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**Board Leadership Development
PA 5108
Spring 2020**

1 Credit and S/N Only

**Saturday, January 23, 2021
9:00 – 4:00 pm**

**Fridays, February 19, March 19, April 16, 2021
9:00 – 11:00 am**

Online Class

Nonprofit organizations are increasingly adding younger members to their boards of directors, however, they are rarely investing in opportunities for board leadership development. Our purpose is to directly address this challenge by spending time reading about governance, and sharing among ourselves the challenges of serving on boards to improve board leadership skills.

More specifically, the practicum focuses on distinctive features of nonprofit board governance and uses research and concepts along with students' current board experiences to illuminate challenges and explore solutions to build board leadership competencies. The course will cover legal requirements of nonprofit boards, their basic roles and responsibilities, important issues of recruitment, composition and diversity, intra-board and board-staff dynamics, life cycle changes, and emerging issues relevant to governance. Other topics may be added, depending on student experiences and interests.

Teaching Method and Course Materials

The course's teaching methods will be a mix of discussion, guest speakers, and reflection related to students' experiences on boards. Students will be evaluated on their participation as well as performance on the reflection papers and final paper assignment. Because this course is largely experiential and reflective, *students' consistent attendance and participation are critical to the learning environment. Students must also complete all assignments and have regular attendance to receive credit for this course.*

We have a Canvas site for the course, and all course readings are on the site for students to download. There are no textbooks.

Additional resources and tools to supplement the primary readings may be added during the semester based on topics of interest or inquiry. These are not required readings.

Course Requirements

All students in this course must currently hold (or be actively seeking) a position on a nonprofit board or board committee or be a staff person who directly works with a board. The course is graded on an S/N basis. Your final grade will be made up of the following:

- Reflection papers 20%
- Final short paper 20%
- Class attendance and participation 60%

Guests

We will have guests for each class session to provide perspective from the field and to engage in discussion and questions on the topic of the week.

Reflection papers

No later than the Saturday of the week following the class meeting (8 days after class) please upload to our Canvas site a 1-page, single-spaced reflection on the readings and class discussion *relevant to your board experiences*. No citations or style guide requirements are needed. These reflection papers are required following the February and March regular class sessions (Sessions 2-4).

Final paper

Due no later than 2 weeks after the final class or a date mutually agreed upon by the class, please write a 2 page, single-spaced paper that provides **a brief analysis of the strengths and challenges facing your board, based on the most important insights from the course, and a description of recommendations for how the board you are connected with could be more effective.**

Feedback on papers

Papers are not graded but the instructor will provide feedback on each paper submitted.

Class attendance and participation

Students' attendance at monthly course sessions is mandatory (absence from more than 1 class session may adversely affect your S/N grade).

Course Topics

Session One: January 23, 2021, 9:00 am to 4:00 pm [See attached tentative agenda]

Introduction to board governance in nonprofit organizations: Theory, research and practice

Readings

- Renz, David O. 2010. "Leadership, Governance, and the Work of the Board." In (D.O. Renz and Associates, ed.) The Jossey-Bass Handbook of Nonprofit Leadership and Management, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Pp. 125-156.

- Jeavons, Thom. 2010. “Ethical Nonprofit Management.” In (D.O. Renz and Associates, ed.) The Jossey-Bass Handbook of Nonprofit Leadership and Management, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Pp. 178-205.
- Ostrower, Francie. 2007. Urban Institute’s “Nonprofit Governance in the United States.” Available on-line at Urban.org. Accessed August 12, 2018 https://www.urban.org/research/publication/nonprofit-governance-united-states/view/full_report
- Ryan, W. Chait, R. Taylor, B. 2017 “Problem Boards or Board Problem?” Nonprofit Quarterly. Accessed August 12, 2018 <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/2018/04/20/problem-boards-or-board-problem/>
- Le, Vu. 2020. “The default nonprofit board model is archaic and toxic; let’s try some new models.” Nonprofit AF. Accessed November 21, 2020 <https://nonprofitaf.com/2020/07/the-default-nonprofit-board-model-is-archaic-and-toxic-lets-try-some-new-models/>

Session Two: February 19, 2021

Governance roles, responsibilities, and representativeness

Readings:

- Miller-Millesen, Judith. 2003. “Understanding the Behavior of Nonprofit Boards of Directors: A Theory-Based Approach.” *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*. Vol. 32 (4): 521-547.
- BoardSource. 2017. Leading With Intent. Pages 9 – 19.
- Moyers, Rick, 2019. “Is Your Board Ready to Advance Equity?” National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, Accessed July 14, 2019. <https://www.ncrp.org/2019/02/is-your-board-ready-to-advance-equity.html>
- Review roles and responsibilities in Renz chapter from Session #1
- Sample bylaws [Please bring the bylaws for your organization]
- *Case: Ripe for Change: Just Food’s Recovery from Executive Misconduct Hubert Project, View all modules*
<https://hubert.hhh.umn.edu/RipeChange4/index.html#screen/a3b5203a-b014-4e71-918d-3e739d316126>

Session Three: March 19, 2021

Board dynamics, power and life cycle differences

Relationship between board members and CEOs/EDs

Readings:

- Stevens, Susan. 2001. Nonprofit Life Cycles. Long Lake, MN: Stagewise Enterprises, Inc. Ch. 3, “Seven Stages of Nonprofit Capacity”
- Classen, Julia. 2011. “Here we go again. The cyclical nature of board behavior.” Nonprofit Quarterly, April.
- Reid, Wendy and Johanne Turbide. 2014. “Dilemmas in the board-staff dynamics of nonprofit governance.” In C. Cornforth and W. Brown (eds.), New Perspectives on Nonprofit Governance. Oxford, UK: Routledge.

- Harrison, Y. and Murray, V. 2012 “Perspectives on the leadership of chairs of nonprofit organization boards of directors: A grounded theory mixed-method study.” *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*. Vol.22 (4): 411-437
- Hiland, Mary. 2008. “The Board Chair-Executive Director Relationship: Dynamics That Create Value for Nonprofit Organization.” *Journal for Nonprofit Management*.

Session Four: April 16, 2021

Determining board effectiveness, assessing performance, inclusion and community engagement

Readings:

- Brown, Will. 2005. “Exploring the association between board and organizational performance in nonprofit organizations.” *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*. Vol. 15(3): 317-339.
- Fredette, Christopher, Bradshaw, Patricia, and Krause, Heather. 2016. “From Diversity to Inclusion: A Multimethod Study of Diverse Governing Groups.” *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*. Vol. 45 (IS) 28S-51S.
- Freiwirth, Judy. 2005 and 2006. “Transforming the Work of the Board: Moving Towards Community Driven Governance – Parts I and II.” *Nonprofit Boards and Governance Review*.
- Renz, David. 2020. “Reframing Governance III.” *Nonprofit Quarterly*, <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/reframing-governance-3/> Accessed November 21, 2020.
- BoardSource. 2017. Leading With Intent. Pages 20-51.

Session #1, 9:00 – 4:00
Saturday, January 23, 2021

Reading required in advance of this meeting – see syllabus

Time	Topic(s)	Questions
9:00 – 9:45	Welcome and Introductions, Syllabus Review	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why are you taking this class? What do you hope to learn? 2. What are your expectations about being on a board? Why do you serve as a member? 3. What have been your best and worst experiences? [Confidentiality agreement among all members of class]
9:45 – 10:30	Conceptualizing governance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is governance? 2. Does the work of the board = “governance?” 3. Why have a board (beyond legal requirements...)? 4. Deeper dive on your board experiences
10:30 – 10:45	Break	
10:45 – noon	The roles and responsibilities of boards Core functions Ethical and accountability challenges	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the core functions of nonprofit boards? 2. What do these functions look like in practice? 3. To whom are boards accountable and how? For what? 4. When do boards get off track?
Noon – 1:00	Break	
1:00 – 1:45	Guests	Discussion with nonprofit leaders TBD
1:45 – 2:30	Roles and responsibilities What is governance and what is management?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What does the research tell us that is especially important about board roles and responsibilities and the division of responsibilities between management and the board? 2. Look carefully at Ostrower’s Urban Institute study – what is most/least surprising to you here? 3. Is it time for new models of governance for nonprofits? Why, and what?

2:30 – Break
2:45

2:45 – Begin to develop your
3:30 board - Board capacity
building model

1. Putting the theory into practice - class board experiences
2. Work through components of Renz's model for your board (or your "ideal" board).

3:30 – Wrap up comments and
4:00 questions