

Reasons to Pursue the UNC Nonprofit Leadership Certificate

Mat Despard, UNC School of Social Work

September 2009

- **Pursue the certificate if you are passionate about nonprofits.** Do it if you see yourself in a middle or upper management position in a nonprofit, such as program director, director of operations, executive director, director of development, etc. and know that you need skills unique to managing and leading nonprofits.
- **The certificate will help you develop specific, marketable skills** that nonprofit managers and leaders need, such as understanding IRS compliance issues, analyzing financial statements, developing fundraising and marketing plans and working with a board of directors.
- **Although we do not know that the certificate influences nonprofit hiring decisions, here's what we do know:** Completing the certificate means you have specific, nonprofit management-focused knowledge and skills that you can showcase in an interview and on your resume.
- **Most students are satisfied** or very satisfied (76%) with nonprofit management graduate programs (Larson, 2002) and alumni feel that such programs contribute to job success in nonprofits (Herman & Renz, 2007). This data is based on programs such as the UNC Nonprofit Leadership Certificate that follow the curriculum standards of the Nonprofit Academic Centers Council (NACC) and NASPA – Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education.

Here are a few comments from recent graduates of the UNC program:

"A Nonprofit Leadership Certificate really prepares a person for a career in nonprofits. The classes were excellent and comprehensive, and I feel like I really got a good overview of the basics of nonprofit management as well as ever-valuable 'hands-on' experience. As a community member working with nonprofits for many years, I now have a much stronger sense of the business of running a nonprofit to go along with all that passion for 'doing good.' I'd recommend the certificate to anyone wanting to work in the nonprofit world in any capacity."

Sarah Poteat, '09 graduate

"The Certificate in Nonprofit Leadership was crucial to my educational experience at the School of Social Work. Having some experience in nonprofit work prior to coming to UNC, I knew that gaining expertise in managing finances, developing resources, and understanding the legal issues related to nonprofit administration were vital to any future leadership positions I might hold. Not only did I gain knowledge in these areas, but I also had the opportunity to engage in

learning in classrooms outside of the School of Social Work and interact with students who are future lawyers, city planners, and government officials. This certificate was instrumental in building my confidence and ability to acquire a new position as a nonprofit executive director.”

Erin Barger, '09 graduate, executive director, Action Ministries, Athens, GA

“Each day I employ skills I developed during my time in the UNC-Chapel Hill Nonprofit Leadership Certificate Program. The courses provided a solid foundation in concepts essential to my work: financial and human resource management, law, governance and leadership. The instructors are some of the most competent, supportive and inspiring professors I have encountered. I consider the experience one of my most valuable assets as a nonprofit leader.”

Jeremy Baggish, '09 graduate, deputy director, American Cleft Palate-Craniofacial Association