339 Abstract First Draft (any suggestions be very much appreciated)

Imagine for a moment that you offer a product—a product that you feel is both highly valuable and extremely helpful to your consumers. Unfortunately, you face some major problems with your product: no proof demonstrating the product's value or helpfulness, no data to indicate it works as advertised, and every 16 weeks it is re-tooled weather it needs it or not. The IPRO program faces these very issues with respect to its products, projects and students. The 339 team has been working to abate and rectify these problems for five consecutive semesters. This semester's team divided into two sub-teams, each addressing one of the major problems facing the IPRO program.

The Creation and Selection sub-team has focused on eliciting project proposals from faculty and students. The entire team provided the IPRO Selection Committee with presentations on each of the 32 IPRO proposals that were submitted for this coming Spring Semester. The sub-team offered several faculty luncheons for departments with few IPRO offerings. These luncheons provided an opportunity for faculty who were unfamiliar with the program to learn what the IPRO program offers, and it opened channels of communication between IPRO staff and faculty who may be interested in developing IPROs of their own. These luncheons helped bring about several new proposals for new projects and raised awareness of the IPRO program throughout the attended departments. Finally, all members of the IPRO helped the Creating and Selection sub-team forge new IPRO proposals to be adopted in subsequent semesters. This involved benchmarking IIT's program with other schools (including teleconferences and trips to other universities), examining what makes "a good IPRO," and finding and securing the resources, faculty involvement, and sponsors to bring a proposal forward. (do we want to mention inflatable greenhouses?)

The Training and Testing sub-team was focused on determining whether the IPRO program does indeed teach the four established learning objectives: project management, teamwork, communication and ethics. At the beginning and end of the semester each IPRO student took a battery of tests that evaluated each topic (need copy of results for here). While end-of-semester data is unavailable at this time, many important findings arose from the first round to testing. No differences were found between students in their first or second IPROs, indicating that the learning objectives were not imparted during the first IPRO experience. No differences were found across major, academic year or sex. Clearly, an instruction program was needed. The sub-team offered brief training sessions in each of these topics to a select number of teams. These sessions either consisted of a brief discussion and a topical handout or simply providing the handout to the teams. For a number of these teams, a practice test was offered on the following week with $20 prizes for the highest scoring member in each team. The results of these tests as well sample handouts and tests are available (what do we want to say about the results?).

Do we want a clincher?