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**PMI Southwest Ohio Chapter** [pmiswohio.org](http://pmiswohio.org)

# Project Management Inspiring and Accelerating High School Students

**D**eer Park High School has a Career Academy that includes project management in its curriculum. "In the Project Management Academy, my students learn about the world of professional project management through an entire semester-long project—from simulation to application—with help from visiting professional project managers from the PMI Southwest Ohio Chapter," said Adam Gergen, Deer Park Jr./Sr. High School Career Academies educator.

The PMI Southwest Ohio Chapter was the first PMI chapter to create materials and teach Project Management Professional (PMP)® exam preparation to members back in 1991, sharing those materials with other chapters free of charge. The chapter may now be the first to work with a high school to provide Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM)® exam prep, PMI student membership, and CAPM® application submission for high school credit. The PMI Southwest Ohio Chapter has been working with a high school in Cincinnati to teach project management in three classes within its Project Management Academy:

- PM 101 is an introduction to project management, offering students foundational terminology and application. This began in August 2015.
- PM 201 enables students to use their acquired project management skills to perform hands-on service projects in the school or community. This began in January 2017.
- PM 301 class is a CAPM prep class with student membership and application preparation so students in higher grades may take the CAPM as soon as they graduate. This will begin in January 2018.

The program was created in partnership with the PMI Educational Foundation, PMI Southwest Ohio Chapter and curriculum architect Doug Arthur of Transform Consulting. This semester, PM 101 students in Mr. Gergen's class are working on a project they call "Beautify Deer Park," in which they spent the first six weeks learning how to plan, execute and manage this project aimed at bettering the community. The last month was spent working with outside groups to develop the students' projects as well as their own project management, time management, teamwork and team management skills.

**The Project Manager is responsible for ensuring that:**

- ☐ The team is completing its tasks on time.
- ☐ Everyone on the team knows what their job is.
- ☐ Everyone on the team knows how to explain what success will look like.
- ☐ Everyone has an equal chance to express their opinions.

*Guidance for students.*

Jay Phillips, superintendent at Deer Park Community City Schools and Career Academy originator, said that "In the Project Management Academy, it's amazing to see every student develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills while also working in class with [professional] project managers on actual projects. Students aren't only learning the skills, but they are applying them and really feeling what it's like to be a project manager."

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"It's been amazing ... teaching the Project Management Academy because I get to see the students handle the transition from traditional classroom learning to project-based learning," noted Mr. Gergen. "It's not easy to work in groups, but the students are giving it their best effort and finding success—and for that they deserve so much credit."

### Valuable Volunteers

A team of chapter members led by Lacey Strete, PMP, the chapter's vice president for outreach, has volunteered time to assist in course development and provide mentoring/coaching for this program.

"When people come in to volunteer, it's a tremendous benefit for the kids," said Mr. Gergen. "The professionals provide the kids with a perspective that lets them know that they are heading in the right direction. Sometimes the volunteers think that's minimal, but it's really not. When someone comes in and says that's a great idea, I wish some of the people on my project team could come up with an idea like that—it's very valuable for the kid's self-esteem which in turn creates motivation and creates engagement."

"The Deer Park High School Project Management Academy helps students learn about project management, teaching them about a profession they might want more exposure to after high school," said Dan Eslinger, PMP, the chapter's former vice president of marketing and continued chapter mentor. "We set it up so that professional project managers take time to visit classrooms so students can ask them

about the realities of their jobs. It's been a true cooperative effort."

"I was glad to see that a school district would help their kids be prepared for the job market when they graduated," said volunteer Karen Tate, PMP, PMI Fellow. "Not all kids can afford or want to go to college and I wanted to help them see that without a college degree, there are fun and interesting jobs participating on a project or even leading a small one that are more lucrative than a minimum-wage job."

For the volunteers, Ms. Tate noted that "The mentoring and coaching is not teaching and can be as simple as stopping by and sharing a story or example from their work or personal lives around project management, or just answering questions."

Lacey Strete, PMP, said central to this entire initiative is the fact that project management is core to 21st century professional skills. "Regardless of a student's desire to become an engineer, an artist, a teacher, a doctor, a caretaker, a developer or anywhere in between—every working professional is a project manager at varying levels. We must start educating as early as possible to get our students the experience that they need to make the fastest impact for their own success and the organizations they will serve. Thanks to PMI, we are already aware of the millions of dollars firms waste each year due to poor project management practices, so collectively, we have the opportunity to increase value directly by improving project management skills broadly."

### The Chapter's Secret Sauce for Volunteer Recruitment and Coordination

With the Project Management Academy project, the chapter clearly communicated this message to volunteers: "Whatever your reason for volunteering, you control your commitment and schedule, so just show up with some stories of your experience from whatever location is most convenient for you."

On a web page dedicated to this volunteer opportunity, chapter leaders tell prospective volunteers that they only need to commit a minimum of one hour to add great value:

- **5-10 minutes preparatory review online** of provided materials before scheduled sessions to fuel a good story.
- **Arrive 5-10 minutes before scheduled sessions**—to set up with the instructor, onsite or remotely. Remote arrangements use free software, making it easy for the busy volunteer.
- **Participate when guided by instructor during scheduled sessions**—at least 50 minutes per session.
- **Possibly answer questions** after the session.

The page notes that volunteers can participate multiple times a day, week, or year across an entire academic calendar year. "We're excited that we've even been engaging retired project managers to

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## PMI's New Strategic Plan A Plan for the Future

**B**eginning at the Leadership Institute Volunteer Planning Meeting (LIVPM) in January 2017, PMI stakeholders have been hearing about PMI's transformation journey. Like many organizations, PMI is undertaking a refresh of our strategy as we move toward becoming a technology-enabled digital enterprise. Unlike so many others, PMI is fortunate that we are doing this from a position of strength. As we prepare for our 50th anniversary in 2019, this foresight has enabled us to envision our future—and the future of the profession we serve—for now and for the next 50 years.

In August, the 2017 Board of Directors approved PMI's new strategic plan. You may have seen, heard or read about elements of this plan, built on the three pillars that guide our approach to transformation and continued success:

- Strategic focus (which helps us choose what to do and what not to do)
- Customer centricity (which helps us better meet the needs of individual project managers today and in the future)
- Organizational agility (which enables us to respond more quickly to customer needs)

Using these pillars and a "playing to win" strategy framework, PMI intends to redefine what it means to be a global

professional association that represents and advocates for professionals like you—people who practice project, program and portfolio management. Put another way, we are inventing PMI 2.0.

What does this mean for you as a member of PMI? Mostly, it means we are becoming more focused on understanding your needs as professionals in project management and identifying ways we can make you indispensable in your organizations. It also means PMI will remain an advocate for the profession of project management with the continued support of our global volunteers.

### Focusing on the Professionals

Our renewed focus on the individual will lead to enhanced capabilities to help you achieve your ideal professional future. You've already seen some of these improvements with features such as membership automatic renewal that created a more convenient option to renew your membership, improved membership web pages that provide a better online experience, the PMI Certification Digital Badge Program that validates your skills and experience in an easily shared digital format, and the online proctoring option for the Certified Associate in Project Management (CAPM)<sup>®</sup> exam. This is just the beginning!



The 2017 strategic plan provides the vision that will guide us to PMI 2.0 and beyond. Our winning aspiration—empowering people to make ideas a reality—underscores the significance of our collective success. We know that empowering our customers to be leaders and true business partners in their organizations goes hand-in-hand with realizing our vision for the future of PMI.

We believe that when we deliver value, we are relevant, and when we are relevant, we continue to grow. In this way, we will expand our ability to serve you, our members, and preserve the current market leadership and influence of your association for the long term.

You will find the strategic plan on Our Leadership & Governance page at [PMI.org/strategicplan](http://PMI.org/strategicplan).

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come back to our chapter to volunteer remotely with Project Management Academy, even though they're now based around the country," said Kristy Bolin, PMP, the chapter's PMI Educational Foundation (PMIEF) liaison.

The chapter has been fortunate to have volunteers who are able to commit to a more regular schedule as students advance through Project Management Academy. Dedicated coaches have come together to more predictably lead the

students through roles like that of Mark Ogg, PMP. As the PM 201 head coach, Mr. Ogg explained "Having a volunteer team of coaches has offered camaraderie within the chapter and educational community, especially around the intrinsic value of social good. The coaches are able to complement one another on different schedules and locations to help students on a recurring basis, while at the same time cooperatively witnessing the tremendous

impact within the recipient communities for our students' project deliverables."

There are many other opportunities to contribute to the initiative on an ad hoc basis outside the business day too, including content and activity creation, mentorship or taking on committee leadership roles. And, of course, volunteers are eligible to earn professional development units (PDUs) in the "Giving Back to the Profession" category.