

# The Richmond MBA Capstone

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Receiving value while giving back



UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND  
**Robins School of Business™**

THE RICHMOND MBA



The Richmond MBA Capstone provides opportunities for graduate students to be **valuable resources and active participants in their communities.**

### The Project

- High level, pro-bono, confidential student consulting project that addresses a strategic question facing the organization
- Involves multiple business disciplines (i.e. finance, marketing, operations, and supply chain)
- Results in analysis, recommendations, and an implementation plan
- Allows student to demonstrate the integration of MBA program concepts

### How it Works

- Client-proposed strategic question central to the direction of the organization, division, or department
- Client provides relevant internal data
- Student researches, summarizes, and analyzes findings and alternatives leading to relevant recommendations
- Biweekly updates, midpoint and final presentations
- Project guidance provided by Capstone Faculty Advisor and Capstone Faculty Director

## The Capstone Project Process

Each project has a detailed set of deliverables, milestones, and management presentations which span three phases:



Client meetings take place in each phase, including the kick-off conversation, and formal presentations at the midpoint and conclusion of the project. Project update meetings between the client, MBA students, and faculty advisor take place regularly throughout the 6-month period.

# Project Types

The Richmond MBA Capstone focuses on three basic types of projects that maximize returns and lead to the most innovative solutions. See examples below.

## Market Entry/ Expansion Strategy

**AMF Bakery Systems** sought an in-depth market analysis of the emerging pizza industry and recommendations for a viable alternative in pursuit of new business. The project focused on providing AMF useful data and insights to inform future decision-making and ultimately drive increased revenues to support the organizational mission.

The final presentation provided insights including development of existing relationships with large, established industry players, utilizing existing organizational technologies, and preparing local facilities for increased capacity, positioning AMF with the ability to acquire new customers and business and enhancing the potential for long-term growth.

## Strategic Decision Analysis

**The Flying Squirrels** partnered with the program to identify potential locations for a new baseball stadium in the Greater Richmond area and outline an inventory of best practices that would enhance the Squirrels' success in the region.

The final presentation included data and market research that provided organizational leadership insight into location opportunities, design elements and amenity recommendations, and suggested market opportunities to increase business revenues and profitability.

## Process Improvement Recommendations

**The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts** wanted an analysis on the current state of the organization's internship and graduate fellowship programs, and recommended strategies to promote a more diverse population. This included marketing, operational, and financial needs and opportunities to support this goal.

The team provided thoughtful research to inform future decision-making with implications for evolving the organization's culture to increase diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion.



# Client Testimonials



## Tony Fox, Operations Manager, AMF Bakery Systems

"The Richmond MBA Capstone program is top-notch. Two fantastic students analyzed a potential growth market and provided helpful strategic insights to our leadership team. The students were reliable and stayed right on schedule. **The Capstone experience continues to be worthwhile for us and exposes us to talented people with great resources and even better ideas!**"



## Ben Terry, Assistant General Manager, Flying Squirrels

"The Flying Squirrels are proud to partner with The Richmond Capstone - **there is no better way to learn about yourself than to welcome others to look at your business critically, while also supporting their investigation and furthering their professional development.** The student's insight was welcome and instructive."



## Kimberly Wilson, COO, CHRO, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

"The Richmond MBA Capstone program is dynamic! The student consultant was highly motivated, professional, and diplomatic. She came prepared to take initiative and be flexible. **The overall results helped furnish concrete support and credibility to internal findings,** increased awareness of the direction of our internship and fellowship programs."



## The Richmond MBA Capstone Team

### Ed Cook, Ph.D., Robins School Analytics and Operations Department

Ed is a former Naval Aviator with over 750 carrier landings. He worked for both Corning and Capital One as an analyst and executive. Ed holds a Ph.D. in Systems Modeling and Analysis and teaches analytics and operations courses at the Robins School of Business. His research focus is group decision-making and the impact of change and decisions on organizational culture.



### Debbie Fisher, Associate Director, Graduate Programs

Debbie builds strategic relationships with the Greater Richmond business community through knowledge sharing, partnership, and collaboration to match students with high-level strategic Capstone projects. Prior to joining The Richmond MBA, Debbie spent 20 years with UVA's Darden Graduate Business School where her last assignment was as associate director of The Batten Institute for Entrepreneurial Leadership.



## Become a Capstone client

- Contact Debbie Fisher at [dfisher2@richmond.edu](mailto:dfisher2@richmond.edu) or (804) 289-8012