### Course Number:
SOWO 884

### Course Title:
Executive Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations

### Semester:
Spring 2008

### Day/Time:
Mondays, 6:00 to 8:50pm

### Instructor:
Mat Despard, MSW  
Tate-Turner-Kuralt Building—Room 402-E  
despard@email.unc.edu

Kirsten Nyrop, MACT  
Office: 919.966-0289  
knyrop@med.unc.edu

### Website:
Blackboard.unc.edu (see SOWO884.001.SPRING2008)

### Office Hours:
Mondays & Tuesdays 11am – 2pm, by appointment

### Course Description:
This course will help prepare students for leadership roles in nonprofit organizations, with an emphasis on health and human services. Students will develop key critical thinking and communication skills applied to a range of leadership and organizational competencies.

### Course Philosophy:
Leadership is expressed in many different ways, certainly not limited to an exercise of position-based authority. This course will emphasize servant and transformational leadership styles - facilitative and collaborative styles that are effective in mobilizing people around a vision for change through nonprofit organizations. Leadership is also viewed as being highly contextual; different styles of leadership are needed based on culture, community needs and circumstances, the organization’s mission and growth stage and other factors. Leadership is also construed as a shared enterprise – among key staff and volunteers – not the sole domain of the CEO. Nonprofit leadership can broadly be understood to include four key skill areas: 1) strategic assessment and analysis; 2) communication; 3) engagement in interpersonal processes and 4) support/mobilization of staff, volunteers and other constituents.

### Goal:
To provide participants with an opportunity for in-depth analysis of the executive role in nonprofit organizations.

### Course Objectives:
Upon completion of this course, participants are expected to be able to:

1. Explain the unique role that nonprofit organizations play as builders of civil society, and in helping to respond to and alleviate the conditions that cause poverty and oppression in traditional American society.
2. Identify the key components of nonprofit management and how executive leadership affects each area.
3. Evaluate personal strengths and weaknesses as a potential nonprofit executive and identify strategies for improving core skills.
4. Assess how various executive skills may be used to effectively address organizational deficiencies.
5. Identify and analyze ethical dilemmas that confront nonprofit executives and frameworks for ethical leadership in nonprofit organizations.
6. Develop strategies for recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce.
7. Understand the relationship between marketing and fundraising in nonprofit organizations.
8. Identify appropriate measures for strengthening the role of the nonprofit board.

Required Text:

In addition to the UNC Health Affairs Bookstore, this text can be found online at:
http://www.tsne.org/site/apps/ka/ec/product.asp?c=ghLUK3PCLoF&b=1438725&ProductID=280933
http://www.fieldstonealliance.org/productdetails.cfm?PC=16

About the Course Text:
I chose this text for its practicality. It provides a very simple, straight-forward framework for understanding nonprofit organizational competencies and leadership issues. Meanwhile, supplemental readings are intended to be considerably more provocative and probing than the text.

Additional Readings:
Additional required readings will be available online in one of three ways:

1) Via Blackboard under “Assignments” (indicated by BB)
2) Via University Libraries online (indicated by UL)
3) Directly from the internet (when a web address is provided)

Some additional material may be given to you during class as handouts.

Recommended Readings:


### Teaching Approach & Course Format

Lecture and powerpointing will be used sparingly in this course – typically only to provide a topic introduction and conceptual framework. Problem-based learning exercises, case studies, role plays and simulations will be emphasized. These methods are used to accomplish two important goals, to: 1) sharpen your critical thinking about leadership challenges confronting nonprofits and 2) increase your ability to effectively communicate with other people concerning these challenges.

Students are expected to participate actively in role plays and simulations; this is how relevant skills can be developed in a classroom setting. Learning can only truly occur in a space where all participants feel respected and safe. We will work to create such an environment.

### Simulation

A fictional organization, “Durham Opportunity” (D0) and its fictional Executive Director will provide a simulated learning context. The Executive Director will present different challenges he is facing as Executive Director and ask students to come up with solutions. This is how we will move from the abstract to the concrete. This means that at certain times, the Instructor or a student may play the role as the Executive Director and either relate to the students as consultants helping him work through a problem OR as staff members and volunteers of D0.

### Communicating with the Instructor

I am committed to responding to emails from students in a timely manner. However, I make no guarantee that I will read and respond to emails after 5pm or on weekends. If you wish to ask me questions concerning an assignment, whether in person or by phone or email, please read the assignment instructions and grading guide first.

### Policy on Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities that affect their participation in the course should notify the instructor if they wish to have special accommodations in instructional format or other factors considered.

### Writing Guidelines

For all written assignments, APA style must be used and students are expected to apply concepts, theory and practice skills from the literature listed in this syllabus and other scholarly sources, which include academic journals, books, nonprofit consulting firms or centers, and foundation and government reports. If unsure about what comprises a scholarly source, please consult the instructor.

To be acceptable, written work must be at a level of professionalism expected of professional managers. If the instructor deems an assignment does not meet such professional standards, the student will have one opportunity to revise and resubmit the assignment.
Please refer to the APA Style Guide and the SSW Writing Guide (http://ssw.unc.edu/currentStudent/index.html) for information on in-text and bibliographic citations, attribution of quotes, plagiarism, and appropriate use of assistance in preparing assignments.

The following web sites provide additional information:

- http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_apa.html (general information about documentation using APA style, 5th Ed.)
- http://www.bartleby.com/141 (e-version of Strunk's The Elements of Style, a valuable writing resource)
- http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~wricntr/html/tools.htm The Writing Center (Links to on-line reference material and many other useful sites for authors)

Honor Code

It is the responsibility of every student to obey and to support the enforcement of the Honor Code, which prohibits lying, cheating, or stealing in actions involving the academic processes of this class. Students will properly attribute sources used in preparing written work and will sign a pledge on all graded coursework certifying that no unauthorized assistance has been received or given in the completion of the work. All written assignments must contain a signed pledge from you stating that, “I have not given or received aid in preparing this written work.” Credit will not be awarded for work that does not contain this pledge.

Course Requirements & Grading

Students will be evaluated based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1: Brief Case Analysis</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 2: Interview of a Nonprofit Executive Director</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 3: Case Study (group project)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 4: Leadership Analysis (optional)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The School of Social Work operates on an evaluation system of Honors (H), Pass (P), Low Pass (L), and Fail (F). A grade of Pass is considered entirely satisfactory.

A form of contract grading will be used wherein students who want to earn an H must complete Assignment 4 AND earn at least 90% AND have an average grade of 90% or above for all other requirements listed above.

Course requirements are briefly described below. Additional instructions and grading guidelines will be posted on Blackboard. All papers completed in fulfilling course requirements must be turned in by the start of class on the due date. Only hard (paper) copies will be accepted. Papers turned in with poor print quality will be marked down.
Class Attendance and Participation

Students are expected to come prepared for class having done the readings and able and willing to contribute to our learning experience through active participation in problem-solving exercises, role plays, simulations, and class discussions.

Any unexcused absences will hurt this part of the grade. If a student has an extenuating circumstance that prevents them from attending class, it is their responsibility to notify the instructor before the class by phone or email.

Assignment 1: Brief Case Analysis

Objectives: 1) To develop an understanding of the challenges confronting nonprofit organizations through case examples.

2) To articulate how both an expression of leadership competencies and use of management skills can effectively respond to various challenges confronting nonprofit organizations.

Due Date: February 18, 2008

Requirements: Students will complete a paper of 5-7 pages in length (double spaced) in response to a case scenario of a nonprofit organization. Students will choose between Case Study A & B and answer the corresponding set of questions on Blackboard. Students will be expected to draw upon and integrate class discussions and readings into their papers.

Assignment 2: Interview of a Nonprofit Executive Director

Objectives: 1) To describe the range of skills and characteristics that an executive director must possess to successfully respond to organizational challenges and lead a nonprofit organization.

2) To understand the circumstances of and motivation for holding an executive position within a nonprofit organization.

Due Date: March 17, 2008

Requirements: Choose an Executive Director of a nonprofit organization in the U.S. to interview. To prevent overwhelming any specific executive director, please get clearance from the instructor prior to contacting the executive director.
After you receive the instructor’s approval, you may contact the executive director to request an appointment for the interview. Explain the reason for the appointment. Interviews can take place in person or over the telephone. Please follow up the interview with a thank you note to the director for taking the time to meet with you.

Assignment 3: Case Study

Objectives: 1) To identify and analyze the key challenges confronting nonprofit organizations.

2) To articulate effective organizational and leadership strategies for responding to challenges.

3) To describe the range of skills that Board and staff leaders must possess to successfully respond to these challenges and lead a nonprofit organization.

4) To demonstrate skill in holding crucial conversations concerning the organization’s responses to its challenges.

Due Date: Group presentations on April 14, 2008.
Papers are due April 21, 2008.

Requirements: Each group of 3-4 students will select a nonprofit organization with which to conduct an organizational capacity assessment. An assessment tool from the Marguerite Casey Foundation will be used by students to help the organization assess its capacity in various areas such as board development and program evaluation. A group presentation on April 14 will be comprised of a mock presentation to the Board of the organization and role play(s) of crucial conversations that might take place within the organization concerning its needs. Detailed instructions will be posted on Blackboard. Alternatively, students or the instructor may identify an opportunity to complete an in-depth project with a nonprofit organization in a particular competency, such as resource development. This can be negotiated with the instructor.
Assignment 4: Leadership Analysis: Vision & Competencies (Optional)

Objectives:
1) To apply and adapt information about leadership (domains, competencies, characteristics) to one’s own identified leadership style.

2) To synthesize knowledge and skills from the course with leadership self-awareness.

3) To identify an opportunity to align knowledge, skills and self-awareness with an organizational or community need for leadership.

Due Date: April 21 or 28 (student choice)

Requirements: This assignment is an option for students who wish to have an opportunity to earn a grade of an H for the course. It is intended to be a reflection paper wherein students apply what they have learned in class (knowledge, skills, leadership self-awareness) to a plan or vision for how they might offer leadership in an organization or community. The final paper should not exceed 12 double spaced pages and should incorporate scholarly sources. It will be comprised of three sections:

1. **Personal Leadership Style:** What do you judge to be your areas of strength and weakness regarding leadership competencies and characteristics discussed in the course? What do you want to improve or strengthen? How would you characterize your own leadership style?

2. **Synthesis:** Based on what you have learned in this course as comprising the skills needed to lead a nonprofit organization by effectively responding to the various challenges they face, what skills/challenges do you feel you are best able to apply/confront in nonprofit work? Based on this assessment, what role within an organization do you feel is ideal? (e.g. Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, Program Director, Client Services Director, Director of Development, Director of Marketing and Public Relations, etc. – Note: You will **not** lose points for not selecting ED!)

3. **Alignment:** Based on your personal leadership style and the skills/challenges you feel you are best able to apply/confront, describe the type of nonprofit organization (size, mission, scope, location, life stage, target population, etc.) with which you feel you are optimally aligned. You can name and describe a specific organization or just describe the characteristics of an unspecified one (though this should bear resemblance to real world organizations!). To fulfill this part of the assignment, you must consult with one individual to give you feedback to help you identify this alignment. This can be a former supervisor, colleague, peer, faculty member (not the instructor), or other person (excluding family members). You must explain why you sought this individual’s counsel by describing the perspective you feel that they offer.
that helps you assess your strengths, weaknesses and alignment. The Dym reading assigned for Class 12 is highly recommended to complete this section on alignment!

Policy on Late Papers:

In practice, both practitioners and administrators face absolute deadlines. This class will hold to that professional standard. To obtain an extension for a paper beyond the deadline, the student must seek approval from the instructor 24 hours before the assignment is due. Each student may request one extension (equivalent to three days) during the course of the semester. Beyond that, the instructor will approve extensions only under extraordinary circumstances.

A paper is considered late if it is handed in any later than the start of class on the day it is due. The grade for late papers will be reduced 10% per day, including weekends. Therefore, a paper that would merit a grade of 100 on Friday will receive a grade of 70 if submitted on Monday. Similarly, a paper due at 2pm on Monday handed in at 3pm will be considered 1 day late.

Course Units of Study:

Unit 1: Nonprofit Leadership

| Class 1: | Introduction |
| Class 2: | Governance & Management of Nonprofit Organizations |
| Class 3: | Leadership Styles, Characteristics & Competencies |

Unit 2: Strategic Development & Management of Nonprofits

| Class 4: | Nonprofit Business Models |
| Class 5: | Marketing & Resource Development Strategy |
| Class 6: | Accountability to Constituents |

Unit 3: Developing and Managing Human Resources

| Class 7: | Developing and working with Boards of Directors |
| Class 8: | Recruiting and hiring a well qualified and diverse workforce |
| Class 9: | Supporting and developing employees and volunteers |

Unit 4: Communicating and Managing Conflict

| Class 10: | Effective communication in the organization |
| Class 11: | Managing conflict and addressing ethical dilemmas |

| Class 12: | Class Presentations |
| Class 13: | Personal & Career Development / Course Review |
# Class Schedule

**Note:** “TEXT” refers to readings from the required text for this course; **BB** = Blackboard; **UL** = University Libraries (online)

## UNIT 1: Nonprofit Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 1</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| January 14 | Understanding expectations for and about the course  
| | Articulate a vision for change through nonprofit organizations  
| | Establish an understanding of one’s own leadership preferences and style  

**Readings:** None.

* No class on Monday, January 21 in observance of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 2</th>
<th>Governance &amp; Management of Nonprofit Organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| January 28 | Describe the role of the Board of Directors and the Board-CEO Relationship  
| | Distinguish between governance and management  
| | Identify and describe significant leadership challenges for nonprofit organizations  

**Readings:**
- TEXT: Chapter 2: Mission, Vision & Values (pp. 7-10)  
- Chapter 6: Governance (pp. 43-56)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 3</th>
<th>Leadership Styles, Characteristics &amp; Competencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 4</td>
<td>Identify and describe leadership types, characteristics and competencies and relate them to nonprofit organizations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Readings:

- **TEXT: Chapter 1: Leadership (pp. 1-6)**


  Recommended:


---

**UNIT 2: Strategic Development & Management of Nonprofits**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 4</th>
<th>Nonprofit Business Models</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Identify and explain underlying assumptions concerning nonprofit organization theories of change and resource development strategies
- Critically examine the nonprofit business model and understand key challenges facing nonprofits

Readings:

- **TEXT: Chapter 5: Strategic Planning & Thinking (pp. 35-42)**


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 5</th>
<th>Marketing &amp; Resource Development Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>February 18</td>
<td>• Explain a strategic approach to resource development and marketing for nonprofit organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Describe social enterprise and other innovative revenue generation strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Analyze the role of the staff and the Board of Directors in resource development and marketing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Readings:

TEXT: Chapter 7: Fund Development (pp. 57-72)


**Class 6**  
**February 25**  
**Accountability to Constituents**

- Discuss the new climate of scrutiny  
- Identify resources for accountability standards  
- Discuss broadened definitions of accountability

**Readings:**  
**TEXT:** Chapter 4: Evaluation (pp. 23-34)  
[http://www.nonprofitquarterly.org/section/341.html](http://www.nonprofitquarterly.org/section/341.html)


---

**UNIT 3: Developing and Managing Human Resources**

**Class 7**  
**March 3**  
**Developing and working with Boards of Directors**

- Discuss the benefits and challenges of recruiting and retaining a well-qualified board of directors  
- Explore potential conflicts between boards and executive directors and ways to resolve these conflicts

**Readings:**

Chapter 8: Role Confusion. (BB)


*** NO CLASS ON MARCH 10, 2008 – SPRING BREAK ***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 8</th>
<th>Recruiting and hiring a well qualified and diverse workforce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 17</td>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Explain how to recruit and retain a well qualified and diverse staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Demonstrate effective candidate interviewing techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Readings:</strong> TEXT: <em>Chapter 10</em>: Human Resources (pp. 97-104)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 9</th>
<th>Supporting and developing employees and volunteers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 24</td>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Articulate employee compensation principles and strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Explain how volunteers can be meaningfully integrated into nonprofit organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Describe and demonstrate beginning skill in varying styles of supervision</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*Chapter 1*: What’ a Crucial Conversation? *Chapter 2*: Mastering Crucial Conversations.
Chapter 11: Yeah, but. Advice for tough cases.


## UNIT 4: Change, Communication and Conflict Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 10</th>
<th>Communication in the Nonprofit Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 31</td>
<td>Articulate effective communication strategies with staff and volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate ability to have crucial conversations with staff and volunteers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Objectives

- Articulate effective communication strategies with staff and volunteers
- Demonstrate ability to have crucial conversations with staff and volunteers

### Readings:


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 11</th>
<th>Managing Organizational Change &amp; Conflict Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 7</td>
<td>* Assignment 4 Due * (or April 30)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Objectives

- Describe effective strategies for facilitating organizational transitions
- Articulate methods for constructively engaging in conflict
- Demonstrate ability to facilitate board and/or staff meetings dealing with issues of conflict

### Readings:

- TEXT: *Chapter 13: Managing Change* (pp. 125-132)


Class 12
April 14

Group Presentations


Class 13
April 21

Personal and Career Development / Course Review

* Assignment 4 (Optional) Due * (or April 30)

Objectives
- Review and summarize progress in achieving course learning objectives
- Develop expectations concerning a career in nonprofit leadership
- Identify career development strategies and resources
