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To any Potential Sponsor of a Capstone Project:

The purpose of this letter is to ensure the mutual understanding regarding intellectual property (IP) matters for all Capstone courses at Northern Arizona University (NAU).  This letter outlines NAU’s position on IP for potential sponsors who are contemplating sponsorship of a project for a Capstone course in the College of Engineering, Informatics, and Applied Sciences.  In order to foster a productive relationship between NAU and a project sponsor, it is critical that the project sponsor, or other authorized person from the sponsor’s organization, review this document.

NAU encourages faculty and students to interact with project sponsors to advance the NAU missions of education, research, and community service.  Within the educational framework, Capstone courses provide students an excellent opportunity to interact with project sponsors through hands on real-world team design projects.  NAU recognizes such educational experience is vital and beneficial to the development of NAU students.  Project sponsors also benefit by observing the students solving real-world problems in the educational framework and oftentimes can identify particular NAU students who might be well suited for an offer of subsequent employment with the sponsor.

The Capstone courses are meant to be an educational experience for undergraduate students with an emphasis placed upon speaking and presenting information throughout the project.  Therefore, it is important to note that a project that requires confidentiality by students or NAU is often not appropriate for a Capstone project.  Barring any agreements executed by authorized personnel, NAU employees will not have any responsibilities or obligations to maintain confidentiality for any information provided to them by project sponsors during the Capstone courses.  Additionally, students receiving confidential information will need their own agreements as NAU cannot negotiate, execute, or sign on behalf of students.

NAU respects the proper IP rights of all parties, including those of project sponsors and will work with a sponsor for any agreement that is needed throughout the project.  Absent intellectual and conceptual input of an NAU employee that would amount to inventorship under United Sates patent law and Arizona Board of Regents Policy 6-908 (<https://public.azregents.edu/Policy%20Manual/6-908-Intellectual%20Property%20Policy.pdf>) NAU will not have rights in any IP that is developed during a Capstone project (see §A(3)(b)).  NAU cannot negotiate the IP rights or potential IP rights in any Capstone projects for students.  Any IP agreements would need to be negotiated and executed directly with the students working on the project.

NAU Innovations is the designated and authorized office at NAU to engage in IP related discussions with project sponsors of Capstone courses.  If there are any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The NAU College of Engineering, Informatics, and Applied Sciences Dean’s Office and NAU Innovations

Andy Wang, Ph.D. William Aylor, M.S., J.D.

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cc: Karen Pugliesi, Ph.D., Provost

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