J. OF PUBLIC BUDGETING, ACCOUNTING & FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, 17 (2), 249-275 SUMMER 2005

THE COURSE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS FOR AN INTEGRATED NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT COURSE CONCENTRATION: BUSINESS COMPETENCIES NEEDED FOR NONPROFIT CAREERS

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ABSTRACT. The paper describes an integrated, interdisciplinary nonprofit management three-course concentration developed for an undergraduate public service major at a small, private college. We describe the course development process and implementation issues pertinent to nonprofit management education that include where to house programs, faculty issues, interdisciplinary teaching, students' needs and experiential learning. Our course objectives aimed to develop business competencies from accounting, finance, management and marketing in the context of nonprofit organizations for students with no prior business knowledge. The paper concludes with a description of our three courses.

INTRODUCTION

This paper describes the development and implementation of three integrated nonprofit management courses designed as an undergraduate concentration for public service majors. Our purpose is to explain our thought process as we developed the courses to assist others with similar interests in nonprofit management education. In 1993, the college received an external private foundation grant of $5 million to develop a public service major. Shortly thereafter, the public service program issued a call throughout the campus for interested faculty from any discipline to develop courses within their major that included a public service component. During the summer of 1995, our group (five business faculty members from the

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departments of accountancy, finance, management and marketing), submitted a proposal to develop nonprofit management courses.

We had three main objectives. First, we desired a more collaborative approach for curriculum between our four independent departments. Second, in our experience, our students who were interested in nonprofit careers already possessed a charitable, public service value system, but needed to acquire business competencies to successfully manage nonprofit organizations. Third, we deemed it vital for students to understand the unique nature of nonprofit organizations; i.e., the relationship between the sectors and complexity within the nonprofit sector itself.

The public service program selected our proposal, and we worked over the summer to develop three courses. The three nonprofit management courses became one of three required concentrations for public service majors. The other two concentrations were in humanities and social sciences. The management department at our institution housed the three nonprofit management courses in the concentration. The courses received institutional approval in the spring of 1996, and the first course began in the fall 1996 semester.

The distinctiveness of our approach is the integrated, interdisciplinary nature of *each* course. The first course provides an overview of the nonprofit sector in comparison to the for-profit and government sectors, and an introduction to business concepts. The second course emphasizes the development of business competencies. The third course is a practicum where students develop a project or write a case study about a nonprofit organization.

The next section describes the course development process. A discussion of course content follows. Our focus for course content includes business competencies and an understanding of the nature of the nonprofit sector. In the final section, we describe each of the courses in the concentration.

NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT COURSE CONCENTRATION DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

This section discusses course development and implementation issues pertinent to management education that include where to house programs, faculty issues, interdisciplinary teaching, students' needs and experiential learning.

Housing NME Programs

Nonprofit management education (NME) is a relatively new field. Between 1986 and 1996, NME increased primarily in graduate programs that range from individual courses, to concentrations in graduate degree programs, to Masters' degrees in nonprofit management (O'Neill, 1998; Young, 1999; Smith, 2000). Thus, our *under*graduate nonprofit management course concentration is somewhat unusual, although many institutions around the country have undergraduate nonprofit management courses or programs (Wish & Mirabella, 1998).[1]

The Wish and Mirabella 1995 survey found that 76 universities and colleges offer graduate degree programs with a NME concentration; 43 universities offer one or two graduate courses, and 47 offer noncredit courses, continuing education courses or undergraduate courses (Wish & Mirabella 1998, p. 15). According to the survey, most programs are in the Midwest, most likely because of funding from the W.K Kellogg Foundation and Lilly Endowment, Inc. Forty three percent of NME programs are associated with a Masters in Public Administration degree, while only 14% are housed in business schools or business and public administration.

Opinions about whether to house NME courses in business departments or schools are at opposite extremes. Because of a "management" focus, one expert thinks that all management education should be ideally located within one school of management (O'Neill, 1998, p. 12). O'Neill's (1998, p. 4) opinion is that "...much of our knowledge about management and organizations has come from the study of business firms and is located in business schools and publications." Keane and Merget (1988) suggest that professional schools, rather than the arts and sciences, emphasize the application of knowledge to practical problems and professional competencies. These experts find that faculty in professional schools are more likely to maintain contact with practitioners, which helps to update curriculum.

From another viewpoint, Cyert (1988) suggests that business schools should not house nonprofit programs because business faculty and the curriculum are too focused on profit-oriented businesses. Young (1999) thinks that a for-profit culture overwhelms the classrooms in business schools, and that faculty are resistant to nonprofit subject matter. Mirabella and Wish (2000a; 2000b; 1999) find that business faculty and public administration faculty each prefer their own programs for NME. Ultimately, it might be most desirable to house NME as a separate program or concentration, equal to either management or public administration (Young, 1999; Smith, 2000). In our opinion, the acquisition of business competencies is not necessarily narrowed to profit making (see discussion below), and we share a great interest in nonprofit management education.

A decision about where to house NME courses or programs often depends on the nature of the institution, whether public or private, its organizations form, and its size. For example, large institutions where there are several graduate faculty in departments to service a program, may be able to staff programs with little need to draw upon faculty from other programs. Funding may also influence where a program is housed. As a result of a public initiative or grant supported funding, a program may be instituted in a given department. Lately, more NME programs are housed across schools, or on a university-wide basis. The assumption that multiple curricular models and multiple institutional settings for NME are necessary and desirable has been validated by the marketplace (Smith, 2000).

In our case, our institution is a small, undergraduate liberal arts private college with separate academic departments. There are no separate schools and few graduate programs. A new public service department at our school wanted its students to select concentrations in academic disciplines outside the public service major. Hence, given the nature of our institution and its needs, we focused our new MNE course concentration on undergraduate students in the public service major, although we did encourage other students across campus to take the courses as electives. We decided to house our courses in the management department as a more generic location than accounting, finance or marketing. We also wanted to better integrate our separate business departments through team teaching. Thus, our next challenge came in assigning faculty to teach the courses.

Faculty

An important issue to NME is who should teach nonprofit management. Faculty may be overly tied to their respective disciplines; i.e., "discipline is destiny" (Levy, 1988, p. 25). Levy (1988, p. 26) suggests that faculty may not pursue the nonprofit sector on its own merits and that nonprofit management is simply a derivative of a particular management theme or skill. "Social work, business, public administration, law are the dogs--the nonprofit sector, a short tail." Levy is concerned that faculty may not be willing to integrate a different body of knowledge and skills.

In fact, anecdotal evidence suggests that scholars who are interested in philanthropy and the nonprofit sector come from a variety of disciplines and professional schools (Mercer, 1997). Our group of five business professors represented all business areas and included business and nonprofit researchers, as well as higher education and technology experts. Each member of the group had been at the college for more than three years and knew the target student population very well. Some members of our group had served on committees to develop the public service program, and to hire the director and assistant director. One professor had experience in teaching courses in the public service major.

The public service program was designed to offer a systematic study of the major conceptual themes of community, service, compassion, public ethics, social justice, social change and leadership. The principal goals of the major were to provide students with tools with which to become fluent in these conceptual themes in both their academic and practical dimensions, to learn community building and sustaining skills, community action research skills, and to become fluent with models of leadership.

Ideally, at least one teacher needed to be involved teaching all three courses for consistency in pedagogy and course content. Team teaching would allow a faculty member with experience in the course concentration to mentor a new faculty member. However, although our course design group had five strong members, we found that assignment of faculty to teach the course became a challenge because of institutional constraints and other departmental responsibilities.

The institution had administrative difficulties in managing team teaching (discussed below). One member of the design group retired. Only one member of the original group taught all three courses, and that person ultimately left the institution. Other members of the design group had other departmental responsibilities such as serving as department chair or teaching courses within their own department. Presently, a new management professor teaches the course concentration.

Interdisciplinary Teaching

Business discipline integration applied to the nonprofit sector is the underlying principle behind the course concentration development, and we think that team teaching is important to its pedagogy. Expert opinion supports the concept of interdisciplinary instruction in NME, across academic departments or schools (Keane & Merget, 1988; Leduc &

McAdam, 1988; Levy, 1988). Team teaching is important in that, as with most faculty, none of us had expertise in all business and nonprofit areas. We believed that at least two instructors should teach each course. In addition, an experienced faculty member in the concentration could mentor a new faculty member.

However, team teaching is a "luxury few colleges or universities believe they can afford" (Bernays & Kaplan, 1997, p. B6). Additionally, although rapid growth has occurred in NME programs during the 1990s, very few receive institutional support for full-time tenured faculty and policies that support faculty crossover to teach from other departments (Mercer, 1997). Our institution did support team teaching for the public service major. However, the management department housed our courses and instructors for the courses from outside that department had to be released from a course assignment in their own discipline. For example, the accounting department had to reassign an accounting course normally taught by an accounting teacher who taught nonprofit management.

The first author of this paper and a management professor taught the first course in the fall 1996 semester, and the first author and a community partner taught the second course in the spring 1998 semester. Initially, regular day faculty members taught the course as part of their normal three-course teaching load, or received compensation as a one-course overload. Over time, the institution started to challenge this compensation arrangement, so we approached people outside the institution, partners from the nonprofit community to teach. Community partners received one-half of the compensation normally paid to a one-course adjunct professor.

In team teaching, we thought that it was important that students were clear about the roles of two instructors. In the first course, we were both present for all classes and took turns as discussion leader. We each individually blind-graded all assignments and exams, and then met to resolve discrepancies. While this method worked, we discovered that we had very different ideas about pedagogy. One of us preferred a collaborative style of instruction, while the other preferred a more structured approach.

In the second course with the community partner, we clearly told students that the full-time faculty member evaluated all student work. The community partner had a full-time consulting business and received only half-adjunct pay for one course. Thus, the community partner did not attend all classes, did not do much planning, and did not evaluate students.

Although we both shared our insights during class discussions, students were not always clear about the community partner's role in the course.

In both situations, disagreement between the instructors about course material did not occur during class, as we decided who would lead the class for the day. However, disagreement between two instructors often enriches the students' experience as they wrestle with the meaning of challenging material (Bernays & Kaplan, 1997). In our courses, much of the material was at an introductory or intermediate level, and disagreements that occurred with case studies solutions mostly occurred between students.

Students

NME program and course designers need to identify the type of students interested in the programs at their institution. Student backgrounds range from undergraduates with no work experience, to graduate students with significant work experience (Tschirhart, 1998). The institution may be public or private and class size may be large or small. In general, most students in NME are older, with some administrative work experience in nonprofits; and most NME students are women and very few are students of color (O'Neill, 1998).

In our situation, the institution is an undergraduate denominational college with few students of color. Women make up the majority of the population: enrollment in courses in the concentration is mostly female. The public service majors have substantial public service internship experience through courses in their major. While very familiar with the values system at nonprofit organizations, the students are unfamiliar with business concepts. Young (1999) suggests that nonprofit management students are more value-driven and socially aware, but less quantitative and hard-nosed than business students.

Instead, other institutions may need to develop nonprofit career awareness (O'Neill, 1998). Some of this need was present in our program because the courses were open to all students across campus. Some business students did take one or more of the courses as an elective, which was an interesting challenge since they were unfamiliar with nonprofit organizations. Having both types of students in the same class allowed substantive learning experiences to occur among students through topic discussions and case analyses, as each type shared their unique perspective.

Another student issue is whether we should teach NME students to be managers or leaders, e.g., board members (O'Neill & Young, 1988). O'Neill and Young ask whether leadership can be taught. We think that management skills and leadership skills are not mutually exclusive. Students can be taught to plan, control and maximize performance at the same time as problem-solving, creative thinking and developing a vision for the future. Our students read Drucker on leadership (see Appendix A), and analyzed a case, American Repertory Theater, that considered the leadership strengths and succession plans for its talented leader (Appendix B).

Finally, should we teach students to be program managers or functional managers? Levy (1988) notes that most practitioners think it is unrealistic to train students to perform both functional and program management skills. However, nonprofit managers are often forced into several roles simultaneously because of lack of staff and/ or lack of funds, particularly in smaller nonprofits. Thus, we thought that students should learn about both functions.

Experiential Learning

Meaningful connections to nonprofits institutions are critical to nonprofit management pedagogy (Levy, 1988), and our course design echoed this belief. Experiential learning is a fundamental tenet of the public service major at the college where our courses were developed. "Experiential education involves not merely observing the phenomenon being studied but also doing something with the phenomenon, such as testing the dynamics of reality or applying the theory learned" (Dolch, Kidwell, Sodow & Smith, 1998, p. 91).

Students do not necessarily have to go off campus for experiential learning. The first course included a nonprofit panel discussion where leaders in nonprofit organizations discussed their career choice and issues of concern to their specific entity. Both the first and second course had students actively involved in comprehensive case analyses (see Exhibit 1). Case studies provided a field-specific educational perspective (Leduc & McAdam, 1988) in that cases used included hospitals, museums, churches, mutual benefit organizations, charities and social cause organizations. In the final course, the primary experiential learning component, students brought their knowledge to the field itself through project management in an actual nonprofit organization.

A major benefit of the courses is that students who participate in experiential learning activities are attractive to potential employers (Tschirhart, 1998). Students developed contacts with nonprofit managers and had a project from the third course to include in portfolios for their job search.

COURSE CONTENT

During course development, we found very few traditional academic texts devoted to nonprofit management topics. Most books are of the trade or practitioner variety (see course outlines in appendices).[2] We reviewed texts, books, journal articles and case studies written about nonprofit organizations. We examined nonprofit course syllabi that we found on the

EXHIBIT 1
Case Analysis

I. Problem Definition:
  A. Identify factors affecting the organization
    1. Environmental
      i. political
      ii. legal
      iii. economic
      iv. social
      v. technological
      vi. ethical
    2. Internal
      i. leadership
      ii. management strategies
      iii. marketing strategies
      iv. human resources
      v. financial resources
  B. Articulate the issues and identify the researchable question.
II. Analysis
  A. Locate the relevant literature.
  B. Evaluate Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats
III. Possible Alternative Actions:
  A. Consider two or three alternatives: 'pros' and 'cons' for each choice.
  The alternatives that you generate should be specifically tied to the problem that you have identified.
  B. Consider the feasibility of your solution.
  Does the organization have enough resources (human, financial, technical) to implement the solution? Is the time frame realistic?

IV. Recommendation and Justification:

Choose one alternative and cite specific reasons as to why this is the recommended choice at this time.

Remember, there is no one right answer for any case.

See:

Harvard Business School website for resources on case teaching (http://www.hbsp.harvard.edu);

Harvard Business School (1996, April 19). "Choreographing a Case Class." (Note: 90595-074). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Publishing.

Harvard Business School (1984). "Hints for Case Teaching" (Note: 585-012). Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Publishing.

Lovelock, C. H., & Weinberg, C. B. (1990). "Studying and Learning from Cases." In C. H. Lovelock and C. B. Weinberg (Eds.), *Public and Nonprofit Marketing* (pp. xiii-xv). San Francisco, CA: The Scientific Press.

Internet.[3] From these sources, we developed objectives for each course during several meetings over the summer of 1995.

Business Competencies in Nonprofit Management Education

We believe that public service majors with no business knowledge need to develop business competencies in accounting, finance, marketing and management to better manage nonprofit entities. If a nonprofit manager does not run the entity in a business-like manner, then the nonprofit organization will not have the capacity to carry out its mission. Most importantly, students should develop business skills *in the context* of nonprofit organizations.

> While it is true that basic models of management may be transferable to the nonprofit sector, it is also true that general management principles alone are not sufficient for management education in the nonprofit sector (Leduc & McAdam, 1988, p. 96).

As background research for this paper, we discovered a survey conducted by the Indiana University in Bloomington for development of a graduate NME program. Tschirhart (1998) developed a list of knowledge skills, i.e., competencies that might be taught in NME, and then surveyed nonprofit managers, faculty and students about their perceptions of importance for each skill. Although we did not have the benefit of Tschirhart's survey results for our course development, we found many similarities in her survey findings to competencies described in our course objectives. Some of these include leadership, financial management, interpersonal skills, fundraising, volunteer management and writing skills.[4]

In a comprehensive study of nonprofit organizations in Michigan, Kattelus, Clifford, Warren and Wiencek (2000) asked nonprofit managers to grade themselves on several competencies similar to those described in the Tschirhart study. Kattelus et al. (2000) found that nonprofit managers highly rated their financial management skills, but they wanted to improve their external relation skills in fundraising and development, marketing and public relations. The importance to NME is that nonprofit managers' development of business competencies improves management capacity, which is the ability of the organization to meet its mission and the needs of the community (Kattelus et al., 2000). A comprehensive list of competencies needed in nonprofit management education may be found at the American Humanics Society website (http://www.humanics.org).[5]

Therefore, we list business competencies included in our course objectives from our course syllabi (see Exhibit 2). Each competency is cross-referenced to a particular course. Throughout, our objectives emphasized critical thinking. We wanted students to analyze complex situations and to use business competencies to develop and evaluate solutions to nonprofit management problems. Oral and written communication was fundamental objectives in all three courses, and students were expected to use library and electronic resources for research.

The syllabus for each course is included in appendices to the paper. Our course objectives included principles of accounting, finance, management and marketing applied to nonprofit organizations. For example, students would analyze nonprofit financial statements, make fundraising decisions, explore human resource issues and consider promotion strategies for nonprofit organizations.

The Nature of the Nonprofit Sector and its Role in Society

In addition to developing business competencies, we though that students should understand the complex nature of nonprofit organizations and the role of the nonprofit sector in a society (Weisbrod, 1988). A central goal in nonprofit management education is to determine the central management challenge, confronting efforts to solve societal problems (Salamon, 1998).

EXHIBIT 2
Competencies Required in Nonprofit Management Courses

Competencies	Course 1	Course 2	Course 3
Nonprofit issues			
Government, nonprofit, and for-profit sectors	x		
Legal issues for nonprofits	x		
History of philanthropy and nonprofits	x		
Rationale for nonprofit existence	x		
Accounting and Finance			
Financial reporting and analysis		x	x
Fundraising	x	x	x
Budgeting		x	
Program Evaluation		x	x
Management			
Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats Analysis	x	x	x
Business planning		x	x
Strategic planning		x	x
Managing change		x	x
Organizational mission development	x	x	x
Performance evaluation	x	x	x
Human Resources			
Conducting effective meetings			x
Conflict management		x	x
Collaboration and networking		x	x
Managing a diverse workforce	x	x	x
Volunteer management	x	x	x
Board recruitment and development	x	x	x
Marketing			
Public Relations	x	x	x
Promotion	x	x	x
Pricing		x	x
Personal			
Leadership	x	x	x
Ethics and values in nonprofits	x	x	x
Creativity	x	x	x
Oral communication	x	x	x
Written communication	x	x	x
Personal growth and stress management		x	x
Computers and software	x	x	x

> The central challenge.... is to prepare people to design and manage these immensely complex collaborations and networks [among the sectors] that we increasingly rely on to address our public problems (Salamon, 1998, p. 140) [words in brackets added].

Much has been written in political science and economics about why nonprofits exist and whether or not nonprofit organizations are even needed (Hansmann, 1986; O'Neill, 1989; Drucker, 1990; Salamon, 1992; Hopkins, 1992). Although the organizational reality of nonprofits is not fundamentally different from for-profit organizations (Hopkins, 1992), attitudes and values needed to manage nonprofits may differ from for-profit and governmental organizations (O'Neill & Young, 1988).

> The development of nonprofit management education has been based on the theory that there are significant differences in (1) the organizational reality of nonprofits, as distinguished from for-profit and government entities, and therefore in (2) the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values needed to manage nonprofits (O'Neill, 1998, p. 2).

Thus, "...it is equally important...to understand the nonprofit sector itself" (Nonprofit Academic Centers Council (NACC) and National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA), 2000, p. 3), which supports the need for separate nonprofit management courses.

In fact, the distinction between nonprofits, for-profits and government is often blurred (NACC & NASPAA, 2000; Young, 1999). Hospital organizations exist in all three sectors and are primarily managed in the same manner in all sectors. Nonprofits often compete directly with for-profit or government organizations. Some examples are nursing homes, day care centers, universities (Levy, 1988), and insurance companies. Nonprofits also frequently enter into seemingly unrelated business ventures such as product sales (e.g., gift shops), restaurants, parking or office space.

> ...the characteristics of the two categories of organizations are identical; both require a legal form, have a board of directors and officers, pay compensation, face essentially the same expenses, are able to receive a profit, make investments, and produce goods and/or services (Hopkins, 1992, p. 4).

The primary difference between nonprofits and for-profits is that nonprofits cannot distribute earnings (e.g., dividends) to nonprofit founders or directors according to state nonprofit incorporation laws (Hopkins, 1992). Most nonprofits then apply for tax-exempt status, which is granted if the public benefits from the work of the nonprofit corporation.

An additional issue is that nonprofits themselves vary in type and size. Examples of different types of nonprofits are human service organizations, health care organizations, advocacy organizations, and mutual benefit organizations or professional trade associations (O'Neill & Young, 1988). In size, nonprofits vary from soup kitchens run by a few volunteers to universities with a large physical plant and thousands of employees. Hence, given the nature of the nonprofit sector, what are the implications for nonprofit management education?

Some NME experts think that the focus of nonprofit education should be on careers and not on the type and size of the nonprofit entity (Salamon, 1998; Cook, 1988; Levy, 1988). Levy (1988) supports this position because of the overlap of the sectors (e.g., hospitals). "...The mix in the marketplace and the likely movement of professionals within a given discipline renders any effort to train by sectoral perspective futile" (Levy, 1988, p. 24). Salamon (1998) advocates the training of "professional citizens," people who are prepared to work on public problems regardless of the sector in which the citizen works. In Cook's opinion (1988), the size distinction has little practical curricula impact in that subject matter (e.g., accounting, finance) would not be different. Broad-based *nonprofit* management education is now widely accepted in the marketplace because of the breadth and depth of knowledge needed by nonprofit managers (Smith, 2000).

In its guidelines for nonprofit management education, the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) suggests that nonprofit management programs should place nonprofit organizations in the context of our demographic society to understand the role of nonprofits and challenges faced by nonprofit managers (NACC & NASPAA, 2000, p. 4). Several essential elements to NME include the history, values, ethics and philosophies of nonprofits, its legal structure, theories of the sector and its interdependent relations with government and for-profit sectors (NACC and NASPAA, 2000; Smith, 2000). We developed the first course specifically to address the complex nature of the nonprofit sector, its characteristics and its relationship to the other sectors. This theme carried throughout the courses. In addition, we discussed the types of nonprofit organizations, and cases covered a variety of types and sizes of nonprofit entities.

NONPROFIT MANAGEMENT TRACK COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Course 1: Perspectives on Not-for-Profit Organizations

An important approach is to begin with the historical, philosophical and religious roots of nonprofit organizations (Levy, 1988; NACC & NASPAA, 2000). "Critical to pedagogical justification is an appreciation for the traits that conceptually and practically mark off the third sector from the first sector (free enterprise) and the second (government)" (Levy, 1988, p. 27). Furthermore, curriculum designers should consider the labor-intensive, tax-exempt, volunteer dependent, public purpose qualities of nonprofits and differences in performance evaluation for this sector (Levy, 1988).

In fact, the objectives for our first course reflected these essential elements to NME (NACC & NASPAA, 2000). We thought that students should clearly understand the similarities, differences and interrelationship among the for-profit, nonprofit and government sectors. In the first week of the first course, we discussed the characteristics of the three sectors. An in-class exercise asked students to list the different types of nonprofit organizations, categorize the types and describe characteristics of each category. The purpose of the assignment was to better define the "nonprofit" sector and to develop a more clear conception of the complex nature of nonprofit organizations. In the next two weeks, we explored the historical roots of nonprofits, rationales for the existence of nonprofits and the legal formation of nonprofit organizations.

To facilitate understanding of the context of nonprofit organizations, we assigned students to groups to prepare a comprehensive oral and written case presentation. We used a class period to explain the case method to students to guide them in their analysis (see Exhibit 2). We expected students to do research to conduct an environmental analysis, to identify the problem in the case, conduct a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis and develop feasible solution alternatives. We stressed that problem identification was a more important skill than finding the correct solution to the case. [6]

The first course included a panel discussion of managers from nonprofit entities. Students got first-hand knowledge of the challenges and rewards of a nonprofit career. Since many of the students were seniors and considering their own career paths, the discussion centered on comparisons of for-profit and not-for-profit career choices. Students gained valuable insight from members of the community who themselves had faced very difficult decisions in their own career choices. Because the panel discussion was such a success, it was repeated the following year when the first course in the concentration was taught for the second time. Students prepared a reflection paper about the experience.

The second half of the course introduced management concepts that included strategic planning, fund raising, public relations, promotion and human resource management (see Exhibit 1). Our purpose was to raise awareness of business concepts applied to nonprofit organizations as a preview to specific competencies to be developed in the second course. Readings introduced theoretical concepts and cases demonstrated application of the principles to real world situations.

Course 2: Management in Not-for-Profit Organizations

The second course in the concentration ran in the spring 1998 semester and included 22 students that represented majors in public service, accounting, marketing, health policy, management and humanities. Some students had not taken the first course, so we briefly reviewed the three sectors, described the characteristics and purpose of nonprofit organizations and reviewed case preparation. The focus of the course was truly interdisciplinary from both a student and learning perspective. The challenge, as Tschirhart (1998) suggests, is that students who had worked in nonprofit organizations (e.g., our public service majors) have different learning goals than our business students.

The students in the public service program require firm grounding in the concepts of citizenship, ethical behaviors, and the value of democratic institutions. In addition, they need to develop concepts and skills in community-centered analysis and action research, understand the interdisciplinary nature of the study of public service and be prepared to become agents of change. Actually, both types of students, public service and business majors, in this second course greatly enriched the learning environment as students shared their vastly different experiences and goals.

Again, the first author of this paper taught this course along with a community partner, which was another unique aspect of the second course. The community partner owned her own consulting business and had over twenty years experience in management positions in primarily nonprofit organizations. In this way, students acquired first-hand knowledge about the application of business practices in nonprofit organizations. Both instructors were present for most classes during the semester.[7]

Our initial course design included learning objectives for students to develop specific accounting, finance, management and marketing competencies applicable to nonprofit organizations. For each functional area, readings and discussion introduced concepts, and then case studies required students to apply their knowledge. For example, students learned the basic format of nonprofit financial statements. Students also learned how to analyze financial statements with nonprofit ratio analysis (McLaughlin, 1995) with spreadsheet software. Then, when a case included financial statements, students had to conduct a ratio analysis for the nonprofit organization and interpret the ratios as part of the case analysis.[8]

With more than fifteen students, a seminar format is more difficult. We lectured about some topics during the semester: financial statement analysis, principles of strategic planning, and writing a business plan. To discuss readings, we divided students into smaller groups and assigned a discussion facilitator. Each student facilitated the discussion for one article during the semester. Students developed a list of discussion questions that were e-mailed to the instructor before the class discussion. We reviewed the questions and suggested changes before the class period. Finally, as in the first course, students worked in small groups to prepare an oral and written case presentation.

Course 3: Project Seminar in Not-for-Profit Organizations

The third course was offered during the fall 1998 semester with an enrollment of eight students. Students applied the business knowledge that they gained to develop a small program or write a case study for a not-for-profit organization from the community. Again, as the first author of this paper, I taught the course. Before the semester began, I visited several nonprofits in the area to describe the course and determine project availability. Organizations included a homeless coalition, a Red Cross chapter, a Big Sisters chapter, a domestic violence group, a scholarship foundation at another college, and a Salvation Army chapter.

The class met in a two-hour time slot, once per week, and students visited the nonprofit organization one to two hours per week. In the first class meeting, students selected their site and we discussed ideas for projects (Cushman, 1997). While the organization had loosely defined project ideas, students developed and planned their own projects. We used two project management guides (Baker & Baker, 1998; Lewis, 1997) to structure the course, as well as the case analysis guidelines (see Exhibit 2) used in prior courses. Then, in subsequent weeks, students obtained information from the organization to develop and plan a project (see Exhibit 3 for an example of a weekly assignment). Because the course was limited to one fifteen week semester, students were not expected to implement the project.[9]

Students kept a weekly journal about their experience at the site. A site supervisor evaluated student performance at mid-semester, and at the end of

EXHIBIT 3
MGT401 Project Seminar in Not-for-Profit Organizations

Week 3
Objectives:

- To review the list of research resources needed to describe the internal and external environment of the organization to assist in developing/defining the course project.
- To review the mission statement and to plan goals consistent with the organization's mission and existing strategic plans.

For discussion:

1. Review journal of this week's activities at the not-for-profit site.
2. Review and refine the list of research resources.
3. Discussion of the Roberts-Gray and Scheirer article* and its application to analyzing the not-for-profit environment.
4. Review the not-for-profit's mission statement and strategic plans.
5. What is the organizational structure of the not-for-profit? What programs are presently in place?
6. How do we write goals for a project?

Assignment:

1. Read Peterson and Bickman**
2. Write project goals and start to define the scope of the project.
3. List as many risks and constraints as you can.
4. Bring eight copies of goals, and risks and constraints to next class to share with other class members.
5. Gather readings and articles and start to prepare environmental analysis.

* Roberts-Gray, C., & Scheirer, M. A. (1988). "Checking the Congruence between a Program and Its Organizational Environment." In J. J. Conrad and C. Robert-Gray (Eds.), *Evaluating Program Environments* (pp. 63-82). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

**Peterson, K. A., & Bickman, L. (1988). "Program Personnel: The Missing Ingredient in Describing the Program Environment." In J. J. Conrad and C. Roberts-Gray (Eds.), *Evaluating Program Environments* (pp. 83-91).

the semester. At specific points during the semester, students handed in parts of the project to receive preliminary evaluation by the instructor and to ensure continued progress. Some of these project components included a research resource list, an environmental analysis, a financial statement analysis and a description of the organization's mission and strategic plan. These components were then combined into a final project paper or case study. In the final class session, students made oral project presentations to the class and nonprofit supervisors.

CONCLUSION

Nonprofit management education programs vary widely across the country. Furthermore, nonprofit managers have different needs and interests. The purpose of this paper is to describe our development process for an undergraduate nonprofit management course concentration. We identify business competencies that we thought were important for future nonprofit managers. In addition, we want students to develop an appreciation for the complexity of the nonprofit sector and its importance to society. As our economy grows more service-oriented, and as resources become even scarcer, society increasingly relies on the nonprofit sector to meet its needs. We hope that other nonprofit management educators can build on our work to further raise consciousness about this important educational endeavor. We need well-educated nonprofit managers to provide leadership so that nonprofit organizations can better serve societal needs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Providence College provided support to develop our nonprofit management course track.

NOTES

1. For a complete description of nonprofit management courses and programs in the United States from the 1995 research project undertaken by Drs. Mirabella and Wish, see http://pirate.shu.edu/~mirabero/Kellogg.html.

2. John Wiley and Sons, Inc. produces a substantial list of titles in a nonprofit management series.

3. Refer to the Mirabella and Wish website at http://pirate.shu.edu/~mirabero/Kellogg.html.

4. The American Society of Association Executives has developed a certificate program to elevate professional standards and enhance managerial skills. Content specific outlines are included at the website http://www.asaenet.org/CAE along with a suggested reading list. Many topics covered in our courses are included in this list as well.

5. In a similar way, the accounting profession developed a list of competencies needed by accounting graduates (AECC and AAA, 1995, AECC, 1990).

6. Both instructors had significant experience in using the case method as a pedagogical tool. To ensure class participation from all students during the oral presentation, we required nonpresenting students to prepare a two to three page management summary of the case.

7. The community partner did not attend those classes devoted to accounting and finance matters.

8. From an instructional viewpoint, the course challenged the instructor as public service majors had never prepared spreadsheets, while business students were largely unfamiliar with work in nonprofit organizations.

9. One student developed a scholarship project for a Big Sisters project that was implemented by the end of the semester. Another student surveyed members of nonprofits in a homeless coalition and made recommendations about the continued viability of the coalition.

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APPENDIX A
Perspectives on Not-for-Profit Organizations

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the not-for-profit (NFP) organizational form; its historical development, the rationale for its existence and its relationship to the community. Through a process of discovery using assigned readings and cases, students will develop an appreciation for the complexities of managing NFP organizations by exploring similarities and differences between NFP organizations and for-profit (FP) organizations. At the end of the course, the focus will shift specifically to an overview of managerial activities within NFP organizations. Emphasis will be placed on oral and written communication and critical analysis of NFP management concepts.

Course Objectives

I. Students will develop a solid grasp of the complexities of managing not-for-profits (NFP).
- no clear-cut distinctions between for-profit (FP) and NFP
- multiple constituencies/ relationships
- difficulties in assessing performance
- dynamic interaction between the organization and its environment

II. Students will develop the following knowledge, skills and abilities.
- problem identification/ DISCOVERY
- identification/ appreciation of multiple perspectives
- communication skills through assignments/ methods geared toward discovery
- tolerance for ambiguity/ messes—"no right/ clear-cut answers"

III. Students will develop an overall understanding of where the first course fits in the concentration.
- appreciation of the process of discovery
- an awareness of the *big picture* of NFP management, and
- an excitement for the area under study and the desire to explore NFPs in more detail.

Books and Materials

Drucker, P. F. (1990). *Managing the Non-Profit Organization.* New York: Harper Business.

O'Neill, M. (1989). *The Third America: The Emergence of the Nonprofit Sector in the United States*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers

Harvard Business cases and journal articles

Course Requirements

Panel Discussion:

A panel of not-for-profit managers will be held one evening during the semester. Students must attend this session and will prepare questions for the panel. After the panel discussion, students will prepare a written paper of not more than five pages that describes their thoughts about this experience. More details will follow.

Group Cases and Presentation:

Students will be randomly assigned to groups of four or five people for case presentations. Each group will prepare ONE oral presentation. Each student in the presenting group must prepare an individual paper that is approximately five to seven pages in length.

Nonpresenting groups are responsible to prepare cases for class discussion. In addition, nonpresenting students must prepare a brief written analysis (one to two pages maximum length) for each case.
More specific instructions will be forthcoming.

APPENDIX B
Management in the Not-for-Profit Organization

Course Description

The purpose of this course is to develop more specific knowledge and skills from the areas of accounting, finance, marketing and management that are related to managing not-for-profit (NFP) organizations. Using assigned readings and cases, students will develop business skills needed to manage programs and services offered by NFP organizations.

Course Objectives

I. Students will continue to develop further understanding of the complexities of managing NFPs introduced in the first course.
- examine the areas of marketing, accounting, finance and management in NFP organizations.

II. Students will develop the following knowledge, skills and abilities:
- detailed study and practice of the skills and methods involved in NFP management
- application of techniques flowing from the study of functional areas
- further development of communication skills (oral and written)

III. To prepare students for application of these principles in the next course, *Project Seminar in Not-for-Profit Organizations* (MGT401).

Books and Materials

McLaughlin, T. A. (1995). *Streetsmart Financial Basics for Nonprofit Managers*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
Smith, Bucklin & Associates (1994). *The Complete Guide to Nonprofit Management*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
Harvard Business School Case Book

Course Requirements

Discussion Leader:
Each student will be assigned to be the group facilitator for one reading or one case. Because cases are comprehensive, two students will be assigned to present one case. Note that each student will do no more than ONE reading or case. Each student will be evaluated on their presentation.

Written Assignments:
Homework assignments will be required to evaluate a student's mastery of specific skills related to accounting, finance, management and marketing topics applied to not-for-profit organizations. Students will be penalized five points for each class period that a homework assignment is late.

Management Case Summaries:
Students are responsible to prepare cases for class discussion. A written analysis (three pages maximum length) must be prepared for each case. More specific instructions will be forthcoming.

APPENDIX C
Project Seminar in Not-for-Profit Organizations

Course Description

Students will conduct a semester-long project in a not-for-profit (NFP) organization to plan a workable program for that organization or prepare a case analysis of the organization. Students will use business concepts developed in the second course in the NFP management series (MGT302) (i.e., accounting, finance, marketing and management) and do research to complete the project.

Course Objectives

I. Students will apply knowledge of their understanding of the complexities of managing NFP organizations by either:
- developing and/or coordinating a new program in a NFP organization.
- writing a case based on a NFP organization.

II. Students will develop the following knowledge, skills, and abilities:
- team work and relationships with class members and NFP organizational representatives
- detailed research report and/or case analysis of project
- identification of research literature pertaining to project implementation
- oral presentation of project

Books and Materials

Baker, S., & Baker, K. (1998). *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Project Management.* New York: Alpha Books.

Lewis, J. P. (1997). *Fundamentals of Project Management* (A Worksmart Book). New York: Amacom.

Roberts-Gray, C., & Scheirer, M. A. (1988). "Checking the Congruence between a Program and Its Organizational Environment." In J. J. Conrad and C. Robert-Gray (Eds.), *Evaluating Program Environments* (pp. 63-82). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Peterson, K. A., & Bickman, L. (1988). "Program Personnel: The Missing Ingredient in Describing the Program Environment." In J. J. Conrad and C.

Roberts-Gray (Eds.), *Evaluating Program Environments* (pp. 83-91).
Three ring binder for weekly journal, handouts and student resources.

Course Requirements

Class Participation

Class participation is vital as students will rely on their peers and the instructor to develop resources to complete the project. Students will bring journals to class to share their NFP experiences with class members and to plan steps toward project culmination. Students must prepare all assigned readings in advance.

Weekly Journal and Site Visits

Students will select a NFP site in the first week of the semester and then visit that site once per week for one to two hours to work toward project completion. Students will keep a written journal to describe the site experience each week that will be shared with the class during the seminar time. The weekly journal will also include materials that students have developed to complete the project, i.e., resource list, financial statement analysis, surveys, etc. The instructor will periodically collect the journal for evaluation.

Students will be assigned a site supervisor as their primary contact at the NFP organization. Students are expected to keep all appointments and to contact the organization promptly, if unable to attend due to illness or any other emergency that may arise. Students will be evaluated by the NFP site supervisor at mid-term and after the final project is completed.

Class Project or Case Study

The student will work with the NFP site supervisor and class instructor to develop an appropriate project. The focus of the project is to plan, implement and manage a program, rather than performing service within the organization. Thus, site visits will focus on obtaining resources and conducting interviews. The student will develop an outline of the proposed project that will be ***reviewed and approved by both the site supervisor and class instructor***.

Final Paper and Presentation

The final paper (or case study) is due on the last day of class. On the date of the final examination, each student will make a ten minute presentation to describe their project to the class. Each NFP site supervisor will be invited to attend the presentation.