Archer Center for Student Leadership Development

Capstone Team Development Process and

Team Standards Agreement

**Rationale and Guidelines**

According to concepts in organizational behavior, there are five stages of team development (Tuckman’s Model, 1964): **Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing** and **Adjourning**. During the forming stage, teams tend to communicate in indirect polite ways rather than more directly. The storming stage, characterized by conflict, can sometimes be productive, but may consume excessive amounts of time and energy. In this stage, it is important to listen well for differing expectations. Next, during the norming stage, teams formulate roles and standards, increasing trust and communication. This norming stage is characterized by agreement on procedures, reduction in role ambiguity, and increased group unity. These developments are precursors to the performing stage, during which teams achieve their goals, are highly task oriented, and focus on performance and production.

In high performing teams, a **Team Standards Agreement** is often generated to establish procedures and roles in order to move the team more quickly into the performing stage. It has been cited (Tuckman, 1974) that by generating a team standards agreement teams have a 46% greater chance of moving through the storming stage to the high functioning norming and performing stages. Therefore, the process of generating a team standards agreement can help jump-start a group’s collaborative efforts by immediately focusing the team members on a definite task.

The following document outlines the steps of developing a **Team Standards Agreement**. The agreement shall be completed outside of class over five weeks through team discussion and an honest exchange of ideas and expectations. Team members should communicate openly in order to identify the quality and quantity of work they wish to achieve, and the level of group participation and individual accountability they all feel comfortable with.

***After completion of each part of the Team Standards process, the team will post (either individually or as a group) a response to the assigned inquiry questions in their team’s EDN Wiki as described below. Teams should be prepared to answer questions by the Project and/or Chief Engineers during class time or via posts to the EDN.***

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**Part 1: Team Formation and Information Exchange**

During the first two classes, team members have begun to get to know each other via the Icebreaker and Poster activities. To continue learning about each other and how you will work as a team, each team member should verbally share the following information with their new teammates:

1.) Explain specific skills/experiences that you can contribute to the team.

2.) Discuss your grade expectations for this class?

3.) What is most challenging for you about working in a team?

4.) What outside obligations, do you have/scheduling conflicts?

5.) How do you prefer to communicate with your teammates e.g. written (email, Webex Direct Message), verbal, etc.?

6.) What communication style do you struggle with the most?

7.) What are the best days and times for you to meet as a team outside of scheduled class time?

**Introductory Section**:

**Each** team member will individually post one thing they learned about a teammate or their new team in their project’s EDN Wiki on a new page called "Team Standards Agreement – Semester Name". Through these postings, the team will become aware of some of the diversity within the team. Posting information to the wiki will help team members learn how to use the EDN.

**Part 2: Meeting Logistics**

In IED, the student team answered the following questions pertaining to meeting logistics:

* How and who will set the agenda and distribute the notifications?
* How will meetings be run and facilitated?
* Who will take/record notes at your meetings and in class?
* What specific strategies will you use to ensure that everyone has a voice at your meetings?
* What will be your decision-making process for resolving conflicts?
* To be inclusive, meetings shall be scheduled to suit the availability of required participants. When will out-of-class meetings will be held?

Here in Capstone (and at every job you have in the future) the answers to some of these questions are already established by existing systems and culture. For Capstone, meetings will be only in-person or via Webex, and the following tasks (the first three questions in the list above) are required to rotate across all team members in order to give everyone the opportunity to participate and practice key professional skills:

* Setting the agenda and distribute the notifications
* Facilitating meetings
* Taking/recording notes (meeting minutes) at all meetings in and out of class

The following questions should prompt your discussions and decision making on how to move forward with the facilitation and organization of (sub)team meetings. It is the team’s responsibility to maintain an inclusive environment while acknowledging the diversity of the team members.

As in IED, the team will need to identify:

* What specific strategies will you use to ensure that everyone has a voice at your meetings?
* What will be your decision-making process for resolving conflicts?
* To be inclusive, meetings shall be scheduled to suit the availability of required participants. When will out-of-class meetings will be held?

**Meeting Logistics Section**:

Please post the responses to the questions above in your Team Standards Agreement EDN Wiki.

**Part 3: MBTI Team Analysis**

At this point your team will have worked on several team activities and may have experienced some of the challenges of working as a team. In IED, you were introduced to the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and how developing an understanding of your teammates' MBTI can help improve team interactions. The following table is provided for your reference.



Each team member should provide their MBTI Type, provided you are comfortable doing so. For those who do not remember, or did not take IED, you may use the information at the following link to determine your MBTI: https://www.myersbriggs.org/my-mbti-personality-type/mbti-basics/.

Remember that no one should be obligated to show their preferences to the group unless they feel comfortable doing so. It is understood that without everyone’s information, only an approximate team preference is identified.

The dominant team preference is determined by counting the greatest number of preferences for each preference pair (e.g. E/I, T/F, etc.) while reviewing the group’s total preferences. Remember that neither individuals or the team control their type, i.e. who you are individually and collectively. This information is intended to help the team better understand itself.

During your out of class team meeting the group will discuss the following:

* What do these results suggest about our team’s potential strengths?
* What do these results suggest could be the challenges or hurdles for our team?
* What preference or type might we be missing that we will need to compensate for?
* How might we go about compensating for that missing or under-developed style?

**MBTI Team Analysis Section**:

During your team meeting, discuss the above questions and post the group’s responses and dominant MBTI preferences in your Team Standards Agreement EDN Wiki.

**Part 4: Team Standards**

The preceding parts generated elements of your Team Standards Agreement. With this part, you are now completing it.

The following items should guide your discussions on the development of written team standards. Develop and use **SMART** standards. Ask yourself are these standards **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic, and **T**ime sensitive.

* The facilitator and note taker roles for each in- and out-of-class meeting are required to rotate across the entire team. The sponsor liaison and editor in chief (optional) roles are to be assigned by the team.
* What other, if any, specific designated roles or leadership structure will you have? (create a sketch if desired)
* The EDN Gantt chart will show team assignments and associated progress. How will work/assignments be delegated?
* What are your rules/expectations for team participation and internal communication beyond those required by the course?
* The EDN Gantt chart and individual member posts demonstrate both the quantity and quality of each team member's contributions. How will you leverage this to ensure accountability of individual members for meeting deadlines and contributing high quality work?
* How will members be rewarded/encouraged for outstanding work and sanctioned/disciplined for poor work and/or failing to meet obligations? Add this specific info to your Agreement.
* How will you provide support if someone becomes ill, needs to quarantine, or has an emergency requiring absence?
* What is your plan for work to continue (as appropriate) during absences/emergencies?
* What specific work rules are critical to your team for success? Develop 5-7 specific ground rules that you can, without question, all agree on.

**Team Standards Section:**

Please post the group’s responses in your EDN Wiki on your Team Standards Agreement page. This should not exceed 2-3 pages in length if printed or converted to pdf. Be brief and use bulleted lists as appropriate.

For a printed document, everyone would sign a copy. Electronically, you will do this by posting your agreement with the document in a Project Management thread called "Team Standards Agreement Signatures". You will need to create this thread if it does not already exist.

**Part 5: Thomas-Kilman Conflict Preference Mode**

For this section, please reference the “Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Styles” document, which can be downloaded here: <https://designlab.eng.rpi.edu/edn/projects/capstone-support-dev/repository/112/entry/Course%20Documents/Kilmann%20Conflict%20Styles.pdf>. During an out of class team meeting, each member will self-report their preferred conflict mode and answer the following two questions:

* To what extent has your preferred conflict mode helped or hindered your ability to work in teams/groups and resolve conflict?
* Have you demonstrated your preferred mode to your team during meetings? Why or why not?

After each individual discusses their personal conflict mode the team will determine if they have a preferred team conflict mode (i.e. a majority of people who utilize a specific mode)?

* What is the team’s preferred conflict mode?
* How might your team’s preferred mode help or hinder your group’s functioning and ability to resolve conflict?
* How might your team compensate if a particular mode is not present or underdeveloped on your team?

**Conflict Modes Section:**

During the team meeting, discuss the above questions and post the group’s responses / preferences in your Team Standards Agreement EDN Wiki.