Running capstone like a business – Focus on the client

Total economic impacts reported by the clients to the university in EACH of the past four semesters has exceeded $14 million with a peak value of $16.5 million. (12-24 one semester, 4 student teams)

Summary of Key Factors

- Successful projects are the primary objective.
  - Students will learn best by participating on a successful project.

- Designs are due 4 weeks before the end.
  - Students need time to receive feedback and make changes to their project before the end of the semester.

- Practicing engineers select, scope and manage the projects from beginning to end.
  - Instructors own the success of the project and may need to jump in and help out if necessary (before, during and after the semester).

- Clients must pay a fee (bigger is better) to ensure a strong commitment to the project’s results and student support.
  - Client need to be educated on how to productively assist the students. [$5k-$10k per semester for a 4 person team]

- Students must engage the clients personally and often.
  - Difficult with the students today being dependent on social media.

- Student teams of size 4 work well.

- Student teams should work on unique projects.
  - Competition between projects is good but within a project is bad.

- Students should select their team members.
  - Compete for projects based on competency (Internships, courses, grades, job acceptances, etc.)