6.033 Computer System Engineering

Spring 2009

Preparation for Class Presentations (Recitation 25)

Your team will present its oral report on Design Project 2 in Recitation 25.

Your design team should prepare a 5-minute at-the-blackboard oral presentation of your design. Choose one of your members to deliver this presentation. (If you wish, you can divide up the presentation among two or three members, but if you do that you will need to work skillfully to keep from tripping over each other in the short time available.) You can assume that your audience is *very* familiar with the problem to be solved, and has a pretty good idea about the design space, so you do not need to spend much of your time giving background or explaining the design in detail. You should, however, make sure to explain the essential ideas of your design with utmost clarity and precision. Avoid low-level implementation details, and focus on the *key design decisions and their implications*. Also explain what your group thinks are your design's major strengths, weaknesses and interesting design decisions.

After presenting your design, the floor will be opened to the rest of the section for a short period of questions, comments, and critique of your design. Design review is a commonly practiced method of checking out designs and proposals. The goal of design review is to be constructive, not destructive. Comments along the lines of "this design is trash" are out of order. Instead you should try to come up with comments along the lines of "this design doesn't handle X, but by incorporating Y it would be more bullet proof" or "This design is excellent, because it meets all of the stated goals and manages to add two neat features, Y and Z." You should try to enhance this goal by maintaining a professional, collegial attitude during the presentation and ensuing discussion.

Your group's grade on design project 2 will not take into account your oral presentation. Instead, your presentation and the comments you make in critiquing other designs will be considered as part of your recitation grade. And don't worry about negative recommendations and misunderstandings by other classmates that critique your design; they do *not* affect your grade.

Some design teams are split between two sections; those design teams will make just one presentation, in the section belonging to the majority of the team's members. If you are a minority member and have the hour available, you are welcome to attend the other section. If, in order for you to attend that other section, your team should give its report at the beginning or end of the hour, let your instructor know so that they can take that into account when working out the presentation schedule.

Organizing a presentation:

It is quite a challenge to make a short presentation that actually communicates the things you really want to say, so it is a good idea, as part of your preparation, to do a "dry run". A dry run is a practice presentation in front of a mirror or a small group of friends, with a clock. The dry run gives you a chance both to find out if your talk is intelligible, and to assess whether or not you have the timing right.

A well-organized presentation will start off with a very brief overview, will make use of the blackboard to illustrate graphically how things work, and will make the most important points early, so that if you do run out of time, what you don't get to say

will be less important. Be careful not to get bogged down in detail, and select carefully the things you do want to talk about in depth. You can expect a "thirty seconds left" warning from your instructor; that is a good opportunity to gracefully (and quickly) wrap up whatever current point you are talking about, and move to a few closing words that remind the audience why your design is a winner.

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† While this presentation falls during the last week of classes, in consultation with the chair of the faculty we have determined that the assignment falls in the spirit of the end-of-term rules.