

NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP, M.S.

Program Description

The Master's in Nonprofit Leadership is an interdisciplinary program intended for both those already working in the nonprofit sector as either a paid employee or a volunteer, as well as those who wish to move into the nonprofit sector. Preparing leaders for the nonprofit world of the 21st century requires competency in many different disciplines. Thus, the program draws from the disciplines of psychology, planning, evaluation, fund raising, ethics, law, human resources, finance, marketing and more so that students can develop the understanding needed to be a successful nonprofit leader and run a successful nonprofit organization. Graduates of this program not only gain the interdisciplinary framework and knowledge needed to lead, they also have had an opportunity to apply that knowledge and learn the challenges of aligning theory and practice.

The program adheres to the crucial goals of Lasallian graduate education.

- Scholarly inquiry in the pursuit of truth, evidenced by its faculty and students alike.
Whether relying on real life case studies, the revelations of current research and/or the assessment of real life events, students and faculty in the program dissect the data to understand better the past so they can prepare for the future.
- Through their research and professional components, graduate programs prepare students for academic and professional careers as well as service to the community.
Through an integrated approach used in all classes, the program equips students with the ability to balance theory and reality, a constant need in the real work world. It prepares students to be successful paid leaders in the nonprofit sector, as well as very knowledgeable volunteers, should they choose to serve on a nonprofit board, board committee and/or be a volunteer to help implement the mission.
- Graduate programs promote lifelong learning in response to the changing and diverse needs of the 21st century workplace and the global community.
The current workforce needs more nonprofit employees in general, and leaders in particular. In the past fifteen years, the nonprofit sector has grown between 17%-24%, while the for-profit sector declined by 5%. We are now seeing the exodus of Baby Boomer executive directors who delayed their retirement because of the Great Recession, and some delayed it further due to the pandemic. This rate of growth and retirement of executive directors combine to create a need for new leaders that well exceed 500,000. Directly and indirectly, the program curriculum will teach students the importance of bringing research and theory into their daily practice to ensure that they are driving their program or organization on the good-better-best practices continuum, aiming always for best practices.

Mission

The mission of the Master's in Nonprofit Leadership is to educate those who seek a leadership position anywhere in the nonprofit sector and to provide them with the knowledge, theory, skills, and approaches necessary to guide an organization (or program) successfully through the ever changing and complex environment in which we all operate. It

equips leaders wherever they reside on an organization chart to best fulfill the promises of the particular nonprofit in which they lead and to fulfill the promise of all nonprofits: to improve the quality of life for all and enrich the communities in which we live.

Program Goals

The program has the following three broad goals:

- To give students a theoretically based, practice-oriented, best practices framework for leading in the nonprofit sector of the 21st century, which translates into competencies in psychology, planning, evaluation, fund raising, ethics, law, human resources, finance, governance, and marketing;
- To emphasize the practical and real time application of knowledge gained, to ensure that students don't just learn ideas about leading a nonprofit but also have experienced how to organize and assess them in the real world under the tutelage of an experienced professional; and
- To ensure that both the knowledge and experience gained are solidly rooted in ethical practice. Thus, while there is a course focused on the law and ethics of nonprofits, ethical practice will run continuously through every class in the curriculum.

The nonprofit sector is extremely diverse, from social service organizations to arts and culture to environment to social justice and more. The National Taxonomy of Exempt Organizations, used by the IRS and others, identifies 26 major categories of nonprofits, and 655 detailed categories. Variety of purpose aside, however, the majority of the tasks of leading a nonprofit varies little from category to category. Thus, the program will prepare students to work anywhere in the sector.

Program Specific Information

Graduation Requirements

Successful completion of all required courses within a 7-year period is required for graduation. Additionally and importantly, all students must have a cumulative minimum grade point average of 3.0 to graduate.

Degree or Certificate Earned

M.S.

Required for Program Completion

- Courses
 - 11
- Credits
 - 33
- GPA
 - 3.0

Student Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this program, a student will be able to do the following:

- Have the skills to assume a leadership position or strengthen their performance in a current leadership position in a nonprofit;
- Analyze, critique, and solve problems in a nonprofit environment;
- Apply newly attained ideas and strategies;
- Explore topics and issues relevant to their daily, nonprofit lives through case studies, research, and data collection of various types;

- Understand what it means to be an ethical leader and steward of a nonprofit that operates legally and with integrity;
- Determine through self-assessment and conversation with others, their most appropriate role in the nonprofit sector.

Academic Requirements

The Masters in Nonprofit Leadership requires a minimum of 33 credit hours for graduation. Students will be allowed to take up to six credits a semester. A student taking six credits during fall and spring semesters and three credits over the summer could, as suggested below in the model roster, complete the degree in as few as seven semesters. A student will, however, have a maximum of seven years to complete the degree, should s/he desire.

| Course | Title | Credits |
|------------------------|---|-----------|
| First Year | | |
| First Semester | | |
| Session I | | |
| NPL 605 | Nonprofit Management | 3 |
| Session II | | |
| NPL 615 | Nonprofit Finance | 3 |
| Credits | | 6 |
| Second Semester | | |
| Session I | | |
| NPL 620 | Fund Development for Nonprofits | 3 |
| Session II | | |
| NPL 625 | Strategic Planning for Nonprofits | 3 |
| Credits | | 6 |
| Third Semester | | |
| NPL 652 | Leadership Assessment and Evaluation ¹ | 3 |
| Credits | | 3 |
| Second Year | | |
| First Semester | | |
| Session I | | |
| NPL 630 | Law and Ethics in the Nonprofit Sector | 3 |
| Session II | | |
| NPL 645 | Marketing for Nonprofits | 3 |
| Credits | | 6 |
| Second Semester | | |
| Session I | | |
| NPL 635 | Program Evaluation for Nonprofit Leaders | 3 |
| Session II | | |
| NPL 610 | Governance and Leadership | 3 |
| Credits | | 6 |
| Third Semester | | |
| NPL 650 | Issues and Trends in the Nonprofit Sector | 3 |
| Credits | | 3 |
| Third Year | | |
| First Semester | | |
| NPL 700 | Capstone ² | 3 |
| Credits | | 3 |
| Total Credits | | 33 |

1

There is only one eight-week session over the summer.

2

This is the only class in the program that is a full semester.

Course Sequence

With the exception of three classes, students may take classes in any order they choose, regardless of the course number. The three exceptions are:

- NPL 605 Nonprofit Management–Nonprofit Management must be the first class a student takes in the program.
- A student must have *completed at least four other classes* before taking NPL 650 Issues and Trends in the Nonprofit Sector–Issues and Trends in the Nonprofit Sector.
- NPL 700 Capstone - Capstone is the last class a student takes in the program.

Course Descriptions

Nonprofit Leadership

NPL 605 Nonprofit Management

This introductory course provides an examination of the management, operations and governance principles and practices of nonprofits in the United States. Directly and indirectly, students will learn the answers to the following questions—and more: How should and do nonprofits operate? What makes them tick? How are nonprofits similar to and different from for-profit organizations? What are the myths versus the truths about nonprofits? What are the challenges facing nonprofits now and in the near future? And so much more.

NPL 610 Governance and Leadership

This course is designed to provide students with a full understanding of the roles and responsibilities of American nonprofit boards, individual board members and executive leadership, as well as the interplay of all, and to introduce the idea of alternative model(s). Through class, readings and assignments, students will learn the theory and the ideal and compare it with the reality. As a result, they will be able to formulate a strong board, devise a strong governance-leadership relationship, evaluate ongoing performance, and support ongoing positive outcomes.

NPL 615 Nonprofit Finance

This course is designed to provide the skills and knowledge to plan an organizational budget, to implement best practices in financial policies and procedures, to evaluate financial statements, to make financial decisions, and to comply with the legal reporting requirements.

NPL 620 Fund Development for Nonprofits

This class offers an overview of fundraising trends, concepts, and strategies. Students will gain an understanding of how fundraising works, and learn how to design contributed revenue programs for charitable nonprofit organizations. Major topics include donor motivation, communicating your organization's worth to donors, and selecting effective fundraising strategies based on an organization's individual circumstances. Students will learn how to raise funds from individuals, foundations, and corporations. Issues of ethics in fundraising will also be explored.

NPL 625 Strategic Planning for Nonprofits

This class focuses upon strategic planning/strategic management, essential skill areas for the 21st century leader. The course highlights planning models as well as key planning functions. The course is "Grounded in theory; anchored in application." Students will learn and apply a set of well-established planning tools and techniques. This course is collaborative, placing shared responsibility for learning upon all participants, students and instructor alike. This course is interactive, featuring a variety of learning tools and approaches. Real work samples are introduced and multiple learning techniques employed.

NPL 630 Law and Ethics in the Nonprofit Sector

This class is about both law and ethics, underscoring that they are not synonymous. Students will gain an understanding of the legal requirements and ethical considerations surrounding everything from starting and dissolving a nonprofit to the laws of fundraising and lobbying. As a class for nonprofit leaders, not lawyers, the course is designed to allow students to appraise and interpret the legal and ethical frameworks necessary to ensure compliance and the ability to construct the right questions to ask of an attorney, the right ethical challenges to propose to staff and board and the tools and knowledge needed to design an organization that is not only legally compliant but ethically run.

NPL 635 Program Evaluation for Nonprofit Leaders

Program Evaluation for Nonprofit Leaders recognizes that the nonprofit sector has entered the "Age of Assessment." This course covers both quantitative and qualitative theories and approaches to evaluation with special accent upon measuring program outcomes. The course utilizes a well respected, time tested evaluation model for evaluation and a hands-on approach to apply concrete, practical tools and techniques. Applications range from preparing an evaluation design to demonstrating specific skills such as developing logic models, survey design, and focus group facilitation. The course does not emphasize statistical or technological applications.

NPL 640 Self-Assessment for Leadership**NPL 645 Marketing for Nonprofits**

The course will enable participants to understand the advanced principles of marketing and public relations with the purpose of applying them as part of the strategic planning knowledge base required of any high-level nonprofit executive. By the end of the course, participants will be proficient in preparing a marketing plan and putting these principles into practice.

NPL 650 Issues and Trends in the Nonprofit Sector

This course is designed to do two things: to explore some of the current trends and issues operating in the nonprofit sector at this time AND to help students gain a comfort with understanding the research of others so that they may become better consumers of research, if not also better researchers. This class explores together three specific, current issues/trends of which nonprofit leaders should be aware because of their potential impact, be it positive, negative or even neutral. The trends explored change with each offering of the class, but two are selected by the profession and the third by the class. In addition, each student will investigate, and share with the rest of the class, an issue/trend of interest to him/her. Prerequisite(s): Students must have taken at least four other classes before this class.

NPL 652 Leadership Assessment and Evaluation

This experiential course is focused on helping students expand their leadership/management capability through systematic assessment of their existing competencies, targeted skill development, and by providing practice in applying the newly acquired skills. A five-step learning framework is used to "drive" this skill acquisition process. During this skill development process, the student receives feedback from self-assessment results, faculty, other participants and co-workers. Topics will include: self-awareness, time and stress management, individual and group problem solving, communication, power and influence, motivation, conflict management, empowerment, and team leadership, and leading positive change.

NPL 670 ST: Nonprofit Ldrshp Fundament**NPL 700 Capstone**

The Capstone Project is a semester-long, learning experience focused on a specific aspect of nonprofit leadership based on a student's interests. The capstone is intended as an opportunity both to integrate all that has been learned throughout the course of the degree program and to explore more deeply a particular subject matter tied to a student's professional development. A student is required to present her/his capstone project both orally and in written form. Prerequisite(s): All other classes in the program must have been completed before a student may enroll in NPL 700.

NPL 770 Special Topics

Faculty

Program Director, Laura Otten, Ph.D.

Lecturers: Otten, Piff, M. Reilly, Scurto-Davis, Shropshire, Simmons, Smith

Program Contact Information

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