Nonprofit Leadership Challenges: Practical issues for Success

Course Syllabus

21582

POGO 580 003 (Spring 2020)
Room 312 Arlington
1.5 Hours
Thursday, 7:20 – 10:00 pm

Instructor: Dr. David K. Rehr
Professor
Telephone: 703-819-9396 (m)
Email: Drehr@gmu.edu
Office: Van Metre Hall – Room 672
Office Hours: By appointment
Class Meetings: Thursday 7:20 pm – 10:00 pm
Course Description and Overview

This is a 1.5 credit class for individuals who aspire to run organizations but want to have insight into practical problems and solutions leader face daily. The course is meant to be a road map for success, and to learn from the successes and failures of current senior leaders in the charitable and association community. It will combine what you may have learned in public policy, public administration, and business to be effective and efficient in running an organization. The lessons, principles and case studies will inform you of best practices. Issues discussed will include, but not be limited to, building teams, understanding the financial environment, delivering value to your stakeholders, handling a Board of Directors, and why focusing and executing on a mission statement with performance measurement are essential for leadership success.

Communication:

The best way to connect is via email. You can expect a response within 24 hours, but often within a matter of minutes, depending on schedules. You can also make an appointment before/after class.

Academic Integrity

All members of the Schar School of Policy and Government community are expected to exhibit honesty and competence in their academic work. Students have a special responsibility to acquaint themselves with, and make use of, all proper procedures for doing research, writing papers, and taking exams. Members of the community will be presumed to be familiar with the proper academic procedures and will be held responsible for applying them. Deliberate failure to act in accordance with such procedures will be considered academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is defined here as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one’s own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information. Acts of academic dishonesty are a legal, moral, and intellectual offense against the community and will be prosecuted through the proper university channels. For more information, see the Honor Code: http://sls.gmu.edu/honor/

Attendance:

The expectation for the class is that regular attendance is strongly encouraged, and attendance will be taken. Any student missing a class must contact Professor Rehr prior to the beginning of the class. Unauthorized absence(s) will be reflected in the final course grade. Students should be prepared for each class, having read the required readings and anticipate potential questions for guests. Remember, a portion of your final grade is based upon class participation.
Use of Electronic Devices During Class:

Use of electronic devices during class is discouraged. Laptops may be used in class if strongly preferred, but only for taking notes and be related to class material and discussions. Cell phones may not be used during class.

Recording Class Lectures and use of social media:

The recording of the course and any class is not permitted. Also, use of publicizing course material, comments or comments of guest speakers on social media is not permitted. The only exception is the posting of pictures (no video or audio) if desired by the Professor. This will allow free and unencumbered discussion and exchange of ideas. Professor Rehr may grant exceptions under unusual and exceptional circumstances.

Disability Accommodations:

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the DRC.

Course Evaluation:

At the end of the semester, students will be given the opportunity to evaluate the course. It is very important that you take the time to complete an evaluation. Students are also encouraged to provide feedback throughout the course of the semester by contacting:

Thys Van Schalk
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at Schar School of Policy and Government
mvanscha@gmu.edu
(703)-993-8227

Class Expectations:

This class will consider how to solve practical problems CEOs in the nonprofit world face. Students are encouraged to engage in respectful and engaging debate with the diverse speakers serving as guest lecturers, even if you personally disagree with their perspective. The class will give students a first-hand view of management decision-making of major operational issues around running a successful organization.
Course Requirements

Students are expected to participate in class discussion, complete assignments on time and within guidelines, and finish assigned readings before class when due. Students are also expected to take part in in-class media practice, recordings, and interviews, both in and out of class. Please submit assignments electronically to drehr@gmu.edu and make sure your name appears at the top of each page with reference to Expanding your Media Clout. You can also bring your paper to the class prior to the beginning of the class when the assignment is due.

Grading:

This is a graded course. The final percentage will be determined by the following percentages: 50% based upon total points available through written assignments; 30% active class participation; 20% on final class presentation.

Assignments and Valuation:

Additional detail about each assignment is provided at the end of the syllabus. Below provides the name of each topic, the learning objective addressed, due date, and the maximum number of points available to the student. All written papers should be at least 5 pages long (double spaced).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Learning Objective(s) Addressed</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Weight (Total points)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The making of a successful leader</td>
<td>Students will exercise the professional skills expected of highly successful professionals.</td>
<td>Before 6 pm on March 26, 2020.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding your authentic leadership</td>
<td>Students will understand basic principles of American Law and what makes America a special place in the world for non-profit associations.</td>
<td>Before 6 pm on April 2, 2020.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discovering you Unconscious Bias</td>
<td>Students will be able to apply and share to share their strategies for greater diversify and inclusion, within federal and state law.</td>
<td>Before 6 pm on April 2, 2020.</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>The important elements of building a successful team</td>
<td>Students will exercise the professional skills expected of highly successful professionals</td>
<td>Before 6 pm on March 9, 2020.</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overcoming a nonprofit financial challenge – case study interview or media review</td>
<td>Students will exercise the professional skills expected of highly successful professionals</td>
<td>Before 6 pm on March 2, 2020.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solving a nonprofit reputation process problem – steps for intervention, recovery, and media outreach</td>
<td>Engage in analytical thinking of problem solving</td>
<td>Before 6 pm on March 16, 2020.</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpreting the success of a nonprofit through performance metrics</td>
<td>Engage in a critical but fair analysis of judging the effectiveness of a non-profit organization.</td>
<td>Before 6 pm on March 23, 2020.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Assignment – Oral presentation with Power Point of a courageous living Washington nonprofit leader you admire</td>
<td>Enhance senior leadership skills by outlining the outstanding characteristics of the leader chosen.</td>
<td>PowerPoint is ready to present April 30, 2020.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>Active participation and engagement during class. This includes asking questions of speakers and offering personal insights and observations.</td>
<td>Viewed throughout the course, with end date of April 30, 2020. Class should ask questions of presenters.</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grading Percentages:

A+ - 100-98%
A  - 91-98%
B+ - 86- 90%
B  - 80 – 85%
C  - 70 – 79%
F  - Percentage below 69%

Required Reading:


Supplemental:


Tentative Course Calendar*

*The instructor(s) reserves the right to alter course content and/or adjust the pace to accommodate class progress and the availability of invited guest lecturers. All guest lecturers mentioned are tentative and subject to their availability. Students are responsible for keeping up with all adjustments to the course calendar.

Each class will be divided into two sessions – approximately 90 minutes each to ensure students understand the complexity of advocacy and lobbying. Expect to stay until 10 pm each class session. Time adjusts can then be made on topics.
Spring 2020 Course

March 19

Class #1 – The loneliness of running an organization – what makes a leader?

Topic and Content Covered

Introductions
Learning expectations
Course review
How media can catapult your professional career

Learning Objectives Addressed

Students will demonstrate an understanding of research, oral advocacy, negotiation, and problem solving.

Required Reading:

Maxwell, pp. 1 – 46.
Drucker, The Effective Executive, Chapters 1, 3, 5
Rehr, Traits of an Exceptional Association CEO, PDF, 2017

Class Questions and Discussion Issues

What are student and professor expectations for class?

Why is the professor using Drucker for a Nonprofit course?

What will we learn from our guest lecturers?

Can leadership be learned?

Second portion of class March 19

Class #2 – Getting the mission of the organization focused: The importance of metrics of performance

Topic and Content Covered

Why a mission is important
Elements of an effective mission
Challenges when mission is blurred

**Learning Objectives Addressed**

Students will demonstrate an understanding of media research, oral advocacy, negotiation, and problem solving.

**Required Reading:**

Maxwell, pp.155-217.

**Class Questions and Discussion issues**

**Why is mission focus of an organization critical?**

**What are some practical challenges to mission focus?**

**How can diverse views and opinions be unified for the mission?**

**March 26**

Class #3– Leveraging your own personality strengths to build an exceptional team

**Topic and Content Covered**

Types of organizational personalities
Learning your own strengths & weaknesses
Elements of being a successful leader

**Learning Objectives Addressed**

**Why understanding yourself is essential**

**How to interact with others of diverse opinions**

**Determining team member personalities and establishing how to interact**

**Creating a healthy, productive nonprofit environment**
Required Reading:

Drucker, Five Most Important Questions, Why Self-Assessment, pp. 1 – 6.


Class Questions and Discussion issues:

Can different personalities get along and work together in this age of division?  
What impact, if any, can social media have on team building? 
How can leaders keep good people?

Second portion of class March 26

Class #4 – Maximizing the personalities of others, while providing job growth and experiences

Topic and Content Covered

Understanding how to work with assorted personalities
Leveraging personality differences to gain productivity
Common workplace personality traits
Interacting with different generations

Learning Objectives Addressed

Developing insights in dealing with others
Tips to understanding personality types and why that is important
Developing great employees

Required Reading:

https://www.wfm.noaa.gov/workplace/Bullying_DifficultPeople_Handout_2.pdf
Invited Speaker
Shannon Steene, Executive Director, Carpenter’s Shelter

Class Questions and Discussion issues:
How do I keep people of differing skills motivated to be exceptional employees
When should I fire a bad employee and how should I do it humanely
How can I lead a positive culture for employees
What are some of the challenge’s leaders face with employees

April 2
Class #5 – How to handle complex Boards of Directors and challenges you will face

Topic and Content Covered
How to manage a Board of Directors
Communicating effectively with you Board
What to do with difficult Board Members

Learning Objectives Addressed
Students will exercise the professional skills expected of members of the Schar School of Policy and Government

Required Readings:
Heidrick & Struggles, Association and Non-Profit Boards: Maximizing Effective Service, PDF, 2018.

Invited Guest Speaker:
Robert Cresanti, CEO, International Franchise Association

Class Questions and Discussion issues:
How do you deal with hostile board members?
What can you do to better align Board of Director actions and activities?
What should you avoid doing with the Board during your tenure?
How do you deal with the Board surrounding rumors of your departure?

**Second portion of class April 2**

Class #6 – Everyday financial issues your organization will face and how to tackle them

**Topic and Content Covered**

Financial issues non-profits face and how to assess them

**Learning Objectives Addressed**

Overarching financial issues Non-profit face
Tips for saving Non-profit resources
Keeping the function in, or sending it out
Minimum financial understanding for Nonprofit leaders

**Required Reading:**


**Invited Guests**

Mike Williams, CEO, Mike Williams & Associates
Charles Tate, CEO, Tyron and Tate, CPA

**Class Questions and Discussion issues:**

What are the most important non-profit financial issues CEOs should manage?

What is the #1 financial challenge for non-profits?

The importance of audits and/or financial reviews

Suggestions to prevent nonprofit financial fraud

April 9
Class #7 – Managing your reputation and the media as a CEO

Topic and Content Covered

The importance of reputation of the organization
Building an authentic reputation
Handling internal and external critics
What happens when bad media is published

Learning Objectives Addressed

Students will exercise the professional skills expected of members of the Schar School of Policy and Government

Required Readings:

Rehr, Creating the Right Association Culture, PDF, 2017.

Invited Guest Speaker:

No speak to leave more room for panel.

Class Questions and Discussion Issues:

How do you handle staff challenges
How do you interact with stakeholders
What are some ways to diffuse bad media
Why is authenticity important

Second Portion of April 9

Class #8 – Steps to deliver “value” to your stakeholders: The good, the bad, and the ugly

Topic and Content Covered

Real world examples of what works and what does not work in different medium
Off the record stories of interacting with reporters and news personalities
Important media life lessons learned when the lights were on or the content posted

Learning Objectives Addressed
Students will demonstrate an understanding of legal research, legal analysis, oral advocacy, negotiation, and problem solving.

**Required Reading**

Rehr, *How to lead better meetings and enhance your organizational effectiveness*, PDF, 2016.

**Invited Guest Speaker(s)**

Daniel A. Varroney  
President & CEO  
Potomac Core - Association Consulting

Kevin Burke  
President and CEO  
Airports Council International – North America

Bryan Wynne  
CEO  
Association of Unmanned Vehicle System International

**Class Questions and Discussion Issues:**

What are the best tips to lead organizations?

What is the most significant challenge to leadership and how did you overcome the challenge?

What things should you avoid in leading an organization?

Why is constant learning important to running effective organizations?

How do you lead a great organization?

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**April 16**
Class #9 – What to do as a leader in crisis

Topic and Content Covered

How to leaders handle a crisis
What do you need to share with organization
How can organization remain relatively calm during turmoil
What lessons did you learn from crisis

Learning Objectives Addressed

Students will demonstrate an understanding of research, analysis, oral advocacy, negotiation, and problem solving.

Required Readings:


https://medium.com/bestcompany/charity-scandals-the-six-ugliest-of-2016-19d3f1149a

Invited Guest Speaker:

Lidia Soto-Harmon, CEO, Girl Scouts Nation’s Capital

Class Questions and Discussion Issues:

What step do you take in handling a crisis
How do you keep an organization focused during a period of crisis
What did you learn as a leader during a crisis
What tips should we remember if we are ever in a crisis period

Second Portion of April 16

Class #10 – Practical ways to build inclusion and diversity in your organization:
Lessons learned over time

Topic and Content Covered

Why diversity and inclusion make economic sense
Challenges to diversity and inclusion within organizations
How to create more inclusive work cultures
Challenges to hiring diverse and inclusive candidates
State and federal constraints in diverse and inclusive hiring

Learning Objectives Addressed

Students will demonstrate an understanding of research, policy analysis, oral advocacy, negotiation, and problem solving

Required Reading:
Vetted Solutions, Diversity and Inclusion: Core Values Among Associations, PDF, 2017

Invited Guest Speaker
Lori Kaplan, former Executive Director, Latin American Youth Center

Class Questions and Discussion Issues:
How do we balance cultural diversity in the workplace
Why do we need to recognize and understand unconscious bias
What is the economic impact of greater diversity and inclusion
What are some innocent practices that hurt inclusion efforts

April 23

Class #11. – Handling consultants, vendors, and challenging team members

Topic and Content Covered

Being an efficient steward of resources
Tips for organizational efficiency
Handling fundraising challenges

Learning Objectives Addressed

Students will demonstrate an understanding of research, analysis, oral advocacy, negotiation, and problem solving.

Required Reading:
Assignment will be given out before class on April 16, 2020.

**Invited Guest speaker**

Exceptional non-profit steward

**Class Questions and Discussions**

Why is stewardship especially important in non-profit organizations
Ways to demonstrate good financial stewardship
Five tips to communicate to your stakeholders
Challenges in dealing with vendors
How to “fire” a vendor without negative blowback in the community

**Second Portion of April 23**

Class #12 – The psychology of Leading: Effective and ineffective styles

**Topic and Content Covered**

Being an effective leader
Different styles and different personalities
Keys to leadership success
Tips on being a great leader
Making great decisions for organizations

**Learning Objectives Addressed**

Students will exercise the professional skills expected of members of the Schar School of Policy and Government

Students will demonstrate an understanding of research, analysis, exceptional oral advocacy, and problem solving.

**Required Reading:**

Drucker, The Effective Executive, pp. 113-174.

**Class Questions and Discussion Issues**
What are the key considerations of an effective decision
Why does a leadership style make a difference
What do great leaders have in common

April 30
Class #13 – Final class presentations

Topic and Content Covered

How do leaders of non-profits face practical problems
What did I learn about non-profit leadership from this course
What leadership challenges are ahead for me based on my style

Learning Objectives Addressed

Students will exercise the professional skills expected of members of the Schar School of Policy and Government

Students will demonstrate an understanding of research, analysis, oral advocacy, negotiation, and problem solving.

Required Reading:

There is no required reading for this class.

Class Questions and Discussion Issues

Additional Portion of April 30
Class #14 – Final class presentations