

Students lend expertise to major corporation

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Developing a training package for a fortune 350 company isn't a typical class assignment — unless you're enrolled in Communication 436.

In her first year teaching at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, Christy Brazee's vision of providing hands-on learning for students has blossomed into reality.

"Students are building a one-hour training program for new employees to support Oshkosh Corporation's new branding initiative," said Brazee, an assistant professor in the communication department.

Brazee facilitated the partnership through Career Services, and her students have been working with Andrew McClain, Oshkosh Corporation's talent development manager, since the beginning of the semester.

"The fresh perspective of individuals unfamiliar with Oshkosh Corporation or the new internal branding initiative has been powerful," McClain said. "Their research and proposals have, thus far, been invaluable in terms of positioning the messaging and approach."

Students interviewed current employees and reviewed internal documents to assess the current culture and identify issues worth addressing in the training program.

"The most challenging part about this task is developing in such depth each and every part of our project and also tying everything together and making it presentable to a respectable audience," said Cale Johnson, a senior communications major.

With just 11 students in the class, teamwork and collaboration drive the project forward as each step in the process is dependent on the next.

"We proposed a needs assessment along with training objectives, which were used to develop a training plan," Brazee said.

Students built a one-hour training session based on their semester of research and planning, which they presented at Oshkosh Corporation on May 11.

"The most surprising thing I learned in this class was when I heard that we would be helping a corporation develop something that may be used in the future," said Lindsey Juhlke, a senior speech communication major.

Not only is the plan likely to be used by Oshkosh Corporation, according to Brazee, but also students have gained a real-world experience to draw on as they enter the working world.

“I think this opportunity will benefit my future greatly,” Juhlke said, who plans to pursue a career in business or public relations. “It's teaching me how to work effectively with a team and learn the steps to take on a project in a future job.”

[See more photos from the presentation at Oshkosh Corporation.](#)