Group 4B Reflections

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BUS 5111: Financial Management

March 24, 2026

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To quote University of the People founder Shai Reshef, our "university relies on peer-to-peer learning" (2012), and end of course group projects are part of the process. I have always found them to be both educational and enjoyable, and I have been amazed at effectively a group of people from around the world who do not know each other except for an online presence in an asynchronous educational environment and manage to figure out how to collaborate, divide up responsibilities, and deliver a result in a few weeks.

I guess as a teacher I should not be so surprised. My classmates at UoPeople have been trained through our shared experience here to work in just this way. I imagine at some of the lower level undergraduate courses things may not always run so smoothly. I have seen some grumbling online about the process (Barnard, 2022; nynomad69, n.d.). My experience has only been in the graduate school program, and I have never had a negative experience with collaborative projects. If anything that reinforces the efficacy of the approach, since we learn through our participation here how to work together effectively within this framework.

This was the first time I ended up with the role of project manager. Struggling a bit with the course content as I was, I wanted to make sure I got an early start with the group project, so I created a wiki page, and emailed my group mates to ask if they wanted me to set up a shared directory for our collaboration. They emailed back saying they did, and through regular emails I suggested how to distribute the work, assign roles, and finish the presentation.

My group mates all contributed their parts. I was particularly glad to see we had someone with a lot more design skills than I have, who added polish to our presentation and made it look nice. We turned in our project a day early, and everything proceeded smoothly.

As a self criticism, I did get a bit overzealous sending emails near the end of the project, when it would have been better to step back and let our group member who was producing the final version take over. I caught this mistake fairly quickly, and emailed her an apology which she graciously accepted.

UoPeople's founder quotes DIY U author Anya Kamanetz saying "Universitas doesn't mean campus, or class, or a particular body of knowledge; it means the guild, the group of people united in scholarship" (Reshef, 2012). I like that idea, and I have found it works well at our university. This group project was no exception to that.

References

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