

## Pilot Program Offers High School Seniors a College-Level Project Management Course

**H**igh school seniors in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA, will be able to enroll in a college-level project management course during the summer school break. The course teaches project management practices and a variety of 21st century skills, such as global literacy, problem-solving, innovation and creativity.

The pilot program is a partnership of the School District of Philadelphia, DeVry University, the PMI Delaware Valley Chapter and the PMI Educational Foundation (PMIEF). The course combines the "Learning Passport to College" program with project management and other skills.

"This course will give students a solid introduction to project management—a discipline that is growing in demand by businesses and organizations worldwide," said Cassandra W. Jones, EdD, interim chief academic officer for the School District of Philadelphia. "In addition to the pilot course this summer, we will have pilots at Philadelphia high schools in the fall of 2008 and in the spring of 2009."

Students need to meet certain grade and attendance standards to be accepted into the course, and will receive college credit upon completion.

"We think the program could be introduced in other cities and eventually become a national program, but first we have to evaluate the three pilot

courses," said John Byrne, DBA, PMP, associate professor of business programs at DeVry University's Keller Graduate School.

### Program Responds to Global Need

PMI President and CEO Gregory Balestrero, who is also PMIEF chief operating officer, noted, "There is a global project manager shortage, so the profession of project management is an excellent one for students to consider. Project management is also an important life skill."

"We look forward to sharing our project management knowledge with students in this pilot program to enable them to be more successful in their academic, personal and future professional lives," said Michael Brennan, PMP, president of the PMI Delaware Valley Chapter.

The PMI Delaware Valley Chapter will be providing classroom mentors, and DeVry University will be providing classroom instructors and course curriculum. The PMI Educational Foundation is contributing project management textbooks and marketing for the course.

### Inspired by Global Congress Session

The idea for a program to train high school seniors in project management originated in a session held at PMI Global Congress 2007—North America in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. Dr. Byrne, who is a member of the PMI Delaware Valley Chapter, was

attending a presentation by Kim Liegel, PMP, on the goals of the PMIEF and the value of teaching project management in elementary and secondary schools.

Danielle Seward, planning coordinator for advanced academics and deputy chief academic officer for the School District of Philadelphia, was a graduate student in Dr. Byrne's project management class. She saw the value in bringing a project management class that also teaches 21st century skills into the Philadelphia school district.

According to Jim Snyder, PMI Founder and PMI Fellow, volunteers from the PMI Delaware Valley Chapter will be devoting four hours a week for six to 10 weeks, serving as mentors for teams of students within the class.

"This is a significant time investment during the middle of the day, and most of the volunteers' employers are allowing time off for this activity," Mr. Snyder said.

### PMIEF Aims to Replicate

One of PMIEF's objectives from this pilot program is to create programs that can be replicated in other areas. The Foundation plans to produce mentoring handbooks, documented lessons learned, school district process documents and sample classroom projects that will make it easier for other school districts, colleges and mentors to set up similar courses.

"I see a shift toward project-based learning where the classroom teacher takes up the mentoring role," said Mr. Snyder, who has been involved in the PMI Educational Foundation and is active with the PMI Delaware Valley Chapter, leading the student mentoring program.

"This program offers an outstanding opportunity to better equip these students for success in their academic, personal and future professional lives," he said.

