# Syllabus

## Instructor Information

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Off site; but can meet in CPSUA offices or other locations as needed, by appointment

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## Course Information

**Course title**  
Strategic Planning and Management Issues for Non-Profit Organizations

**Course number**  
PA 6980

**Course discipline**  
Public Administration / Nonprofit Management
Course description
This graduate course offered by the College of Urban Affairs and Public Service can be applied within the College to the following degree programs -- the MPA or the Ph.D.-- as well as towards a certificate program in Non-Profit Management. The course may be transferred towards other degrees at TSU or other universities at the discretion of these other entities. This seminar will address important management challenges facing non-profit administrators in general with special emphasis on issues relating to the development and use of strategic planning in non-profit agencies. The course uses a mix of face to face meetings and eLearn, a distant learning technology (elearn.tnstate.edu).

Course dates
January 18, 2011 through April 26, 2011

Location
TSU, Avon Williams Campus, Room 287

Meeting day(s)
Every other Tuesday, either in person or online

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Co-requisite(s)
Students MUST have
1. regular and frequent access to the internet. I will be emailing you articles from time to time at eLearn so be sure to check your mail there on a regular basis because it is assumed that the next meeting of the class (virtual or face to face) you have read it.
2. A positive attitude, and patience, especially as we use eLearn.

COURSE GOALS AND INTRODUCTION

COURSE GOALS
Understanding management and organizational issues facing nonprofit organizations.

INTRODUCTION
The nonprofit sector is a large, growing, diverse, and dynamic part of our economy and society - from four to ten percent of economic activity by various measures. Nonprofits are defined - in simplest terms - as having a legal status that prohibits them from distributing their profits or surplus. Many or most of the entities that provide services in religion, social welfare, education, health care, and the arts are nonprofits as well as many civic, commercial, and social associations from clubs and economic
development organizations to labor unions.

Several trends - “from welfare to work” and pressure on government spending on the arts to social entrepreneurship, venture philanthropy and the internet - are placing new demands on the sector and creating new opportunities for strategists and leaders of today's nonprofit organizations (NPOs).

This course is designed to provide an overview of the nonprofit sector from a strategic and governance point of view. Our perspective will be that of the nonprofit executive director and the leadership of the Board of Directors. After providing an overview of the sector, the course will focus on mission, strategy, and governance. But, because nonprofit leaders also need to understand the demands of strategy implementation in the nonprofit sector, we will also explore the distinctive aspects of NPO management, particularly the most critical issues facing those leaders today.

Those critical management issues include:
1. Mission. What are the attributes of an effective mission (statement)? How should an NPO’s strategy reflect its mission?
2. Strategic analysis and planning. What elements should be analyzed in developing and/or evaluating an NPO's strategy? Internally? Externally?
3. Strategic decision making. How does an effective NPO make strategic decisions, allocate resources, and plan? How should an NPO board and its leadership evaluate its options?
4. Board governance. What are the attributes and responsibilities of an effective NPO Board?
5. Strategic management. What are the distinctive functions of an NPO?
6. Future of the NPO sector. In what directions will the NPO sector evolve? What effect will forces such as venture philanthropy, social entrepreneurship, and the internet have?

Our assignments and class sessions will be focused around those issues.

POLICIES

SNOW POLICIES
If the class needs to be cancelled due to weather check your email inbox on eLearn before leaving for campus.

ATTENDANCE
If you must be out-of-town on business, schedule it for the weeks that we will be using the web or doing other activities. If you miss 3 or more meeting of the class (face to face or virtual ) be sure to withdraw in a timely manner.
LEARNING OUTCOMES:

By the end of the course students will be able to:

- Diagnose common problems that affect non-profit organizations such as founders’ problems, board-staff relationships, developing strong boards, board responsibilities.
- See the relationship between fiscal responsibility and agency performance.
- Describe the expected role(s) of the Board, CEO, and Chart(s) of the Board, CEO, and Charter/Constitutional Officers.
- Understand the role of mission and vision for non-profit organizations.
- Assess the complex relationships between non-profit organizations and their environment(s), leadership-salaried employees and, volunteers/members/service recipients.

COURSE COMPONENTS & GRADING

ASSIGNED READINGS, DISCUSSION AND PARTICIPATION

Adequate participation is defined by:

- submitting at least 1 substantive posting on eLearn discussion boards for each web assignment,
- class attendance,
- submitting all assignments on the due dates, and
- active engagement in class discussions.

CRITICAL REVIEW AND PRESENTATION OF RECENT SCHOLARLY ARTICLES

- Sign up for your presentation date during the first meeting of the class.
1. Select one article that has been published since 2008 in a scholarly, refereed journal. The article may address any aspect of strategic management in NPOs.
2. Prepare a critical review. Assess the quality of the article from both practitioner and academic points of view. Evaluate the probable implication(s) of the topic(s) under study by the articles for strategic planning and management in NPO’s.
3. Create a brief Powerpoint or other handout for presentation purposes.
4. Use eLearn to post or e-mail the reference to each member of the class. Put a copy of the article in the Dropbox along with the PPT and or other documentation for your class presentation. The PPT is due before the presentation in class. You will have no more than 15 minutes for your class presentation.

MIDTERM

Based upon the assigned readings and those brought to our attention by classmates in discussion or in formal presentation, your midterm will be delivered online and must be completed within the normally allotted class time.
Select an NPO and compile a case study on the basis of media reports and internet search about the practices used by similar agencies in other places to prepare for interviews about the organization you study. You are expected to have no less than a total of 5 interviews with officials of the organization (e.g., CEO and Board members), staff, and members/service recipients.

The paper needs to include at least each of the following components:

1) An introduction
2) A literature review of leading articles about strategic planning in NPOs
3) A detailed description of the various elements of this NPO’s strategic plan, if any, and the process used to develop it.
4) A critical assessment of the strategic plan, role of the CEO, Board, staff and members/service recipients. The review should highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the plan, the process used to compile it and, the extent that they are consistent with the literature covered under no. 2 above, and
5) A description and evaluation of the measures the NPO is using to assure accountability and monitoring of performance.

REQUIRED TEXT


ADDITIONAL RESOURCES


TRANSFORMING TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY: STRATEGIC PLAN 2010-2015

Strategic Planning (in nonprofit or for-profit organizations)
http://managementhelp.org/plan_dec/str_plan/str_plan.htm

The Philanthropy Journal http://www.philanthropyjournal.org/


# Helpful Information

## URLs in the Syllabus

If the link for additional reading does not work directly from the syllabus on *eLearn*, cut and paste the address into the browser’s address field. If that does not work, conduct a search for the URL. All links have been tested. Use initiative to resolve any obstacles if the link does not immediately work for you.

## Assistance with *eLearn*:

You will access the course homepage on *eLearn* in one of two ways:

2. Access via [www.tnstate.edu](http://www.tnstate.edu): click on Student Services from the main menu, click on the *eLearn@TNSTATE* logo, and click on [http://elearn.tnstate.edu](http://elearn.tnstate.edu).

When you are on the *eLearn* login page you will need to type in your username and password in order to access your course. Your username is the same as your MyTSU username; however, your *eLearn* password is not the same as your MyTSU password. If you need assistance with your login or password, please contact the Help Desk at 615-963-1239 (7:30AM - 4:30PM) or email your password reset request to [helpdesk@tnstate.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tnstate.edu).

## Effectively Learning in a Virtual Environment

[http://www.clt.odu.edu/oso/index.php?src=lo_effective](http://www.clt.odu.edu/oso/index.php?src=lo_effective). This link will give parameters for success when utilizing distance learning. Please review it. Topics address include:

- Time Management for Coursework
- Scheduling Goals
- Beginning your course
- Throughout your course
- Procrastination
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| January 18, 2011 | ELearn - Introduction to the Seminar  
ASSIGNMENT 1:  
A. Online Personal Introductions. Since we are not in physically in class, please use the discussion forum to introduce yourself to your classmates. Let us know your past academic history, current status, professional endeavors, career goals, interest in the field, and any other information you want to share.  
B. Sign up to present a Critical Review of a scholarly article in the field. (See Course Components on p. 4.)  
C. Online Research. Submit to Dropbox on Elearn by 11:59 pm on Monday, January 24. Using the Internet and library resources, describe and assess the usefulness, strengths and weakness of the major efforts to classify, offer typologies or create clusters of various categories of not for profit organizations  
1) Assess the usefulness of such efforts for practitioners and researchers  
2) Does the classification (type or clustering) of an NPO matter from a legal point of view (e.g., when it comes to issues of incorporation, tax liability, etc.)?  
3) Does it matter when it comes to strategic planning? Why or why not? The following resources may prove useful in directing your search:  
   - [http://nccs.urban.org/classification/NTEE.cfm](http://nccs.urban.org/classification/NTEE.cfm)  
Before the next class  
- Read Worth, Chapters 1 & 2  
- Read the following two letters, available at the links below as well as in the content section of E-Learn  
  1. [http://www.greyseal.org/docs/NYTLetter.doc](http://www.greyseal.org/docs/NYTLetter.doc)  
     A letter to the editor of the New York Times about Harvard Business School’s attempt to address management issues of non profits.  
  2. [http://www.greyseal.org/docs/Pebbleman.doc](http://www.greyseal.org/docs/Pebbleman.doc)  
     A letter about the differences between non-profit and for profit organizations in terms of organizational design and management issues. |
| January 25, 2011 | In Class  
Discussion of class requirements  
Review of assigned readings and online research  
Discussion of “Basic models of strategic planning” |
| February 1, 2011 | Elearn: Boards and Governance  
Submit to the Dropbox by Monday, February 7th  
As you compile your answers to the questions that are listed below, consider the following issues.  
- What are the current salient issues when it comes to the governance of NPOs?  
- Are they different from the key issues that dominated the discussions about NPOs in the past?  
- What are the fiduciary responsibilities of the “Board”? Who oversees compliance with them?  
  Note that the founder of a nonprofit organization often recruits the first board members, and supports members to grow into their roles as board members, as well. Therefore, the founder should initially have some very basic understanding of the roles of a board. This understanding will soon be enhanced later on during further development of the board and nonprofit organization.  
- List the duties and responsibilities of boards (Note that various experts might offer a different mix of duties and responsibilities. The important point here is to get a basic sense of the overall responsibilities of a board.)  
- To whom is the board of directors responsible? |
What are the responsibilities of the board chair? Vice chair? Secretary? Treasurer? Board member? Be sure you understand the role of the board chair. The chief executive officer and the board chair work closely together to coordinate and support board activities.

What guidelines for recruiting board members can you offer? What is their strategic importance?

The chief executive officer often plays a key role in recruiting the first members of the board of a new nonprofit organization. What are the advantages and limitations/weaknesses of this approach? Can you offer an alternative, but promising, approach?

Before next meeting, read Ch. 3-4

February 8, 2011
In Class: Articulating the strategic plan
What roles are “Boards” expected to play v. the role(s) of “Staff”? What is the reality?
Review of eLearn reports
Critical Reviews
Before next meeting, read: Ch. 5-8

February 15, 2011
eLearn: The emerging of “Governance” as a new way of addressing public issues
Increasingly, communities call (formally or by informal expectation) on nonprofit organizations to address the most critical issues facing society—from the revitalization of cities to the transformation of educational, health, and social service systems to the strengthening of civic, arts, musical and other cultural and social institutions. Recent writing on this development talk about the shift from Governing to Governance or from bureaucracies to networks.

At the same time, today's nonprofits operate in a more challenging environment than ever before. Increased financial pressures, innovations in technology, and increased public scrutiny are just a few of the forces creating turbulence in the nonprofit world. Success in this changing environment depends upon effective, innovative board leadership and effective, innovative leadership from the directors of those organizations.

The success of nonprofit organizations in responding to new demands, as well as older familiar demands, depends upon fostering productive board/staff relationships. We will assess leadership needs at both the board and executive/staff levels with a focus on the board/director relationship. The division of labor between the two will be examined.

In view of the above, answer the following questions:

- In what ways developments that have to do with the ability of government agencies to be responsive to service demands influences the emergence/decline/transformation of NPOs?
- What role, if any, should government and commercial entities (i.e., corporations) play in developing and supporting the emergence of Civil Society Based NPOs?
- How should (could?) NPOs be held accountable? What is the current legislation at the federal level and in TN?
- What is the role of the media in assuring NPOs accountability?

February 22, 2011
In Class: Discussion and review of e-learn reports
Critical review presentation
Review for Midterm

March 1, 2011
ELearn: MidTerm – Mid-term will be online
Read: “The strategic role of the CEO: The Role of the Chief Executive or Director of the Non-Profit,” Free Management Library's On-Line Nonprofit Organization Development Program, Module #3: Role of Nonprofit Chief Executive Officer
Click on: [http://managementhelp.org/np_progs/ceo/ceo.htm](http://managementhelp.org/np_progs/ceo/ceo.htm)
Read all of: Orientation to Chief Executive Role
Early, Basic Preparation for Building a Board
Early, Basic Preparation for Working with a Board
Founder’s Syndrome
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<tr>
<td>March 8, 2011</td>
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<td>In Class: The CEO/Director and the NPO: A One-Person show?</td>
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<td>Critical Review Presentation</td>
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<td>March 22, 2011</td>
<td>eLearn: Based on your reading, research and conversation with practitioners in NPOs address the following question:</td>
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<td>• Should the strategic plan for fundraising be derived from the strategic plan or should it be the other way around?</td>
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<td>• Are there any ethical or legal issues that entice you to answer this question one way or another?</td>
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<td>March 29, 2011</td>
<td>In Class: REAL TIME STRATEGIC PLANNING EXERCISES</td>
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<td>April 5, 2011</td>
<td>eLearn: Public Private Partnerships and NPOs.</td>
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<td>Based on your own research address the following questions:</td>
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<td>• What are the legal and financial issues that are involved in pursuing such endeavors from an NPOs point of view?</td>
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<td>• Should NPOs get preference over for-profit organizations by Government?</td>
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<td>In Class: Review of reports</td>
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<td>Critical review presentation</td>
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<td>Analysis of case studies Term Papers</td>
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TOPICS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION (before compiling the eLearn report)

Orientation to Chief Executive Role
1. What is the “definition” of a chief executive officer for a NPO you can accept and which “definition” you find lacking? Why? What is/are the trends/ assertions in the literature?
2. In an incorporated nonprofit, to whom should the chief executive report? What is the reality?
3. What are the major roles/functions of the CEO of an NPO? Rank them by order of importance and explain why?
4. Name at least five actions that chief executives and board chair can take to ensure an ongoing, strong working relationship.
5. Name at least five actions the chief executive and board members can take to ensure ongoing, strong participation of board members.
6. Describe the general procedure for evaluating the chief executive.
7. Considering the assertions of various writers about the life cycle of organizations and leadership types/styles should NPO replace the CEO to match the agency’s circumstances with a CEO which posses the “right” attributes for dealing with the situation at hand?
8. What is “Founder’s Syndrome”? What causes it? How can you recognize it? Name at least three actions that boards can take to address it. Name at least three actions that chief executives can take to address it.
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