THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL
School of Social Work

COURSE NUMBER: SOWO 884
COURSE TITLE: Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations
SEMESTER AND YEAR: Spring 2009
CREDITS: Three credit hours
INSTRUCTOR: Mat Despard, MSW
TTK 402-E; 919-962-6467
despard@email.unc.edu
OFFICE HOURS: Mondays 12noon – 2pm and by appointment
COURSE WEBSITE: is available through http://blackboard.unc.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course will help prepare students for various leadership roles in nonprofit organizations, emphasizing critical thinking and communication skills applied to a range of organizational challenges.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
1. Explain the unique role that nonprofit organizations play in meeting community needs and promoting positive social change.
2. Distinguish governance, leadership and management needs and behaviors within nonprofit organizations.
3. Evaluate personal strengths and weaknesses as a potential nonprofit manager and identify strategies for improving core skills.
4. Critically examine and assess nonprofit organizations’ business models, including mission, vision, theories of change and sustainability.
5. Describe key organizational competencies of nonprofit organizations and how leadership and management skills may be used to effectively strengthen organizational performance.
6. Identify and analyze ethical dilemmas that confront nonprofit leaders and frameworks for ethical leadership in nonprofit organizations.
7. Develop effective communication and conflict management strategies to strengthen individual and group performance.
8. Develop strategies for recruiting, developing and retaining a diverse paid and volunteer workforce.
9. Identify effective measures for strengthening the role of the nonprofit board.

EXPANDED DESCRIPTION: Students will learn about a range of challenges to nonprofit organizations concerning key capacity areas such as board development, human resources, organizational learning and sustainability and how their role as leaders can help facilitate effective responses. Leadership is expressed in many different ways, certainly not limited to an exercise of position-based authority. This course will emphasize particular leadership styles that are seen as more applicable to nonprofit organizations. Leadership is also viewed as being highly contextual; it is
affected and shaped by gender, race/ethnicity, culture, community needs and circumstances, the organization’s mission and life stage and other factors. Leadership is also construed as a shared enterprise – what Jim Collins refers to as “legislative leadership” – among key staff and volunteers, not the sole domain of the CEO. Nonprofit leadership can broadly be understood to include three key skill areas: 1) strategic assessment, analysis and decision-making; 2) communication and engagement in interpersonal processes, including conflict; and 3) support and mobilization of staff, volunteers and other constituents.

**REQUIRED TEXTS/READINGS:**

**RELATED READINGS:**
Required readings, which are listed in the class schedule and reading assignments section below, will come from the required text and from other sources such as academic journals. These additional readings can be accessed via Blackboard in the Assignments/Assigned Readings folder either as a document or URL link.

**TEACHING METHODS:**
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” (DO) 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 DO.

**CLASS ASSIGNMENTS:**
Students will be evaluated based on the following:

- Class Attendance and Participation: 20 points
- Homework - Business Plan Exercise: 10 points
Brief Response Papers (3 total) 30 points
Organizational Development Project 35 points
Leadership Self-Analysis (extra credit - optional) 10 points

CLASS PARTICIPATION:
It is expected that students will be active members of the class. Therefore, the following grading rubric will be used for class participation.

20 pts: Consistent attendance and active participation.
19 pts: One class missed, active participation.
18 pts: One class missed, inconsistent participation
17 pts: Two classes missed, active participation.
16 pts: Two classes missed, inconsistent participation.
Under 16 pts: Three or more classes missed, disengagement from class.

The class participation grade includes a small group homework assignment. In groups of three, students will be assigned a set of focus questions or a case scenario of a nonprofit facing a challenge. During the following class (one week later), each group will present their recommendations and facilitate class discussion related to the readings for that week.

HOMEWORK - BUSINESS PLAN EXERCISE:
This assignment is intended to help students critically examine how nonprofit organizations pursue and sustain their missions by identifying key programmatic and marketing/resource development strategies. Students will select a nonprofit and answer questions and complete information using a business plan worksheet. Completing this exercise will not require direct contact with an organization. Students will share their findings in class on February 16, 2009.

BRIEF RESPONSE PAPERS:
Students will answer focus questions in brief (2-4 page, double spaced) papers. Focus questions for each paper will be posted on Blackboard in the Assignments folder. Students will complete a total of three papers corresponding to the three units of study:

1. The context of nonprofit leadership (due February 9, 2009)
2. Pursuing and sustaining nonprofit missions (due February 23, 2009)
3. The interpersonal side of leadership (due March 30, 2009)

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT:

Objective: To identify and analyze key challenges confronting nonprofit organizations and articulate effective organizational and leadership strategies and skills for responding to them.

Due Dates: Students must select from Options A-D below and notify the instructor of their chosen option by February 2, 2009 by submitting a one paragraph abstract (print or email is fine). Presentations will take place on April 20 & 27, 2009. Papers are due on April 27, 2009.
Assignment Options:

Students must choose from one of the following options to complete this assignment:

Option A: Organizational Assessment (Group Project)

Requirements: Each group of three students will select a nonprofit organization with which to conduct an organizational capacity assessment. An assessment tool from the Marguerite Casey Foundation (available on Blackboard) will be used by students to help the organization assess its capacity in various areas such as board development and program evaluation. The idea is not for the group of students to evaluate the nonprofit as an outside group, but to use the assessment tool to help the nonprofit answer key questions about its capacity to achieve its mission. A group presentation on April 20 or 27, 2009 will be in the form of a mock presentation to the Board of the organization. Detailed instructions will be posted on Blackboard.

Option B: Organizational Development Project (Individual or Group Project)

Requirements: Students will work with a nonprofit organization that wants help in addressing one or more capacity areas described in the Marguerite Casey Foundation organizational assessment tool. Unlike Option A, which focused on assessing and understanding, this option involves helping the organization develop ideas, strategies and tactics about one or more key performance areas. Examples include:

- SWOT analysis
- A resource development and marketing plan
- A capital campaign plan
- A board recruitment, development and retention plan (including job descriptions and other important documents)

The final product will consist of the completed written work to be turned in to the nonprofit organization and a supplementary paper to be turned in to the instructor that discusses the leadership roles and skills within the organization that are needed to accomplish the development effort. It is essential that information and recommendations given to the nonprofit be substantiated with nonprofit literature (see Blackboard for helpful sources).

Option C: Literature Review – Organizational Best Practices (Individual Project)

Requirements: Students choosing this option will conduct an in depth literature review related to one or more capacity areas described in the Marguerite Casey Foundation organizational assessment tool and apply (theoretically, not in actual practice) what they learned from the review and from the course to a nonprofit organization of their choosing and what they see as the leadership roles and skills within the organization that are needed to adopt the recognized best practice(s).
Option D: Nonprofit Startup (Group Project)

Requirements: Students with an existing interest in launching a nonprofit corporation can exercise this option to accomplish several important tasks required in starting a nonprofit:

- Creation of mission and vision statements, core values and beliefs and case statement
- Filing Articles of Incorporation with a state corporation commission
- Creation of organizational bylaws
- Board constitution
- IRS Form 1023
- Nonprofit business plan outline

The most important part of this assignment is the business plan outline. Generally speaking, the instructor actively discourages the formation of new nonprofit corporations for a variety of reasons. Without a solid idea of how a new nonprofit would be financed, it shouldn’t be formed. The final product will consist of the documents listed above and a supplementary paper that discusses the leadership roles and skills within the organization that are needed for a successful launch. The instructor will entertain alternative ideas to this option, including proposed mergers between existing nonprofits.

Leadership Analysis (Extra Credit - Optional)

Objective: To apply and adapt leadership knowledge and skills discussed in the course to one’s own identified leadership style and to align this analysis to a specific nonprofit organization.

Due Date: April 27 or May 4, 2009

Requirements: This assignment is 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 following reading is highly recommended to complete this section on alignment:**


**Grading System:**
All grades are based on the following scale:
- 94 and above: H
- 80-93: P
- 70-79: L
- 69 and below: F

While it is possible to earn as much as 95 points (grade of H) without completing the optional Leadership Analysis assignment, chances of earning an H are considerably greater if a student completes this optional assignment. This is an intentional form of contract grading.

**Policy on Incompletes and Late Assignments:**
Each student may request one 3 day (72 hour) extension (due Thursday at class start time) during the course of the semester – no questions asked. Otherwise, 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 5% per day, including weekends.

A grade of Incomplete is given only in exceptional and rare circumstances that warrant it, e.g. family crisis, serious illness. It is the student’s responsibility to request and explain the reasons for an Incomplete. The instructor has no responsibility to give an Incomplete without such a request.
POLICY ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:
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 should contain a signed pledge from you stating that, “I have not given or received unauthorized aid in preparing this written work.”** Credit will not be awarded for unpledged work.

Please refer to the **APA Style Guide**, The SSW Manual, and the SSW Writing Guide for information on attribution of quotes, plagiarism and appropriate use of assistance in preparing assignments. In keeping with the UNC Honor Code, if reason exists to believe that academic dishonesty has occurred, a referral will be made to the Office of the Student Attorney General for investigation and further action as required.

POLICY ON ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:
Students with disabilities that affect their participation in the course and who wish to have special accommodations should contact the University’s Disabilities Services ([http://disabilityservices.unc.edu](http://disabilityservices.unc.edu)) and provide documentation of their disability. Disabilities Services will notify the instructor that the student has a documented disability and may require accommodations. Students should discuss the specific accommodations they require (e.g. changes in instructional format, examination format) directly with the instructor.

USE OF LAPTOPS OR OTHER ELECTRONIC DEVICES:
Use of electronic devices for non-class related activities (e.g. checking email, surfing, IMing, blogging, playing games) is prohibited. Use of laptops is permitted as a tool for small group activities and in-class assignments or as an approved accommodation for students with disabilities (see above).

EXPECTATIONS FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS/APA FORMATTING:
Students are expected to use good academic English; grades will be lowered for poor grammar, syntax, or spelling. Those who have difficulty writing are STRONGLY encouraged to use online resources of the campus Writing Center ([http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/](http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/)) and/or seek assistance from Diane Wyant or Susan White in the School of Social Work.

The School of Social Work faculty has adopted APA style as the preferred format for papers and publications. **All written assignments for this course should be submitted in APA format.** A summary was distributed at orientation for MSW students and can be shared with non-MSW students as requested. The web sites listed below provide additional information, though students are strongly encouraged to purchase the following text:


- [http://www.apastyle.org/elecref.html](http://www.apastyle.org/elecref.html) (APA Style for material in electronic formats)
READINGS AND COURSE OUTLINE

UNIT 1: THE CONTEXT OF NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 1</th>
<th>Introduction</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 12</td>
<td>* * * Understand expectations for and about the course * * * Identify key characteristics and dynamics of the nonprofit sector * * * Explore basic assumptions about leadership in nonprofit organizations</td>
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Readings: None.

\* *** NO CLASS ON JANUARY 19, 2009 – Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday ***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 2</th>
<th>Governance &amp; Management of Nonprofit Organizations</th>
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<tr>
<td>January 26</td>
<td>* * * Describe the role of the board of directors and board-staff relationships * * * Distinguish between governance and management functions * * * Identify and describe significant leadership challenges for nonprofit organizations</td>
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Multimedia: DO Podcast #1 (BB - .mp3 format)

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


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 3</th>
<th>Developing &amp; Working with Boards of Directors</th>
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| February 2 | • Discuss the benefits and challenges of recruiting and retaining a diverse and well-qualified board of directors  
| | • Explain key areas of board performance and how to promote it |
| | Chapter 8: Role Confusion. (BB) |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 4</th>
<th>Nonprofit Accountability</th>
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| February 9 | • Describe various standards of accountability for nonprofits  
| | • Compare and contrast different ways in which nonprofits maintain accountability with various stakeholders  
| | • Examine the relevance of diversity to accountability |
| Readings: | TEXT: Chapter 4: Evaluation (pp. 23-34)  
**UNIT 2:  PURSUING & SUSTAINING NONPROFIT MISSIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 5</th>
<th>Nonprofit Business Models: Pursuing &amp; Sustaining the Mission, Part 1</th>
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| February 16 | • Describe the essential characteristics of the nonprofit model and how it poses unique challenges for nonprofits to sustain their missions  
|          | • Critically examine how nonprofits purport to create social value |

**Multimedia**  
DO Podcast #3 (BB - .mp3 format)

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


*The Non-Profit Quarterly* 12(1): 1-5. (BB)

http://www.thestranger.com/seattle/Content?oid=31920

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 6</th>
<th>Nonprofit Business Models: Pursuing &amp; Sustaining the Mission, Part 2</th>
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</table>
| February 23 | • Explain a strategic approach to resource development and marketing for nonprofit organizations  
|          | • Examine earned income strategies for nonprofits  
|          | • Analyze “third way” concepts and models (B Corp, social entrepreneurs, etc.) and how they present opportunities and threats to nonprofit organizations |

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

http://www.bcorporation.net/: Read About B Corp/Our Vision/What & Why


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**UNIT 3: THE INTERPERSONAL SIDE OF NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 7 March 2</th>
<th>Leadership Styles</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives</strong></td>
<td>• Analyze differences between leadership and management</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identify and describe leadership types, characteristics and competencies and relate them to nonprofit organizations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Multimedia**

DO Podcast #2 (BB - .mp3 format)

**Readings:**

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


*** NO CLASS ON MARCH 9, 2009 – SPRING BREAK ***

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 8</th>
<th>Building Your Team: Recruiting &amp; Hiring Well Qualified &amp; Diverse Employees</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 16</td>
<td>Objectives:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Identify major components of nonprofit human resource systems</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Explain how to recruit and retain a well qualified and diverse staff</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Demonstrate effective candidate interviewing techniques</td>
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<td>Multimedia:</td>
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<td>DO Podcast #4 (BB - .mp3 format)</td>
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<td>Readings:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>TEXT: Chapter 10: Human Resources (pp. 97-104)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Digh, P. (2001). Getting people in the pool: Diversity recruitment that works. ASAE &amp; The Center for Association Leadership. (BB)</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Class 9</th>
<th>Supporting Employees &amp; Volunteers</th>
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<tr>
<td>March 23</td>
<td>Objectives:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Explain how volunteers can be meaningfully integrated into nonprofit organizations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Describe use of various leadership styles and strategies for supporting and retaining employees</td>
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<td>Readings:</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 10 March 30</th>
<th>Communication in Nonprofit Organizations</th>
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| Objectives        | • Articulate effective communication strategies with staff and volunteers  
|                   | • Demonstrate ability to have difficult conversations |

Readings:  


Organizational Change & Growth

Objectives

- Apply organizational life cycle perspectives to understand challenges confronting nonprofit organizations
- Critically examine assumptions about organizational performance and impact

Readings:


Engaging in and Managing Change, Conflict & Growth

Objectives

- Describe effective strategies for facilitating organizational transitions through participatory decision-making and conflict management

Readings:

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


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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 13</th>
<th>Presentations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 20</td>
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<td>Readings:</td>
<td>None.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 14</th>
<th>Presentations / Course Review</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 27</td>
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</table>
| Objectives | Review and summarize progress in achieving course learning objectives  
|           | Develop expectations concerning a career in nonprofit leadership |

**Multimedia**

DO Podcast #5 *(BB - .mp3 format)*

**Readings:** None.