

## **INTERVENE: Identifying and Addressing a Problem or “Gap” in Our Society**

For this assignment, you will put the professional writing skills you have been attaining over the course of the semester to good use! As a class, we will divide into 3 large groups of six students each. Each group’s task is to identify a problem and to develop a “business plan” to solve that problem -- and then go try to solve it. Will you change the world in the next few weeks? Probably not. But you will at least begin to make a dent in some issue that you and your groupmates find important enough for intervention.

### **A few tips:**

- **Think local.** What issues relevant to students or student life come to mind? What problems are present in our local community -- here in Ann Arbor -- that you could address?
- **Think small.** Be specific. Have a clearly defined problem that you want to solve.
- **But also... think big.** Does the problem feel too big? Relax. There ARE six of you. And you can build partnerships with other organizations around campus. Don’t let a big problem scare you.
- **Think about the community.** Make sure it’s a problem that other people in the community/society would agree is a problem (otherwise your business will fail!).
- **Think about your product, service, or action.** Is this a *solvable* problem? What small steps could individuals take to solve it? What action can you take to help address the issue? If you can’t think of what your action, product, or service will be, it might not work.

### **Expectations and Guidelines:**

You will be evaluated as a group and as an individual at the end of the term, based both on your group’s overall performance and on your contribution as a team member. In business and other professions, operating as a team is crucial -- even as an academic, I almost never work alone. I am part of a research team on a project, I write with colleagues, I design studies with colleagues. How well your team divides tasks, how each team divides up responsibilities and establishes leadership -- all of these will be considered in your final assessment. I’ll therefore base much of my assessment on observations of your team meetings in class, sitting in on team meetings from time to time or moving from group to group. I will base my final evaluation on the following expectations:

1. Teams **establish effective leadership**, and that leadership divides tasks equitably and listens to the concerns and ideas of all group members and responds appropriately.
2. Teams **identify a problem relevant to the society/community** they are targeting, establish a plan of action and proposal for addressing that problem, and enact parts of that plan.
3. Teams **spend meeting time working on tasks relevant to the project**, whether that means designing promotional materials, troubleshooting problems, or developing proposals. Groups turn to group leadership for support, or to Liz and other classmates when they need additional ideas or guidance.
4. Teams **communicate with one another regularly** via a system of their choosing -- email (cc Liz!), social media, or other.
5. Individuals **contribute to the cause of the team** by participating in team meetings, contributing their particular skills to the team’s cause, and volunteering to take up team tasks.

### What You Will Produce:

1. **A business proposal** outlining your team's objective, team member roles, and team plans for action.
2. **Promotional materials:** drafts and final products (because no business or cause can survive without these!) These could include:
  - a. Videos posted online
  - b. Posters
  - c. Social Media sites and streams
  - d. Websites
  - e. Flyers
  - f. Podcasts
  - g. The sky is the limit....
3. **Team communications** (emails, conversations in class and out of class)
4. **Progress reports:** in class, I will occasionally ask you to write quick reports as a team on the status of your project. At the end, you will write a final report (as a team) outlining where you have succeeded and where you would go from here (hypothetically, if the term weren't ending).
5. **A final reflection** on your team's success and your role in aiding the team.
6. **Change. Action. Intervention.** You'll produce some sort of effect on the community or problem you are targeting. It might be a small impact, but you will be asked to report results of some kind -- what improvements did you see, even if these results are intangible?

### Major Deadlines:

- Wednesday 3/19:** Team Proposals Due to Liz by 11:30am (*Response 3*)
- Monday 3/24:** Proposal Pitches in class. Be ready to present your idea to other teams and receive feedback.
- Wednesday 3/26:** Group conferences with Liz
- Wednesday 4/9:** Progress Report due to Liz
- Monday 4/21:** Final Presentation to Class and all group materials due to Liz
- Finals Week:** Final Course and Assignment 3 Reflection (*Response 4*)