

MGMT 555 Nonprofit Board 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.

Board Leadership Seminar sessions take place 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 participate in 16 hours of Board Leadership seminars and assignments 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, 0 credit hours in winter and 2 credit hours 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
- 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
- Common tools and frameworks used by boards for the strategic management and evaluation of nonprofit organizations

COURSE READINGS

1. ***The Nonprofit Board Answer Book 3rd Edition. The Board Source*** (2011, Joey Bass Publishing).
2. ***UW Board Fellows Program Handbook by the UW Consulting and Business Development Center at the Foster School of Business.*** (2020).

3. **Additional readings will be provided to students via the Canvas course site.**

PARTICIPATION

Students are expected to participate in board meetings, all seminar sessions, complete the assigned reading and participate in small group discussions and exercises. Course format will include online lectures, readings, group discussions and assignments.

EVALUATION OF STUDENTS

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

Class participation	10%
Board project feedback meeting	10%
Board project proposal	20%
Board service reflection journal	20%
Board project status report	10%
Final board project	30%
TOTAL	100%

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 JOURNALS

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 guiding questions for these entries which will be due TWO 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. Additional readings are listed below. Readings may be added or substituted as over the course of the academic year.

SEMINAR AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

Seminar Overview

Session 1: Course Kickoff	Friday, Oct 2nd 7:30-8:30am Online
Session 2: Effective Board Leadership	Friday, October 16 th 7:30-8:30am Online
Session 3: Panel Discussion – How Funders Make Decisions on Nonprofit Giving	Friday, October 30 th 7:30-8:30am Online
Session 4: Strategic Decision Making on Boards	Friday, November 13 th 7:30-8:30am Online
Session 5: Fiduciary Role of Board Members	Friday, December 4 th 7:30-8:30am Online

Session 6: Leadership in Uncertain Times	Friday, April 16th 7:30-8:30am TBD
Session 7: Reflections on Leadership in Times of Crisis	Friday, April 30th 7:30-8:30am TBD
Session 8: TBD	Friday, May 14th 7:30-8:30am TBD
Final Board Project Submissions	Completed by June 7th. Submitted on Canvas course website

***All seminar session are subject to change.**

FALL QUARTER

Session 1: KICKOFF: Topic: Kickoff Event

- Course overview, assignment and expectations

Readings

- *UW Board Fellows Program Handbook 2018*

Assignments

Get ahold of book The Nonprofit Board Answer Book Third Edition

Session 2: Effective Board Leadership

- Board responsibilities overview (strategy, fiduciary duties, fundraising)
- Key leadership challenges
- Effective practices for advancing your project in your organization

Readings

- Harvard Business Review. *When a business leader joins a nonprofit board*. 72(5), 38.
- Board Source (2011). *Nonprofit Board Answers Book*. Introduction & Part I (Ch 1-7)
- Sample board project proposals and Board Fellows project scoping document on Canvas

Assignments

- Have virtual lunch/coffee with your CEO or Board Mentor to get advice on how to be an effective board member in your organization and discuss project ideas by Nov 13
- Schedule first meeting with Liz to discuss project

Session 3: Panel Discussion – How Funders Make Decisions on Non-Profit Giving

Readings

- TBD


Assignments

- Be prepared to ask at least one question of the panelist

Session 4: Strategic Decision-Making on Boards

- Frameworks and tools for strategic decision-making on boards
- Intended Impact framework
- Theory of Change framework

Readings

- Bradach, Tierney and Stone, (2008) *Delivering on the Promise of Nonprofits*
- Rangan, V. K. (2004). *Lofty missions, down-to-earth plans*. *Harvard Business Review*, 82(3), 112-119. [Rangan Lofty Missions.pdf](#) 
- Board Source (2011). *Nonprofit Board Answers Book*. Part VII (Ch 75-85)



Assignments

1. Readings and class discussions

Session 5: The Fiduciary Role of Board Members

- Evaluating measure of financial health and resiliency in nonprofit organizations
- Making strategic decisions by analyzing nonprofit financial statements
- Case study

Readings

- [The Nonprofit Starvation Cycle](#) [Stanford Social Innovation Review.pdf](#) 
- [The Looking-Glass World of Nonprofit Money.pdf](#) 
- [Nonprofit Financials Primer - The Basics.pdf](#)
- Boston Globe, *Some Officers of Charities Steer Assets to Selves*, 9, 2007.
- Wall Street Journal, *Where were the Boards?*, October 25-26, 2008.
- Board Source (2011). *Nonprofit Board Answers Book*. Part V (Ch 48-61)

Assignments

1. TBD

WINTER QUARTER

Assignments

1. Board project drafts and feedback meetings (**Due by January 15th**)
2. Board project proposal (**Due by January 29th**)

SPRING QUARTER

Session 6: Leadership in Uncertain Times

- Panel Discussion - TBD

Readings

- TBD

Assignment

1. TBD

Session 7: Reflections on Board Leadership

- Discussion on lessons and reflections from Board Leadership Experience
- Presentation of board projects
- Project consultations by appointment

Readings NA

Assignment

1. PowerPoint deck with summary of board projects
2. Project consultations by appointment

Session 8: TBD

Readings

TBD

Assignment - TBD

Final Board Fellows Project and Presentations Completed by June 7th. Submitted to Canvas course website

Assignment

1. Final Board project Submission
2. Leadership reflection journal