



AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Abstract approved:

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Abstract: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become a pervasive focus of organizations and is regarded, alongside sustainability and financial profit, as a key element of a triple bottom-line approach. Corporations are realizing that CSR cannot be approached compartmentally but instead must be ubiquitous across departments and operations. Therefore, it is in the organization's best interest to hire employees who are socialized in the CSR culture. This study used interviews from Enactus sponsoring companies, OSU Enactus current/alumni, OSU Enactus project partners, and participant observation to investigate the links between corporate support of socially responsible organizations and the development of appropriate skills and capacities (key performance indicators- KPIs developed through involvement in social-initiative organizations) that can translate into a pool of socially responsible employees. Results show the effectiveness of Enactus in producing benefits for sponsoring companies and reinforce Enactus's ability to produce candidates with desired skills and capacities.

Key Words: Corporate Social Responsibility, Key Performance Indicators, Students, Social-initiative Organizations, Smart Partnering

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Developing the Next Generation of Socially Responsible Employees:

The Case of Enactus at Oregon State University

by

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## **Introduction**

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) has a short history that includes an initial phase that spanned from 1960 to 1990 and is still undergoing profound change (Visser, 2011). It began as a response to regulation written in 1916 by J.M. Clark in the Journal of Political Economy where it states “if men are responsible for the known results of their actions, business responsibilities must include the known results of business dealings, whether these have been recognized by law or not” and evolved therefrom. CSR is now seen as equal to sustainability and financial profit as elements of a triple bottom-line consisting of people, planet, and profit (PPP). Initially, corporate leaders would relegate CSR to a separate unit within the company. However, for many corporations it has become apparent that an approach which deals with CSR as the work of a few specialists isolated from other departments is not adequate to meet the goals of the triple bottom line. Instead a coherent approach is needed where social responsibility is a visible corporate value and integral to business strategy. Thus, corporations are recognizing that the values and goals of social responsibility need to be pervasive in all departments and operations of the company. Furthermore, CSR cannot be addressed in a compartmentalized manner nor through ‘green washing’, which serves the company’s appearance or image. A recent study revealed that “people’s willingness to buy, recommend, work for, and invest in a company is driven 60% by their perceptions of the company, and only 40% by their perceptions of the products” (Reputation Institute, 2013).

This coherent approach to social responsibility subsequently has an effect on the qualities and capabilities (key performance indicators- KPIs) required of employees and

can affect recruitment considerations. *This research project will assess the links between corporate support of socially responsible organizations and the development of appropriate skills that can translate into socially responsible employees.* Results may also help universities identify mutually beneficial relationships between corporations and student volunteer opportunities which will better produce a pool of socially responsible job candidates.

More specifically, this research project seeks to examine how corporate support of university based social-initiative organizations such as Entrepreneurial Act Us (Enactus) develops leaders with requisite skills for companies to cultivate a sustainable corporate social responsibility (CSR) culture. Enactus is an international non-profit organization that brings together students, academic advisors and business leaders who are committed to using the power of entrepreneurial action to improve the quality of life and standard of living for people in need. This undergraduate honors thesis could potentially be used as a stepping-stone for a master's thesis. The researcher is interested in understanding the key performance indicators that CSR-inclined corporations seek in employees and examining if involvement in such non-profit organizations helps to develop these indicators. The researcher further hypothesizes a cyclical relationship of mutual benefit.

## Literature Review

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has emerged as a mainstream element of 21<sup>st</sup> century business. Based on the United Nations, CSR is defined as a “management concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders” (UNIDO). CSR looks at both what companies do with their profits and how their profit is made, which goes beyond mere philanthropic activities and compliance, but rather an unequivocal company culture of responsibility that permeates the workplace, market, supply chain, community and stakeholders. The triple bottom line consisting of the three Ps: profit, people and planet must be integral to company decision-making. Research has shown a trend of success among companies that commit to CSR with an overarching business strategy (Businessweek, 2008). Ed Zander, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Motorola, states:

*“Strong economic performance and good social and environmental performance are not mutually exclusive. In fact, I believe that good corporate citizenship improves our bottom line. It's not surprising that many analysts and investors are paying closer attention to a company's corporate citizenship efforts for purely fiduciary reasons. Firms with social citizenship records and a real commitment to corporate responsibility are arguably more sustainable, better managed and, therefore, better long-term investments” (Motorola Inc., 2004).*

Below is a discussion of the origin of CSR and the current state of CSR. This will be followed by a discussion of theoretical frameworks and relevant CSR case studies.

**History and evolution of CSR:**

Businesses concern about societal impacts can be traced for centuries; however the formal literature on Corporate Social Responsibility was largely created in the twentieth century. For instance Howard Bowen, regarded as the father of CSR, argued the idea that responsibility rests on the shoulders of businessmen who are to “pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society” (Bowen, 1953). Furthermore, in 1962 Kreps discussed the measurement of social performance in business in terms reflective of the time: 1. Profit - 2. the market is self-regulating and individuals can make profit and maximize therefrom without the need for government intervention (the ‘invisible hand’) - 3. quantitative analysis of social welfare systems and 4. using precise measurable outcomes for paths for voluntarism (Kreps, 1962).

The importance of CSR emerged from the systemic problems especially evident in the global financial crisis, the great depression years. CSR has been motivated by various factors at different times and can be divided into five stages, to degree levels of CSR, described by Visser (2011): Defensive CSR, Charitable CSR, Promotional CSR, Strategic, and Systemic CSR. The first stage Visser discusses is defensive CSR where responsibility is practiced to protect shareholder value through initiatives that increase employee motivation and productivity. The second stage is to offset the threat of regulation or staying one step ahead of government legislation, that is, to anticipate social pressures and make business strategies to response to them before a regulation is implemented. The third stage of CSR is charitable where companies set aside profit to support social and business causes. The fourth stage is the ‘promotional stage’ of CSR

where companies attempt to project themselves as sustainable and responsible to build brand and reputation.

The marketed impression of responsibility, 'green washing', from a socio-political perspective is a legitimacy approach which suggests that one path to legitimacy is to manipulate stakeholders' perceptions through association with legitimizing symbols, which may include targeted disclosures (Deegan, 2002). For example, if stakeholders perceive standalone CSR Reports to be a symbol of 'good' corporate citizenship, then companies deflect stakeholders' pressure by delivering standalone CSR Reports to legitimize their status with stakeholders, and accrue the benefits that come with being a 'responsible' even if the company has not taken action to be in alignment (Mahoney 2013). The next stage of CSR is strategic in that initiatives are in line with business's overall business strategy. Coca-Cola and its water stewardship program is an example of this. As stated in its sustainability review, Coca-Cola focuses on water stewardship in three key areas: "improve our water efficiency; recycle the water used in our operations (wastewater treatment) and replenish through community water access and watershed restoration and protection" (Sustainable Review 2009/2010). These efforts are linked to the company's commitment to the sustainability of water resources and importance of water as a key component to its business. The final stage of CSR is systemic CSR where responsibility is focused at the micro level to not only align company's business strategies to CSR, but also identifying and attempting to address unsustainability and irresponsibility. As companies mature in the area of CSR, they will go through these stages of CSR.

Integrated Corporate Social Responsibility by businesses indicates increased levels of maturity in bringing CSR into the company and has resulted in proven profitable benefits. The challenge to fully integrating CSR into business practices has been to redefine society from passive receivers of products to an interrelated socio-ecology system, which redefines productivity based on a revised organizational structure. There has been a gradual organizational paradigm shift from “a power based to a responsibility based organizations” and an evolution from “asking what we are entitled to, to what are we responsible for?” (Holme and Watts, 2000). For instance corporations have started to recognize the importance of encouraging and rewarding experts to share knowledge, rather than maintain a code of silence. This corporate shift prevents the stifling of creativity and innovation that results from creating small concentrations of competitive protected knowledge. Drucker, a management professor and sociologist, reinforces this by stating “Partnership with the responsible workers is the only way to improve productivity. Nothing else works at all” (Drucker, 1993). A challenge in making the shift however is that CSR is still rather abstract and thus initiatives tend to be detached from actual business practices. Organizations focus more on internal change and are not well equipped to handle external and internal change simultaneously.

Another challenge to fully integrating CSR is that it has been approached in two competing ways: 1. ‘implicit’ – Approach based on legitimacy; a business-society-government relationship which results from strong norms and practices that parties recognize as important to participate. 2. ‘explicit’ – A voluntary and deliberate strategic approach made by corporations (Matten and Moon 2008). An important key to successful CSR implementation is developed values and norms in the work culture that is

in turn translated in integrated decision-making and initiatives. Ultimately the institutional framework of the corporation should communicate norm-driven policies and practices to stakeholders using a coherent CSR strategy to foster shared meaning and value.

Responsible companies with established integrated CSR practices not only create credibility for the company, but also bring benefits such as: “cost savings, reduced risk, increased revenue, built reputation, developed human capital and improved access to capital” (Sanjeev and Nidhi, 2009). CSR improves reputation for companies in the marketplace and has a correlation with higher sales, enhanced employee loyalty and attracts better personnel to the firm. A study found that:

*“For consumer industries, greater CSP [corporate social performance] is associated with better CFP [corporate financial performance], and the opposite is true for industrial industries... Empirical studies have examined the relation between CSR and corporate financial performance, and while the results are mixed, overall the research has found a positive but weak correlation.” (Barton, Harjoto and Jo, 2009)*

Another study further suggests a positive link between CSR and increased profits:

*“Findings from a meta-analysis of 52 studies, yielding a total sample size of 33,878 observations, suggest that corporate virtue in the form of social responsibility and, to a lesser extent, environmental responsibility, is likely to pay off... CSP [corporate social performance] appears to be more highly correlated with accounting-based measures of CFP [corporate financial performance] than with market-based indicators, and CSP*

*reputation indices are more highly correlated with CFP than are other indicators of CSP. This meta-analysis establishes a greater degree of certainty with respect to the CSP-CFP relationship than is currently assumed to exist by many business scholars” (Rynes, 2003).*

### **Prerequisites to creating a socially responsible culture:**

A CSR culture is a result of forces at multiple levels within a corporation, including the role of corporate leaders in formulating and implementing such organizational initiatives (Siegal, 2009) At the organizational level, cultural norms, in the form of subcultures are proposed to shape attitudes towards CSR (Linnenluecke et al., 2007). At the level of the individual, Basu and Palazzo refer to the cognitive and linguistic process of managers as the internal institutional determinants of CSR (Basu and Palazzo, 2008). So what are the qualities and capacities of individuals who contribute towards creating a ubiquitous CSR culture?

Leadership is a key prerequisite and is identified as a key capacity underpinning successful CSR practices (Waddock and Bodwell, 2004). For this research the Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship definition of leadership will be followed. It states that in the context of responsibility as the ability to “combine vision with the persistence and drive to mobilize people around a higher purpose,” and an aptitude for leveraging “organizational awareness to influence others to commit to corporate citizenship” (Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship, 2010). Siegal argues that a leader’s integrity to personal values can yield benefits for business and suggests that it could be the driver of CSR strategies in organizations (Waldman and Siegel, 2008). Personal values would refer to having ethical, authentic and moral leadership style.



De Hoogh and Den Hartog's study found that leaders that exhibited a sense of right versus wrong, duty, concern for others, concern for consequences and tend to be judgmental of their own behavior were viewed as ethical leaders (De Hoogh and Den Hartog, 2008). The sense of duty is especially linked to an ethical leadership style. Furthermore research conducted that examined the values of 500 CEO's in 17 countries by asking what values or factors were most important in decision making and its link to financial success further reinforced Siegal's argument. The research indicated that leaders with strong economic values were viewed as authoritarian and leaders with strong stakeholder values were viewed as visionary leaders, which was linked to financial success (Sully de Luque et al., 2008). Being a visionary, ethical and authentic has also been positively correlated with job performance. A survey of 478 students, with a mean age of 32 years, indicated positive correlations with job satisfaction and organizational culture (Walumbwa et al., 2008). Leadership positions have the opportunity to alter the work environment and when done right can spark innovation and creativity that are CSR focused. Silberman, vice president of Corporate Responsibility at member company Hilton Worldwide, discusses in her article the importance of fostering a corporate culture where 'intrapreneurs', internal entrepreneurial approaches to create business value, can thrive thus helping to advance citizenship and business goals (Silberman, 2013). This culture starts from the hiring process, having a team with shared values, and is accompanied and encouraged to be innovative in whatever role they play to create shared value. The internal work culture also plays a role. Employees should be exposed cross-departmentally to share insights and brainstorm thus allowing a bottom up/grassroots movement to develop. This provides a sense of ownership and empowers employees to

be agents of change. This excitement and empowerment towards change becomes a contagious organic cultural change. Positive reinforcement and pressure is what will help create a shared-value centric culture that permeates throughout the corporation.

In addition to having a visionary leader, there are specific competencies needed to be an effective employee: team player, determination and commitment, being socially aware, strategic thinking, integrated versus a fragmented approach, collaborative networker, influential communicator and being the change (Visser, 2011). Being team oriented requires showing an attitude of commitment to the team; displaying fair behaviors and decisions – listening and understanding team members even though views may be conflicting; finding ways to accompany and empower others to take on leadership roles and finding satisfaction in team accomplishments. Determination and commitment is a strong personal passion and belief in the potential of CSR in its ability to integrate responsibility and business strategies to create value. Commitment and determination balanced with practicality is key to motivating oneself and engaging others. Social awareness and a natural curiosity to know and understand trends and issues that relate to one's company and or position help to identify opportunities and potential risks. Knowing key social and or environmental issues and how they relate to one's company and its stakeholders, at all levels including the individual, will help develop effective strategies. Being knowledgeable about trends and issues needs to be paired with strategic thinking in formulating strategic and constructing measurable ways of integrating CSR into overall business strategy to address weakness and opportunities for improvement. It is also essential that employees view business and society as integral by identifying areas for responsible impact to deliver value for stakeholders. Prioritized goals in a long-term

plan are also important to ensure sustainability in CSR efforts going forward.

Collaborative networkers are leaders that are able to build trust-based relationships with various stakeholders and identify how interests feed into the larger business strategy.

Good communication is not enough; it needs to be supported by understanding the needs and ability to speak the language of the audience to be an influential. Communication requires the ability to listen, reflect, and find mutually agreeable ways to resolve issues. Also influential communicators are able to sense and adapt interpersonal styles to the subtleties of others'. Lastly, to create change requires taking action. Employees must be willing to take risks and feel empowered to take initiative on strategies that are align with goals and have measurable outcomes. These skills and capacities will be further analyzed in the context of the case study: Enactus – Entrepreneurial Action Us and interviews used for this research. These skills and capacities make an individual more likely to be socially responsible and when combined with the ability do the specific job improves the effectiveness of the employee in contributing to the shared value of an integrated business strategy.

### **Case Studies of successful CSR implementation:**

The development and implementation of CSR strategy is an organizational change process. As discussed above it cannot be a mere implicit attempt, but rather an explicit approach to attaining a ubiquitous culture of responsibility. Implementing CSR is not formulaic thus a posture of humble learning and systematic approach of planning, action and reflection is necessary. Below are two case studies of CSR implementation in global companies that involved skills and capacities of managers, established work culture and commitment to corporate values as discussed above.

Unilever Indonesia (UI) is an example of how CSR can be put into practice starting from a commitment in business values and integration with business strategy to sustainable implementation. Unilever Indonesia is at the forefront of CSR as the company implemented their CSR as an integral part of the company's strategic business framework in the mid-1970s. Unilever's values can be summed as integrity, responsibility, respect, and to be pioneering. Responsibility is themed as a spirit of sharing to "unlock society's potential, add value to society, synergize strength of partners and become inspiring catalyst for partnership" ("Unilever- Engaging with Community & Environment, 2005" 3). UI's resilience was tested during the 1997-1998 financial and political crisis when the Indonesian rupiah fell in value (Clay 2005). Unilever Indonesia held their values in keeping relations with customers, employees and suppliers and modified its business strategy to ensure high quality of all products while maintaining affordability. For instance UI's reaction to the crisis was not to sell production abroad but instead to make design changes to reduce waste, buy parts locally, make products as closed loop as possible, and focus on helping Indonesia's economy. Furthermore UI made it a high priority to retain workers by utilizing ideas from the "200 constructive suggestions received by employees over two weeks" which led to the inverse of sales decline of "50 percent or more in several product categories" (Clay 2005). The triple bottom line approach was proven successful not only for its gained reputation, but also when compared to other Indonesia's Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) companies, where UI sales more than doubled, growing from \$319 million to \$757 million-137 percent increase whilst FMCG experienced a market fall of nearly 22 percent between the years 1998-1992 (Clay 2005). This case study demonstrates managers' ability to analyze the

problem at hand, using creativity whilst maintaining passion towards creating goods for business and society, and employing an integrative work approach. The leadership and teamwork skill, ability to build capacity when managing employees are acquired through the socially attuned dynamics of the company's internal culture and the recruitment strategy. Unilever builds capacity in its employees to seek ways to apply values such as sustainability in any role they play by offering training that integrates sustainability and challenges employees in their role (Global People Survey 2014). As the company strives towards excellence, it employs measurable outcomes in its conscious effort to strengthen diversity, ensure an integrated organizational structure, and improve processes such as decision making and building capacity through personal development and skills training programs (Global People Survey 2014).

NIKE represents a company that has gone through operational changes, especially in the area of supply chain, and can help to shed insights on embedding CSR values. This brief case study illustrates the complexity and risks associated in operating at an international level and the vulnerability resulting from disassociation between supplier and buyer. Employees responsible for supply chain management are often under intense pressure to reach global brands directly. Targeting of company sourcing activities and appearing exploitive of cheap labor, regardless of where guilt lays: suppliers or purchasing firm, often lead to negative perceptions of a company. Thus to protect brand image, companies such as NIKE, GAP and ADIDAS have had to change approaches that look beyond economic calculations. In the 1970s NIKE like many other companies was in a race to the bottom looking for opportunities to cut costs. Its production product line was at one point in South Korea and Taiwan since these countries offered less expensive

labor, less authoritarian ruling, few labor laws, a developed network of local parts suppliers, and the country welcomed the economic perks of job creation. Over a short span of about a year, Korean and Taiwanese factories became producers of both inexpensive, mass-market footwear as well as expensive high-end shoes (Donaghu and Barff, 1990, pg.541). As these industrializing countries advanced through democratic reform, labor activism increased labor costs leading to increased U.S. export duties; Nike thus moved its production to Indonesia, China (Shaw, 1999, pg.27). Since suppliers shouldered the competitive pressures of being the cheapest and quickest producer, suppliers remained passive whilst global companies like NIKE could shift to factories flexibly based on production niches available. In the 1990s as CSR became an important issue and due to the nature of its outsourcing it was completely divorced of decision making in the area of supply chain. NIKE's supplier hurt their brand image when it was accused of age law violations, child labor, excessive overtime, physical abuse of workers, and unsafe working conditions. The company's 'market-oriented production' model went against the CSR code of conduct and approach needed changing. The three classes of sub-contracting: 1. developed partners - upper class technology and skills; 2. volume producers – large capacity facilities; and 3. developing sources – unskilled low labor costs, Nike pitted factories one another and removed producers that did not meet the criteria (Donaghu and Barff, 1990, 541). The disassociation with suppliers allowed Nike maximum flexibility to beat competition on price and product differentiation. In 1990 Nike offered 900 styles while its main competitors, Adidas and L.A. Gear, offered around 500 (Korzeniewicz, 1994).

As NIKE continued to get increased pressure from media and stockholders, it responded by completely changing its buyer-supplier relationship by re-assembling and contracting a 'collaborative partnership', coined by Frenkel, and Scott, that "generates superior performance for both parties and their workers". Global corporation's obedience to foreign countries' code of labors will not only help to uphold labor standards in the country but also improve worker's well-being and improve workplace efficiency and performance. NIKE had "manufacturing expatriate technicians" and a CSR team to do impact assessments and evaluate working conditions to rectify and improve upon (Rothenberg Aalami, 2004). This started off as spot checks but changed when proven ineffective. Furthermore, NIKE partnership meant that the relationship would remain through good and bad times, a relationship of collaboration in research and design with its international factories.

In 1996 NIKE developed its first department to manage supply chain compliance labor standards and in 1998 it embedded responsibility to where they manufactured in its CSR program that is an integral component with its core business (NIKE Inc.). Management took on a systematic approach to CSR management, which involves 1. planning - consulting stakeholders, establishing code of conduct and setting targets/milestones; 2. action – promoting code compliance and establishing system; 3. check – analyzing measurable outcomes, doing audits and reports; and 4. improve – take corrective action and modify or reform as necessary. Nike's integrated CSR business strategy in the context of supply chain is now one of lean – commitment to sustainable manufacturing philosophy, green – in product design, creation and sourcing responsibly, equitable – balance of profit and people and empowered – building capacity and creating

growth opportunities in an optimized workforce (NIKE Inc.). Like many other companies attempting to improve CSR implementation, NIKE focused on capacity building in employees in the role of management by heightening awareness of the company's rights in the context of international and national labor laws and code of conduct (IDH, 2009). Furthermore instead of one-off audits, managers were encouraged to work with local NGOs and trade unions to ensure consistent monitoring of production sites (IDH, 2009). NIKE has improved, but they are still taking steps to be best at CSR in regards to working conditions at production facilities (Global Exchange 2001).

Ultimately CSR, as stated by former CEO of Unilever Indonesia Peduli Foundation- Mr. Urip, is that “the application of CSR principles needs to be directly influenced by business’ understanding of business strategy, in proportion to the need of the community” (Urip 13). Sustainable business development does not result from its own accord, but rather commitment to sustainability demands that everyone's actions are aligned to. Requisites for this are binding guidelines, concrete corporate goals and a clear organizational structure.

**Examples of non-profits that build requisite skills and capacities to contribute to successful CSR implementation:**

Association Internationale des Étudiants En Sciences Économiques et Commerciales – French for: International Association of Students in Economics and Management (AIESEC) is an example of an organization that seeks to develop responsible minded leaders. AIESEC is a “global youth network impacting the world through leadership development experiences. AIESEC has been facilitating youth



leadership activities as well as international internships & volunteer experiences for over 65 years, developing a global learning environment across 124 countries & territories” (AISEC, 2013). This is a youth run organization with a customer centric model. Its purpose is to get closer to customers – those experiencing the internships & exchange programs, listen to their feedback and improve the program. The organization aims at producing leadership for positive impact by providing an integrated approach of business skills development, professional development and community development locally. AISEC is a program focused on providing exchange opportunities. Members, depending on their position will gain these skills: financial accounting and budgeting; customer relations; recruitment, talent identification and retention, and communication/networking. This experience is integrated with application in local community development. Furthermore the exchange programs, internships and conferences serve to provide international experience sharing and partnering efforts.

Engineers without Borders (EWB) is another global organization that “supports community-driven development programs worldwide by collaborating with local partners to design and implement sustainable engineering projects, while creating transformative experiences and responsible leaders” (EWB-USA: Annual Report, 2012). Its mission is to create change through humanitarian engineering. EWB chapters seek partner organizations with similar mission and values but lack the technological skills. They work alongside locals to build their capacity in water systems design, construction and sanitation.

These are just two examples of organizations that help develop responsible minded leadership skills and social awareness in its participants whilst providing

opportunities to put specific studies into practice that contributes to the betterment of society. *This research will discuss the interlinking between the skills and capacities developed through such involvement and analyze the degree to which it matches with the skills and capacities that are in demand by companies as it seeks responsible employees.*

It is important to highlight that successful organizational change and CSR implementation is not possible without the skills and capacities of individuals within the corporation. Where are these skills and capacities developed? They are developed from experience, especially in individuals who seek out opportunities to get hands-on experience outside the classroom. *The researcher hypothesizes that individuals that are involved with organizations such as Enactus, which enables students to apply theoretical knowledge from their field of study in meaningful action that contributes to the betterment of society and environment, develop skills and capabilities that are in demand by corporations seeking responsible minded employees.*

## **Population and Method**

### **Population:**

Enactus, a global non-profit organization that uses business skills to create sustainable change, was chosen as the case study to base the research on because the researcher has been heavily involved with this organization for the last two years. The researcher knew that many of the sponsoring companies chose to support Enactus for the skills and capacities developed in its students. The researcher's interest is in seeing if there is congruency in the skills and capacities (Key Performance Indicators) developed by students as viewed by participants of Enactus and Enactus partners, and how well that matched KPI's identified by corporations for recruitment purposes.

Participants used in this research are adults older than 18 years who fit into one of the three interview groups: 1) corporations which support Enactus; 2) individuals who were previously involved or are currently involved with Oregon State University's (OSU) Enactus chapter; and 3) OSU Enactus project partners. The participants identified for categories: OSU Enactus' project partners and Enactus alumni and current alumni members were a convenience representation. Corporations that sponsor Enactus were randomly selected from the pool of Enactus partners and donors.

### **Process:**

The randomly selected 20 company representatives were contacted via email up to two times and invited to participate in the research. An oral consent was obtained prior to the participant divulging any information pertaining to the research questions and before inquiries about any relevant research information was made. As part of the oral consent process, the researcher explained to interviewees that the data collection and

reporting will be completed in such a way as to preserve the confidentiality of their response.

Interviewees were notified that the student researcher preferred to audio record the interview and later transcribe it. Audio recording did not begin until introductions had taken place to ensure names of participants were not recorded. Once participants agreed to the recording, they were informed of the handling of audio recording and transcripts of recording in the future. This includes secure electronic storage of transcripts under password protection, known only to the principal investigator and student researcher. Any paper copies of transcripts have been secured in a locked location assessable by only the principal investigator and student researcher. Any additional paper copies from interviews and email communication are securely locked or shredded. For participants that did not agree to an audio recording of the interview, the student researcher took detailed notes during the interview. Participants were also informed at the start of the interview that they held the right to terminate the interview at any time for any reason.

#### **The Researcher's Role:**

The researcher first got involved with Enactus Fall of 2012. I went on my first trip during the winter break, which was instrumental in building relationship between the OSU Enactus chapter, a partner called TECHO and the community we were helping. I was very quickly promoted to various leadership roles, first project lead then a term later international initiative lead. During the summer of 2013, I spent two months with a co-lead to implement the team's first microloan program in Nicaragua, business skills workshops, work on a business strategy for an environmental non-profit, constructing a community garden and teaching healthy eating and physical education while finding new

partners. I also recently led a team, mostly new to the international projects, to Nicaragua during winter 2013 to execute projects concerning water sanitation and food insecurity with a new partner, follow up and take steps to prepare for the summer, and form new partnerships with the OSU Enactus faculty advisor.

**Research Analysis:**

Each interview consisted of 8 questions that include both quantitative and qualitative questions. Furthermore trends from on the ground observations were used in the analysis of results to compare trends. The research analysis was conducted by aggregating interview findings into themes, comparing trends from interviews and on the ground observations, and relating it to the thesis question. All quotes in this research are anonymous. Email templates inviting companies to participate in the research, oral consent, and interview questions for all three groups can be found in the appendix.

## **Results**

This study used interviews from three groups: Enactus sponsoring companies, OSU Enactus current/alumni, OSU Enactus project partners. The researcher starts with an analysis of the skills and capacities identified by OSU Enactus current/alumni, then analyses the project partner's scoring of skills and capacities exhibited by OSU Enactus current/alumni members, and then finally analyses the identified skills and capacities corporations seek in their employee pool. Participant observation is used to further reinforce aggregated results and anecdotes from interviews.

### **Interviews with OSU Enactus Current/Alumni**

There were a total of 9 respondents representing the OSU Enactus current members and alumni. Participants were asked a series of questions related to: teamwork, leadership, social awareness, experience in grassroots social action, and appreciation for sustainability. In addition, they were asked their perception on process oriented organization, creativity and passion, entrepreneurial spirit, integrative work approach, ability to employ measurable outcomes, and ability to build capacity in others. Table 1 is a summary of responses using Likert scale options ranging from 1 "not at all" to 5 "to a large extent" with data representing the median and mean scores to the skills and capabilities attained from OSU Enactus members from their involvement with Enactus. The question posed to respondents for table 1 was: "to what extent do you think you have developed the following skills and capabilities". The sample size for Group 2 (OSU Enactus current/Alumni) was 9 and consisted of current or alumni members, project leads, initiative leads. The quantitative data for each category is higher than 3, which indicates that the respondents believe they developed these skills and capacities, which is

also consistent with what the researcher observed during my experience in Enactus. What follow is a more detailed presentation and discussion of the results.

*Table 1 – Development of skills and capabilities by OSU Enactus current/alumni members:*

<b>Skills and Capacities</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Teamwork	4	4.222
Leadership	4	4
Social awareness	5	4.667
Experience in grassroots social action	5	4.667
Appreciation for sustainability	4	3.778
Process oriented organization	3	3.778
Creativity & passion	4	4
Entrepreneurial Spirit	4	4.111
Integrative Work Approach	4	4.111
Ability to employ measurable outcomes	4	3.813
Ability to build capacity in others	4	4

*Likert scale: 1 being “not at all” and 5 being “to a large extent”.*

### **Teamwork and leadership:**

Enactus is a student organization that welcomes and encourages new members from any discipline. OSU Enactus projects are large in scale and variety. The organization is run by students which means there is a regular turn over due to graduation; therefore having a strong core team is key to continuity and success. Within the organization, there are initiative project leads and general membership. The initiative and project leads work with members to match their strengths and interests to projects to ensure the optimum outcome for projects. Being a lead requires being an example by action and able to empower others. As leads, Enactus team members always look for individuals to replace us and to accompany to leadership roles. The mean of teamwork and leadership as perceived by Enactus current and alumni members is 4, which indicates that Enactus

alumni and current members believe that these skills have been developed to a large extent. This is further supported by qualitative responses from respondents. An alumni initiative lead interviewee shared:

*“Leading a group requires putting yourself out there, being confident and being able to get others involved. Seeing a position for everyone and it shows that you need a group behind you to achieve great heights. Being a leader of any kind or management positions teaches you to find skills and motivation of individuals joining the group and matching them with responsibilities. It has also showed me that leaders don't always need to have the answer. Hierarchy and structure is needed, but it's also important as a group to work on an equal plain field and as a team”.*

Both the qualitative and quantitative responses, 4.222 (mean for teamwork) and 4 (mean for leadership), are congruent indicating that Enactus alumni and current members believe that these skills have been developed to a large extent This also supports the skills and capacities that the researcher believed have been developed and were observed during fieldwork.

**Social awareness involvement/experience in grassroots social action:**

OSU Enactus creates impact by working with people at the grassroots level. OSU Enactus projects offer its members opportunities to work with communities locally, nationally and internationally. Education is important, but applying knowledge to create change has the potential to transform a person forever. Most students at OSU have not travelled out of the country or to a developing country. It is important that students gain global awareness and learn through immersion and action. It is when students realize that



their work has the ability to transform lives of people and communities that it becomes an act of the heart. Students get an experience based on what they put into Enactus.

Opportunities are created to provide leadership experience and to make travelling assessable to Enactus members. The effectiveness of providing Enactus members social awareness and experience in grassroots social action on a likert scale is 5 (mean: 4.667) for both categories indicating that both skills are perceived to be greatly developed. This is further reinforced by the qualitative responses and my personal grassroots experience.

A team member who has taken on a leadership role shared her transformational experience: “Working with people and understanding their reality made me change my intention to work for a multinational company to working for a non-profit in managing their finances and business operations”. On a personal level, the impact of the researcher’s team’s work did not hit until our team’s follow up winter trip after my extended trip to Nicaragua with a co-lead to start a microloan program. As we followed up with one of the microloan recipients: a father of two children, an entrepreneur who had a failing business and a husband that struggled to provide for his family. The micro loan provided funds to expand his business and business skills to turn his business around. His son suffers from a chronic asthma condition resulting from trash burning and wood burning in the community. Our team held a village wide trash clean up, trash awareness campaign, worked with the department of sanitation to arrange consistent trash pickup and micro loaned the neighbor to stop the direct smoke to the son’s house from wood burning resulting from her tortilla business. The OSU Enactus team met the entrepreneur’s son who had been hospitalized two hours away for the last year for the

first time and realized the importance of our work. The ending of trash burning and direct smoke into the entrepreneur's house now provides a recoverable environment for his son.

**Appreciation of sustainability:**

One of the criteria for Enactus projects is that it is sustainable. The Enactus team has learned from previous experiences. An example of this can be observed in the microloan program started in summer 2013. The program's aim is to provide micro-loans to individuals starting or expanding their businesses while helping the process of community development. The entrepreneurs are funded by microenterprises mentored by Enactus members at OSU and given to the community as a grant. The money paid back would go into a bank account set up by two members of TECHO focused on this community and the community leader for the purposes of either re-investing into another micro-loan or a community project. The OSU Enactus team piloted the micro-loan program in Nicaragua for the first time, which required participants to payback within a given period of time whilst also committing to a set number of community service hours. Unlike other micro-lending organizations, the OSU Enactus chapter does not charge interest and have a required time investment in the community to collaborate on projects that address key needs (education, waste management, bridge). Furthermore, our microloan program is tailored to the dynamics of the community and not rigid to provide entrepreneurs the best chance of success. There are additional projects such as business plans and strategies that will be discussed later in the results, which display Enactus chapter's commitment to sustainability. The respondents' median for this category is 4 with a mean of 3.778 indicates a positive direction, a satisfactory development of sustainability in approach, and an area that the OSU Enactus chapter looks to improve on

in current projects and as it seeks new opportunities.

**Process oriented organization:**

Enactus is organized with clearly defined roles for positions. There are three levels of involvement for OSU Enactus: team members, project leads and the executive council. This system allows us to create a legacy where our projects are sustainable and incoming leaders have the resources and expertise to explore new possibilities. However in the execution of projects the OSU Enactus chapter needs to be flexible in our process but firm on our goals. This helps explain the non-formulated nature of Enactus as identified by respondents; ranking process oriented organization with a median of 3 and a mean of 3.778 showing that process and structure is present to the degree needed while still allowing for creative approach to problem solving. A team member shares a qualitative response that further supports this: “Enactus made me comfortable with thinking on my feet and ambiguity. We can make our systematic plans but during implementation there are always so many unexpected situations to deal with”. This likely explains the lowest positive score for this developed skill/capacity category

**Creativity & passion, entrepreneurial spirit and integrative work approach (problem solving):**

Enactus teams seek out projects and non-profits to partner based on the criteria of being able to display business skills, creativity, sustainability and entrepreneurial spirit. Often time needs are presented that do not necessarily meet the criteria and together the OSU Enactus chapter discusses ideas to address the need while meeting our project criteria. Respondents scored these categories: business skills, creativity, sustainability and entrepreneurial spirit with a median of 4 indicating that Enactus alumni and current

members feel that they have developed skills to a large extent. When assessing one's own development, one does not like to toot one's own horn, which may explain the lower scoring. A grassroots example is La Isla, a newer partner to work on addressing water sanitation and hydration of sugarcane field workers. Chronic kidney disease is prevalent and is exasperated by hard working conditions, pesticides and herbicides sprayed over the sugarcane community and terrible sanitation. This is taking the lives of men ages 33-55 who work as sugar cane cutters. Through discussion between our team, our partner and the La Isla community the OSU Enactus chapter came up with ideas on how to create a portable water treatment system that had a close loop production and to address dehydration of sugar cane workers. We planned a strategy of providing water bladder prototypes that would be tested among workers and reversed engineered. The final design of the water bladders would then be assembled and sewn in the community in the form of a co-op. Local resources will be sourced to teach sewing skills and train the women on production of the sign water bladder design. This specialty skill can be used to later produce products for sale outside of the community to supplement their men's underpaid income. The micro loan program was also a program of interest after learning about our experience in that area. The urgent need empowered our team to think of creative solutions to help this community.

**Ability to employ measurable outcomes:**

A key measure of sustainability in our Enactus projects is through before and consistent after data/feedback collection. For example the microloan program included data collection as part of the microloan interview and was followed up by data collection to track entrepreneur progress and areas that require additional accompaniment. Post

evaluation is important for Enactus members to reflect on and make modifications or improvements. Furthermore frequent communication with partners and communities provide us the opportunity to assess progress, address challenges that come up and find ways to improve. This category was given a mean score of 3.813 and a median score of 4 indicating a well-developed ability to employ measurable outcomes, but an area for improvement.

**Ability to build capacity in others:**

In addition to providing team members an opportunity to build skills and capabilities to take on leadership roles, as part of our sustainable approach to projects the goal is to always accompany individuals or organizations until they are on their feet. Respondents scored this category with a 4 (mean and median score) indicating a good level of confidence in Enactus alumni and current members to empower others to develop skills and capacities. This score turned out lower than expected due to the humble nature of respondents. This is evident not only among Enactus team members but also with our project partners. The microloan program involved a two-month long on the ground accompaniment of entrepreneurs to learn and apply business skills in marketing, accounting and savings. This was followed by further on the ground accompaniment by a partner and semi-annual visits from our team. Our goal for the microloan program was to work with a core of viable businesses and then have them teach and accompany other entrepreneurs in their community. After consultation among the community members during execution, the microloan recipients decided that the microloan workshop would be opened up to the community. This came from the sincere belief in building capacity among the community members. The idea was that other attendees would learn to apply

business skills they receive in the workshop in their own business to improve their business, built a better track record and increase their chances of getting a micro loan in the next round of interviews. Community members helped us make visits to homes in the community to invite members to the workshops. This experience gave us insight into their collective culture and taught us the never-ending extent of accompaniment.

### **Interviews with OSU Enactus Project Partners**

Table 2 shows the median and mean in regards to the skills and capabilities of Enactus members as observed by OSU Enactus Project Partners. Participants were asked a series of questions related to entrepreneurial skills, teamwork, leadership, concern for understanding the needs at the grassroots, willingness to engage in “hands on” community development activities and the ability develop and execute sustainable business plans. Table 2 is a summary of responses using likert scale options ranging from 1 “not at all” to 5 “to a large extent” with data representing the median and mean in regards to the question: “to what extent do you think the ENACTUS volunteers exhibited the following skills and capabilities?” as observed by OSU Enactus project partners. The sample size for Group 3 (OSU Enactus Project Partners) was 8. The lowest positive score received for observed skills and capabilities is 4.563 and the highest is 5 indicating that project partners felt that all the skills and capacities were well exhibited. When comparing these results to the scoring of skills and capabilities developed by Enactus current and alumni members themselves, congruence between the two is observed. This illustrates that project partners have observed the skills and capabilities that OSU Enactus members felt have developed from their experience in Enactus and that Enactus provides

opportunities to develop such skills and capacities. Each of the skills and capacities demonstrated are in more detail below.

*Table 2 – Exhibited skills and capabilities by OSU Enactus members as observed by OSU*

*Enactus project partners:*

<b>Skills and Capacities</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Entrepreneurial Skill	5	4.625
Teamwork	5	4.875
Leadership	5	4.625
Concern for understanding needs at the grassroots	5	4.625
Willingness to engage in “hands on” community development activities	5	4.875
Ability to develop and execute sustainable business plans	4.75	4.563

*Likert scale: 1 being “not at all” and 5 being “to a large extent”.*

#### **Entrepreneurial skill, and ability to develop and execute sustainable business plans:**

The category “entrepreneurial skill” received a median score of 5 with a mean score of 4.625; and the category “ability to develop and execute sustainable business plans” received a median score of 4.75 with a mean score of 4.563. This suggests that the OSU Enactus chapter was able to apply business skills and work with partners to create sustainable non-profit organizations to a large extent. The category “entrepreneurial skill” probably received a higher score because entrepreneurial skills are integrated in our work with each of our partners. The OSU Enactus chapter strives towards excellence and there are areas for us to improve in quantifying our project impact and results, and sourcing additional partners or emphasizing more collaboration across partners to work together on improving business models. Below is an anecdote from an environmental non-profit in Leon, Nicaragua that OSU Enactus partnered to create a business plan, implement a

financial accounting system, and advice on strategic marketing for the purposes of replication. SONATI is an environmental organization working on environmental education focusing on courage, love and care towards the environment. The founder shares his assessment on the OSU team:

*“Angels if I could state that. You have a lot of motivation to come and help people like us who are so unorganized. You exhibit so much goodwill and passion although it was so hard for us to provide accurate data. You spent so many hours and months to collect and analyze data. The passion and motivation is unbelievable. Teamwork is beautiful between yourself and with your professor. Your group's business and organizational skills to plan and divide members to put together a business plan is so impressive and beautiful. The financial recording forms have made getting important information much easier. I never believed this mess could be changed and data efficiently collected for analysis and strategic planning”.*

At a local level, Our Enactus team has worked with multiple businesses to apply business skills to help improve business sales.

**Teamwork and leadership, and concern for understanding needs at the grassroots:**

All three categories received a score of 5 on the likert scale demonstrating an exceptional demonstration of teamwork, leadership and concern for needs of partners and issues. This is further reinforced by qualitative responses by respondents discussing project collaboration. The OSU Enactus team implemented a sustainable micro loan program in a rural barrio in Leon, Nicaragua. The micro loan program was created when



Enactus members, through community involvement, realized there were many failing businesses, aspiring entrepreneurs unable to start due to the lack of business skills or funding and the strict and non-achievable criteria of local micro loan programs. A TECHO lead in charge of projects in Roger Deshon shared that:

*“I have seen a lot of communication and social skills. Skills referring to project formulation and creativity/innovation for new projects...despite the long distance, there's been constant communication through Skype/e-mail. We have discussed every detail and always made sure both sides came to a common decision and not many partners have this”.*

Leadership requires buy in from a core group of people who play the important role of rallying the community towards a shared goal. The core people served as the in-persons who helped the team progress the relationship building process.

**Willingness to engage in “hands on” community development activities:**

In working with partners especially in Nicaragua, it is important to understand the difference in customs. The Hispanic culture in this region focuses on building a trusting relationship before bringing up ideas for projects and going forward. In any partnership there has to be an investment of interest and time in one’s partner and their mission. The qualitative response at the end of this paragraph further reinforces the median score of 5 and means score of 4.875 for the category indicating an exceptional level of willingness to engage in “hands on” community development activities. This process involved partnering with an organization that has an established relationship and reputation. In the case of the micro loan program, OSU Enactus worked with TECHO to construct

emergency houses as a way to spend time and get to know village members and village elders. Discussion with our partner and village elders led to the implementation of the micro lending program, an awareness campaign about the dangers of trash burning and littering and village-wide trash pick-up. The lead for TECHO Leon and Managua, Nicaragua stated in her interview that: “Unlike other partners, you take the time to talk with community members and us to discuss needs. You integrated yourselves with our house construction projects even it's not your focus”.

Table 3 shows the extent to which OSU Enactus team was able to help partners as observed by OSU Enactus Project Partners, on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being “not at all” and 5 being “to a large extent”. Participants were asked a series of questions related to the extent OSU Enactus helped them focus on organization’s core mission, develop additional business skills, develop an entrepreneurial approach and see new opportunities, become more sustainable non-profit, and address financial obstacles. The sample size for Group 3 (Project Partners) was 8. It is important to note that two of the project partners were not non-profits therefore, the category “become more sustainable non-profit” has a sample size of 6. The lowest positive score received for benefits of collaboration with Enactus is 4.125 and the highest is 5 indicating that the OSU Enactus team was able to work with partners effectively and help reach partner objectives. The lowest positive score may be a result from our partnership. For example the OSU Enactus chapter worked with TECHO, whose mission is to provide emergency houses, to help provide the added resources for community building. Another example is SONATI, whose mission is to provide environmental education to younger generations, which the OSU Enactus chapter worked with to create a strategic business plan that funds their mission. These

results further support the effectiveness of the OSU Enactus team in addition to exhibiting necessary skills and capacities for achieving project success. Examples of our involvement with partners have been discussed above. These results indicate the team's project partner's assessment on achieving project goals and objectives. The interview question was broken into 5 categories for the purposes of a quantitative analysis. However the qualitative responses show cross cutting categories as seen in the quotes below.

*Table 3: Extent of OSU Enactus team's ability to help partners:*

	Focus on your core mission	develop additional business skills	develop an entrepreneurial approach and see new opportunities	become more sustainable non-profit	address financial obstacles
Group 3 (OSU Enactus Project Partners)	4 (4.125)	5 (4.429)	4.5 (4.5)	5 (4.667)	5 (4.714)

*Likert scale: 1 being "not at all" and 5 being "to a large extent".*

### **International Partners:**

*"SONATI has many weak points especially in the business arena. ENACTUS has been able to help us restructure our business strategy and become more profitable. With your help, we could see for the first time where we stood financially. You helped us make changes and make a strategy and with the financial recording spreadsheets we are now making profit on our business side to support our environmental projects".*

*- Coordinator of the environmental projects at SONATI*

*"TECHO exists in a lot of Latin America, but very few have microloan programs. In Nicaragua, this is the first time and now we have*

*experience in microloan programs to expand it in different communities.*

*Nicaragua is the only country that TECHO works in with micro loan workshops. This opportunity has allowed us to improve the way we work in these communities and the microloan program. In fact other TECHO branches in other countries have shown interest in adding the microloan workshops in their work”.*

*- TECHO leader that leads projects in Roger Deshon*

### **Local Partners:**

*“The Enactus team branded the 3 Wine-Down events, planned all the logistics between 20 small businesses and executed the wine-walks making profit which they used to help small struggling businesses. They made step-by-step lists on how to get the events ready to run. This model was very transferable and made replicating and expanding the event very easy”.*

*- A volunteer from St. Helens community development non-profit group, Shedco*

*“The Enactus team helped us create a logo, marketing strategy and advertise. As result of our involvement in the Wine-down event hosted by the Enactus team, we have observed a 50% increase in sales”.*

*- A struggling restaurant business that the Enactus team worked with to improve sales*

### **Cross Examination between Enactus current/alumni and Sponsoring Companies**

Table 4 compares the top 5 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) ranking, in terms of importance, identified by OSU Enactus current students/alumni and sponsoring companies for Enactus in the context of being an attractive employee. The sample size for Group 2 (OSU Enactus current students/alumni) is 8 and for Group 1 (sponsoring companies for Enactus USA) is 6. Each respondent was given a list of 14 skills and capacities, which are believed to be requisites to being an attractive employee, to rank.

*Table 4: KPI ranking compared between Enactus sponsoring companies and OSU Enactus current/alumni:*

	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Group 1 (Sponsoring Companies for Enactus USA)	Teamwork	Ability to employ measurable outcome	Creativity & passion	Integrative work approach (problem solving)	Process oriented
Group 2 (OSU Enactus current/alumni)	Integrative work approach (problem solving)	Teamwork	Ability to employ measurable outcomes	360 Degrees leadership	Ability to build capacity of others

*Likert scale: 1 being “not at all” and 5 being “to a large extent”.*

The purpose of this exercise was to observe if there is any congruence between Enactus current students/alumni and Enactus sponsoring companies in the context of the top five key performance indicators (KPIs). Teamwork, integrative work approach (problem solving) and ability to employ measurable outcomes are KPIs identified in both groups as top 5 skills and capacities sought for in potential employees. Creativity and passion, process oriented 360 degrees leadership, entrepreneurial spirit and the ability to build capacity in others were other skills and capacities that were commonly ranked in the top five in both groups.

### Analysis of mutual benefit between Enactus current/alumni and Sponsoring Companies

Given the aggregated results, it is important to link the results back to my research objective: to find out what are the key performance indicators that CSR inclined corporations seek in employees and to examine if involvement in such non-profits helps develop these KPIs; and the subsequent hypothesis: a cyclical relationship of mutual benefit. The results discussed above from table 1 show the skills and capacities that Enactus current students/alumni feel have developed. Table 2 and 3 above discuss the skills and capabilities of Enactus members and the effectiveness of the OSU Enactus team in helping project partners achieve objectives as observed by OSU Enactus Project Partners. The skills and capacities Enactus members develop is reinforced by OSU Enactus project partners, my on the ground experience and sponsoring Enactus USA companies. Table 5 shows the analysis of the effectiveness of Enactus in producing benefit for sponsoring companies by six randomly selected sponsoring companies based on a likert scale of 1-5 with 1 being “not at all” and 5 being “to a large extent.

*Table 5: The effectiveness of Enactus in producing benefit for sponsoring companies:*

	Median	Mean
1. To what extent do you think the above Key Performance Indicators are developed through involvement in such grassroots social action?	4	4
2. To what extent do you think potential employees who have had experience in university based non-profit organizations are more valuable to your corporation?	4	3.833
3. To what extent do you think employing employees with such experience will help contribute to the corporation’s mission in attaining sustainable Corporate Social Responsibility?	4	4

*Likert scale: 1 being “not at all” and 5 being “to a large extent”.*

The first question in table 5, which received a mean and median score of 4, shows that companies interviewed believed in Enactus's ability to provide opportunities to develop necessary skills and capacities. This result reinforces the development of skills and capacities identified by both Enactus current students/alumni and project partners. The second question received a mean score of 3.833 and a median score of 4 showing that companies interviewed believed in Enactus's ability to produce a pool of desirable employees. This is supported qualitatively by a respondent's comment: "If I were choosing between applicant and given everything equal in skills and ability, I would choose the applicant with non-profit leadership experience". The third question received a mean and median score of 4 indicating that companies interviewed believed that individuals that participated in organizations like Enactus are able to provide a CSR oriented mindset thus helping contribute to integrated company CSR objectives. The companies that scored this question the highest were companies in the beginning stages of developing a CSR strategy. In one case the company is new to the country due to company expansion and in another case the company is going through a major transformation. Both companies view recruiting employees with the identified skills and capabilities as key to making their transitions. In sum many companies echoed what one respondent stated: "Leadership, people and responsibility are three tenants of Enactus which are closely aligned with our company's guiding principle. This is why we chose to support Enactus". The predicted cyclical relationship of mutual benefit is further assessed in table 6 on a Likert scale of 1-5 with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 5 being "strongly agree".

*Table 6: Integrating Enactus sponsorship with CSR objectives:*

	Median	Mean
1. To what extent do you agree that sponsoring ENACTUS provides a meaningful way for your company to fulfill its philanthropic duty as part of CSR?	3	2.833
2. To what extent do you agree that sponsoring ENACTUS programs help emphasize sustainability in terms of community development?	3	3.333
3. To what extent do you agree that graduates of ENACTUS programs represent a talent pool with skills and capabilities that your company seeks?	5	4.667
4. To what extent do you agree that involvement with Enactus has benefits to your company beyond the CSR consideration?	5	4.667

*Likert scale: 1 being "not at all" and 5 being "to a large extent".*

Question 1 received the lowest score in all results, a median of 2.833 and a median 3. This indicates that giving money to organizations to tick the box for philanthropic duty as if it is an isolated item seems not to be present. It is important to realize however that my research is based on a small sample and that the companies were randomly chosen from a pool of Enactus sponsoring companies are mostly in advance stages of Corporate Social Responsibility. Question 2 received a mean score of 3.333 and a median score of 3. This further reinforces that by merely sponsoring such organizations does not fulfill the sustainability nor CSR criteria. A company representative shared in an interview:

*"Social responsibility is part of our guiding principles and if when we hire candidates it would be because they align with our principles. Therefore social awareness and social responsibility component would be a natural part and not a separate designated criterion. Our CSR strategy is all encompassing and is a commitment we practice internally and externally"*



Question 3 and 4 both received a mean score of 4.667 and a median score of 5. This suggests that applicants with experience with organizations such as Enactus have gained skills and capacities that are highly regarded by companies. Furthermore of those companies that participated in this project, the highest number of Enactus students employed by a sponsoring company is 109 with an average of 41 employed per company.

## **Discussion**

This study used interviews from Enactus sponsoring companies, OSU Enactus current/alumni, OSU Enactus project partners, and participant observation to investigate the links between corporate support of socially responsible organizations and the development of appropriate skills and capacities that can translate into a pool of socially responsible employees. It was hypothesized that individuals that are involved with organizations such as Enactus, which provides students the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge from their field of study to meaningful action that contributes to the betterment of society and environment, develop skills and capabilities that are in demand by corporations seeking responsible minded employees.

The first set of aggregated results from OSU Enactus current/alumni indicated coherence, in skills and capacities developed and were substantiated through participant observation by the researcher. All skills and capacities listed in table 1 were ranked positively by respondents and were further supported by qualitative responses and the researcher's personal experience. Furthermore, results showed that Enactus effectively provided participants experience in grassroots social action and developed social awareness. Although 'process oriented' was scored lowest but still positive, it indicated that Enactus participants felt that they developed creative problem solving skills, and the ability to be flexible while focused on goals.

Interview responses from OSU Enactus Project partners were examined to assess the skills and capacities exhibited by OSU Enactus members from the perspective of project partners. Results illustrate the observed skills and capacities, and the effectiveness of OSU Enactus in meeting partner objectives. Aggregated results indicated congruency

in skills and capacities between OSU current/alumni and OSU Enactus Project partners. Given that Enactus' mission is to use business solutions to enact sustainable change, the Oregon State University Enactus chapter scored the highest in its ability to help partners develop additional business skills, become more sustainable non-profits, and address financial obstacles. Enactus project partners scored the OSU Enactus chapter slightly lower but positive for categories: 'focus on your core mission' and 'develop an entrepreneurial approach and see new opportunities' shows a non-ethnocentric approach to projects locally and internationally. In many cases the Enactus team worked with founders of organizations and owners of businesses, which meant additional caution was needed in making suggestions for improvement. A relationship of trust and collaboration has been key to the success of projects and partnerships between OSU students and Enactus Partner organizations. In sum, these set of results show the OSU current Enactus team's ability to effectively apply developed skills and capacities to address partner objectives and also reinforces the identified skills and capacities by OSU Enactus current/alumni.

The final set of interviews occurred with Enactus sponsoring companies and provides additional insight for the key findings. Results compared the top 5 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) ranking, in terms of importance, as identified by OSU Enactus current students/alumni and sponsoring companies for Enactus in the context of being an attractive employee. Results indicated that teamwork, integrative work approach (problem solving) and the ability to employ measurable outcomes were overlapping KPIs illustrating a high level of congruence between the two groups. Furthermore, creativity and passion, process oriented, 360 degrees leadership, entrepreneurial spirit and the

ability to build capacity in others were additional skills and capacities commonly ranked in the top five by respondents in both groups. These findings indicate a similar understanding between employers and potential employees, given required prerequisites are met, on what skills and capacities make an attractive candidate. Many respondents highlighted striving to sustainability, social awareness and responsibility as a requisite philosophy to proceed in interviews.

Results show the effectiveness of Enactus in producing benefits for sponsoring companies and reinforce Enactus's ability to produce candidates with desired skills and capacities. Quantitative results further support sponsoring company's ability to integrate Enactus sponsorship with their CSR objectives. Findings show that companies do not use a fragmented approach to CSR and that sponsoring Enactus and other similar organizations are only a part of the company's CSR portfolio. These companies seek to partner and sponsor organizations with shared philosophies of leadership, a sense of responsibility that translates to seeing opportunities and taking action, striving towards excellence and the fear of never having tried. In summary the qualitative and quantitative aggregated responses from sponsoring companies reinforce the KPIs identified by Enactus members and observed by project partners; and the value of sponsoring Enactus USA in terms of recruitment opportunities, collaboration with other leaders and building a company's CSR culture.

### **Limitations and Implications**

Due to the small scope of this study, it has limitations and must therefore be evaluated in this context. The sample size started with: 28 Enactus sponsoring companies, 13 OSU Enactus current/alumni, and 15 OSU Enactus project partners. Adjusting for interview non-responses, the research participant number dropped to: 6 Enactus sponsoring companies; 9 OSU Enactus current/alumni; 8 OSU Enactus project partners. This small sample size renders most statistical analysis of results negligible. The small sample size also classifies this as a case study. Thus, results cannot be universally applied or readily generalized to larger populations.

Secondly due to the nature of the research and its focus on specific sponsors of Enactus USA and members and project partners involved with Enactus Oregon State University chapter, the findings from this research cannot be generalized across other organizations. Furthermore location is a key factor in that Enactus USA has business students as its majority and Enactus Germany has engineering students as its majority which influences the extent, for example Oregon State University chapter, of application of engineering skills in projects. From university to university, the projects selected and background needed by the chapter can impact recruitment of certain majors and limiting opportunities for other majors. This study can, however, provide a baseline of comparison for similar studies in the future looking at different university-based organizations.

Thirdly, there were limitations with the study approach itself. Despite random selection of current and Enactus alumni students and because of the majority of members being business majors with varying minors, respondents from other majors such as

engineering, public health and agriculture were underrepresented. Furthermore, the researchers' heavy involvement as a participant observer could make the analysis of aggregated results favorable towards Enactus. Despite using established social science protocols to maximize objectivity, some bias may be embedded in the recounted qualitative observation from on the ground experience.

Finally most of the interviews with companies were done over the phone since many company representatives were from other states. The level to which participants were scripted could not be analyzed. Furthermore this study did not account for nonverbal responses, for example pauses, length of responses and body language, which may have better informed the analysis of results.

### **Implications for future research**

Much remains to be learned about how to best integrate multiple company objectives with developing a responsible pool of talent. Smart partnering at its core focuses on business moving beyond avoiding risks or enhancing reputation and toward improving its core value creation ability by addressing major strategic issues or challenges. In its commitment to a fair, just and sustainable society, the aim is to shift from maintaining minimum standards to seeking creative solutions to improving employment, the overall quality of life, and standard of living. The key is for each party to tap into the resources and expertise of the other, finding creative solutions to critical social and businesses challenges. A future study may be to study the type of university-based organization partnerships that optimizes mutual benefit.

Furthermore as students seek a way to make a difference in the world and companies look to deal with challenges, scalability and collaboration to facilitate

optimum learning and impact will be fundamental. A future study may include research on the key components to best facilitate the cycle of mutual benefit between companies and students.

### **Conclusion**

As customers, employees, suppliers, and society generally place increasing importance on CSR, many corporate leaders viewed this as an opportunity to fundamentally strengthen their businesses while contributing to the betterment of society. CSR is thus viewed as central to the company's overall strategies, helping to address key business issues. A challenge for executives is how to develop an approach that integrates a genuine commitment to social sustainability and giving back to society with business objectives. Some companies have met this challenge with smart partnering, partnering with university organizations to develop the next generations of employees, as one way to create value for both the business and society simultaneously. This project focused on Enactus as an organization for smart partnering - providing benefits for business, students, society, and developing creative solutions that draw on complementary capabilities to address educational and corporate challenges.

In a competitive job market and recovering economy, having a degree(s) is not enough. Students look for opportunities to gain hands-on experience and improve their resume. They need to stand out. The research hypothesis driving this study was to examine whether or not the skills students obtained through hands-on experiences meet the needs of today's employers. The populations used in this study were persons involved with Enactus- OSU students/alumni, companies and project partners. This research shows that organizations such as Enactus provides students an opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge from their field of study in meaningful action that contributes to the betterment of society and environment, while also developing skills and capabilities that are attractive to corporations seeking responsible minded employees. Corporations



benefit from having a pool of talented students that are hardworking, value-driven leaders that combine striving for excellence and a competitive spirit with integrity and sense of responsibility. Students involved in Enactus projects have demonstrated their commitment to doing public good, developing skills and abilities, and integrity through action and projects highlighted at presentations. Companies are reassured by the quality of candidates they recruit from the OSU Enactus program. In sum organizations such as Enactus help facilitate a cyclical nature of mutual benefit for university students and sponsoring companies. Enactus depends on company sponsorships and provides students opportunities for hands-on experience. Students involved in Enactus develop skills and capacities, and represent an attractive talent pool to companies. Sponsors get a return on their investment partly from the quality of employee universities with Enactus chapters produce.

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## Appendix A: Interview Questions

Interview Group 1:

### Corporations that supports ENACTUS:

1. Describe your company's approach to Corporate Social Responsibility?
2. With regards to your company's approach to Corporate Social Responsibility, please rate the following on the scale of 1-5 with 1 being "not at all important" and 5 being "extremely important":
  - a. How important is social responsibility to the corporation?
  - b. How important is it to have socially aware employees?
  - c. How important is it for your company to have a positive, sustainable impact on the community served through CSR efforts?
  - d. How important is it to your company for social responsibility to be integrated into all activities and part of the corporate culture?
3. When seeking new employees, which of the following Key Performance Indicators would you rank as the top skills and capabilities sought for in terms of importance?

[Note to student researcher: Give respondent list of items and collect response]

- a. Academic record
  - b. Teamwork
  - c. 360 degrees Leadership
  - d. Academic reputation of university
  - e. Major studied
  - f. Social awareness
  - g. Involvement/Experience in grassroots social action
  - h. Appreciation of sustainability
  - i. Process oriented
  - j. Creativity & passion
  - k. Entrepreneurial spirit
  - l. Integrative work approach (as appose to silo)
  - m. Ability to employ measurable outcomes
  - n. Ability to build capacity in others
4. When did your corporation first start sponsoring ENACTUS?
  5. With regards to sponsorship of ENACTUS please rate the following on the scale of 1-5 with 1 being "strongly disagree" and 5 being "strongly agree":
    - a. To what extent do you agree that sponsoring ENACTUS provides a meaningful way for your company to fulfill its philanthropic duty as part of CSR?

- b. To what extent do you agree that sponsoring ENACTUS programs help emphasize sustainability in terms of community development?
  - c. To what extent do you agree that graduates of ENACTUS programs represent a talent pool with skills and capabilities that your company seeks?
  - d. To what extent do you agree that involvement with ENACTUS has benefits to your company beyond the CSR consideration?
6. Has your company hired ENACTUS graduates? If so, how many?
7. With regards to hiring of ENACTUS graduates please rate the following on the scale of 1-5 with 1 being “not at all” and 5 being “to a large extent”:
- a. To what extent do you think the above Key Performance Indicators are developed through involvement in such grassroots social action?
  - b. To what extent do you think potential employees who have had experience in university based non-profit organizations are more valuable to your corporation?
  - c. To what extent do you think employing employees with such experience will help contribute to the corporation’s mission in attaining sustainable Corporate Social Responsibility?
8. Is there anything else you would like me to know about your company’s CSR culture or its involvement with ENACTUS?

~Thank you for your time and your willingness to contribute to this project. ~

## Interview Group 2:

ENACTUS alumni/current members:

1. When did you get involved with ENACTUS and what was the motivation?
2. What ENACTUS projects (local, National and or International) have you been involved in?
3. What is your area of study at Oregon State University and what career path are you seeking?
4. What skills and capabilities have you gained from your involvement with ENACTUS? What are your key takeaways from your experience?
5. With regards to skills and capabilities attained from ENACTUS, please rank the following on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being “not at all” and 5 being “to a large extent”. To what extent do you think you have developed the following skills and capabilities:

[Note to student researcher: Give respondent list of items and collect response]

- i. Teamwork
  - ii. 360 degrees Leadership
  - iii. Social awareness
  - iv. Involvement/Experience in grassroots social action
  - v. Appreciation of sustainability
  - vi. Process oriented organization
  - vii. Creativity & passion
  - viii. Entrepreneurial spirit
  - ix. Integrative work approach (problem solving)
  - x. Ability to employ measurable outcomes
  - xi. Ability to build capacity in others
6. In the context of being an attractive employee, which of the following Key Performance Indicators would you rank as the top skills and capabilities sought for in terms of importance?

[Note to student researcher: Give respondent list of items and collect response]

- i. Teamwork
- ii. 360 degrees Leadership
- iii. Social awareness
- iv. Involvement/Experience in grassroots social action
- v. Appreciation of sustainability
- vi. Process oriented organization



- vii. Creativity & passion
  - viii. Entrepreneurial spirit
    - ix. Integrative work approach (problem solving)
      - x. Ability to employ measurable outcomes
      - xi. Ability to build capacity in others
7. Have you been hired or offered a job at any of the ENACTUS-sponsoring corporations?
8. Is there anything else you would like me to know about your company's CSR culture or its involvement with ENACTUS?

~Thank you for your time and your willingness to contribute to this project. ~

Interview Group 3:

Non-Profit Partners of ENACTUS program:

1. When did you get involved with ENACTUS and what was your motivation?
2. Please describe the nature and purpose of your non-profit organization.
3. How has collaboration with ENACTUS benefited your organization and helped to attain your goals?
4. With regards to benefits of collaboration with ENACTUS, please rank the following on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being “not at all” and 5 being “to a large extent”:
  - a. To what extent has ENACTUS help you focus on your core mission?
  - b. To what extent has ENACTUS help you develop additional business skills?
  - c. To what extent has ENACTUS help you develop an entrepreneurial approach and see new opportunities?
  - d. To what extent has ENACTUS help you become more sustainable non-profit?
  - e. To what extent has ENACTUS help you address financial obstacles?
5. Please describe the skills and capabilities exhibited by the ENACTUS volunteers with which you worked.
6. With regards to the skills and capabilities of ENACTUS volunteers, please rank the following on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being “not at all” and 5 being “to a large extent”. To what extent do you think the ENACTUS volunteers exhibited the following skills and capabilities:
  - a. Entrepreneurial skills
  - b. Teamwork
  - c. Leadership
  - d. Concern for understanding needs at the grassroots
  - e. Willingness to engage in “hands on” community development activities
  - f. Ability to develop and execute sustainable business plans
7. Is there anything else you would like me to know about your company’s CSR culture or its involvement with ENACTUS?

~Thank you for your time and your willingness to contribute to this project. ~

## **Appendix B: Elements of Verbal Consent**

Lori A. Cramer

Developing the Next Generation of Socially Responsible Employees

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### **Ensure that potential participants understand each of the elements below**

**Purpose:** The goal is to learn how corporate support of university based social-initiative organizations such as ENACTUS develops leaders with requisite skills for companies to cultivate a sustainable corporate social responsibility (CSR) culture.

#### **Activities:**

The interview questions will relate to the participant's involvement with Oregon State University's ENACTUS chapter.

The student researcher will request the permission to audio record the interviews, so the responses can be transcribed and communicated accurately in the final report. If participants do not agree to an audio recording of the interview, the student researcher will take detailed notes during the interview. All data (audio recordings, transcripts, respondent cards and notes) will be stored by the principal investigator and student researcher for three years post study termination. Only the principal investigator, student researcher and federal regulatory agencies of Oregon State University who may inspect records pertaining to this research have access.

Research analysis will be conducted by aggregating interview findings into themes and relating it to the thesis question. All quotes will remain anonymous. As part of the oral consent process, the researcher will explain to interviewees that the data collection and reporting will be completed in such a way as to preserve the confidentiality of their response.

**Risks:** There are no foreseeable risks to the participants in this study. The researchers will keep individual responses confidential. All data will be stored by the principal investigator and student researcher for three years post study termination.

**Benefits:** No direct benefit will be given to participants. Since this research provides an assessment on how the non-profit partners perceived their partnership with Oregon State University's ENACTUS chapter, this study may indicate areas for improvement as the partnership continues. Results may also help universities identify mutually beneficial relationships between corporations and student volunteer opportunities.

**Voluntariness:** Consent to participate must be given freely. There is no penalty for choosing not to participate or for leaving the study at any time. The student researcher will use the information about the participants only in the way in which consent is given. The participants can request that any identifying information about them be destroyed. The participants will be told they do not have to answer any questions they are uncomfortable with.

**Contact information:** Participants can contact the principal investigator with any questions or concerns.

Principal Investigator

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**Appendix C: Telephone and Recruitment Protocol**

Email template and basis for telephone recruitment to potential participants inviting them to participate in interview:

To: Potential Interviewee

From: Shireen Weik

Subject: Interview request

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I know of your work at (company name/non-profit organization/in ENACTUS projects) and I'm interested in learning how corporate support of university based social-initiative organizations such as ENACTUS develops leaders with requisite skills for companies to cultivate a sustainable corporate social responsibility (CSR) culture. I would love to set up an interview with you at your convenience to talk more about your work and how you see your company and or yourself seek to develop skills and capacities to establish a sustainable approach to corporate responsibility.

The interviews will contribute to my undergraduate thesis: A Sustainable Approach to Corporate Social Responsibility. The principle investigator for this study is Dr. Lori A. Cramer. The interview questions will relate to the participant's involvement with Oregon State University's ENACTUS chapter. Since this research provides an assessment on how the non-profit partners perceived their partnership with Oregon State University's ENACTUS chapter, this study may indicate areas for improvement as the partnership continues. Results may also help universities identify mutually beneficial relationships between corporations and student volunteer opportunities.

If you are available for an interview, I would be happy to schedule a time with you at your convenience. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

Shireen Weik

541-7402123

**Appendix D: Response Cards**

Group 1 Respondent Card:

Please rank the top skills and capabilities that apply:

	Academic record		Appreciation of sustainability
	Teamwork		Process oriented
	360 degrees Leadership		Creativity & passion
	Academic reputation of university		Entrepreneurial spirit
	Major studied		Integrative work approach (as appose to silo)
	Social awareness		Ability to employ measurable outcomes
	Involvement/Experience in grassroots social action		Ability to build capacity in others

## Group 2 Respondent Card:

Please rank the following on a scale of 1-5 with 1 being “not at all” and 5 being “to a large extent”:

	Teamwork
	360 degrees Leadership
	Social awareness
	Involvement/Experience in grassroots social action
	Appreciation of sustainability
	Process oriented organization
	Creativity & passion
	Entrepreneurial spirit
	Integrative work approach (problem solving)
	Ability to employ measurable outcomes
	Ability to build capacity in others

