

**Date: 18 December 19\_\_**  
**To: C\_\_\_\_\_**  
**From: Prof. Rick Vaz**  
**Re: Evaluation**

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Projects are very different than courses in many ways, and this difference becomes most apparent when the time comes to assign a grade. Unlike a course, there are no tests or other such traditional assignments. I've found over the years that this can often lead to surprises and misunderstandings. In an effort to avoid these situations, I have attempted to give you explicit feedback, both in the form of grades for oral and written work early in the term (to give you an idea of my expectations), and in the form of detailed critiques and revisions of your written and oral work. It is my hope that this feedback provided you with some idea of the level and quality of effort I expect.

The grade for a project reflects many things, including the **process** and the **product**. By process, I refer to such things as the effort you expended; the cooperation and conscientiousness with which you interacted with your partners, your liaisons, and me; and your creativity, critical thinking, and analytic skills. By product, I refer to the quality of your oral and written work (your own work, not the result of my corrections and suggestions); the overall attention to detail and thoroughness in your work; and the usefulness and validity of the results and recommendations provided to your sponsors. These things are difficult to assess using traditional grades, but nonetheless that is what I must try to do.

You have earned a grade of A for your IQP. Congratulations. This grade signifies excellent work, and I do not give it lightly. I'd like to take this opportunity to elaborate on my impressions of your accomplishments and contributions.

I consider your **level of effort** in this project to have been exceptional. Throughout the entire term, your team consistently put in an excellent effort. You kept to an aggressive schedule, and were able to respond to the diverse expectations and requests of \_\_\_\_\_ and me. You maintained a positive attitude in the face of a number of challenges and setbacks, and never (well, almost never) slacked off. It's clear that you did the work, and the results speak for themselves.

I also found the **quality** of your work in this project to have been consistently excellent. The writing in your report showed mastery of both ideas and language; it is some of the best student writing I've seen. Your presentations were always at least very good and often excellent. You conducted yourselves very professionally in our meetings with \_\_\_\_\_, and were always prepared, on top of important issues, and willing to do what was necessary to make the project as good as it could be.

The final products--the report, your final presentation, and the recommendations you have developed--are excellent. Your recommendations are well-justified and well-presented, and I hope that someone is in the position to act upon them. The report will be extremely useful to anyone interested in these issues. I think you've given \_\_\_\_\_ a lot of ammunition, and I think he will know how to use it. I also think you've laid the groundwork for future projects with \_\_\_\_\_, so thanks.

C\_\_\_\_\_: I really appreciate your positive attitude and conscientious efforts this term. The effort you put in was not lost on me, nor was your impressive understanding of the complex technical and nontechnical issues associated with this project. I know that there were some rough spots, teamwork-wise, but the outcomes of this project indicate that you were able to get by them as a group. To tell you the truth, there were times when I almost thought you were taking the project too seriously (I don't think I've ever said that to a student before). Your motivation and work ethic, combined with the ability to understand and communicate about complex interrelated issues, is a powerful combination. I

hope that this project has given you some idea about how you might use your talents in an area that could benefit society.

It's been a pleasure to get to know you, and I hope you'll drop by and see me in AK once in a while. If there's anything I can do for you, such as a letter of recommendation or any advice, don't hesitate to ask. Have safe journeys and happy holidays, and I'll see you on the hill.