

# Solve a Problem, Develop Future Leaders

By Doug Ruch | Director, Hope College Center for Leadership



*"We were very impressed with the students' final presentation. They were able to take a project off our workload and do all the heavy lifting in such a way that blew us away."*

*"The professionalism of the students as well as the end product were exceptional."*

These are the kinds of comments we hear on a regular basis from clients of the CFL Consulting program at Hope College. Since 2017, I've had the privilege of leading this initiative. Through a unique model, we've created a way to deliver both outstanding value for clients and invaluable experiences for students.

*"I am super thankful for this experience! It has been one of the best experiences I've had in college."*





## How It Works

Since 2008, CFL Consulting has completed 225 real-world projects for a diverse collection of for-profit and non-profit organizations. Project topics have included HR, marketing, sales, operations, procurement/logistics, IT, engineering, finance and strategy. Most often, these projects are challenges or opportunities that the organization doesn't have the resources to tackle.

Project teams consist of three or four students led by experienced practitioner coach. Teams often include a subject matter expert. The key to the model is an outstanding team of coaches. Because of their expertise, clients can have confidence in the outcome and they don't have to "manage" students as they do with an internship. The coach also provides incredible value to our students as a role model and mentor. We start with an agreed to statement of work, run with it over the course of the semester deliver excellent results.

Another unique aspect of this work is that it's a paying job for our students and coaches. Students go through a selective interview process to be a consultant. Coaches are chosen based on their credentials and ability to provide leadership, mentoring and deliver results. To cover our costs, we charge clients \$8,000 for each project.

Doug earned a BA from Hope College and MBA from the University of Colorado. He began his work career with P&G and then moved to Donnelly (now Magna) eventually becoming the VP of the Toyota Business Unit. He was the CEO at the Fleetwood Group for 20 years before joining the Hope team in 2015. He and his spouse Linda reside in Saugatuck.

## New Projects Starting in January

We are eager to bring this program to more organizations in our region and grow the program to bless more students. If you are interested in exploring a spring semester (or future) project, please contact me at [ruch@hope.edu](mailto:ruch@hope.edu) or 616.836.0531.

For more information regarding CFL Consulting visit: [hope.edu/academics/center-leadership](https://hope.edu/academics/center-leadership)

## Win-Win

One of the things that continues to amaze me is the creativity and ingenuity of Hope College students. Of all the jobs I've had in my career, this is my favorite. It is so fulfilling to witness our student's growth as they tackle the client projects and then surprise and delight them with creative and sound solutions.

Our clients notice this too. Through regular check-in meetings over the course of the project, they get to know students as the students get to know their organization. Clients have hired CFL consulting students into internships and full-time entry level jobs. It's a big win-win.

