

REAL 916 – Real Estate Lab
Winter Quarter 2011-2012
Tuesday Evenings 6:30p-9:30p in Evanston (Section 81)

Project in brief:

To assess the City of Evanston's policies towards the development of commercial office real estate.

Sponsor:

Evanston Inventure, a private, non-profit economic development organization dedicated to the long-term economic health of Evanston.

Sponsor contacts:

Kent Swanson, Principal and CFO, The John Buck Company
Wally Bobkiewicz, City Manager, City of Evanston

Instructor:

Therese McGuire, Professor, Kellogg School of Management

Project description:

The City of Evanston is currently considering whether to offer an incentive program for commercial office development. Students taking the lab will research the pros and cons of offering such a program, including benchmarking the proposal against other cities. The team will then present a comprehensive recommendation to the client as to whether the program should be adopted and its optimal design.

There are at least three reasons why commercial office development might be good for the economic health of the City of Evanston. First, the businesses that rent office space in commercial office buildings create jobs that are relatively high-skill and high-wage. Second, a vibrant commercial office sector has spillover benefits for the local economy, with office workers patronizing local restaurants and retail stores and with a critical mass of commercial office businesses attracting other like firms. Third, commercial office real estate contributes relatively more than other types of real estate to the property tax base of the City.

Weekly class sessions will consist of meetings at which the instructor will lecture about and engage students in readings on the topic, consulting meetings with the sponsor, guest speakers, working sessions in which the students will critique one another's drafts, and a class meeting for oral presentation of the final report.

Project deliverables

A report, with supporting documentation, and a presentation to the sponsor.

Student grades:

There are four components to each student's grade: the instructor's assessment of the student's contribution to the project deliverables (the written report and the oral presentation), participation in class, peer review, and sponsor review.