ENGL 301 Project Four: PSU Proposal

Whether formally or informally, technical and professional writers make proposals and pitches almost every day. In this project, you will become familiar with the elements of proposal writing, work on creating concise communications by condensing your proposal into different forms, and use various online tools to facilitate collaborative writing.

Reading Assignments

Proposals, pp. 433 – 453
Interviewing, pp. 270 – 272
Listening, pp. 307 - 309
Presentations, pp. 412 – 421
Cover Letters / Transmittals, pp. 114 – 115

Project Summary

Working with a group of peers, you will investigate a problem on campus and propose a solution to it. Your audience will be decision makers on campus or elsewhere who might actually have power to solve the problem.

Component One: Problem Statement with Project Pitch and Statement of Intent / Methodology (individual)

Using approximately 400 - 500 words, this Discussion post on our Canvas site will outline your idea for a Proposal Project. This post should

1. Identify a problem that affects PSU,
2. Describe the impact the problem is having and the primary group affected by the problem
3. Offer specific reasons why this problem is an important one to address,
4. And offer your plan for completing the other parts of Project 5 (parts of the proposal document, presentation rehearsals, drafts, and presentations, for example), including a tentative timeline.

You should work to convince your classmates and me that the problem on campus you've identified is important and that they should help you write a proposal to get that problem fixed. Remember that this is a persuasive document; you are attempting to persuade your classmates to take up your project idea. Therefore, you should not only clearly state the problem your proposal would address but attempt to convince your classmates that this is an important project worthy of their time. I will select the top pitches for completion by the groups. **Make sure to consult the handout on Problem Statements before completing this Component.**

Markers of Success
- Identifies a problem that affects PSU.
- Describes the impact the problem is having and the primary group affected by the problem.
- Offers specific reasons why this problem is an important one to address.
- Offers a plan for completing the proposal project.

- Includes a tentative timeline for completing Project 5
- Uses an appropriate method of development in the document.
- Uses the style of technical and professional communication, demonstrates evidence of revision, and remains free of major grammatical errors, wordiness, awkward phrasing, and vague / unclear language.

Component Two: Twitter Pitch and Elevator Pitch (group)

The ability to create a concise message is one of the most important stylistic aspects of technical and professional communication. In many professional situations, you may have only a short amount of time or space in which to make your case. As a group, you will create a 3-minute elevator pitch version of your proposal and present the pitch during class. This initial oral presentation will also help you become comfortable for the final presentation. You should also provide your audience a handout to help them follow the presentation by including any important information, graphics, pictures, data, or other material you want your audience to take with them. Additionally on the handout, you will include a statement or statements of no more than 140 characters (counting spaces) that presents a "hook" for your proposal (in the style of Twitter). **If you go over the time or the character count, you will not receive credit for this assignment.**

Markers of Success
- Conforms to the three-minute time limit and the 140 character limit.
- Focuses on conciseness and clarity of the proposal's message.
- Includes a handout that helps the audience follow the presentation and offers the Twitter pitch.
- Conforms to the criteria on the Presentation Dos and Don'ts Sheet.
- Uses an appropriate method of development in the document.
- Uses the style of technical and professional communication, demonstrates evidence of revision, and remains free of major grammatical errors, wordiness, awkward phrasing, and vague / unclear language.

Component Three: Oral and Electronic Presentation (group)

Your oral and electronic presentation must conform to the requirements for a Pecha Kucha 20x20 presentation. PechaKucha 20x20 is a simple presentation format where you show 20 images (with minimal text) each for 20 seconds (for a total of 6 minutes, 40 seconds). The images, set on a timer, forward automatically, and you talk along to the images.

Keep in mind that the audience comes to hear what **you** have to propose, not simply to read PowerPoint slides. Each aspect of the presentation should help communicate your message to the audience and help persuade them to accept your proposal. Your presentation should be content-oriented and audience-oriented, not presenter-oriented. The presentation should have the same organization as the printed proposal and should include any graphics in the printed report.

Markers of Success
- Falls within the requirements for a PechaKucha 20x20.

- Demonstrates a collaborative effort.
- Conforms to the criteria on the Presentation Dos and Don'ts Sheet.
- Conforms to the criteria on the PowerPoint Dos and Don'ts Sheet.
- Communicates the message to the audience.
- Persuades the audience to accept your proposal.
- Cites material taken from outside sources, both in the text and in a reference list at the end.
- Uses an appropriate method of development in the document.
- Uses the style of technical and professional communication, demonstrates evidence of revision, and remains free of major grammatical errors, wordiness, awkward phrasing, and vague / unclear language.

Component Four: Proposal (group)

In a 5 – 6 page document (inclusive of the main body of the proposal document), your purpose is to propose that something on campus be changed. The document should include all of the major sections of the proposal genre, which are given on the Common Sections of the Proposal handout.

Additionally, your document should use a variety of persuasive strategies, including *logos* (arguments according to logic, such as statistics, facts, and considering counterarguments), *ethos* (arguments according to credibility, such as showing that you are knowledgeable about the problem / topic), and *pathos* (arguments according to emotion, such as showing how a change might affect customer satisfaction).

In order to be persuasive, your document should demonstrate that you fully understand the problem and that you can provide adequate evidence to justify the action you propose. Thus, you will conduct research. Sources essentially fall within one of four categories, and you should try to provide a wide variety of research in order to demonstrate your credibility:

1. *Background*: sources in which you want to assert that something is a fact and which can contextualize your claims
2. *Exhibits*: sources that you offer an analysis or interpretation of
3. *Arguments*: sources that are part of the discourse about your topic
4. *Method*: sources that you use to delineate the method of analysis you will use or the terminology you will employ

You should include evidence / research from **at least five different sources** in your proposal, though you may certainly include more sources.

Please note: If you choose to perform interviews for your sources, your roommate, significant other, mom, or best friend is unlikely to be a good source. Think about the people who have hands-on control of what you are writing about. Writing about housing? Start with someone in the housing office, not with your friend who happens to live in a dorm or with the president of the university. Proposing a new method to begin student groups? Who, then, is currently in charge of that process?

Additionally, your final document will combine text and graphics in order to present your information most effectively and persuasively in a reader-centered format through the inclusion of **at least one table and at least one figure.** The choice of content is up to you.

Markers of Success
- Follows the conventions of a formal proposal, including all of the sections given on the Common Sections of the Proposal handout.
- Analyzes the audience carefully to determine how to best meet the readers' needs or requirements.
- Includes a concise problem statement at the outset to clarify the proposal's goals.
- Divides the proposal into manageable segments and develops a timeline for completing tasks.
- Focuses on the proposal's benefits to readers and anticipates their questions or objections.
- Uses a variety of persuasive strategies, including logical, ethical (credibility), and emotional strategies.
- Incorporates evidence from at least five different credible sources, through research and interviews, to support the claims of the proposal.
- Cites material taken from outside sources, both in the text and in a reference list at the end.
- Selects an appropriate, visually appealing format that increases the usability of the document for the readers.
- Includes a table and a figure to increase the usability of the document for readers.
- Uses an appropriate method of development in the document.
- Uses the style of technical and professional communication, demonstrates evidence of revision, and remains free of major grammatical errors, wordiness, awkward phrasing, and vague / unclear language.

Component Four: Teamwork Protocols
As a teammate on a group project you are expected to: participate, communicate reasonably (promptly, as needed, and professionally) with your team, complete a reasonable amount of work on the timetable agreed upon by the group, lead (if necessary) without dominating, be a "team player" without becoming completely passive, help to reduce and resolve conflict when it arises, give and receive constructive criticism without making it personal, consult guidelines for the project as relevant when completing work and edit both your own work and that of others in your group to make the project as strong as possible.

During the Project
In case of team problems, please follow this procedure:
1. Intervene within the group (communicate).
2. Contact me ASAP if step 1 fails to resolve the problem.

3. With my approval, you can fire a non-contributing or dysfunctional teammate. Consequences of being fired are: the teammate must complete the entire project solo AND the project will have an automatic 15% grade penalty on it.

After the Project
Team members will each complete a Team Member Evaluation sheet. The evaluation sheet is confidential to me, but it must be professional.

You will assign each teammate a grade out of 5 for 10 elements (50 points total). For any total grade lower than a B (lower than 40/50) you must provide a written paragraph justifying the grade. You do not evaluate yourself. If your combined grades from teammates are 80% or higher, your teamwork is rated as "solid" or better, and that is the acceptable range. If your team work is graded at a C (up to 79%), you may be grade penalized up to 5% from the grade on the group project at my discretion. If your teamwork is graded at a D (no higher than 69%), you may be grade penalized up to 10% as above, at my discretion.

Opt Out Clause
You may elect to opt out of working in a group before the report project begins in earnest. To do so, you must email me to state that you are opting out. You will then complete the entire assignment alone. You are still required to be present during group work class periods per the attendance schedule. I expect, however, that the majority of you will remain in groups as it is designed to be a group assignment. Opt outs should be uncommon and for substantial cause.

Groups with two members or fewer now or after members opt out may request to be reassigned to bigger groups; I will determine which team you are reassigned to.

Points Assessment (see schedule for due dates and times)
The project breaks down as follows:
> Project Pitch and Statement of Intent / Methodology: 50
> Proposal: 100
> Elevator and Twitter Pitches: 50
> Oral and Electronic Presentation: 100
> Teamwork Evaluations: 50