Student Focused Community Engagement:
The SBI Program as a Bridge into the Community

Ron G. Cook
Rider University

Diane K. Campbell
Rider University

Amber Kopp
Rider University

This paper discusses the importance of community engagement to universities. High level student-focused community engagement can be considered a type of service-learning, which is one method of experiential learning. It is believed that the student team consulting model is better structured and offers an improved learning experience for these activities than most service-learning projects. Research is examined from experiential learning and service-learning, and there is support for this argument. The paper concludes by discussing the Small Business Institute® model (SBI) of student team consulting and how the national Small Business Institute® Association can help schools and faculty use the SBI model to create more rewarding community engagement.

"During the last decade, community engagement has emerged as an important priority among many colleges and universities in the United States" (Weertz & Sandmann, 2010, p. 632). Community engagement (CE) is often characterized as universities employing a myriad of public service and outreach programs as a way to generate a more favorable opinion in the eyes of the local community and to enhance overall reputation, thereby increasing enrollments (Trowler & Trowler, 2010). However, this engagement has tended to be one-sided, as "most colleges and universities conceptualize engagement as focused on providing either (a) students with experiences in the community (i.e., internships, volunteer efforts) or (b) providing university expertise to the community" (Bruning, McGrew & Cooper, 2006, p. 126). Another issue raised in the literature is the amorphous nature of the term 'engagement' (Buys & Bursnall, 2007). Engagement has been described as any type of involvement with the outside world, ranging from community use of campus property to ongoing university-led studies of economic viability of an entire region.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

To better clarify this argument, engagement is defined as something more than sharing athletic fields or promoting the local community theater to students and staff. Engagement should be a deeper relationship among universities, students, and communities that benefits all stakeholders and requires a meaningful commitment from all parties participating. Here the word "universities" is used as shorthand for all higher educational entities, from community colleges to research universities. Further, the term "communities" is not defined solely by physical proximity to a campus. It can also be a larger region, a specific population such as Native Americans, or a larger organization. Therefore, this definition of engagement would then include a university that had an ongoing relationship with the Red Cross as well as one that worked with the local homeless shelter.

Community engagement is important because allows universities to develop their identity as more than a functional educational establishment and foster ties to the world beyond students, faculty and alumni. A more positive view of the university will not be limited to just that community, but will also enhance their overall image and standing. Today, with more questions being raised about the cost of higher education (CBSNews, 2011; Katsouleas, 2013), it is more vital than ever that a university be seen as being valuable to society at large.

Whereas in the past some universities have seen community engagement as a minor function of student volunteering, there is evidence that this perception is changing as more academic institutions are realizing the significance of finding common ground with their respective communities and the benefits that can result from embracing this partnership (Bruning, McGrew & Cooper, 2006). In this context, benefits can include, "improvement in the quality of teaching and learning and more rapid speed of 'internalization' of community engagement in an institution's identity" (Buys & Bursnall, 2007, p. 74). In collaborating with different groups/organizations, both academics and students alike are being exposed to different perspectives and are given the opportunity to merge theory with practice in a real world setting. This not only adds value and context to information already held, it also increases the chances that the knowledge will be retained, incorporated and manifested as skills (Watson, 2007). The second benefit, internalization, addresses the need for universities to establish norms around community engagement such that these collaborations become habitual and thus a part of their overall mission. This lessens the criticism that these efforts are mere "public relations," and demonstrates the commitment of the university to the wider world.

To demonstrate community engagement's importance, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (CFAT) introduced a new classification for universities that engage in their community. Qualifications for this particular classification confirm that a university has institutionalized engagement with their community in three ways - identity, culture, and commitment. It is important to note that this classification is optional as it relies on voluntary participation by universities. Institutions awarded this classification must be able to document how they have incorporated CE in their identity through indictors of culture and commitment and how they define the scope of their CE (outreach programs, partnerships, etc.). Universities that meet this criteria experience benefits such as clarity of mission and full documentation of their work. In addition, having Carnegie's official acknowledgment of their CE focus increases visibility and recognition (Driscoll, 2009). This is an excellent demonstration of the way that "University community partnerships can have a significant impact on raising the profile and status of the university" (Buys & Burnsall, 2007, p. 81).

Scholarly research in regards to the area of community engagement often focuses on processes, benefits, and roles as they relate to the main groups involved, namely academic institutions and their respective communities. Unfortunately, there is limited mention of arguably the most important constituency, the students, who play an integral part in the collaboration between universities and communities. Since the central mission of all academic institutions is to educate and engage students, it is essential that students are at the core of community engagement initiatives. Having a student focus at the center of CE programs not only makes sense, but it can also be a vital pedagogy in advancing the students' academic development, and fostering a deeper sense of dedication to their community. Having students understand that their actions can have an impact on the world, as well as demonstrating the applicability of their education, increases the likelihood that knowledge will be retained and incorporated (Kickel, Griffiths, & Bacq, 2010). Therefore, it is proposed that student community engagement (SCE) be the primary focus of community engagement efforts.

STUDENT COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AS EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Experiential learning is a broad category that encompasses a range of learning activities from internships to consulting projects to student-run ventures. It is considered more holistic than classroom-only instruction and helps bridge the gap between what the students learn passively and the actual job expectations that students encounter when they enter the working world (Maskulka, Stout & Massad, 2011, p.4).

Experiential learning has been the source of a great deal of study in recent years, and previous research demonstrates its efficacy in increasing learning outcomes (Godfrey, Illes & Berry, 2005). The link between experiential learning and student community engagement can be manifested through one subset of experiential learning, service-learning. Although a number of definitions of service-learning (SL) can be found, a commonly accepted definition is as follows:

> A course-based, credit-bearing, educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and reflects on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995, p. 112).

Previous research has concentrated on the effectiveness of service-learning as a pedagogical method. This research has found that just like student community engagement, the environments where SL can occur have ranged from lower level club-based service projects to higher level, course-based activities (Holland, 1997). This contributes to our belief that an experiential learning approach that fits service-learning also fits student community engagement. More specifically, we focus on the higher level type of service-learning that uses a process-based approach that has students taking on "the role of professional consultants producing goods that will, in fact, be used" (Kenworthy-U'ren, 2000, p. 59). Higher level service-learning addresses complex problems in complex settings, requires students to practice critical thinking, and involves teamwork and community involvement (Eyler & Giles, 1999). This complex type of SL is appropriate to recommended for SCE as it includes a deep and substantial commitment to the learning process, and demonstrates the best kind of experiential learning.

As pedagogically sound as service-learning is, however, it can have its drawbacks. For example, in a study of service-learning preferences, almost two-thirds of community organization members were interested in transactional or one time projects with university partnership programs, typically because of resource constraints such as limited staff time (Kenworthy-U'ren, 2008). This means that the level of familiarity between parties that could emerge from much longer engagements does not naturally occur. Further, from the university's perspective, some service-learning activities have had difficulty documenting the learning process as these SL projects often lack structure and clarity (Kenworthy-U'ren, 2000). These two concerns could also apply to student community engagement, and it would seem that they would need to be addressed to make higher level projects more effective for SCE.

Therefore, it is suggested that the student team consulting (STC) model be used as a framework for student community engagement, and it is believed that previous research into service-learning supports our recommendation. Student team consulting is an experiential learning model that has students operating as consultants with faculty oversight and a client whose needs are being addressed by the students. In the student community engagement process, that client would be a community organization. STC also focuses on problem-based learning in a cooperative (team) environment, and research into the best service-learning projects supports this type of pedagogy (Kenworthy-Uren, 2008). Both STC and the best of SL focus on building critical thinking skills and offer an inter-disciplinary approach to complex issues. Student team consulting and service-learning are also similar as both "seek to balance academic rigor with a practical relevance which furnishes students with a broader and, we argue, richer, educational experience" (Godfrey, Illes & Berry, 2005, p. 309). They both address one of the most salient criticisms of education today - the absence of realistic experience, applied learning, and grounded personal development (Godfrey, Illes & Berry, 2005). Given the shared characteristics of student team consulting and higher level service-learning, and parallels between service-learning and student community engagement, it is expected that student team consulting's particular strengths would make it a great tool for an academic institution to successfully pursue SCE.

To address issues regarding community groups' lack of staff resources that leads to a preference for transactional projects, STC can easily alleviate the fears that projects will overwhelm community organizations, thereby removing this barrier to the community engagement partnership. The STC model provides clear starting and stopping points designed around an academic calendar and requires the students, faculty and client to have an agreed upon understanding of the tasks the students are to accomplish. The student team consulting model can require a Letter of Engagement (LOE) that spells out the respective responsibilities of the parties and provides clarity to the project. Appendix A offers a detailed example of the LOE. The LOE is a negotiation that happens before the project starts, and allows the community organization to set the project's parameters. Therefore, all parties receive assurance that their concerns are being met, and that the project will be beneficial for all stakeholders.

Since the LOE provides the clarity of the relationship between an organization and the student consulting team, this relationship can then be easily explained to other parties. It can become the cornerstone of any report to the university's administration, and makes documentation much easier. Should the community and the university wish to lengthen the engagement into a long-term partnership, the student team consulting model can be extended into broader efforts. It is not uncommon for organizations to have iterative STC projects, and based on the projects' recommendations, other areas of the university can also become engaged with the organization as well (Cook, Belliveau & Campbell, 2012). For example, a student team could make recommendations for changes in the outreach efforts of a literacy program, and those changes could be produced by a student team from the graphic arts department. Or the STC model could be used by education students as they work with an organization to assess their pedagogy. The student team consulting approach of analyzing the problem, exploring solutions, and making recommendation(s) would remain the same. Hence, it is only necessary that the issue being addressed is a complex, real-world problem needing the kind of analysis that the students involved have the ability to complete. The keys to success in student community engagement are communication among all the stakeholders, and an agreement of the parameters of the project. Both are integral to the STC model.

Universities can also have reservations about SCE projects such as these, particularly in regard to assessment of learning and obtaining faculty buy-in. Because STC is a proven model, it can help faculty adapt to SCE, provide the project's integration into an established course structure, and allow the faculty member to concentrate on enhancing the student's learning experience rather than on course design/modification to make it "fit" into SCE. Further, by adding a reflection piece to STC, the model can also create documents for assessment of learning for the university's use in meeting accreditation criteria. All of the documentation that is built into the STC model allows the university to understand, track, and assess each project.

Therefore, the student team consulting model can create value for all stakeholders, is grounded in real world projects, and will greatly enhance the students' cognitive abilities and learning process. The STC model can facilitate effective learning-based connections between student experience, course content, and community (Cook, Belliveau & Campbell, 2012). All of these factors make student team consulting ideal as a methodology for student community engagement.

SMALL BUSINESS INSTITUTE® MODEL OF STUDENT TEAM CONSULTING

Fortunately, there exists an organization dedicated to the STC model which can help universities conduct student community engagement using student team consulting. This organization is the Small Business Institute® (SBI), and its SBI program is a flagship model for STC. The SBI program is the oldest and most successful example of student team consulting in the country, as it began in 1972, and at its peak encompassed over 400 colleges and universities (www.smallbusinessinstitute.biz, n.d.). Like all STCs, the SBI program involves the students and the community, is characterized by a deep commitment by the faculty and students towards the client, and results in an invaluable learning experience for students.

However, what makes an SBI program attractive is the rigorous structure of the projects, which are done under faculty guidance and for academic credit. The SBI program has the student teams operating as outside consultants and requiring them to assess a client's needs, develop a contract with their client, and then execute that contract over the course of a semester. In summary, the process:

> …offers students an opportunity to integrate their academic and work experiences in the creation of a consulting solution for a client's real world problem. The consulting process provides students with experiential learning in small group dynamics, problem definition, research methodology and application, project management, and in making presentations (Cook, Belliveau & Campbell, 2012, p. 9).

Given that the student team consulting model provides the basic framework needed for student community engagement, the SBI program takes that framework and provides more structure and rigor to provide the best possible outcome for the client which, in almost all cases, is in the local community. Thus, student community engagement is assured. Further, the level of involvement that an SBI client organization has with the student team is deep and ongoing, and as a result, the organization builds a relationship with the faculty instructor and the university. We characterize these relationships as win-win-win. The organization gets a consulting report that involves literally hundreds of hours of effort, the students are engaged in experiential learning in the community during the creation of this report, and the university gains goodwill by helping the community as it strengthens these organizations.

To assist universities with starting with an SBI program, you can turn to the national SBI Association. The Association provides assistance to faculty in three broad areas, including knowledge development, conference activities, and recognition programs. For the purpose of helping a university start an SBI program, we will focus on the knowledge development area.

Knowledge development includes activities relating to the SBI national conference sessions, and a one-on-one mentoring program to help start an SBI. The Association also runs an annual student consulting competition that recognizes the best student consulting projects. The projects that win this annual competition can provide excellent examples of quality student community engagement.

The national conference offers professional developmental sessions on creating and operating a successful SBI program. These hands-on workshops offer the opportunity for new SBI programs to learn how to recruit clients from the community, match them up with students, and gain the support of their institutions. Established SBI programs can learn new methods and tips to keep their programs current and relevant. Most importantly, the conference brings together numerous faculty members who have devoted much of their careers to promoting SCE through their SBI programs. This wealth of knowledge is a resource to anyone who wishes to utilize the SBI model for student community engagement and enhance both their students and their professional lives.

Further, the Association provides a mentoring program to help new SBI programs. New SBI directors are paired up with experienced directors for one-on-one coaching and advice. This mentoring will occur for as long as it is needed and institutions will be matched up with each other by size and type, if possible. Although there is a much longer list of benefits that can be gained from being involved with the Association, these two examples are provided as a sample of the available support for an individual SBI program.

Student team consulting, and specifically the SBI program model, is an excellent vehicle for universities to pursue student community engagement. To learn more about creating an SBI program at your university, visit the national website at www.smallbusinessinstitute.biz.

REFERENCES

Bringle, J.N. & Hatcher, J. (1995). A service learning curriculum for faculty. *The Michigan Journal of Community Service-Learning*, *2*, 112-122.

Bruning, S.D., McGrew, S., & Cooper, M. (2006). Town-gown relationships: Exploring university-community engagement from the perspective of community members. *Public Relations Review*, *32*, 125-130. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2006.02.005.

Buys, N. & Bursnall, S. (2007). Establishing university-community partnerships: Processes and benefits. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, *29*(1), 73-86. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13600800601175797.

CBSNews (2011, October 26). Higher education costs continue to soar. Retrieved October 2, 2013 from: http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-201_162-20125731/higher-education-costs-continue-to-soar/.

Cook, R., Belliveau, P., & Campbell, D. (2012). *The Experiential Student Team Consulting Process: A Problem-based Model for Consulting and Service Learning (4th ed.)*. Ohio: Cengage Learning.

Driscoll, A. (2009). Carnegie's new community engagement classification: Affirming higher education's role in community. *New Direction For Higher Education*, *47*, 5-12. http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/he.353.

Eyler, J. & Giles, D.E. (1999). *Where's the Learning in Service-Learning?* San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Godfrey, P.C., Illes, L.M., & Berry, G.R. (2005). Creating breadth in business education through service-learning. *Academy Of Management Learning & Education, 4*(3), 309-323.

Holland, B. (1997). Analyzing institutional commitment to service: A model of key organizational factors. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, *4*, 30-40.

Katsouleas, T. (2013, August 26). Righting the ship on higher education costs. *Forbes*. Retrieved September 20, 2013 from: http://www.forbes.com/sites/singularity/2013/08/26/righting-the-ship-on-higher-education-costs/.

Kenworthy-U'ren, A.L. (2000). Management students as consultants: A strategy for service learning in management education. In Godfrey, P. & Grasso, E. (Eds)'s *Working for the common good: Concepts and models for service-learning in management* (pp. 55-68). Washington, D.C.: AAHE.org.

Kenworthy-U'ren, A.L. (2008). A decade of service-learning: A review of the field ten years after JOBE's seminal special issue. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *81*(4), 811-812.

Kickul, J., Griffiths, M., & Bacq, S. (2010). The boundary-less classroom: Extending social innovation and impact learning to the field. *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, *17*(4), 652-663.

Maskulka, T.A., Stout, D.E., & Massad, V.J. (2011). Using and assessing an experiential learning project in a retail marketing course. *Journal of Instructional Pedagogies*, *6*, 1-20.

Smallbusinessinstitute.biz (n.d.). Retrieved September 20, 2013 from: http://www.smallbusinessinstitute.biz.

Trowler, V. & Trowler, P. (2010). Student engagement executive summary. *The Higher Education Academy*, 1-8. Retrieved August 15, 2013 from: http://eprints.lancs.ac.uk/61684/1/Student_Engagement_Project_Executive_Summary._Nov_2010.pdf.

Watson, D. (2007). *Managing Civic and Community Engagement*. Berkshire, UK: McGraw-Hill International.

Weerts, D.J. & Sandmann, L.R. (2010). Community engagement and boundary-spanning roles at research universities. *The Journal of Higher Education*, *81*(6), 702-727.

APPENDIX

Sample Letter of Engagement (LOE)

KJP Consulting
SBI Consulting Team
Rider University

Mr. Daniel Josephs, I.C.E.
Spruce Industries, Inc.
759 E. Lincoln Avenue
Rahway, NJ 07065

Subject: Letter of Engagement between Spruce Industries, Inc and KJP Consulting

We are delighted to have the opportunity to work with Spruce Industries, Inc. ("you" or "Client"). This letter of engagement describes the services to be performed and the relevant terms and conditions governing our relationship.

I. Background

Hank Josephs purchased Spruce Industries, Inc. over 20 years ago. Hank's son Dan Josephs joined the business approximately five years ago to assist with the day to day operations of the business. Spruce Industries is a producer and distributor of sanitary cleaners, chemicals, and equipment offering complete sanitary solutions.

A few years ago Hank and Dan recognized an early trend in the marketplace. They realized that more people wanted cleaning solutions that were green. "Green" in the sanitary industry means chemicals that are non-toxic and/or products that have minimum impact on the environment. In the past, green cleaning products were not in as much demand because they often did not clean as well as traditional cleaning products and cost more. However, with developments in green cleaning chemistry, green products now clean equally well at the same price. Spruce's customer base consists of schools (45%), healthcare (10%–15%), housing authorities (10%–15%), with the balance consisting of different kinds of accounts such as airport terminals.

Spruce Industries is seeking the services of KJP Consulting to provide marketing recommendations to tap into the same consumer market. In connection with this engagement, KJP Consulting has referred to and relied upon information provided by Spruce Industries.

II. Project Objectives

Spruce currently sells and distributes cleaning products to businesses or organizations that use the products purchased for industrial purposes. With intense competition in this market, including product price cutting due to the recession, it is becoming increasingly difficult for Spruce to discover new business opportunities. Spruce would like KJP Consulting to make strategic business recommendations to effectively tap into the consumer market, specifically for their in-house (private label) and eco-friendly cleaning supplies.

To accomplish that objective, Spruce is looking to expand the consumer market through retail outlets. While this has never been attempted by Spruce, KJP Consulting will research if there is a significant

opportunity to grow the revenue of the firm by obtaining shelf-space in retail outlets is feasible. In addition, Spruce would also like for KJP Consulting to provide insightful ways to use the just-developed consumer website to meet his goal.

In order to develop a plan that will reach this market, the Student Consulting Team will conduct research with consumers and retailers to create a marketable brand of eco-friendly cleaning products that will appeal to the consumer market. This will entail creating a new brand name, and designing new packaging.

III. Approach

In order to meet the objectives of this project, KJP will conduct primary research that looks at retailers of eco-friendly products and how the products they carry are marketed and priced. The consulting team will evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of competitors to help determine what, if any, possible openings or competitive advantages are in the existing market. Part of this analysis will focus on process and its potential to create an advantage. For example, one competitive advantage that Spruce's private label eco-friendly brand products could have over some other consumer-based products is the necessary "green" certifications. Once this research is completed, a brand needs to be created that is appealing to the consumer in terms of product use, brand name, and packaging. Misco Product Corporation will be the source that provides valuable information on private label branding and packaging to KJP Consulting. Five possible brand names that the consulting team has created will be surveyed in the consumer market using the services of Survey Monkey to get a sample size of approximately 100 consumers. Based on the popularity of the brand names, they will be narrowed down and then the consulting team will make the final decision on which name to utilize.

While Spruce's eco-friendly consumer brand is being developed, primary research will be performed concurrently to determine the processes involved and feasibility in obtaining shelf space at various regional and/or local retailers. This primary research will consist of directly contacting two big box retailers (Target and Wal-Mart), two supermarkets (Wegman's and Whole Foods) and two environmentally conscious retail stores (located in New Hope, Pennsylvania area) through phone, email and onsite visits to obtain as much information as possible concerning the feasibility of obtaining shelf-space at these locations. Using this information, a plan will then be put together for Spruce's sales representatives to help them obtain accounts in the retail market.

Ultimately, KJP Consulting will make a recommendation as to whether or not it is feasible to enter the consumer market through this channel. Consistent with this recommendation we will also provide ideas towards the most effective use of the existing consumer website.

IV. Client Deliverables

1. KJP Consulting will submit and formally present the project data to Spruce Industries on or before April 10, 2011 (or a mutually acceptable date) at Rider University.
2. At the time of the presentation, Spruce Industries will receive a bound copy of the project containing the primary data, the secondary data, and the final recommendations.
3. Spruce Industries will have a new eco-friendly brand for household cleaning products regardless if the final decision is to recommend that Spruce pursue the consumer market.
4. Spruce Industries will be provided with a list of feasible retailers to target based on the primary research conducted by KJP Consulting, as well as a brochure that clearly defines the brand, brand slogan, and brand image to be utilized by Spruce's sales force.

V. Scope of Consulting Project/Responsibilities

General Guidelines
- Objectives and assumptions contained in the project proposal are based on information provided by Mr. Dan Josephs of Spruce Industries to the Student Consulting Team. Other assumptions may be made based upon the information that we receive during the site visit of Misco Products Corporation.
- This letter of Engagement will define the scope of the consulting project.
- Any modifications to project requirements must be agreed to by Mr. Joseph's, the KJP Consulting, and the professor. These modifications must be documented via e-mail or written agreement.

Spruce Industries Responsibilities
- Communicate project requirements openly and precisely. Dan Josephs will be the primary firm contact, and will actively engage in product design and implementation.
- Commit the time and resources necessary to provide all requested information, feedback, and guidance on a timely basis.
- Be available to KJP Consulting at mutually agreeable times and locations, either via telephone or in person.
- Provide any resources and/or budget as agreed upon by this Letter of Engagement and in subsequent written authorization.

KJP Consulting Responsibilities
- Actively participate in all meetings to understand Spruce's requirements and deliverables.
- Remain in regular contact with Mr. Dan Josephs throughout the project. For simplicity, the majority of communication will take place through Kevin Lawton who represents KJP Consulting as a primary point of contact for Spruce Industries.
- Communicate project requirements openly and precisely.
- Manage project deliverables and timelines.
- Conduct all meetings and exchanges in a professional and courteous manner.
- Maintain the confidentiality of project information.
- Identify a single primary point of contact and supply additional contact information of all team members.

VI. Project Budget

At this stage in the process, no expenses are expected. Should expenses arise during the course of this project, they will require prior authorization by Mr. Dan Josephs. Authorization may be in the form of e-mail.

VII. Project Schedule

- Initial meeting will be held with Mr. Dan Josephs at Spruce Industries' Rahway NJ office to obtain information about the organization and its needs. This initial meeting was held on Monday, January 10, 2011.
- The second in-person meeting took place on February 15, 2011 at Misco Products Corporation in Reading, PA with Mr. Daniel Josephs. The purpose of this meeting was to better understand the different possibilities for redesigning the green private label product line for Spruce. During this meeting the Student Consulting Team examined possible products, ideas of making these products more eco-friendly and appearance of physical product through its packaging.

- Letter of Engagement will be completed by Thursday, March 3, 2011 and sent to Mr. Dan Josephs for his signature.
- Brainstorming will be done for finalized product line which will be done in collaboration with Mr. Dan Josephs, and will be done by the end of March.
- Research will be done in order to determine where Spruce may have a potential consumer market in the local area. This research will lead to the feasibility aspect of the plan and allow for a further understanding of which retail locations are best suited for the new product line. The research portion of this section will be completed by March 27, 2011.

Certain steps outlined above will be done concurrently. Project milestones will be marked with interim updates to Mr. Dan Josephs of Spruce Industries.

VIII. Agreement

The analysis, recommendations, and final report that will be provided should not be interpreted as the official position of Rider University or its staff. Rather, it will contain the views and opinions of KJP Consulting based on discussions, observations, investigations, and analysis of Spruce Industries operations and its business environment.

If circumstances arise that are beyond the control of KJP Consulting or Spruce Industries, and the completion of this project cannot be achieved, KJP Consulting and Spruce Industries shall jointly take a course of action that is mutually agreeable.

IX. Approval Signatures
(signatures on the copy that went to the client)