



Featured Service-Learning Course: MKT U201 Introduction to Marketing with Tao (Tony) Gao

During the fall 2008 semester, Professor Gao's Introduction to Marketing course partnered with Peace Games National Office represented by Mr. James Noonan.

In conversations between the Service-Learning (S-L) staff of the Center of Community Service and Peace Games regarding how to mutually address the interests and needs of Peace Games and the students through service-learning (S-L), James posed the question as to whether or not Peace Games should pursue further marketing and publishing of their book. Aligning with the learning objectives of the course, the same question was posed to the 40+ students of Professor Gao's Introduction to Marketing class who took on the responsibility of making recommendations to the organization by the end of the semester.

Acting as consultants to Peace Games in this project-based model of S-L, students were divided into seven teams within which they would work collaboratively over the course of the semester.

The teams of students formally presented their recommendations to their peers, Professor Gao, and James from Peace Games during the final week of classes in December, offering the organization a great deal of information on target markets, competitors, potential partners, resources, and publishing options from seven different perspectives. Students based their recommendations on research, analysis, and creative thinking they explicitly drew from specific course concepts they studied throughout the semester. The students also delivered a written report as part of their course requirements. Not only does this deliverable have value for Peace Games, but students are able to add their reports to their portfolios as they begin to seek out future co-op employment and other professional opportunities.

The semester long process of the project was equally as important as the final outcomes of the teams; it was a learning process from beginning to end for all involved. The mutually beneficial S-L partnership resulted in students gaining first-hand experience in the marketing field and developing numerous academic and professional skills, as well, Peace Games now has the information they need to guide them in their decision as to whether or not to proceed with marketing and publishing their book.

This has been a truly collaborative and successful partnership between Professor Gao, the students of Introduction to Marketing, and James of Peace Games. The Center of Community Service is pleased to have supported the partnership throughout the semester.

The fall 2008 semester is Professor Gao's third semester utilizing S-L in his courses at NU and his first time integrating it into Introduction to Marketing. He intends to continue utilizing S-L in Introduction to Marketing this spring and in future semesters. He originally utilized S-L for two semesters in Marketing Research. Professor Gao will also be joining the NU Service-Learning Advisory Board in Spring 2009.

Mr. James Noonan is a Program Specialist at the Peace Games National Headquarters in Boston, MA. To learn more about Peace Games, please visit their website at: www.peacegames.org