The Nonprofit Board Leadership Seminar provides the intellectual underpinning for the Board Fellows Program, which is offered by the Consulting & Business Development Center at the Michael G. Foster School of Business. Board Fellows are assigned to boards of directors of nonprofit organizations throughout the Greater Puget Sound area and serve with those boards for an academic year. The Nonprofit Board Leadership Seminar assists students in maximizing their service to nonprofit organizations by examining the fundamental responsibilities of board members and the challenges of board governance. The seminar affords students the opportunity to explore research-based strategies and tactics to become effective board leaders in nonprofit organizations. The seminar is also a space for students to reflect on the experiences they encounter as first-time board members.

The Nonprofit Board Leadership Seminar meets three times in fall quarter, twice in winter quarter, and twice in spring quarter. Given that this is an “experiential learning” based class, a good portion of the learning will take place during the hours students spend attending board of directors general meetings, subcommittee meetings, retreats, and other organizational functions at their assigned nonprofit organization. This work generally involves two hour board meetings and one hour of subcommittee/ events per month (about 24 hours total between October and May). In addition, students are required to attend 16 hours of the Board Leadership Seminar during the entire academic year.

During the fall quarter, as students get oriented to their board service and organizations, they can expect to spend approximately 20 hours participating in board meetings, events, orientations, project planning sessions, as well as scheduled leadership seminars. Once students have a project scoped and are regularly participating in meetings, they can anticipate their time commitment to be approximately 10 hours per quarter. Therefore, the course will count towards 2 credit hours in the fall quarter and then 1 credit hour in winter and 1 credit hour in spring. In total, the course will account for 4 credits during the academic year and be graded on a credit/no credit basis.

During the academic year, each student’s participation on their assigned board of directors and the quality of their board project will be supervised by the UW faculty member overseeing this course. The faculty member will arrange time with students during the academic year to provide coaching on how to effectively fulfill their role as board members and successfully complete their board projects.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the completion of the course students will understand:

• The central roles and responsibilities of serving on a board of directors.
• Competencies required to become an effective board leader.
• Distinction between management leadership and board leadership.
• History and trends in the nonprofit sector in the region.
• Common tools and frameworks used by boards for the strategic management and evaluation of nonprofit organizations.
• Financial obligations and fiduciary responsibilities of board members
• Ethical considerations of nonprofit board members
• The advocacy roles board members can assume in their organizations.
• Issues of diversity and equity in nonprofit boards

Key texts for this course:


UW Board Fellows Program Handbook by the UW Consulting and Business Development Center at the Foster School of Business. (2017)

Additional readings are listed below. Readings may be added or substituted as over the course of the academic year.

FALL QUARTER

Session 1: KICKOFF: Challenges and Opportunities of Nonprofit Board Leadership
Friday September 29th 7:30-9:00am

• Introduction to the program
• Guest speaker addressing a central topic or trend in nonprofit board leadership.
• Roundtable discussion between students, nonprofit executives and board members around the most pressing issues facing nonprofit board today.

Readings

• UW Board Fellows Program Handbook

Session 2: Effective Board Leadership
Saturday October 14th 8:30-12:30pm PACCAR HALL 392

• Student introductions
• Course assignment and expectations
• History and trends in nonprofit governance
• Overview of roles and responsibilities of board members (fiduciary, accountability and financial oversight etc.)
• Exercising Leadership on Boards
Readings

Session 3: Board Project Development and Execution
Friday October 20th 1:30-3:20pm PACCAR HALL 392
- Board project development and management
- Effective practices for consulting to a CEO and Board of Directors
- Guest Speakers on conducting strategic research projects for nonprofit boards. (Q&A with Board Fellow Alumni and Nonprofit Executive Director)

Readings
- Sample board projects
- Project scoping template

Assignments
1. Small group discussion in class on key readings
2. Board project feedback meeting
3. Board project proposal (Due December 14th)

WINTER QUARTER
Session 4: Strategic Leadership in Nonprofit Boards
Friday January 26th 1:30-3:20pm
- Panel discussion on strategic tools used for board governance
- Small group discussion in class on key readings

Readings

Assignments
1. Readings and class discussions
2. Board reflection journal submission
3. Developing questions for guest speakers
4. Board project check-ins
Session 5: Board Leadership for Financial Strength and Sustainability  
**Friday March 2\textsuperscript{nd} 1:30-3:20pm**
- Nonprofit funding models identification and analysis
- Panel on board member fiduciary responsibility
- Student Q & A with panelist on leadership for financial strength and sustainability

Readings
- Foster and Bradach, (2005) ‘Should Nonprofits Seek Profits”

Assignment
1. Board project status report
2. Board project consultations
3. Board service leadership journal

**SPRING QUARTER**

Session 6: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in Nonprofit Boards  
**Friday March 30\textsuperscript{th} 1:30-3:20pm**
- Discussion of readings
- Panel discussion on best practices in DEI and Q&A
- Board project working groups

Readings

Assignment
1. Board project check-in
2. Small group discussion in class on key readings

Session 7: Board Project Presentations  
**Friday April 20\textsuperscript{th} 1:30-3:20pm**
- Presentations of nonprofit projects in small groups
- Course evaluation

Readings
NA
Assignment
1. PowerPoint deck with summary of project
2. Nonprofit partner feedback survey
3. Course feedback and evaluation

Participation: Students are expected to participate in board meetings, all seminars, complete the assigned reading in advance of class, and participate in class & small group discussions and exercises. Course format will include lecture and small group discussion. If you must miss class, please notify your instructor before class if possible. It is the student’s responsibility to negotiate a plan for making up any missed class participation.

EVALUATION OF STUDENTS

Satisfactory completion of this course for credit will be based on the following

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board project feedback meeting</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board project proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Board service reflection journal</td>
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<td>Board project status report</td>
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<td>Evaluation by Board Mentor</td>
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<td>Final board project</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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NOTE: While students will spend the majority of their time in this program serving on a nonprofit board and conducting a board project for their organization, the quality of their work will be evaluated by the UW faculty member in charge of this course.

BOARD LEADERSHIP REFLECTIONS JOURNAL
A central component of getting the most from your board experience is learning from the challenges of this new role. To support you in this effort, you will be asked to submit entries of your learning into a Board Leadership Reflection Journal. The instructor will provide you the guiding questions for these entries which will be due a few times during the academic year.

BOARD PROJECT
The project should leverage your skills and knowledge to gain specific expertise on at least one aspect of the nonprofit while addressing a critical need of the board. This project should be approved by your board and the instructor prior to beginning the project. This project should involve the collaboration of nonprofit board members. It is estimated the project will take between 40-50 hours per student. These hours are in addition to the time students spend attending board meeting and the leadership seminar.
Generally there are two students matched with each nonprofit organization and both students may work on one project, if the nonprofit board deems the project robust enough for two graduate students. In either case, each student should plan to work approximately 40-50 hours on this project.

Each nonprofit organization is asked to identify projects based on the board’s needs. After the Fellow begins serving on the board, the organization and the student will jointly collaborate to decide on a project that can be completed during the student’s tenure on the board. A good project will be one that is important to the board of directors, uses the Fellow’s skills and furthers the work of a board committee or the board as a whole.

When selecting a project consider the following:

- Is the topic of the project important to the board of directors?
- The project must be board-level. This is not the type of project that could be assigned to an intern at the organization to assist management (i.e., marketing plan design, financial audit, staff evaluations etc.).
- Will the results be discussed and used by the board?
- Is it clearly defined, has beginning and an end, and agreed upon by the Board Mentor, the CEO and the Fellow?
- Is it strategic in nature?
- Does the project use the Fellow’s experience and expertise?

The topic and scope of the project should be finalized in December and agreed upon by the nonprofit board. The Fellow and their Mentor should communicate regularly about the project progress.

The Fellow(s) should present project findings to the nonprofit board before their term ends in whatever format is most appropriate given the nature of the project (PowerPoint, written report, oral presentation, etc.). These projects will also be submitted to the UW Faculty member overseeing the course who will independently evaluate the project based on established criteria that meets the high academic standards of the University of Washington Foster School of Business.