

Welcome to the Analytical Consulting Lab!

In DECS 915, the Analytical Consulting Lab (ACL), you will work on a real-world project where quantitative analysis drives your recommendations. This experiential approach to learning provides an excellent opportunity to exercise many of the concepts that are part of an MBA curriculum. As you will be working in a team, you will have an opportunity to exercise leadership and teamwork concepts. The project is also full of real-world complexity, which will require you to integrate concepts from various disciplines. For instance, pricing problems are tied to strategy and the response of competitors, requiring concepts from strategy and marketing. Customer data will almost certainly have omissions, requiring approximations and statistical prediction concepts. Market forces on a business product may be poorly understood, requiring economic analysis and marketing concepts.

A general goal of this class is to apply analytical techniques and principles of measurement in order to make improved and, indeed, better decisions. Projects often involve developing analytical metrics for improved customer marketing, superior operations, product performance, and even improved data use in the firm. This approach allows us to consider multiple, simultaneous goals of the client, reflecting the real-world aspects of a project. By diving into the data, you are able to learn a great deal about the client's challenge and provide grounded recommendations going-forward.

The opportunity to work with a real-world client and develop a set of recommendations based on analysis also permits you a great chance to exercise consulting best practices and client-facing skills. We cover many of these best practices and focus on the importance of written and verbal communication, as well as data presentation as part of a consulting engagement. You will learn how to conduct industry research and how to develop strategy presentations in line with consulting best practices.

In many ways, my role in the class is different than in a lecture class. I will work with each team to overcome any issues with the data, analysis, research, formulation of recommendations, and its presentation. My role is to help and guide you in being successful with the client and successful with your personal goals. Working with teams and seeing the great progress in an academic quarter is always very rewarding for me. I am confident you will find the opportunities in ACL rewarding, too!

I hope you can join us for a project in ACL!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Russell Walker", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Russell Walker, Ph.D.