

Two Dollar Challenge

Knowledge in Action to End Poverty



**Challenge Week
Instructor's Guide**



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Challenge Week

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I. Introduction

Nearly half the world's population lives on less than two dollars a day. A significant number of these individuals live on less than a dollar a day. Indeed, the first of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals is halving this latter share of individuals by 2015. Accomplishing this goal is more daunting for some regions of the world as opposed to others. For example, in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, the share of the population living below \$1 a day is 43% and 35%, respectively. Whereas, in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Middle East and North Africa it is 9% and 2% respectively (World Bank 2007). Explaining this pattern of poverty and grasping a better understanding of the daily existence of the poor is the fundamental purpose of a course focused on global poverty and economic development.

Poverty can be likened to a trap. The poor that it ensnares are socially excluded, politically powerless, and vulnerable to crime, corruption, and coercion. They have limited access to education, technology, and markets. Overall they are marginalized, with few if any, economic opportunities to improve their standard of living. Poverty includes homelessness, malnutrition, lack of sanitation, and inadequate access to safe drinking water. Poverty's physical consequences include fatigue, susceptibility to disease and early death. Moreover, the daily struggle of the poor to secure the basic needs of warmth, water, food and shelter makes it difficult, indeed makes it risky, to plan for the future. The emotional distress, depression, and anxiety that attend poverty can lead the poor to believe that they are incapable of making a difference in their own lives. Poverty not only limits the economic opportunities of the poor, it can handicap their ability and their willingness to take advantage of the opportunities that are present.

It is one thing to learn about the multiple dimensions of poverty by carefully following abstract lines of reasoning in a classroom. It is something entirely different to begin learning how the other half lives with the assistance of personal experience. Toward accomplishing this end, Challenge Week asks participants to live on two dollars a day for five days and four nights. Participants also adhere to a number of additional rules which place constraints on their accustomed livelihoods. All are structured to offer them a momentary and admittedly incomplete glimpse into a poor individual's daily struggle to meet their basic needs.

Beyond asking participants to briefly step into the context of the poor, Challenge Week gives them an opportunity to be part of the solution. Each year we choose a poverty-related cause (for example, health, malnutrition, microfinance) and a non-governmental organization whose development programs address our chosen cause as a partner. Participants seek out sponsors who donate money to the challenge. Upon completion of Challenge Week, all donations are transferred to our partner. Through our non-profit partners we are able to relax, however minutely, one of the many constraints that the poor confront.

Some have argued that graduates of our higher education system cannot consider themselves educated if they do not have an understanding of how the other half of the world's population lives. Challenge Week attempts to do just that. It has numerous imperfections. However, given the set of tools with which to accomplish that objective - lectures, movies, readings, quotes from the poor – it is the least imperfect. Moreover, it allows participants to be part of the process of economic development.

II. Challenge Week

Challenge Week can be integrated into the courses of a number of disciplines – economics, business, geography, sociology, political science, engineering, and environmental science. Since the fall of 2006, we have had the opportunity to run Challenge Week in our Principles of Macroeconomics, Comparative Economics, and Economic Development courses. We run it as an extra credit assignment (see *Appendix: Assignment* and *Appendix: Extra Credit*). There are three fundamental steps:

Step 1: Choose a Cause

Poverty manifests itself in many forms. Consequently, when it comes to choosing a cause the list is lengthy – education, microfinance, enterprise development, water, HIV Aids, and environmental justice to name just a few. Over the years, our chosen cause has been microfinance (see the Instructor Page on-line for a number of resources to assist you in choosing a cause).

Step 2: Choose a Partner

The next step is to partner with the poor in an effort to break the self-perpetuating cycle of poverty. One way to do this is to select a non-profit partner that implements development programs that expand economic opportunities for the poor and/or improves their everyday living conditions.

Step 3: Take on Challenge Week

For five days and four nights, participants constrain their daily income to two dollars. These four nights may be spent in makeshift shelters. Participants also limit their access to water, clothing, other preexisting sources of wealth, and set a monetary goal. Participants can take the challenge and donate the difference between what they would have spent and their \$2 a day income. They can also seek out sponsors and have them tie their donation to each day that they successfully live on \$2 a day. Donors can also sponsor participants with a block donation. All donations are transferred to your chosen non-profit partner (see *Appendix: Collecting Donations* for guidance in this area).

In the following sub-sections, we will detail the various aspects of Challenge Week, including the rules, code-of-conduct, shelters on campus, and alternative assignments for non-participants.

Rules

Students participating in Challenge Week are asked to adhere to the established rules for the duration of the Challenge (see *Appendix: Rules*). Of course, the fundamental rule is that students constrain their daily income to two dollars a day. Students utilize a number of strategies while operating under the two dollar a day income constraint. Some will plan their meals for the duration of the Challenge and go to the grocery store with all five days worth of income to purchase their desired goods. Others will take the Challenge one day at a time and spend their income only when they feel like they need to. While still others will form into groups, pool together their resources, and coordinate their purchase of group goods. Students in these groups have specialized in the purchase of particular items – for example, the bulk purchase of rice and beans and the purchase of hygiene related items such as tooth paste and deodorant. Students in these groups have also specialized in boiling water, begging, raising funds for our non-profit partner and gathering the building materials for the shelters. Indeed, participants develop a small economy through the trading of goods and services with each other and non-participants.

Some of the more salient rules constraining participants include having to boil water before it can be consumed. Showers are not permitted. Participants can bathe from a public water source (for example, from a sink in a common area); however, hot water is not permitted unless personally heated. The consumption of electricity is regulated by nature. Lights can come on when the sun rises but have to go out when it sets. For any work to be completed after sunset, participants have to go to a common area to access electricity. Only two complete outfits of clothing are allowed and they must be kept on your possession at all times. Participants are also expected to attend two discussion nights to be held at the shelters.

We have a number of exemptions designed into the simulation to maintain the safety of the participants - including access to refrigeration for perishable items and a stove top with appropriate pans for boiling water. Health related goods and services are allowed into the simulation. Recognizing the fact that some participants are also parents, dependent family members are exempt from the rules. Moreover, the consumption of gasoline is exempt for students who commute or have jobs and/or internships that they drive to. Students are also allowed to bring in their uniforms for work or athletic teams. Finally, students have continued access to housing without constraint.

Code-of-Conduct

In addition to the rules, we also have a code-of-conduct which we review with the students and ask them to sign before taking the Challenge (see *Appendix: Code of Conduct*). One obvious rule is that

participants are not allowed to relax their income constraint through stealing. They are allowed to request assistance from others in the community – for example, begging for food. However, they must ask for assistance from individuals other than their friends and family. Moreover, they must request assistance first and explain the exercise they are engaged in second. The sequence of actions is crucial for two reasons. By requesting assistance first, participants have an opportunity to experience the humbling process of asking for assistance from others. Explaining the exercise they are engaged in next provides participants with an opportunity to spread awareness of global poverty. It also provides those individuals from which they begged an opportunity to rescind their assistance. These individuals may feel those resource would be better dedicated for those in the local community who are truly in need and/or homeless.

Participants will most likely have non-participants approach them and offer to donate food, drinks, and even articles of clothing. While donations ease the self-imposed income constraint participants are operating under, we have decided to allow participants to accept them for two reasons. Accepting donations facilitates interaction between participants and non-participating community members. These interactions provide a valuable opportunity to raise awareness and understanding. The donations are also a stark reminder to participants about the wealth of resources in their community. We leave it up to each participant to decide whether or not to consume perishable food donations. However, donations of non-perishable food and drink and other items are stored for the duration of the Challenge and delivered to the local homeless shelter upon its conclusion.

Arriving at the above decision regarding donations was a struggle; however, it was a valuable exercise. It compelled us (the authors and our students) to honestly debate the purpose of this experiential-learning exercise. Upon first thought, one could reasonably conclude that accepting donations undermines the whole purpose of the exercise. Challenge Week, however, is a personal journey for participants. They must decide how best to navigate the contrasts between their lives within and outside the exercise. For example, outside the Challenge their days are characterized by ease, fluidity and predictability. They wake up in the morning throwing off their covers and the air in the room feels comfortable regardless of the time of year. With an adjustment of the thermostat, it is cooled and conditioned in the summer and warmed in the winter. Whatever their wake-up time, once out of bed, they can flip a switch and enjoy a lighted path to the bathroom. An effortless twist of a handle allows them to enjoy clean water for whatever purpose they intend. By twisting the handle marked with an “H” their water is not only clean but is heated. Preparing their breakfast is just as simple. It may require pushing a button. Similarly, their clothes are washed and dried with minimal effort. Ready for the day, they tuck away their lap-top, cell-phone, i-pod, and any and all other things used in the process of accumulating knowledge into their backpack. However, before they proceed on to class, they need their caffeine. The

local barista prepares their caffeine vehicle of choice in exchange for that little piece of plastic in their wallet, pocket, or purse. Indeed, whenever they pass that little piece of plastic across any counter, other people, who for the most part are strangers, in exchange for its momentary possession, will give them whatever they desire at that moment: a latte, a burrito, a slice of pizza, music, books, the list is endless. Yet, their days within the Challenge are more difficult, disrupted, and unpredictable. Participants find themselves spending an unusual amount of time being cautious, planning and strategizing. That includes the time spent walking up and down the aisles of a grocery stores deciding on what to get, moving back and forth between stores gathering price information, possibly brainstorming on how best to construct shelters in an effort protect themselves against the elements, and/or boiling water.

There are innumerable moments throughout the Challenge when participants crave the luxury of clean drinking water with the twist of the faucet, instant illumination at the flip of a switch, or a cup of coffee that will break their \$10 budget. In those moments, they must decide whether to adhere, bend or break a rule. How far each participant wants to take the experience of Challenge Week is a personal decision. Whatever their decision, these are indelible moments for participants. In these moments they recognize that they have a choice. They are choosing to “play” poverty and in some cases they may not do a very good job at it. Moreover, they have an exit at the end of Challenge Week. For nearly half the world’s population there is no choice to adhere, bend or break a rule to fulfill a desire. There is no immediate exit. Challenge Week places participants in these moments for a moment through the contrast that it creates. Challenge Week is not about strict adherence to the rules. Indeed, it should not be.

Shelters

In addition to living on two dollars a day, a number of participants including one of the authors choose to reside in shelters on campus. This aspect of the exercise is fully optional. Participants can choose to stay all four nights in the shelters, one or two nights, or move back and forth from the shelters and their dorm rooms as they see fit. The shelters serve as a place for participants to store non-perishable food and clothing. Indeed, a number of participants spend most if not all of their free time between classes and other activities at the shelters.

The chosen location and layout of the shelters are important factors to consider. We have chosen to construct shelters in the heart of campus. This not only draws awareness it also facilitates fundraising. We also do our best to position our shelters and accompanying sitting area in a way that is most inviting for non-participating students, administrators, faculty members and campus visitors to approach us and inquire about the exercise. As was mentioned earlier, on a number of occasions community members will drop off food, drinks, and other items. Making their approach easier is another reason to accept

donations. Indeed, some of the most rewarding moments of this exercise occur when non-participating students approach us with donations and/or questions and subsequently ask to join us in the exercise.

Participants choosing to stay one or more nights in the shelters are permitted to bring additional wealth into the exercise - including tarps and sleeping bags. On the Mary Washington campus we use cardboard collected from behind the local grocery store, tarps, stakes, rope and various other items collected from campus dumpsters to construct our shelters. Over the years, the shelters have evolved from a simple lean-to to one large communal structure. Participants on other campuses have chosen to build individual structures; however, having one large communal structure is advantageous for a number of reasons. First and foremost it creates a sense of community among the participants. Together we build and take down a shared space. In this shared space we hold our two dinner and discussion nights. On these occasions, we come together to share our resources for a communal dinner and discuss a chosen reading on the second night and share our experiences, stories and overall reflection on the last night of the exercise (see homepage for a list of discussion topics). The shelters also provide a space to hold office hour and small classes.

Adding this aspect to the exercise also provides an avenue for participants to experience (once again only an approximation) the incomplete protection that makeshift shelters provide against the elements. On the Mary Washington campus we have experienced torrential downpours, below freezing cold spells, and unusual heat waves. Participants have witnessed food not properly stored spoil due to the rain or heat. Others have had their food taken or partially consumed by squirrels and dogs. While the squirrels and dogs may be lighthearted moments, food spoiling is not. These moments provide a valuable opportunity to talk about some of the risks that accompany the life of those living in slums. Risks we have mitigated with climate-controlled dwellings constructed of robust materials.

Maintaining close communication with your university is necessary. On the Mary Washington campus, university officials keep the instructor informed of the possibility of inclement weather. In the case of inclement weather, all participants are required to move to a nearby building (left unlocked for this purpose by campus police) or return to their dorm rooms. On the Mary Washington campus we have yet to be asked by the university to do this.

Journal and Blog

Challenge Week can be a transformative experience. Its emotional and physical discomforts can inspire significant reflections from participants. We believe that it is in those reflective moments that the educational value of this exercise resides. Indeed, we believe that this value is magnified when it is expressed and shared with others. For these reasons, we invite participants to blog in an effort to

introduce themselves to each other and document their experiences throughout the week (for example, with photographs and video-posts). We also strongly encourage our participants to use this forum to comment on the blog posts of other participants and share their overall reflections at the Week's end. Those who would like to keep their experiences personal can maintain a daily journal – however, they are expected to make comments on the blog posts of other participants. We generally conclude Challenge Week on a Friday and request participants to write their final blog post or turn in their daily journals, accompanied by receipts documenting their expenses over the week, before the following week's scheduled course meeting time. Of course, for those participants who choose to blog they simply turn in their receipts. See *Appendix: Blogging* for guidance in structuring this part of Challenge Week.

Alternative Assignment

Not all students will choose to participate in Challenge Week. There are a number of reasons which range from health concerns to scheduling conflicts with athletic events and university assignments. This is completely understandable. It is difficult for participants to maintain peak performance under these conditions. This project is physically, intellectually, and emotionally challenging. We make it a point not to have any assignments due during this week. Some students decline to participate because of jobs and internships that require them to maintain a certain level of personal hygiene. We provide a number of opportunities in the weeks leading up to Challenge Week for students to gather information about its requirements. We review the rules and code-of-conduct on the first day of class. As Challenge Week gets closer, we invite past participants to share their experiences during class time. We also hold interest meetings outside of class. While these reviews of Challenge Week are public, the decision to participate or not is a private one for students. A preliminary count of participants is possible at the meeting during which we review and have students sign the Code-of-Conduct. A final count is possible once blogs are posted and journals turned in upon the conclusion of Challenge Week. Some students may decide to participate and then drop out of the exercise and others may decide to join in late. In both cases, after brief conversations with the student, we have awarded partial extra credit. For non-participants, we provide alternative ways for them to earn extra credit. There are two options we have used in the past: committees and an individual research project (see *Appendix: Alternative Assignments*).

III. Conclusion

Challenge Week strives to provide an approximation of a poor individual's context. However, at its best, it provides a very incomplete one. Beyond a severely limited income, there are a multitude of additional constraints that the poor confront in developing and transitioning economies - constraints that simply cannot be approximated. Although living on only \$2 a day, participants can expect that their body and physical possessions are protected against the predation of others. The Challenge is conducted within the context of a stable society. There is no immediate threat of political upheaval. There are no hordes of bandits roaming through campus. Participants have continued access to campus security. Indeed, they can expect that those tasked with the responsibility of protecting them will not prey upon them. There are no impromptu checkpoints by which university officials can tax participants indirectly by coercing bribes. In the case of inclement weather, participants have a ready retreat to the comfort and warmth of university buildings. Although participants have to boil their water, they know that it is safe to drink. Although participants are only permitted to bathe from a sink and are limited to only two complete outfits of clothing, when they interact with the wider college community they can feel confident that for the most part their community will receive them without discrimination. Participants have continued access to health-care including relatively low-cost prescription drugs and follow-up care. There is no threat of malaria or water-borne diseases. There is sanitation. Their intake of food and drink is more constrained than usual; however, they still have the opportunity to enjoy a well-balanced vitamin and nutrient-rich diet. More importantly, participants are only feeding one mouth!

All of the aforementioned are additional constraints that the poor confront and Challenge Week cannot simulate. However, even with these limitations it has a number of strengths (see *Appendix: Measuring Impact*).

1. Raises Awareness: Challenge Week is a conversation starter about global poverty. Every interaction between a participant and a non-participant - whether at the dinner table, on campus, or in surrounding community - is an opportunity to inform a larger audience about the pervasiveness of poverty and the role of his/her chosen non-profit partner in eradicating it.

“It is not like I hadn't heard about poverty before, but I think there is something to be said for feeling it in this experiment. No, we did not mimic the conditions of poverty exactly, but it is harder to ignore. Plus, I got my friends and people I knew involved. That is neat. It is hard to just one day bring up “Hey, so about poverty...” at the dinner table, but it is another thing entirely to bring it up as something you are doing in class.” *Anonymous Student*

2. Engenders Empathy: Whereas the physical discomforts that attend the Challenge recede when participants return back their wealthy lifestyles, the emotional discomforts linger. Over the years, student journal and blog entries have demonstrated that Challenge Week does succeed in engendering a deeper sensitivity and awareness concerning the economic lives of the poor.

“Despite the lack of realism of this assignment, I gained quite a bit of insight into the hardships of impoverished people...I am now painfully aware of what it means when text books and articles talk about people who receive a lower-than-optimal amount of calories.” *Anonymous Student*

“Perhaps more than anything, I realized, yet again, that even with all the limitations we are so blessed to have been born where we are. Our physical struggles to survive are practically nonexistent in comparison to billions of people who actually live below the international poverty line...I am also glad that we were given time to truly reflect on people living in poverty anytime our stomach growled, a headache persisted or all we wanted to do was sleep.”
Anonymous Student

3. Provides an Opportunity to Act: In addition to raising funds Challenge Week provides its participants an opportunity to act by partnering with non-profit organizations that are actively engaged in alleviating poverty.

Challenge Week can be customized to fit any course that has the opportunity to address global poverty.

You can ask your students to live on two dollars a day for one or two days with or without adhering to any additional rules. We have a number of resources in the appendix and on-line

(<http://twodollarchallenge.org/instructors/>) to facilitate your implementation of Challenge Week: a list of lectures with accompanying PowerPoints and discussion topics, guidelines for handling donations, and suggestions for implementing Challenge Week on the Community College Campus.

Good luck!

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Appendix

Assignment

From Monday, April 5 (starting at 7 am) through Friday, April 9 (ending at 4 pm) we will be conducting Challenge Week. Here are the ways in which you, as a student, can be eligible for extra credit.

1. Participate in Challenge Week

A. Live on \$2 a day and adhere to the rules and code of conduct during the week of the project. See <http://www.twodollarchallenge.org/> to download the participant's manual.

i. Please note that living in the shelters on campus is optional. You are free to move in and out of the shelter during the day and night. You can spend all four nights in the shelter or some nights in the shelter and other nights in the dorm or your home.

B. Keep a receipt of all your expenditures during the week. Keep a log of the items and amount you would have purchased throughout the day. Calculate this difference.

C. Join our *Poverty Discussion Forum* (hosted by MFI Connect). Here is how:

i. Sign Up: (<http://www.mficonnect.com/main/authorization/signUp>)

ii. Join the TDC Group on MFI Connect:
<http://www.mficonnect.com/group/twodollarchallenge>

iii. Here is where you will blog and post comments on other blog entries. You are expected to make at least one daily blog post on MFIconnect and at least 1 comment on another student's posting each day.

a. Here you can post pictures and videos

b. Remember that you are an ambassador for the University of Mary Washington so be professional. When participating in the challenge, including blog entries, please adhere to the *TDC Code of Conduct included in the participant's manual*. Be respectful. Disparaging remarks in relation to others' ethnic or racial background, sex, sexual preference, age, disability, socioeconomic background, etc. will not be tolerated.

iii. Those who would like to keep their experience personal can keep a daily journal – however, you will be expected to make comments on others' blogposts.

D. Go to http://www.optinnow.org/group/the_two_dollar_challenge_-_umw_chapter and join UMW's group on Opportunity International's OptInNow homepage (<http://www.optinnow.org/>)

E. On the Tuesday following Challenge Week, you will need to turn in your Signed Challenge Week Code of Conduct Sheet with your receipts attached. If you kept a personal journal, you are required to turn this in as well.

2. If you cannot participate in Challenge Week, you can still earn extra credit.

Please note that in no way should extra credit be tied to a student's willingness and/or ability to garner donations for the Two Dollar Challenge.

Reminder for all participants: You are operating under the honor code.

Rules

1. All goods and services consumed over the five days must be newly purchased out of your \$2 a day income. These items include, but are not limited to personal hygiene products, cosmetics, cell phones (pay phones are allowed) and other personal electronic devices, and any stored food or drinks. You cannot use your meal plans over the five days.
2. With just a few exceptions, you cannot use any part of the wealth you enjoyed before the beginning of the week.
3. Gasoline must come out of your income.
4. Water taken from a private (personal tap) or public source (water fountain) must be boiled before it can be consumed. You are permitted to use a pan and stove top without charge. For safety concerns, you are allowed to bring an appropriate container for boiling water into the simulation.
5. There will be no showers. You can bathe from a public water source (for example, a common sink), however you are not permitted to use the hot water tap. You can use other means to heat water to desired temperature for bathing.
6. Your consumption of electricity should coincide with nature. For example, lights can come on when the sun rises but must go out at sunset.
7. Your consumption of heat will not be constrained. Indoor heating is permitted.
8. You are permitted two complete outfits of clothing. Both complete outfits must be kept on your possession for the duration of the project. Layering is encouraged.
9. You can barter for additional goods and services that you wish to consume outside of your \$2 a day income. You must provide a service in exchange for these goods (for example, cleaning a dorm room). You cannot ask friends or family members, but are encouraged to seek out individuals within the larger university community for assistance.
10. Any monetary assistance you receive during the five days cannot be used for consumption. It must be donated to the cause that all of your fundraising efforts are going towards.
11. During the Challenge there may be campus events which include free food. The food at these events is off-limit.
12. Food cannot be accepted from friends and family. Unsolicited food donations *can* be accepted to help facilitate communication with those in the community who show interest.

Exemptions

1. Gasoline consumption for commuter students and those who drive to work or internships.
2. Dependent family members.
3. Consumption of all health related goods and services.
4. Uniforms for work or extracurricular activities.
5. Refrigeration
6. Pots and Pans for boiling water

If you are planning on staying in the shelters overnight, you are allowed to bring in the following wealth:

1. Sleeping Bag
2. Blanket
3. Tarp

Code of Conduct

1. As students representing an educational program and liaisons for our partner economic development organizations, stealing absolutely cannot be tolerated.
2. All University rules must be followed.
3. Those who participate in Challenge Week will face physical and emotional hardships, but they are still expected to participate in all class work and other assignments.
4. Begging from local businesses and others is allowed, but you must beg first and explain the Challenge later. By begging a participant experiences the emotional process involved, and after this initial exposure explaining the program provides an opportunity to spread awareness of world poverty and economic development.
5. At all times participants must respect those nearby who are truly in need. If at any time those in Challenge Week are using resources which are valuable for indigent residents in the area this action must be re-evaluated.
6. Food on campus – you are allowed to accept food from community members, because this provides an avenue for others to come to us so that we can share our experiences, however you are not allowed to eat free food on campus. If it is discarded that is fine, but no free cookouts or food from clubs.

Challenge Week is an educational exercise which is designed to help aid in the transformation of a student into an empowered actor in the eradication of poverty. Participants are expected to act in a respectful manner at all times and strive to spread awareness and inspire activism in every interaction. By taking part in Challenge Week a participant becomes a liaison for those living in severe poverty around the world as well as a representative of their college or university and the organizations which we have chosen to partner with. By participating you agree to the above Code of Conduct and to act in a respectful and sensitive manner throughout the Challenge.

Participant Name

Participant Signature

Date

Blogging

The blogging component of the Two Dollar Challenge is a collaborative learning process that allows students to connect with each other and share their experience, thoughts, and coping suggestions. It provides a social networking aspect to the Challenge that forms a sense of camaraderie and empowerment against global poverty. In addition, blogging has been used as a graded component of the extra credit assignment. For example, requiring at least one original posting and one comment on another student's posting a day. Setting ground rules for the blog forum helps the student to understand what is expected of them and what is considered unacceptable behavior.

Three Rules for the Blog Forum

- 1) Please remember that the culture of mutual respect is part of this course.
- 2) Participation in the blog is required for extra credit, unless journal option is elected. However, commenting on another student's posting each day is always required.
- 3) Participation alone is not enough; a thoughtful and meaningful approach in your posts is required - Quality counts!

Setting-up an online blog for your class can be done using one of the many blogging websites such as Google® Blogger or Yahoo® Pulse. In the past, one website of choice has been <http://www.mficonnect.com/>. Mficonnect.com helps students to share their experience not only with others at their university but also people from around the world all working to fight global poverty. Additionally, students can connect with others taking The Challenge at colleges across the country. This platform for sharing ideas and experiences from many regions around the country helps to further amplify the empowerment that students feel when participating in The Challenge.

Past Blog Entries:

“After that challenge, I know I have been changed. What an experience. I still can't imagine what it would be to live like that and worse day-in and day-out. While I am thankful that I can eat what I like, I know that I will think about those that have so little every day for the rest of my life.”

- Anonymous Student

“So the first two days were not all that bad my meals are a bit bland but at least we have some choices here. One thing I was noticing as I was walking through the store is that although we are restricting ourselves to two dollars a day we do get to choose what that two dollars is spent on. Most people living in poverty don't get the luxury of choice. I got a can of veggies to last me the week, I am used to a fresh salad every day but I am sure that even a can of veggies would be a treat to a lot of people. It makes you realize how much we take advantage of in our society. I only spent \$ 5.15 at the store so I do have a bit left for the rest of the week.”

- Anonymous Student

Alternative Assignment

Students not taking the \$2 a day challenge may still participate and earn extra credit by joining a two dollar challenge committee or writing a paper on overcoming poverty. You may offer, and find, that some students wish to participate in both the Challenge Week and a committee. In doing so, it is a great opportunity for the student and can help to further enrich the experience.

About Committees

There are 4 recommended committees to establish that will assist in Challenge Week, Treasury, Public Relations, Project Selection, and Participants. However, you may conduct Challenge Week by establishing all, one, or none of the following committees. That is, they are not a necessity for conducting the Challenge but help to reduce instructor workload and have become an intricate part of past Challenge Weeks. In addition, class size may limit the amount of committees that you can establish and force you to prioritize. Therefore, we have ranked the following list in order of importance given past experience.

When establishing a committee, it will be helpful, as the instructor, to assign the role of committee chairperson to a student or, have the student committee vote. Given the incentive to free-ride by group members, it is recommended that the committee chair receive a few additional extra credit points. Additionally, reiterating that leadership roles are valuable line items for résumés and letters of recommendation will help with recruitment.

Committee List

1) Treasury Committee

This committee is tasked with the responsibility of overseeing the collection and disbursement of the donations generated by the project. It is recommended that this committee have at least 3 members. Additional responsibilities and guidelines for the Treasury Committee can be found in the Two Dollar Challenge Treasury Committee Constitution.

2) Public Relations Committee

This committee is tasked with the responsibility of informing the university, community, and wider public with regard to the project and generating interest. For example, members of this committee can inform the school newspaper, student life organization, or local paper about Challenge Week. In addition, members can design fliers to post around campus or inform local businesses and possibly obtain sponsorship.

Project Selection Committee

3) This committee is tasked with the responsibility of selecting a non-profit partner that will receive the donations. Responsibilities will include not only selection of the partner, but registration and the necessary steps required in order to transfer the donations.

4) Participants Committee

This committee is tasked with the responsibility of organizing and documenting Challenge Week on campus. When conducting Challenge Week with multiple classes, and thus many students, it can be advantageous to have oversight of its participation. Members of this committee will be tasked with creating an electronic list of all students participating in living on \$2 a day as well as all committee

members. If conducting The Challenge with multiple classes, recommend that the committee send members to each class to conduct a census.

Overcoming Poverty Analysis Paper

Students that do not wish to participate in Challenge Week or join a committee can still earn extra credit by writing an analysis paper. Below are instructions and guidelines that have been used in past principles courses for students electing this option.

I. Directions

Go to the following homepage:

<http://www.copenhagenconsensus.com/The%2010%20challenges-1.aspx>

Choose one of the ten global challenges enumerated. Download the Challenge paper and any “perspective” papers included to write a 5 – 7 page overview of the global challenge.

II. Format Guidelines

1. Final Paper:

- a. Due date: To be determined by instructor.
- b. Presentation of the paper (optional): You may wish to have the student present his/her paper to the class.
- c. Format:
 - i. The final paper should be arranged in the following order: title page, abstract, outline, appendix (if any) references, tables (if any), and figures (if any).
 - ii. The title page should contain the title, author's name, institutional affiliation, date, email address, JEL classification code (or appropriate social science code), and list of keywords.
 - a. Please see instructor for a sample title page.
 - iii. The abstract should be double-spaced and have a maximum of 100 words. No page number should appear on this page. An abstract summarizes your paper's main points and conclusions. It is important to be clear and concise - present your work in condensed form. In the abstract you should tell your reader the following: the focus of your paper, why it is significant (scholarly relevance), what scholars have said about the subject, how you will organize your paper, and what the expected conclusions are (this can be general).
 - iv. The body of the paper should start on a separate page be 1.5-spaced throughout, using margins 1" all around and 12 font – Times New Roman. Do not justify. It should be limited to 5-7 pages. Page numbering begins with the body of the paper.
 - a. **See the Suggested Outline below.**
 - b. Page numbers should be centered at the bottom of the page.
 - c. Citation style will conform to chapter 16 of the 15th edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style* (or other instructor approved citation style).
 - vi. Appendix(es): should begin immediately after the conclusion of the outline (on a new page). Each appendix should have a brief title; if there is more than one, specify "Appendix 1, Appendix 2,"...
 - v. Reference List: should begin on a new page, yet continues the numbering of the pages in the text.
 - a. Should be titled **Reference List**
 - b. Only sources cited in the text should be included.
 - c. Your Reference list should be single-spaced with a space between each entry and contain a minimum of 10 sources
 - d. Follow the reference style referred to above.

vi. Tables: should be preceded by a number and title.

vii. Figures: should be preceded by a number and title. Do not typewrite or hand-draw anything; use computer-generated figures whenever possible. All figures should look alike in terms of proportion, font, and the manner in which you arrange the data.

II. Suggested Outline

1. Briefly describe the Copenhagen Consensus

- What does the CC propose to do? How does it propose to do it? Why is this exercise important? Keep this brief.

2. Overview of the Challenge in which have chosen to focus.

- Focus on the theoretical link between overcoming this challenge and economic growth. Another way to state this is – if this challenge is overcome, why should we expect to witness a reduction in poverty? Here you may want to turn to the class lecture notes to support your theoretical link.

3. Overview of the Opportunity that will supposedly allow us to overcome this challenge

- What do the proponents of the policy say? Why do they advocate this policy?

4. Critique of the Opportunity and/or the Challenge as well

- What do opponents to this opportunity say? Why do they believe that the pursuit of this policy will be ineffectual?

5. Concluding Thoughts

- Here there may be opportunity for you to make a judgment.

Extra Credit

Using extra credit to motivate students to participate in Challenge Week is a decision we have revisited multiple times. On the one hand, we want students participating because they want to earn experiential wisdom not extra credit. On the other hand, we have had participants remark, through informal communications and in their blogs and journals, how they were motivated to take on Challenge Week by the extra credit. Yet, having had the experience, they would do it again without the chance for extra credit. We have concluded that extra credit gives us the opportunity to engage those students who may not have given global poverty much thought into a deeper reflection of the issues that surround it. In some ways this is where Challenge Week makes its biggest educational impact.

Over the years the extra credit we have awarded has ranged from 1% to 5% of the total grade. Most recently, in one of our upper level economics course, the extra credit accounted for 3.75% of the total grade. As we mentioned in the Instructor's Guide, you may have some participants drop out of the Challenge sometime during the week and others join the Challenge sometime during the week. On these occasions, we have awarded partial extra credit.

It is important that you make it absolutely clear to participants and non-participants on the Committees that their extra credit is in no way tied to their willingness and/or ability to raise donations for your non-profit partner.

Collecting Donations

It is important that when collecting donations it be as transparent as possible and that measures are implemented to ensure accountability. There are 3 ways in which monetary donations can be received:

- 1) Receiving cash or check directly
- 2) Pledge forms
- 3) Via your chosen global poverty partner's website
 - a. Opportunity International
 - b. Other

Collecting cash or check donations

Cash or check donations must only be transferred into the instructor's possession at official Treasury Committee meetings (see appendix on committees) that have met quorum (at least 3 members present). The amount of cash or check must be verified by all members of the Treasury Committee. The donation is then placed in a sealed envelope with the amount of the donation written on the front of the envelope and initialed by all Treasury members. Additionally, each Treasury member must sign his or her name over the seal of the envelope. At this time, the secretary of the Treasury committee must note in a ledger the amount of the donation and in what form, cash or check, it was received along with the donor's name and/or tax ID number, if a business.

Checks should not be made-out to the instructor. Instead, have your chosen sponsor inform you with regard to the check's correct addressee. For example, Opportunity International requests that checks be addressed to OptInNow and that the memo of the check identify the entrepreneur's identification number in which your class is sponsoring. Upon completion of the above guidelines, the instructor may now take possession of the donations.

Transferring Donations

Donations in the form of a check can typically be mailed to your chosen global poverty partner and a tax receipt can be issued on the donator's behalf. Cash donations can typically be transferred via credit card (instructor's) to your chosen global poverty partner on behalf of the individual or firm. At this point, a tax receipt can be issued for the donator.

Pledge Forms

Donations received with pledge forms should be dealt with in the same manner as the above documentation on *collecting cash or check donations* describes with one additional component. A member of the Treasury committee must verify that the amount of each pledge corresponds to the amount written on the pledge sheet. This creates accountability and oversight so that a misappropriation of pledge form funds does not occur.

Website Collections

Your global poverty partner will typically have a method for collecting donations on behalf of your chosen cause. A link or ID number will usually direct those wishing to make a donation online to a secure web server in order to facilitate a credit card transaction.

Measuring Impact

There are a number of ways to measure the Impact of Challenge Week:

1. Number of Participants

- A. Record the number of participants (whether or not they are in your class)
 - i. Include brief biographic information – year in school and major.

2. Awareness Raised

- A. Keep track of the publicity Challenge Week raises (for example, in the university newspaper and/or local and regional newspapers, radio stations, and news channels)

3. Donations Raised

- A. Record the total funds raised for your non-profit partner.
- B. Gather information about the project towards which the funds raised will be directed.

4. Educational Impact

- A. Compose a “Best Of” blogs and journal entries list.

Community College

Conducting the Two Dollar Challenge at a community college will operate in much the same way as was previously outlined for a 4-year university. However, experience has found that the diversity of student population attending a community college may differ from that of a 4-year. The average age of the student body, for example, tends to be greater. Student life programs, though every bit as extensive as a 4-year, do not entail on-campus living or fraternity housing. Structural differences may also be present and include such factors as socioeconomic and/or household composition. Therefore, the following caveats and suggestions will help to ensure success:

- 1) The necessity of commuting via car or public transportation does not preclude students from participating. However, suggesting carpooling or biking demonstrates to the student that he/she can still be included even though they may live a great distance from campus. The simple act of having to contemplate an alternative means of transportation demonstrates to students the hardships faced by those in developing nations when trying to work and/or obtain an education without a reliable means of travel.
- 2) Given the distance from home to campus and/or family obligations, some students may be unable to participate in on-campus shelters. In the past, these students have found that they can mimic this aspect at home (at least to some degree) by using a sleeping bag on the floor and the use candle light. Encouraging these students to attend the dinner and discussion session at the shelter will help create a social connection for them given the absence of their overnight stay.
- 3) When introducing The Challenge to the students, remind them that participating, either in a committee or The Challenge itself, offers you as the instructor more attributes to include in a letter of recommendation. This can be a strong incentive for community college students as many are shortly anticipating transfer to a 4-year degree granting institution.