THE C.V. STARR PROGRAM IN
BUSINESS, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONS

SENIOR CAPSTONE 2018–19
BEO Capstone 2018-19 Projects

The C.V. Starr Program in Business, Entrepreneurship and Organizations (BEO) is a unique, interdisciplinary, undergraduate concentration at Brown University focused on the study of business, entrepreneurship, technological innovation and organization theory. BEO educates students to be creative and flexible leaders for careers in for-profit, social mission and startup organizations. Through the disciplines of economics, sociology, engineering and entrepreneurship, students learn methodological approaches to address challenges in national and global economic context.

All BEO seniors take a required capstone course that includes a one- or two-semester-long project. Project teams, usually comprising five students, are supervised by a faculty advisor. Students apply conceptual and theoretical grounding obtained in BEO courses to deliver analysis and recommendations related to a specific challenge facing a sponsor organization. Sponsor organizations appoint a senior-level mentor to help define and guide the project.

This academic year marks the sixth cohort of BEO students to participate in the capstone. Since the inception of the BEO Capstone, BEO students have participated in over 100 projects. For the 2018-19 academic year, nearly 95 students worked on 17 projects in the fall with 6 of the projects continuing in the spring. Student learning experiences were excellent. Mentors and faculty were impressed by the depth and quality of analysis and recommendations produced by the teams. Please join us in celebrating this accomplishment.

BEO Capstone Faculty

Kayla Colson  
*M.A. Candidate, PRIME*

Lisa DiCarlo  
*Senior Lecturer, Sociology*

Brendan McNally  
*Director, BEO*

Steve Petteruti  
*Adjunct Lecturer in Engineering*

Alden Richards  
*Presentation Coach*
Social Entrepreneurship/Social Organizational and Innovation Projects (Fall and Spring)
BEO1930A

Students typically act as members of the mentor organization or in a “consultant” role to tackle critical issues for the sponsor organization. Projects are usually full-year commitments with the fall semester focused on research design and data gathering and the spring devoted to research analysis and recommendations.
Developing, Branding and Launching Design Your Life @ Brown

BEO Capstone students worked with Brown staff to develop the new Designing Your Life (DYL@Brown) program. Using a model developed by Stanford University, the team applied design thinking to tackle “the wicked problems of life and vocational wayfinding or Brown undergraduates.” The BEO capstone students attended design workshops and developed a Brown-branded program. The team collected data gathered from interviews, surveys and focus groups. Project deliverables included recommendations for program design, marketing, partnerships, communications and strategic growth.

Sponsors: Brown CareerLAB and Nelson Center for Entrepreneurship, Providence, Rhode Island

Mentors: Aixa Kidd, Director of BrownConnect; Jim Amspacher, Associate Director, CareerLAB; and Fran Slutsky, Faculty Member, Nelson Center for Entrepreneurship

Project Advisor: Lisa DiCarlo

Team members: Brandon Burke, Mary Butler, Jorquel Condomina, Yumeng Fan, Caylen Rhine
Increasing the Quantity and Quality of Brown Graduate Student Housing

Brown's Graduate School seeks to increase the size and quality of its graduate student population, and housing options are a critical factor in attracting these scholars to Providence. Brown’s Real Estate Office tasked the capstone team to assess the needs of graduate student populations by designing, administering and evaluating surveys and interviews that gathered critical “demand” information to inform optimal housing requirements. The team's findings provided data on critical information about location, size, amenities and affordability. Key deliverables included the design of an “idea” unit, an estimate of the number of units needed and the case for transient housing for newly arriving international students.

Sponsors: Brown Real Estate Office, Providence, Rhode Island

Mentor: John Luipold ’13 MBA, Assistant Vice President, Brown Real Estate Office

Project Advisor: Lisa DiCarlo

Team members: Leah Fowler, James Fox, Andrew LaBrie, Jackson Newsome, Dalton Schroeder, Patrick Shanahan
Scaling a Nonprofit Organization

Beat the Streets Providence (BTSP), a sports-based, youth development organization, provides year-round co-educational wrestling programs to positively impact the physical health, socio-emotional well-being and academic engagement of at-risk youth from the Greater Providence area. To get to the next level of offerings, the capstone team worked with its mentor to engage in strategic analysis and planning related to organization design, board structure, development initiatives, strategic partnerships and qualitative and quantitative metrics. The team developed a road map to scale the organization, through a fund raising campaign and a strategic merger with their boston-based partner, Boston Youth Wrestling.

Sponsors: Beat the Streets Providence, Providence, Rhode Island
Mentor: Steven Keith and Richard Muniz, Executive Directors
Project Advisor: Lisa DiCarlo
Team members: Jack Hagstrom, Katrina Heilbroner, Christian LaBrie, Christian Lafragola, Brendan O’Connor, Travis Vasquez
Understanding and Defining the Customer

Kidoinfo.com is a social mission enterprise whose goal is to be the most trusted hub in Rhode Island for everything about kids. Its web-based platform provides a wealth of information for parents, including articles by local experts, a comprehensive family events calendar, giveaways and unique “KidoGuides.” The team used company data from Google Analytics and social media and gathered new data from interviews, focus groups and surveys to better understand customers and their needs. Recommendations also included suggestions for content and service offerings that meet customer needs and improve the value proposition to local partners who advertise on the site.

Sponsor: Kidoinfo.com, Providence, Rhode Island
Mentor: Susan Gale, Publisher
Project Advisor: Lisa DiCarlo
Team members: Anjelica Claxton, Meisha Lamb-Bell, Caitlyn O’Berry, Mark Sluys
Growing an Ed-Tech Venture

Effective to Great Education (ETG) is an education-technology startup venture developing a social emotional learning (SEL) and wellness management platform. Its goal is to provide tools and technology to help pre-K to grade 12 at-risk students develop healthy behavioral self-regulation. The capstone team worked with ETG’s founder to conduct market research, analyze various business models, explore research partnerships and understand the impact of SEL critiques by scholars and the public. The team’s final recommendations highlighted the need for very focused initial product offering (both programmatic and technical) in order to establish a credible market position and be attractive to research partnerships.

Sponsor: Effective to Great Education, Washington, D.C.
Mentor: Laura Thompson ’12 MPA, Founder and CEO
Project Advisor: Lisa DiCarlo
Team members: Laura Felenstein, Andrew Livingston, David Randl, Aubrie Redwine, Samuel Reidt
Entrepreneurship & Technology Management Track Projects (Fall and Spring) BEO 1930B

Each team works with a mentor company to create a startup venture that will bring a technology to market. Fall semester focuses on becoming expert in a technology, identifying potential markets and defining a product or service. The spring semester involves prototype development and crafting a business plan to bring the product or service.
Exploring Electric Vehicle Battery “Jump-Charging”: Zap Charging

The future of electric vehicles (EV) shows great promise; however, drivers want peace of mind when it comes to emergency recharging. This capstone team created a startup, Zap Charging, which has worked with its mentor, the American Automobile Association, to assist EV customers with dead or dying batteries on the road. Zap employs a “fast charging” technology that can jump-charge an EV so drivers are back on the road within 15 minutes. The team found its target market, designed a prototype app for members and developed a service and staffing model to ensure customers are served quickly and efficiently.

Sponsor: American Automobile Association (AAA), Orlando, Florida
Mentor: John Nielson, Managing Director of AAA Automotive Engineering and Repair
Faculty Advisor: Steve Petteruti
Team members: Joseph Asbel, William Homza, Teodore Norhagen, Callie Smith, Austin Vincent
Designing a Sunscreen Scanning Kiosk to Reduce Skin Cancer

Many know of the prevalence and deadliness of skin cancer; however, one of the simplest prevention steps — proper application of sunscreen — has very poor compliance rates. Working with a team of medical professionals at the Warren Alpert School of Medicine, the capstone group founded a venture, UScreen, to tackle this problem. UScreen works with sunscreen manufacturers to add non-harmful agents into their products so smartphone cameras can detect proper application. UScreen’s innovative solution is a win for sunscreen companies and a win for consumers, who can easily take a selfie with built-in smartphone camera filters and see how thoroughly they have lathered on the lotion.

Sponsor: Warren Alpert School of Medicine, Providence, Rhode Island
Mentor: Dr. Jennifer Lee, Resident in Dermatology
Faculty Advisor: Steve Petteruti
Team members: Nicholas Lorence, Justin O’Brien, Allison Roth, Alexander Rothberg (non-BEO), Braedan Russell, Jonathan Viruet
Business Finance & Consulting Projects (Fall) BEO 1930C

Projects are designed generally as one-semester commitments. Students typically act as members of the mentor organization or in a “consultant” role to tackle critical issues for the sponsor organization. Student must collect data, analyze information and make recommendations, all within the fall semester.
Defining Green Finance and Sustainable Finance in China

By many measures, China’s economy is the largest in the world. This project tasked students to research and understand the size and scope of the “sustainable investment” ecosystem in the Chinese economy. The team worked with its mentor, Cary Krosinsky, an author and expert in sustainable investment strategies, to catalogue macro-economic investment trends in China, understand the Chinese regulatory environment and recommend actions stakeholders should take to increase both domestic and foreign investment in sustainable opportunities. The team recommended education about and adoption of ESP rating systems to bring more consistency and objectivity to financial analyses. Also, the team recommended green and social-impact bonds, particularly for private equity and venture capital investors.

Sponsor: Cary Krosinsky, Author and Professor
Mentor: Cary Krosinsky
Faculty Advisor: Brendan McNally
Team members: Daniel Aidman, Logan Atkins, Jennifer Mastrianni, Alexandra O’Donnell, Andrew Provost, Elizabeth Seid
Creating and Pricing a Marketing Strategy

tauPay, a text-based payment platform, allows users to transfer, spend, receive and cash out money, even if they do not have a bank account. In its very early stage of growth, tauPay tasked the capstone team to explore the viability of a customer-to-business (C2B) business model and assess how tauPay might stand against competing technologies such as Venmo, PayPal, ACH, et al. The team conducted extensive field research, interviewing dozens of merchants to understand their needs, pain-points and price thresholds. The team’s research results formed a recommendation to target specific university cities with the most promising mix of tech-savvy students and merchants. In addition, the team refined financial projections and conducted sector comparisons to advise their mentor on a valuation price for the firm.


Mentor: Jonathan Brandt ’87, Co-Founder

Faculty Advisor: Brendan McNally

Team members: James Behend, Joseph Belmonte, Gabrielle Hechtman, Brett Kahn, Nandita Manalap, Christopher Sullivan
Develop a Customer Engagement Strategy for CollegeBound Saver (Rhode Island’s 529 Plan)

Encouraging families to save for post-secondary education is a goal of Rhode Island’s Treasury Office. Through Rhode Island’s CollegeBound Saver program, families can begin early to invest in the future. To incentivize participants, Rhode Island provides a $100 grant for all newborns; however, participation has been low. The capstone team surveyed new mothers to understand why more fail to take advantage of the program. The team recommended an opt-out policy, education during the discharge process, and ideas for branding CollegeBound to increase awareness of the program among the target audience.

Sponsor: Rhode Island State Treasury, Providence, Rhode Island
Mentor: Lisa Churchville, Director of College and Retirement Savings
Faculty Advisor: Brendan McNally
Team members: Corey Daugherty, Miles Jefferson, Davin Lewis, Meili Novak, Nicole Nowak
Develop a Market Entry Strategy for the Middle East

Uptake, a Chicago-based leader in artificial intelligence software, leverages its technology in numerous industries (e.g., energy, oil and gas, transportation) to reduce maintenance costs. This project challenged the capstone team to conduct macroeconomic, political and industry-specific research to develop go-to-market strategies for Uptake in the Middle East. The team prioritized countries, industries and potential partner firms for the most promising opportunities using a detailed “attractiveness matrix” and PEST analyses to evaluate and rank the suitability of various options.

Sponsor: Uptake, Chicago, Illinois

Mentor: Michael Donahue, Vice President, Utilities and Thermal Generation

Faculty Advisor: Brendan McNally

Team members: Alexandria Donahue, Ryan Kopec, Kaitlyn Thein, Joshua Weisberg, Nicholas Wignot, Linghui Wong
Modeling the Challenges and Benefits of A Carbon Tax

Brown’s Office of Sustainability works across campus to identify and implement best practices to reduce the University’s footprint in areas such as greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), waste, food and transportation. Recent implementation of carbon taxes by many Fortune 500 companies as well as large nonprofit organizations shows some promise to change behavior. This capstone team explored whether Brown should adopt a carbon tax and, if so, at what price and on what goods and services. The team researched current practices of universities and companies and examined potential costs, benefits and outcomes. Final recommendation included a price range and suggestions for a pilot program on specific travel-related activities to offset the purchase of renewable energy.

Sponsor: Brown Office of Sustainability, Providence, Rhode Island

Mentors: Jessica Berry, Director; Erin Royal, Program Manager; Stephen Porder, Associate Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Assistant Provost for Sustainability.

Faculty Advisor: Brendan McNally

Team members: Sebastian Dovi, Zachary Genaway, Christian Murabito, Michael Panepinto, Alexander Santangelo
Making the Case for Rhode Island’s Historic Tax-Credit Program

Grow Smart Rhode Island provides statewide leadership for sustainable economic growth by advocating for compact, mixed use, transit/pedestrian-friendly development in urban, town and village centers. This capstone project worked with Grow Smart to research, analyze and strengthen the case for recapitalizing the Rhode Island Historic Tax Credit (HTC) program, which has gone unfunded for several years. The capstone team analyzed HTC best practices in other states, and success stories within Rhode Island, and made the case by demonstrating the economic benefits. The team recommends smaller projects, improving promotion and instituting standardized reporting metrics. Grow Smart takes the recommendations to the Rhode Island legislature and governor for the 2020 budget.

Sponsor: Grow Smart Rhode Island, Providence, Rhode Island
Mentors: Scott Wolf ’75, Executive Director
Faculty Advisor: Brendan McNally
Team members: Taylor Cosme, Franco Martins, Courtney Palms, Sabrina Stillwell, Grant Varner, Jacqueline Walsh
Designing and Creating the Business Case for Operational Changes

Brown's Office of Sustainability works across campus to identify and implement best practices to reduce the University's carbon footprint. Space is fully allocated in most residence hall kitchens, limiting options to add dishwashing capacity in order to expand reusable dishware. This capstone project explored all aspects of instituting change — organization, equipment, space and costs — to install a new dishwasher system at Andrews Commons. The team conducted extensive expert interviews and cost-benefit analyses to prove the changes had merit. Recommendations have been accepted and the project will move forward into the planning phase.

Sponsor: Brown Office of Sustainability, Providence, Rhode Island

Mentors: Jessica Berry, Director; Erin Royal, Program Manager

Faculty Advisor: Brendan McNally

Team members: Madeline Ayles, Taylor Bright, Anton Casey, Dylan Jordan, Austin Pfarr
Investment Analyses for Venture Capital Fund

Waterman Ventures, a member of the Alumni Ventures Group, is a venture capital investment firm that provides accredited Brown alumni with a diversified range of investment opportunities. The capstone team worked with Waterman mentors to develop an evaluation scorecard template to quantify and qualify the investment potential of ventures. The team refined a detailed rubric to rate a startup venture’s team, product, market and financials. Once the scorecard was solidified, the team used it to evaluate four early-stage ventures. Given the early stage growth of the ventures, the capstone team developed financial projections for each to model potential revenue and expenses.

Sponsor: Waterman Ventures, New York, New York
Mentor: Wolfgang Shultze ’97, Managing Partner
Faculty Advisor: Brendan McNally
Team members: Foster Leboeuf, Acie Newton, Brian Prigmore, William Scherer, Brady Schoo, Conner Wynne
Employing Data Analytics to Grow the Customer Base

Since 1881, Munroe Dairy has been delivering dairy and food products throughout Rhode Island, Connecticut and Massachusetts. A rare survivor in the dairy delivery business, Munroe has succeeded due to fresh products, constant innovation and excellent customer service. The capstone team worked with Munroe to analyze profitable segments of its customer base and model promising areas for growth from both existing and new customers. This project required deep analysis of operational data, customer demographics and consumer product trends.

Sponsor: Munroe Dairy, East Providence, Rhode Island
Mentor: Steven Genuario, Chief Operating Officer
Faculty Advisor: Brendan McNally
Team members: Christine Meder, Carson Christuk, Maxwell Gottlieb, Thomas Marchin, Daniel Miklasevich, Owen Russell
Exploration of New Vertical Markets

UpServe, a high growth-stage startup in Providence, offers a point of sale management system that does it all for the restaurant industry. The capstone team was tasked to find and quantify a new vertical market (confidential for now), including identifying the total addressable market and segments within the market. The capstone team researched the competitive landscape, interviewed dozens of potential customers and provided recommendations for “go-to-market” strategies. While there are major established competitors, the market niche the team identified looks very promising.

Sponsor: UpServe, Providence, Rhode Island
Mentors: David Hoffman, VP Corporate Development and Partnership Strategies; Eric Duboe ’14, Associate, Pritzker Group
Faculty Advisor: Brendan McNally
Team members: Alexander Brink, Addison Gierkink, Peter Honzik, Carl Johan Mix, Braedan Russell, Amanda Weiss