**TOPIC SELECTION GUIDELINES**

A Senior Project is about doing and learning something that you want to do and learning more about! This is your chance to choose a topic that will be interesting and worthwhile and will extend your knowledge. However, making the decision may not be easy. Choose carefully, consult with your Faculty Advisor, and remember to keep your project manageable. Carefully choose a product or process that you can build or produce or a community-based service you can provide. Answer these questions as you decide your topic:

* Is there a clear connection between the research topic and the product/process you want to produce?
* Does the product/process represent significant amounts of time, effort, and appropriate complexity? Does it go beyond what you already know how to do?
* Is the project something you will do outside of your regular class or co-curricular requirements?
* Will the product involve tangible evidence of your work – either something physical that can be seen and touched, a community-based service that can be documented as beneficial or something that can be written, produced, taped, or presented?

**The following guidelines may assist in choosing the subject to be explored.**

**1. The research topic should be one in which the student is interested, but not one about which the student is already an expert.**

If a student has been a diabetic for ten years, worked closely with the Juvenile Diabetes Association, and has been a volunteer in the children’s diabetic ward in a local hospital, he or she probably knows a great deal about the subject juvenile diabetes. Unless that student pursues a new angle to diabetes, that topic might not yield much new learning.

**2. The research topic may be one that requires cumulative knowledge across grade levels and content area.**

It should be a natural outgrowth of interest and combined skills of all, or most content areas. For example, a student who researches the changes in the ozone layer is using cumulative knowledge from at least English, math, science, and history.

**3. Some preliminary research may be helpful to the student.**

By reading about a certain topic, the student may expand his/her areas of interest. Possibilities for new areas of exploration may surface.

**4. The research topic should be one that is challenging to the student academically and creatively.**

The student should take care not to choose a topic that is limited to relatively simple ideas or one that has little application or extension possibilities. The topic should require an academic and creative stretch/risk.

**5. Students should avoid choosing topics that might involve expenses they are not prepared to handle.**

For example if the research involves travel or long distance calls, the student may want to make another choice. If the product that grows out of the research will require materials, the student may want to make another choice. Remember, the student is not required, encouraged, or advised to spend money in order to complete the project. Expenditures will not enhance the evaluation of the project.

**6. Primary research is a valuable component of any inquiry.**

It may be wise, therefore, to explore the possibilities for personal interviews, informal surveys, empirical observation, etc., before making a final selection of topic.

**7. Students should avoid choosing topics that might endanger themselves or others.**

For example, experiments which are potentially explosive or activities such as handling poisonous snakes are not appropriate.

**8. Students should use good judgment to be certain that the topics they choose are appropriate for presentation to a review panel and the general public.**

Remember that the student must have *Project Proposal Approval* by the Senior Project Steering Committee and Faculty Advisor prior to beginning the Project.

**9. The research topic should be one that is broad enough to allow the student access to enough information, yet narrow enough to make the research scope reasonable.**

For example, a student choosing the topic *First Aid* would find it impossible to include everything about first aid (home remedies, history of emergency services, the treatment of burns, how to stop bleeding, evolution of first aid courses, etc.) On the other hand, a student choosing to research *the Application of Band-Aids to Skin Abrasions* probably will not find enough information.