

Senior Project Staff Representative Handbook



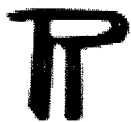
Charles M. Russell High School



Choose your passion



Make the connection

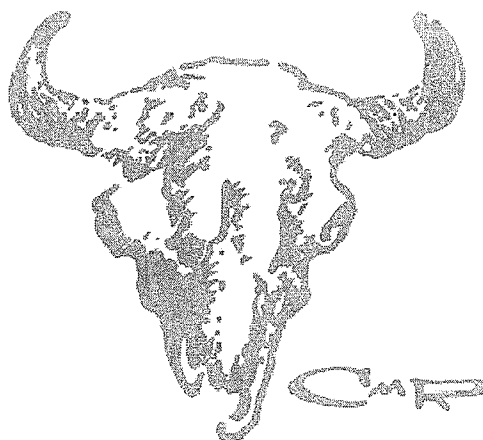


Realize your potential

Project Goals

As a result of the individualized nature of this project and potential for student growth, Charles M. Russell High School has enthusiastically adopted this project with the following goals. Upon graduation and completion of Senior Project, Seniors will:

- Demonstrate independent learning and problem solving skills
- Use effective self evaluation, time management, and communication skills
- Set goals, create a plan, and follow through
- Give back to the community and interact positively with a community mentor
- Feel empowered, valued, and capable.



We would like to acknowledge the following schools, whose programs were used as models for this handbook:

**Hellgate High School- Missoula, Montana
Big Sky High School- Missoula, Montana
Medford School District- Medford, Oregon
Rosemont High School- Sacramento, California
Webster Central School District- Webster, New York
New Trier Township High School- Winnetka, Illinois**

Project Overview

Charles M. Russell High School proudly presents Senior Project, a student centered exploratory which started in Medford Oregon in 1985. Since then, Senior Project has grown enthusiastically in high schools around the country, and in 2007, 23 states required Senior Projects for graduation in order to:

- personalize student learning with rigor and relevance
- foster social responsibility
- anchor Seniors in their final year of high school
- provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate 12 years of interdisciplinary growth
- meet 21st century learner and employer needs with increased creativity and critical thinking skills.

Traditionally Senior Projects are distributed in thirds: 1/3 of students will select a vocational or career based project, 1/3 of students will select a service based project, and 1/3 of students will select an extra-curricular or interest based project. However, regardless of the project type, each student will complete “The 4 P’s” and a community service component:

Paper-- Seniors will select an approved topic and write a *persuasive*, thesis driven research paper. The paper topic must address some controversy, within their field of study, which clearly has two positions; students will present both positions, refute the opposition, and affirm their position. During the product phase, students will also complete additional multi-genre writings specific to their work. For example: a letter to the editor, a newsletter, survey results, a public service announcement, blue prints, graphs, or an ad campaign are all possible writing ideas

Product-- With the assistance of a community mentor or internship preceptor, Seniors will apply research knowledge by defining, designing, and producing a related product that reflects a *learning stretch* and requires hands on learning, in a real world context. Med prep students' product will be their 45-90 hour internship.

Portfolio-- Seniors will create a portfolio collection of both *process and showcase* pieces, reflections, and artifact/pictures documenting their work throughout the year. Students must also take their learning and give back to the community with a required, minimum of 15 hour, community service component.

Presentation-- In May, Seniors will present their work at Senior Boards. This is a formal, judged speaking opportunity followed by an informal question and answer session.

Community Service-- Students must also take their learning and give back to the community with a required, minimum 15 hour community service component. Students' service must be related to their project topic.

To facilitate the completion of these four major components, each Senior will have a community mentor and a staff representative to guide them during this year long process.

Senior Students

The student is the person most active and responsible throughout this process. Each student is responsible for:

- Planning his/her project
- Finding his/her staff representative and community mentor. Med Prep students your staff representative is Ms.Virts and your community mentor is your internship preceptor.
- Researching his/her topic
- Writing his/her research paper
- Creating his/her product
- Reflecting on the process
- Completing a minimum of 15 community service hours
- Developing his/her portfolio- documenting the project process
- Presenting his/her project

Each student will have the help of the following people along the way: a community mentor, a staff representative or Med Prep Internship Coordinator, their English teacher, their Government teacher, and two Senior Project Coordinators.

Sample Senior Project Topic

Student Project “Fly Fishing: More Than Just Flex Rates”:

Research Paper Thesis Statement- As a result of rapid energy transfer and fast action flex rates, graphite fly rods are more accurate casting long distances than bamboo fly rods.

Product- Design and build a graphite fly rod with a professional mentor from the community.

Portfolio-

- Research paper
- Documentation- Contracts, Signature Forms, Time Logs
- Physics experiments analyzing energy transfer data with different rod mediums
- Experiment data and conservation data from the community service component

- Photographs of fly rod construction process

Presentation- Senior Boards

Community service- Volunteering with Trout Unlimited and Fish Wildlife and Parks tagging fish for data purposes.

General Timeline

First Semester

September- October

- Learn about Senior Project- Read handbook overview, complete web search
- Narrow Topic- Complete Brainstorming Form
- Select Topic- Complete Topic Proposal Form
- Read, Sign, Get Signatures, and Turn In:
 - Ethical Commitment Form
 - Parent Acknowledgement Form
 - Community Mentor Contract
 - Staff Representative Contract
 - Contact Information
- Draft, Write, Revise Letter of Intent
- Get Letter of Intent Approved by Senior Project Advisory Board

November-December

- Complete Research Process and Paper
- Portfolio Documentation (Reflections, Required Forms, and Final Graded Draft of Research Paper)

January- February

- Work on Community Service Hours
- Begin Working on Product with Community Mentor
- Continue Portfolio Documentation
- Portfolio Check

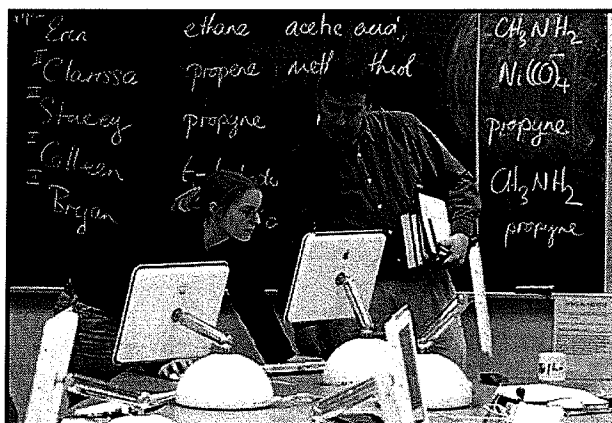
March-April

- Finish Product
 - Get Community Mentor's required evaluation form and optional/extra credit Letter of Recommendation
- Finish Service Hours
 - Complete Service Hours Documentation Form
- Finish Portfolio

May

- Prepare and Practice Presentation
- Present Dress Rehearsal to Senior English Teacher
- Complete Final Senior Project Presentation

Staff Representative or Med Prep Internship Coordinator



All professional and support staff members are invited to be Senior Project Staff Representatives. However, to work effectively with each student, Representatives are asked to work with **no more than three** Senior Project Seniors and all Representatives.

Representatives will meet with students throughout the year and assist them as they develop, write, and implement their project. The Senior Project Staff Representative will also be the school contact person for the student's Community Mentor.

The Staff Representative will:

- Complete the Staff Representative Contract.
- Encourage the student throughout the process.
- Help the student narrow their topic, project, and community service ideas.
- Help the student identify a reasonable learning stretch.
- Approve student's Letter of Intent.
- Help the student pace him or herself to meet deadlines.
- Review the student's portfolio materials and artifacts.
- Help the student find a community mentor.
- Verify the project's progress.
- Verify the authenticity of the student's Community Mentor.
- Help the student troubleshoot difficulties.
- Discuss with the student his or her accomplishments, discoveries, frustrations, questions, obstacles, etc.
- Be a practice audience for the student's presentation.
- Attend the student's Senior Board presentation in May.

After students have narrowed their Senior Project topics, they will review the database of potential Staff Representatives on the Senior Project Web Site. Students will use this database in an attempt to match their project ideas with an interest area listed by staff members. After students select an interest area, they will then be given coordinating contact information for that staff member. Students should then make an initial contact and politely request staff guidance. This staff member may accept or decline the student's request.

Staff Representative Contract

I have reviewed the Senior Project Handbook, and Med Prep Internship Addendum if necessary, and agree to serve as a Staff Representative for _____ for the year _____ - _____. I understand that as a Senior Project Staff Representative, I have the following responsibilities:

- Encourage the student throughout the process.
- Help the student narrow their topic, project, and community service ideas.
- Help the student identify a reasonable learning stretch.
- Approve student's Letter of Intent.
- Help the student pace him or herself to meet deadlines.
- Review the student's portfolio materials and artifacts.
- Help the student find a community mentor.
- Verify the project's progress.
- Verify the authenticity of the student's Community Mentor.
- Help the student troubleshoot difficulties.
- Discuss with the student his or her accomplishments, discoveries, frustrations, questions, obstacles, etc.
- Be a practice audience for the student's presentation.
- Attend the student's Senior Board presentation in May.

I have met with my Senior Project student. He or She has shown me their Topic Proposal Form, and I understand the research topic and proposed product. We have established a biweekly or monthly time to touch base. That time is _____ at _____ . If the student needs to reach me between meetings, the best way to contact me is _____.

Staff Representative Name (please print): _____

Staff Representative Signature: _____

Date: _____

Student's Name: _____

Student's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Thank you for serving as a Staff Representative!

Meeting Log

Students must document their Staff Representative and Community Mentor meetings.

11 Meeting Minimum:

- 3 meetings with your Staff Representative
- 3 meetings with your Community Mentor
- 5 additional meetings with either your Staff Representative or Community Mentor

Date	Time	Mentor Signature	Tasks Accomplished
1.			
2.			
3.			

Date	Time	Staff Rep. Signature	Tasks Accomplished
1.			
2.			
3.			

Additional Meetings:			
Date	Time	Signature	Tasks Accomplished
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

Beyond Minimum Meetings:			
Date	Time	Signature	Tasks Accomplished
1.			
2.			
3.			

Senior Project Letter of Intent

Using correct business letter format, write a letter of intent to your Staff Representative and the Senior Project Advisory Board. Your letter should be well written, thoughtful, properly formatted, spelling and grammar checked, and interesting to read. Write a letter that reflects you and your passion for your project! Use the following template as a guide:

Your Street Address
Your City, State, and Zip Code
Date

Charles M. Russell High School
Great Falls, Montana 59404

Dear Staff Rep. (name them) and Members of the Senior Project Advisory Board:

Introduction Paragraph of Personal Information:

Describe your personality, interests, and future plans.

Paragraph about your Topic, Learning Stretch, and Experience in this field:

Describe your general Senior Project area of interest (art, history, music, sports, etc.) and why you selected this area. Describe what your learning stretch will be as you complete this project. Briefly explain what you already know, or have accomplished, in this area.

Paragraph about the Focus of the Research Paper, Project Product, Community Mentor, and Community Service:

Clarify your specific research paper thesis statement and the research you intend to focus on to complete your paper. Include some of the ideas you intend to cover in your paper and the research resources you intend to focus on to complete your paper. Describe the nature of your product and the relationship between your research paper and your product (what will it be, what is the connection, who will be involved, what is the potential cost and potential time commitment, and what are your possible resources). Identify your community mentor. Describe your community service component- who, what, when, where.

Paragraph about your understanding of the Ethical Commitment related to Senior Project (see page 5 of this handbook).

Explain your understanding of plagiarism and the repercussions of such an act. Make a statement of integrity (your firm adherence to the Ethical Commitment and your intention to do a competent and comprehensive job on your Senior Project). Also, compose a statement regarding your understanding that this letter is a self-generated contract for your Senior Project. This paragraph is required or your letter of intent will automatically be rejected.

Sincerely or Respectfully,

Your Signature _____

Your Name (typed) _____

Your Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Senior Project Letter of Intent Approval Form

Student's Name: _____

Reader 1: _____

_____ Accepted As Is

_____ Postponed Based on these necessary revisions:

_____ The **learning stretch** is not apparent or sufficient (must create a challenge, but not constant overwhelming frustration)

_____ **Research topic** does not appear to be controversial (with 2 clear opposing sides—student takes a position and refutes the opposition) OR research topic needs to be clarified/specified

_____ The **product** needs to be specified, concrete, assessable, and/or more closely connected to the research topic.

_____ **Community mentor and/or a staff representative** missing.

_____ **Community service** (15 hour minimum) needs to more closely align with project topic and/or be clarified/specified.

_____ Student needs to add/develop their **ethical commitment** statement to address plagiarism, falsifying forms, or other honesty issues.

Comments:

Reader 2: _____

_____ Accepted As Is

_____ Postponed Based on these necessary revisions:

_____ The **learning stretch** is not apparent or sufficient (must create a challenge, but not constant overwhelming frustration)

_____ **Research topic** does not appear to be controversial (with 2 clear opposing sides—student takes a position and refutes the opposition) OR research topic needs to be clarified/specified

_____ The **product** needs to be specified, concrete, assessable, and/or more closely connected to the research topic.

_____ **Community mentor and/or a staff representative** missing.

_____ **Community service** (15 hour minimum) needs to more closely align with project topic and/or be clarified/specified.

_____ Student needs to add/develop their **ethical commitment** statement to address plagiarism, falsifying forms, or other honesty issues.

Comments:

Advisory Board Signature: _____ Date: _____

Staff Representative Signature: _____ Date: _____

Postponed Letters need to be resubmitted, along with this form, to the advisory board for review and approval.

Senior Project Coordinators, **Senior English Teacher,** **and Government Teacher**

Senior English teachers will be:

- Guiding students through topic brainstorming sessions
- Approving the Topic Proposal form
- Overseeing students as they write their Letter of Intent
- Teaching students the research process
- Guiding students as they write their research papers
- Assessing students' research papers (fall)
- Assessing students' presentation (spring)

Jamie McGraw 268-6174 jamie_mcgraw@gfps.k12.mt.us

Senior Government teachers will be:

- Introducing the importance of community service
- Verifying and assessing students' community service proposal, hours, quality, and narrative
- Assessing students' project portfolios

Brian Halverson 268-6240 brian_halverson@gfps.k12.mt.us

Ed McNamee 268-6154 edward_mcnamee@gfps.k12.mt.us

Med Prep Internship Coordinator will:

- Placing student in internship location
- Overseeing and guiding students throughout the internship process
- Assessing student's internship reflections
- Assessing student's case studies
- Supporting Internship Preceptors throughout the internship process

Christi Virts 268-6226 christi_virts@gfps.k12.mt.us

Senior Project Coordinators will be:

- Verifying students' staff representative selection
- Supporting students throughout the project process
- Supporting Staff Representatives throughout the project process
- Supporting Community Mentors throughout the project process
- Planning and organizing Senior Board Presentations

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