Consent/Liability Release Form
- Encourage students to stay organized, meet deadlines and ask for help when necessary.
- Supervise the “stretch” of the Capstone by giving support for new experiences and help the student to think creatively about how to overcome challenges.
- Review the Reflection Paper and Presentation Guidelines with your child.
- Remind the student that this project is supposed to be FUN and be relevant to their future endeavors!

Senior Capstone Project – Advisor Commitment Form

Student Name: _____

School Attending: _____

Capstone Advisor Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

Qualifications: _____

Briefly describe how you discovered this Capstone Advisor and how you think he/she can best help you with your senior capstone project:

CAPSTONE ADVISOR AGREEMENT

I understand and accept the responsibilities of advising this student during his/her work on the Senior Capstone Project.

Capstone Advisor

Date

<u>DATE</u>	<u>ACTIVITY/TASKS</u>	<u>TIME SPENT</u>	<u>ADVISORS SIGNATURE</u>
<p>Insert the date of each activity</p> <p>Example: 9-28-09</p>	<p>Describe in detail what you spent time doing and include any personal thoughts about the activity.</p> <p>Example: Today I met with my Advisor to review my Capstone Proposal. He asked me a few questions and made a few great suggestions that I had not thought about. Specifically, he asked I didn't really know how to answer the question, so he suggested I research it a bit further. He suggested I email him my responses in a few days so that we can finalize the proposal.</p>	<p>Insert time amount to nearest ¼ hour.</p> <p>Example: 1.5</p>	

Senior Capstone Project – Reflection Paper Guidelines

You will be required to submit a written self-evaluation of your Senior Capstone experience. As a part of your portfolio, you have been asked to maintain an activity log that describes your experiences during the Senior Capstone Project. This activity log serves two purposes; documents the time and tasks you were engaged in during the course of the project, but most importantly, provides a mechanism for you to record impressions, reactions and feelings regarding events and activities that occurred along the way. Recording these thoughts while they are fresh and clear in your mind, without the pressure of a deadline, will provide a solid source of information and content for the reflection paper.

You should consider setting aside 10 minutes following any significant time spend working on your Senior Capstone Project as a time for reflection and review. Reviewing activities with your Capstone Advisor is another good way to stimulate thoughts worth reflecting upon.

Ideas

The reflection paper should provide the reader with a synopsis of what you did during the course of the Senior Capstone Project, but most importantly, it should reveal what you learned about yourself, about the specific subject of focus, and about how the experience may apply to your future aspirations or endeavors. In an effort to involve the reader and engage their interest, you should be sure to use well-placed and vivid anecdotes.

Reasoning

Demonstrate through a clear and thoughtful stream of ideas and concepts, as well as logical reasoning, how you arrived at conclusions you have drawn regarding the Senior Capstone Project outcomes.

Organization

The reflection paper should be a well-ordered presentation of your experiences and discoveries during the entire course of the Senior Capstone Project.

Voice

The reflection paper is intended to provide you with a platform by which to enter into a dialog with the reader about your project, discoveries, experiences, and impressions. You should carefully craft and edit the paper, but the tone should be personal as if explaining what you did, what you learned and its impact on you and your future to a friend.

Conventions

You should demonstrate your grasp on proper English conventions including grammar and vocabulary, as well as the use of a variety of sentence structures and lengths. Carefully review your reflection paper and consider asking others to review it in an effort to produce a final product that represents your best work. Remember, the resulting product may serve a great work-product reference document for you in the future.

Introspective

The reflection paper should demonstrate detailed evidence of what you learned both academically and personally from this experience. Don't be afraid to discuss the areas that were positive, as well as those areas that challenged you. How are these learning's impactful and how might they influence you in the future?

Presentation

The reflection paper will be a minimum of 1000 words in MLA format (Ariel or New Times Roman 12pt. font, 1" margins, double-spaced, page numbers and first/last name in top right margin) and should include a cover page that identify your name, school attending, year of graduation and the title of the Senior Capstone Project. You are encouraged to meet with their teacher and Capstone Advisor to review the final draft. The final draft should include components of your portfolio such as photographs, charts, graphs, or other images.

Senior Capstone Project – Presentation Guidelines

You are encouraged to utilize a presentation method and format that best demonstrates your skills and talents, as well as shows-off your Senior Capstone Project. Many students will opt for a Power Point presentation format, while many others may prefer a spoken presentation approach. Either approach or combination thereof, is quite acceptable. If your project included some form of performing arts, you may even choose to perform some portion of your presentation. The goal is for you to engage the review panel at a personal level and have fun presenting the results of your hard work.

Time

You should plan to spend 8-10 minutes giving your presentation. You will be asked to conclude at the end of 10 minutes even if you are not yet completed. The review panel may ask questions once you are completed.

Professionalism

Appearance: You should wear nice, casual clothes for your presentation (business casual). Dressier clothes are acceptable, but khakis and polo shirts are fine.

Attendance: We suggest you arrive at least 30 minutes prior to your presentation. You should have already provided copies of your presentation, if necessary, in electronic format to the Capstone Administrator.

Presentation:

Whatever your method of presentation, you should begin by introducing yourself, your school, and your Senior Capstone Project. You should thank the review panel for the opportunity to present your Senior Capstone Project to them. Additionally, if your Capstone Advisor is in attendance, you should take the time to introduce them and thank them for their assistance and attendance.

Your goal is to provide the review panel with a clear and concrete sense of what you did and what you gained from the experience.

Preparation: If you intend to use note cards, list the points you wish to make and to remind you of what you intend to say next, but DO NOT read from them. If you intend to use a Power Point presentation as a guide, it should contain only bulleted points and NOT masses of text. You should NOT read the bulleted points, but rather use them as a guide for the discussion. You should have practiced the presentation enough to have the background content you desire to speak on memorized. If you are using some other method of display, you should use text to guide the reader through the display. Be creative in your presentation and feel free to utilize combinations of presentation media as long as it does not distract from the primary purpose of the presentation.

Organization: Speak in a coherent line of thinking and a logical order for the project. The visual aids used should be organized and arranged to show that logical order. Tell a synopsis of the “story” from beginning to end.

Clarity: Speak confidently and in a matter that is easy to hear and understand. Remember, YOU ARE THE EXPERT. You are the one that has invested the energy and countless hours into the Senior Capstone Project. The review panel is there to listen and is truly interested in what you accomplished and the lessons learned. They are your friends!

Delivery: Show-off and have fun! Be enthusiastic. Explain why you selected this project and engage the audience in their interest in your experience. They are indeed interested! Your display(s) should also be engaging and capture the attention of the reviewers.

Content: Reflect on the experience and show evidence of what you learned. Show the progression you achieved throughout the project. Be prepared to be asked questions that may require you to expand on your responses. Demonstrate that you have done some analysis of your experience. Show a depth of understanding of the topic. Your presentation or display should also include components of your self evaluation (reflection paper).

Work Product: Be sure to bring, display and incorporate resulting work product into your discussion and presentation. This will be extremely interesting to the reviewers and will provide evidence of real-life and practical results from your efforts.

Presentation Skills/Speaking Skills: We know that many students are nervous about speaking in front of a review panel. Once again, you are the expert and have invested a significant amount of time and energy in this project. Speak clearly and at an appropriate pace. Make eye contact with your audience. Stand straight and show your confidence and enthusiasm for what you have achieved. This is a huge accomplishment and you should be proud of yourself . . . we are!

A laptop computer, projector and speakers will be provided for the presentation. If you require the use of this equipment, you are asked to notify the Capstone Administrator and provide your presentation material in electronic format at least one (1) week prior to your scheduled presentation. The Capstone Administrator will install and verify proper operation prior to the presentation.

Other Suggestions

- Review your Senior Capstone Project from beginning to end to remind yourself of the process you went through and the activities you engaged in.
- Display and explain something tangible that you produced as a result of your effort.
- Discuss some skills and/or knowledge you were lacking and how you filled that gap.
- Discuss your relationship with your Capstone Advisor and something you learned from them and how that may impact you in the future.
- Explain how you did something or perhaps even demonstrate it.
- Show a portion of a video tape and explain it.
- Talk about what you did, what you learned and any areas where the results may have differed from your expectations. An illustrative story may assist in sharing this with the audience. Tell about your up's and down's. What was going on and how did the whole experience make you feel? How will this experience impact you in the future?

Senior Capstone Project – Progress Checklist

- ☐ Senior Capstone Project- Proposal, including;
 - ☐ Senior Capstone Project - Synopsis
 - ☐ Senior Capstone Project - Parent/Guardian Consent/Liability Release Form
 - ☐ Senior Capstone Project - Advisor Commitment Form
- ☐ Portfolio
 - ☐ All components included in the Senior Capstone Project - Proposal
 - ☐ Work Plan (Service-Oriented or Career-Exploration strands)
 - ☐ References or sources for skills and/or knowledge enhancement (Self-Development strand)
 - ☐ Senior Capstone Project - Activity Log
 - ☐ Reflection Paper
 - ☐ Professional Resume
 - ☐ Three (3) letters of reference/recommendation
 - ☐ Original and unique work product resulting from the experience that may include;
 - ☐ Photographs
 - ☐ Videos
 - ☐ Audio
 - ☐ Models
 - ☐ Computer programs
 - ☐ Internet assets such as websites, blogs, etc.
 - ☐ Other _____
- ☐ Presentation
 - ☐ If your Senior Capstone Project included an internship, decide whether you will present to the Review Panel or participate in a Professional Interview
 - ☐ If Interview, work with the Capstone Administrator to schedule
 - ☐ Presenters will schedule the date and time of their presentation with the Capstone Administrator
 - ☐ Your Senior Capstone Project Presentation will be held:

Date: _____ Time: _____
 Location: _____

- ☐ Other important items to consider
 - ☐ Write and mail thank you letters to all individuals who participated in your successful completion of the Senior Capstone Project. Use the space below to maintain a list.

Senior Capstone Project – Timeline

October 12 – November 6	Senior Capstone Project Orientations (statewide meetings)
December 9	DUE: Senior Capstone Project Proposals Due
December 14-22	Senior Capstone Project Proposal responses returned to students
February 24	DUE: Intermediate progress report. Submit current Activity Log, work plans, research documentation and/or samples of work product that demonstrate progress toward completion.
April 14	DUE: Senior Capstone Project Reflection Paper rough-draft and Presentation outline
April 19-23	Senior Capstone Project Reflection Paper feedback to students
May 3	DUE: 1) Senior Capstone Project Portfolio 2) Senior Capstone Project Presentations to Capstone Administrator in electronic format
May 10-24	Senior Capstone Project Presentations/Interviews
June 3	Graduation