



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

JOHN GLENN COLLEGE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Summer 2015

Skills: Board Development, Course #6890, 1 Credit

Tuesday, 5:45-7:35 pm, Page 0060

Instructor: Lori Overmyer

Office Hours: By appointment

E-mail: lori@goettler.com

Phone: 614-301-4492

Course Description

One of the most significant factors in the success of any nonprofit organization is the knowledge, quality and commitment of volunteers who are charged with its governance as members of its board of directors. In effect, a board member assumes a critical role in ensuring the mission is uppermost in all activities, in overseeing the executive director, ensuring the appropriate policies are in place and upheld, and ensuring the organization's financial health. Getting the right person to fill each of these roles is essential to success.

This course is designed to introduce students to the skills required to model an excellent board member. Course instruction will have broad applicability to those interested in working in or with nonprofit organizations, public organizations, universities, nonprofit foundations and/or corporate foundations. The course will utilize a combination applied theories and methods, guest speakers and readings to deliver the core content. In addition, during the course students will have the opportunity to apply what they have learned by taking part in a behavioral simulation that reflects what happens in a specific real-world board environment. Each class will consist of instruction combined with simulated board meetings, whereby each student will be expected to behave and react as if they were members of a nonprofit board.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course, students will:

1. Understand the role of the nonprofit board within an organization as a key component of an overall management;
2. Identify different components of a board operations, including the duties of officers and members, role of standing and ad hoc committees, techniques to run and/or participate in a board meeting, and an understanding of critical policies;
3. Develop best-practices techniques for optimal board management including the creation of basic policies, job descriptions, meeting minutes, agendas and assessments;
4. Be familiar with the legal duties of care, loyalty, compliance, and maintain records associated with nonprofit boards; and
5. Apply what they have learned by assuming a real-world board role that requires analytical techniques to determine appropriate strategies using tools and techniques learned.

Reading Materials

Required Texts: N/A

Supplemental Texts:

1. Drucker, Peter F. (2006). *Managing the Nonprofit Organization: Principles and Practices*. New York, NY: HarperCollins.
2. Mancuso, Anthony. (2011). *Nonprofit Meeting Minutes and Records*. Berkeley, CA: NOLO.
3. Batts, Michael E. (2011). *Board Member Orientation: The Concise and Complete Guide to Nonprofit Board Service*. Orlando, FL: Accountability Press.
4. Adams, etc. al. (2003). *The Board Member's Guide*. Columbus, OH: Academy for Leadership and Governance.

*Additional assigned readings for each class will be available online, through Carmen.

Grade Distribution

The primary deliverable in this course is a weekly assignment related to board operations, which will be compiled into a Board Manual. While the final Development Plan will be a group product (with a group grade), each group member will be assigned components according to their simulation role and will receive an individual grade for those components.

Course grades will be assigned based upon the following distribution:

	Percent of Final Grade
Board Manual	45%
First Draft Components (Individual)	25%
Final (Revised) Manual- All Parts (Group)	10%
Presentation of Strategy Summary and Recommendations (Group)	10%
In-Class Activities & Participation	55%
Simulation Participation (Individual)	25%
Class Participation and Discussion (Individual)	20%
Attendance at Community Nonprofit Board Meeting and Assessment	10%

Graded Components

Board Manual:

Students will work in groups of seven or eight as members of a nonprofit board. Each board will be provided with background material to offer a profile of the political, cultural and conflict activity that would normally take place in a nonprofit governance structure. Board simulations are to be fully integrated into the course; we will use these projects as dynamic case studies to link theory with practice during course discussions and workshops. Each week a different challenge will be presented which each board must address; students will be required to meet as a board at each class. As board members, they will be assigned roles that will require them to spend an appropriate amount of time as needed to gather information to complete each assignment, and to actively assume their board role as chair, vice chair, project.

Describe each deliverable here, including individual components, completed Board Manual, presentation of strategic summary and recommendations and role-playing participation.

First Draft Components:

The first half of each class will be instructional, with an introduction each week of the elements required to build and maintain a high-functioning board, and a model format. The second half of the class will consist of simulated board meeting, with each student assigned a role as a member of a (randomly assigned) board. Students will be assigned to draft a specific segment of work and/or complete related tasks depending on their board role. For his/her component, students will provide a written synopsis of the situation regarding their board and complete the component relative to his/her role which might be policies, organizational charts, minutes, job descriptions, ethical quandaries, and financial analysis. Understanding and evaluating current and future governance needs, and establishing bench marks of measurement, is a fundamental board skill and will be counted as 25 percent of each student's grade.

All work will be graded and returned with comments and edits; these assignments should then be refined to comprise part of the final board manual.

Final Board Manual:

The final board manual will be a compilation of all assignments organized according to each of the seven class "board meetings." The final document will incorporate instructor edits and group input and serve as a cohesive document that speaks with one "voice." The manual will be worth 10 percent of each student's grade.

Presentation of Strategy Summary and Recommendation

The ability to logically and dynamically determine the ability – or lack thereof – of your board growth and success is a critical skill. Well-articulated understanding of the mission as the core focus of all activities is as important as sound statistical analysis. Both contribute equally to keeping the governing body from straying from its primary roles and responsibilities. Each student will be given an opportunity to present his/her assessment of his/her board and, personal performance, and performance of board officers, and an overall spokesperson will present the board's assessment of its own future. This portion of the course work will account for 10 percent of the overall grade.

Simulation Participation (Individual)

Each student will be assigned a board member persona and board assignment in the first week of class. Thereafter, they will be expected to fully assume that persona and complete tasks according to simulation roles selected e.g., board officers, committee chairs, committee members, etc. In certain cases, students will be asked to complete an assignment in a board team of two, as a committee, or as the full board. The instructor will also pose several "crisis" situations which boards must deal with through swift and decisive problem-solving. In week seven, each student will be assessed by their board peers on their participation as part of the simulation. The simulation participation portion of the course work will account for 25 percent of the student's grade.

Class Participation and Discussion (Individual)

Because of the importance of active class discussion and participation, 20 percent of the final grade is based on participation and discussion. **Attendance in class sessions is required to receive credit for participation.** For most weeks, about one-half of the class session will be “hands on” activities, guest speakers, or case studies to engage the lecture material.

Participation is essential to the success of these activities. Participation during the lecture portion of the class is also important to illuminate the material. Your participation grade will be determined by the instructor at the end of the quarter, as well as through peer evaluations of your participation in the group consulting project. In general, active participation during each class session is expected to receive an “A” for participation at the end of the quarter.

Attendance at Community Nonprofit Board Meeting and Assessment

Students will choose a nonprofit from a roster of pre-selected organizations to attend one of the organization’s board meetings. Groups of three to four may attend a meeting at any one time. Prior to attending, students will be asked to glean specific characteristics of each board and their structure. Students will attend a meeting at any time between Week 4 and Week 8; instructor must be notified in advance of their selection and document attendance.

Course Policies

Workload:

For each credit, there should be about an hour of in class meeting time, and 2 hours out of class work. So for a one-credit class, you should expect 14 hours of in class instruction and about twice that outside of class preparing and doing homework and assignments. If you find yourself doing more than this on average, please alert the instructor.

Confidentiality:

In the process of attending a meeting of a nonprofit organization, students may hear or receive proprietary data and sensitive information. Participating organizations have been informed that such information may be discussed in class. It is therefore imperative that the confidentiality of the materials and of the class discussions be maintained. Some participating organizations may require the team members to sign confidentiality statements. In addition, students are prohibited from sharing such information with anyone inside or outside of class. Further, the audio or video recording of any interactions with the organization is expressly prohibited. **Breaches of confidentiality will be considered a violation of class rules and the guidelines on academic misconduct will be followed.** Refer to the Office of Academic Affairs for further information. <http://oaa.osu.edu/coam.html>.

A Note on Plagiarism

The deliverables that you will be preparing are “professional documents.” These types of documents are different than traditional research and course papers, in that they typically do not include a “list of works cited” or bibliography at the end of the document. HOWEVER, this does not reduce the importance of incorporating external references OR of properly

documenting such references. Many professionals find footnotes within text to be an efficient way to reference external sources or materials. Such footnotes should be provided to cite **any material taken from websites or organizational documents** (direct quotes or paraphrased materials), in addition to traditional “academic” references.

The Center for the Study of Teaching and Writing here on campus provides further direction on citing materials in documents. <http://cstw.osu.edu/writingcenter/handouts>

Inadequate citation of materials, or plagiarism, is taken very seriously at The Ohio State University, and the guidelines on academic misconduct will be followed in this course. Refer to the Office of Academic Affairs for further information. <http://oaa.osu.edu/coam.html>.

Important Dates

Week	Class	Class Subject	Consulting Project
Week 1	6/16/15	Overview of Course Work Why a Board?	Assignment of Boards and Individual Roles for Simulation First “introductory” board meeting; basic job descriptions & mission discussion
Week 2	6/23/15	Legal Duties of Board Members Running an Effective Meeting	Consent Agendas and Minutes Due (individual work assigned each week) Second board meeting; ethical crisis introduced
Week 3	6/30/15	Types of Boards: Working, Governing, Institutional Guest Speaker (Community Board Members)	Development of basic policies due (assigned to team of two) Third board meeting: policy review, resolution of crisis
Week 4	7/7/15	Board Committees: Standing and Ad Hoc	Your Board Type profile due (group assignment) Fourth Board Meeting: Standing and ad-hoc Committees created and chairs assigned
Week 5	7/14/15	Hot Topics: Board Diversity and Recruitment	Committee Job Descriptions and reports due (individual assignments) Fifth Board Meeting: Board Diversity Matrix
Week 6	7/21/15	Top Ten Responsibilities of Board Members (and that means fundraising)	Diversity Matrix due (group assignment) Sixth board meeting: financial/managerial crisis introduced
Week 7	7/28/15	Board assessment and evaluation	Financial/managerial strategy to resolve crisis (group assignment) Seventh board meeting: self- and board-leadership assessment.
Week 8	8/4/15	Modelling Effective Board Members	Group presentations: Report out on the success of your board

***Deliverables are to be posted to the appropriate Carmen Drop Box by the start of class time on the date that they are listed above. A printed copy must also be provided in class.**

Course Schedule

Week 1: June 16, 2015

Overview of Course Work: Why a Board?

- Student Introductions
- Course Overview
- Assignment of boards and initial roles
- First Board Meeting: getting Started as a Board

Required Readings:

1. The 5 Most Important Questions, Peter F. Drucker. Questions #1: What is our Business Mission?

Supplemental Readings:

1. Qualities of a Board Member
 2. Recommended Board Practices, BoardSource
-

Week 2: June 23, 2015

Legal Duties of Board Members

- Review of the critical duties required by the Ohio Attorney General's Office
- Elements of running an effective meeting; consent agendas; Robert's Rules
- Board Meeting #2: Ethical crisis for board to discuss and resolve

Required Readings:

1. Guide for Charity Board Members, Office of Attorney General Mike DeWine.
 2. Why a Consent Agenda?
 3. Summary: Robert's Rules of Order
 4. Sample policies required by Form 990
-

Week 3: June 30, 2015

Types of Board

- Basic characteristic of boards and their life-cycles; profile of each
- Guest speakers from boards at different life stages

Required Readings:

1. Sample committee job descriptions
2. Checklist of Board Tasks, *The Board Member's Guide*

Supplemental Readings:

1. Board organizational charts
-

Week 4: July 7, 2015

Board Committee: Standing and Ad Hoc

- Must-have Committees for best practices management
- What is an Executive Committee?
- Basic committee job descriptions for chairs and members
- Committee reporting and the consent agenda

Required Readings:

3. Sample committee job descriptions
4. Checklist of Board Tasks, *The Board Member's Guide*

Supplemental Readings:

1. Board organizational charts
-

Week 5: July 14, 2015

Hot Topics: Board Diversity Understanding the Annual Fund

- Defining Diversity
- Recruiting and enlisting board members
- Board applications
- Year-long education plans

Required Readings:

1. Leading with Intent, BoardSource
2. The Board Matrix
3. Strategic Board Recruitment, Chapter 2

Supplemental Readings:

1. afpnet.org, Board Diversity Committees
-

Week 6: July 21, 2015

Top Ten Responsibilities of Board Members

- How responsibilities manifest themselves in board/staff relationships
- The role of fundraising
- Basic research to identify funding sources
- Guest speaker from local foundation

Required Readings:

1. Board Letter of Agreement
 2. What Board Members Can Expect from Staff
-

Week 7: July 28, 2015

Board Assessment and Evaluation

- Trends in board assessment
- Analyzing assessment outcomes
- Strategies to improve board performance through assessment

Required Readings:

1. NHI Board Assessment and Scoring
2. Strategic Board Assessment, Chapter 8

Week 8: August 4, 2015

Final Class: Group Presentations

- Are you modeling effective board members? And why? (or why not?)
- Board Assessments
- Thoughts gleaned from Community Nonprofit Board “visits”
- Board Manual Due
- Resources for Community Board Placements

SAMPLE