

Alaska Business Week
July 30 – August 6, 2011
UAF campus

Instructors:

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Introduction:

The Alaska Business Week program is a week-long residential 'discovery learning' program aimed at Alaska high school students finishing grades 9 through 12. It is modeled after the successful Washington Business Week Program started in 1976, and is being spearheaded by the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce.

The mission of the Alaska Business Week program is to inspire high school students to discover their leadership potential, as well as begin to solidify their future aspirations before they leave their high school years. This simulated business environment immerses students in an actual business scenario of running a manufacturing business. Competing with other student teams to come up with a winning strategy, students will discover their own leadership talents and strengths.

One of the aspects that make this program different from other summer high school programs is the involvement of business leaders working directly with the students as company advisors throughout the course of the week.

The objective of this program is to give students a hands-on discovery learning opportunity to explore leadership skills and potential talents in the business arena. Most students come into the program with little or no knowledge of the various aspects of running a business; by the end of the week, they have discovered their strengths and weaknesses, their talents, and their leadership potential.

Program curriculum: (See attached 2010 Alaska Business Week program.) The schedule is set by program standards and requirements, and there is little deviation from the attached agenda.

Program calendar: Commences Sunday, July 30 at 10:30 am and runs through 10:00 am on Saturday, August 6, 2011. All activities occur on campus.

Participants:

Students: Alaska high school students finishing grades 9-12 as of May, 2011. This includes home schooled, private schooled and public school students from all walks of life, and all parts of the state.

Company Advisors: The key to the success of this program is the active participation of committed company advisors who are on loan from their companies for one week. Their role is to mentor the students, from giving moral support, to guiding stimulating discussions, and allowing students to make their own decisions. The goal is to simulate a work environment as closely as possible. Advisors are challenged to use their leadership skills and expertise to guide their young entrepreneurs to a winning strategy.

Alaska businesses are asked to 'loan' their executives for a one-week period of time to act as 'company advisors' to the teams and mentor the students. Their active participation assists the students in discovering their true potential and leadership skills. Advisors are assigned a team of up to 10 students and stay with the group throughout the week.

Presentations to the assembly of students, company advisors and staff given by business leaders from around the state challenges students to consider the various aspects of running a business, as well as the real issues businesses face today, offering insight into the strategies of top companies. It also gives them an opportunity to ask questions and interact with the business leaders. In total, the schedule provides for a series of up to 9 presentations from business and industry leaders.

As an added element, business leaders are encouraged to participate in the stockholder presentations and tradeshow event at the end of the program, and students have the opportunity to interact with them to gain insight into what makes them successful and what it will take to develop their own career path.

Structure of program:

Each element of this program builds on the next, and students are actively participating from 7:00 am through 10:00 pm for the entire week.

Students are grouped into teams composed of up to 10 students and one company advisor. Their focus throughout the week is to work with their team members to run a company. Each team is given the same company inventory, cash, employees, stock and personnel. It is incumbent upon the teams to come up with winning strategies over the course of 8 business quarters. Although the simulated business program (BizSim) is utilized by the program, students are not allowed to use computers.

Students are provided with a very detailed set schedule throughout the week, including 18 company meetings and 9 presentations by business leaders. During the week, teams will create a new product or service, and prepare to defend their company's decisions and results to a panel of business leaders acting as 'stockholders' at the end of the program. They also participate in a tradeshow to entice potential stockholders to invest in their new product.

Instructional methods:

Discovery learning method utilized; 9 lectures, small group interaction, team-building games and activities, public speaking, ethics exercises and discussions, financial business calculations – causes and effects thereof. Mentorship provided to every student.

Topics include, but not limited to:

Leadership
Entrepreneurship
Alaska employment statistics and jobs of the future
Marketing
Business Ethics
Financial management
Current practices in the business environment
Successful and unsuccessful business strategies

Program materials:

Students and advisors are provided with a computer-simulated program called “BizSim” utilized for the purpose of assisting the students in running their companies. A company manual is also provided to each student. Company advisors are prepared ahead of time, and are given the BizSim documents and the curriculum utilized throughout the week.

Venue:

The program is conducted on a university campus, affording the students an ‘inside look’ at what it would be like to attend college. Students live on a university campus, stay in the dormitories, eat at the cafeteria, participate in stimulating and thought-provoking lectures, and get a genuine feel for what college life is like.

Preparation:

Students are asked to keep an open mind, and try to move out of their ‘comfort zone’. A set GPA is not a prerequisite to be accepted into the program. In many cases, students entering the program do not have a specific interest in business, and leave with a new insight into their strengths and future focus.

Participants are required to participate in the program for the entire week-long period. The more they participate, the more they will gain from this experience. In many cases, this program inspires students to focus on specific strengths and interests discovered throughout the week as they plan their next steps in life.

Participation:

Students are expected to attend all company meetings, presentations, group exercises, and activities, and actively participate in all aspects of the program. Attendance is taken, and any absence must be excused and reported in advance of the meetings.

A zero-tolerance policy is enforced, and any student violating this policy will be sent home at their own expense. (See attached.)

Student support services:

Company mentors and staff are available to all students throughout the week to address issues and concerns and assist them in understanding the curriculum.

Evaluation:

Stockholder presentation:

On the last day, students are expected to fully participate in an exercise before a panel of their 'stockholders' composed of actual business and industry executives. Each team must defend their actions in running their company, and be prepared to answer questions pertaining to any and all aspects of their business. Each student is expected to present some aspect of running their company during this presentation, and will be prepared to articulate what they have learned and present themselves in professional manner.

Tradeshow:

Student teams will have developed a new product or service over the course of the week and are required to 'sell' their new invention to a group of actual business and industry executives, including the benefits of the product or service, the cost to produce and manufacture the product. Utilizing their newly developed marketing skills, students should be able to solicit for stockholder investments in their products. This tradeshow exercise requires the active participation of all team members.

Grading: Passing grade of 65%.

Participation	35%
Stockholder presentation	25%
Tradeshow	25%
Taking visible leadership	15%

Disabilities:

The Office of Disabilities Services implements the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and insures that UAF students have equal access to the campus and course materials. We will work with the Office of Disabilities Services (203 WHIT, 474-7043) to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities.