**Capstone Project Student Guide**

This course serves as the culminating experience for the Master of Science in Leadership (MSL) student. It allows you an opportunity to put into practice theories and concepts from prior courses, and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of a contemporary leader. You will engage in a capstone project where you can apply what you have learned in the MSL program.

You will develop and implement a project within your organization or another community with which you are affiliated (e.g., a volunteer organization, church, professional organization). The capstone project can range in experience, focus, and need. For example, students may find enhanced training on technology could be beneficial, while others might propose a new professional development process or even a mentorship program within their organization. Past coursework can be very helpful – consider the innovation project you proposed (but did not execute) in LDR-640. You will spend 15-20 hours implementing and facilitating the capstone project, in addition to the time spent planning, evaluating, and reflecting on the implementation, so make sure you identify a project that will allow you to develop and explore something of interest to you.

The capstone project process will also help you develop a professional portfolio that represents your learning experience and leadership abilities as a Grand Canyon University MSL graduate. More information about the portfolio can be found in the Topic 7 Benchmark - Capstone Executive Summary Report and Leadership Portfolio assignment.

**Capstone Project Outline**

The outline below includes the key deliverables for the project. Individual assignments and discussion requirements are provided on the course syllabus. If you have questions after reviewing the course materials, please contact your instructor for clarity.

***Topic 1:***

There are no project assignments due in Topic 1, but you should begin to narrow down the organization. Evaluate any organizations that come to mind and identify a need that could be served by the capstone project. Discussion questions for this topic offer opportunities to “think out loud” with your classmates and gain insight from your peers and instructor.

***Topic 2:***

In Topic 2, you will submit the Capstone Project Needs Analysis and Organizational Approval assignments. These are key planning assignments for the implementation of the capstone.

During this topic, you will begin the formal planning process for the capstone project. Your needs analysis should help you articulate the scope of the project, including its value to both the organization and your leadership development.

You will also secure approval and support from a representative within the organization. This will be documented in the approval form submitted to the instructor.

***Topic 3:***

In Topic 3, you will submit the Capstone Project Overview assignment.

After the needs analysis, you will continue to formalize the scope of the project. To prepare for implementation, your overview should outline the scope of the project, including project parameters, unique organizational factors, support resources, and any other planning, implementation, or evaluation components or tools that you will require. Reviewing the assigned readings in this course can also help you connect your capstone project to leadership theories/models.

***Topic 4:***

In Topic 4, you will submit the Survey/Evaluation Tool assignment. This tool should be designed as a pre- and post-assessment to help you determine the project’s effectiveness.

Topic 4 is also when you will begin the implementation of the project and put your plan into action. This is an exciting opportunity to move your project beyond a plan on paper. You may start to see initial change and progress towards the goals you have identified, but you may also encounter unexpected obstacles. These obstacles provide chances to continue to learn, grow, and adjust. If you have questions or need guidance, reach out to your instructor or capstone organizational contact for additional support and problem solving.

***Topic 5:***

There are no capstone project assignments due in Topic 5, but you should continue to work on your project and to prepare for the Benchmark - Capstone Executive Summary Report and Leadership Portfolio assignment, due in Topic 7.

***Topic 6:***

There are no project assignments due in Topic 6, but you should continue to work on your capstone project and to prepare for the Benchmark - Capstone Executive Summary Report and Leadership Portfolio assignment, due in Topic 7.

***Topic 7:***

In Topic 7, you will submit the Benchmark - Capstone Executive Summary Report and Leadership Portfolio assignment.

This is a two-part assignment. The first component focuses on an Executive Summary of your capstone project: the scope of the project, its execution, and pre- and post-evaluation results. The second component is a Leadership Portfolio reflecting on work completed for four other courses in the MSL program.

***Topic 8:***

There are no project assignments due in Topic 8.