

# MGMT 555: Course Syllabus

## Board Fellows Leadership Seminar

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Credits: 4 Total  
(2 Fall Qtr.)  
(0 Winter Qtr.)  
(2 Spring Qtr.)  
Credit/No Credit

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 and serve with those boards for the duration of 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.

Seminar sessions take place during the academic year. Given that this is an “experiential learning” 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).

During the academic year, each student’s participation on their assigned board of directors and the quality of their board project will be supervised and evaluated 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
- The distinction between management leadership and board leadership
- Financial obligations and fiduciary responsibilities of board members
- Ethical considerations of nonprofit board members
- Common tools and frameworks used by boards for the strategic management and evaluation of nonprofit organizations

## **COURSE READINGS**

1. *The Nonprofit Board Answer Book 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*  
*The Board Source* (2012, Joey Bass Publishing).
2. *UW Board Fellows Program Handbook by the UW Consulting and Business Development Center at the Foster School of Business* (2019).
3. Additional readings and videos will be provided to students via Canvas.

## **PARTICIPATION**

Students are expected to participate in board meetings at their organization and seminar sessions at the Foster School. Course format will include live and online lectures, readings, group discussions and assignments.

## **EVALUATION OF STUDENTS**

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

Class/online discussion participation	10%
Board project scope meeting	20%
Board project proposal	20%
Board service reflection survey	20%
Final board project	30%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

## **BOARD PROJECT**

The project should leverage students' skills and knowledge towards supporting critical needs of the board. This project should be approved by each non-profit board and the instructor prior to beginning the work. Generally, there are two students matched with each nonprofit organization and both students may work on one project, or work on two separate projects. In either case, each student should plan to work approximately 50 hours on each project. These hours are in addition to the time students spend attending board meeting and the leadership seminar. After the Fellow begins serving on the board, the organization and the student will jointly decide on a project that can be completed during the student's tenure on the board.

When selecting a project, students and their boards should 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?

The topic and scope of the project should be finalized no later than mid-January. The Fellow and the board members should communicate regularly about the project. It is recommended that the Board Fellows complete their projects no later than the end of April.

The Fellow(s) should present project findings to the nonprofit board before their term ends in the format that 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 academic standards of the University of Washington Foster School of Business.