



Curricular Guidelines

for **Undergraduate Study** in Nonprofit Leadership,
the Nonprofit Sector and Philanthropy

First Edition

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NONPROFIT ACADEMIC CENTERS COUNCIL

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N O N P R O F I T A C A D E M I C C E N T E R S C O U N C I L

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

On behalf of the members of the Nonprofit Academic Centers Council (NACC), it is a pleasure to present the *Curricular Guidelines for Undergraduate Study in Nonprofit Leadership, the Nonprofit Sector and Philanthropy*. NACC developed graduate-level curricular guidelines under a grant from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation and published them in 2003. Since then we have embarked on a process to assemble guidelines appropriate for undergraduate study of the nonprofit sector. As such, these represent the first comprehensive guidelines ever developed for undergraduate study in the nonprofit and philanthropic studies field.

In considering its approach to undergraduate study in the field, NACC acknowledges a duality of focus and intent. First, an undergraduate curriculum should reflect a broad liberal arts approach to educating students in the field. Because the nonprofit sector is such a vital segment of our society, we believe that all students regardless of their major need to understand the role of nonprofit organizations in twenty-first century life. Second, we also recognize that a growing number of students would like to study specifically within nonprofit and philanthropic studies academic programs to prepare for careers in the sector. Consequently, we have divided the Undergraduate Guidelines into two parts. The first part is designed to inform undergraduate general education requirements. It is meant to explain how nonprofit organizations, philanthropy, and civil society affect who we are and how we live. This content is intended for integration across the undergraduate curriculum.

The second part of the Undergraduate Guidelines is intended to propose more specific content for pre-professional endeavors, be they individual courses, certificates, minors or majors. This part of the Undergraduate Guidelines is designed for those students who expect to work or volunteer in the nonprofit sector and they suggest a more applied orientation.

The NACC Undergraduate Curricular Guidelines were developed by a formal Curriculum Task Force organized in 2006 and facilitated by our former NACC center director colleague, Dr. Pamela Leland, as a consultant to the project. We want to acknowledge the many individuals who contributed their expertise to the development of the Undergraduate Guidelines and to thank Amy McClellan, NACC's executive director, for providing unequalled staff support to the Task Force.

NACC's mission is to strengthen nonprofit academic centers and to strengthen the field. There is no more appropriate contribution we can make than Curricular Guidelines to assist in the design of nonprofit courses, programs, certificates, and degrees as we strive to educate future generations of nonprofit leaders, scholars, policy makers, and informed citizens. We hope you will find these Undergraduate Guidelines useful in your work. Please continue to assist us through the broad dissemination of this information and by your suggestions for future revisions as knowledge and experience allow us to further refine this field of study.

Most sincerely,

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NACC President, 2006-2008
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Background on NACC's Undergraduate Curricular Guidelines

The Nonprofit Academic Centers Council (NACC) is a membership association comprised of academic centers or programs at accredited colleges and universities that focus on the study of nonprofit organizations, nonprofit management and leadership, philanthropy, and voluntarism.

NACC's efforts to create curricular guidelines for the field of Nonprofit and Philanthropic Studies began in 2001, made possible through the generous financial support of the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. These early discussions were focused on graduate degrees in this particular field. After extensive discussion and involvement of the membership and through the leadership of a Curriculum Task Force, NACC published *Curricular Guidelines for Graduate Study in Philanthropy, the Nonprofit Sector and Nonprofit Leadership* in 2003. These early curricular efforts were followed by other efforts to strengthen this field of study and included publication of Indicators of Quality for Nonprofit Academic Centers (2006) and a Knowledge Base Initiative that built a bibliographic database of resources available to support teaching in nonprofit management and philanthropic studies.

When NACC initiated its efforts in 2001 to create the first-ever curricular guidelines for a graduate degree in the field of nonprofit sector and philanthropic studies, it was with the knowledge that the development of graduate-level guidelines was only the first step. From the beginning there was a desire to create similar guidelines for the study of the nonprofit sector and philanthropy at the undergraduate level and to eventually extend our efforts to non-credit educational programs as well.

NACC began its formal efforts to create these Undergraduate Guidelines in 2006 as part of a larger curriculum initiative to revise our Graduate Guidelines published in 2003. The work of creating these Undergraduate Guidelines would not have been successful without the significant contribution and involvement of many of our members and the extensive work and leadership of those on the Curriculum Task Force.

As with our Graduate Guidelines, NACC is committed to a regular review of these Undergraduate Guidelines and revisions as needed to reflect changes and trends in the field. We welcome your comments.

How to Use This Document

In articulating a model curriculum for undergraduate education in philanthropy, nonprofit organization management, or nonprofit sector studies, we believe this document can be used in a variety of ways with a number of audiences.

This document can be used to:

- Inform and educate faculty in other programs and departments about the curricular base of this expanding field
- Provide a framework from which the study of the nonprofit sector in various departments and academic programs can be structured
- Inform and educate university groups and systems, for example, university curriculum committees, deans and provosts
- Communicate learning goals and objectives to prospective students
- Act as a resource to community representatives who may serve on program advisory boards or councils
- More fully inform funders of the goals and intent of our academic, professional development and continuing education programs
- Serve as the evaluation benchmarks and/or standards of excellence for our own academic programs and curricular content

The Context of Undergraduate Education

An exploration of the differences – or similarities – between graduate and undergraduate level educational programs is beyond the scope of this report and this project. Nevertheless, in NACC’s efforts to articulate curricular guidelines for undergraduate academic programs that focus on nonprofit leadership, the nonprofit sector and philanthropy, it was essential that these efforts not simply be viewed as a “less in-depth version” of the already-adopted Graduate Guidelines.

While the subject matter may be similar at both levels of study, the depth of knowledge and learning outcomes will be weighted differently in undergraduate and graduate level programs of study. We recognized that there are some important and inherent differences in academic study at the undergraduate and graduate level and that, in developing a set of undergraduate guidelines, we needed to create guidelines that reflected these critical differences. We offer the following as additional contextual elements when considering the application of these guidelines in an undergraduate setting:

- **Community engagement as an essential element of undergraduate education.** Different fields of study have different goals and anticipated outcomes for students. It is our position, however, that some level of engagement with the community should be a part of every undergraduate student’s college experience. This engagement with the community occurs primarily in and through the nonprofit and philanthropic sector. Effective engagement is grounded in an understanding of the sector.
- **The need to develop and apply pedagogical tools specifically for an undergraduate population.** Most undergraduate students have not yet had professional work experience. As a result, a goal in academic programs or courses focused on the nonprofit sector is the integration of academic and experiential learning. Service-learning strategies are

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frequently cited as effective means to bring these together. Case study methodology, often promoted as a way to build both problem solving skills and knowledge of different theories, may be particularly useful with undergraduates. Likewise, other teaching tools and methods that assume some level of practical knowledge from prior work experience need to be adapted to the more typical pre-service student population.

- **The use of service-learning methods to not only build knowledge of the nonprofit and philanthropic sector but also to foster new skills that will promote the development of an engaged citizenry.** Important in our minds is ensuring that service-learning experiences include a curriculum that connects the students' experiences with the larger field of nonprofit sector and philanthropic studies, i.e., students learn about the sector through their service-learning opportunities.
- **The importance of internships as a means to build knowledge and skills and create enhanced opportunities for future employment.** Undergraduate academic programs might be directed to younger pre-service students, older returning students, or some blending of the two. When undergraduates lack exposure to and experience in a professional work environment, internships in the nonprofit sector that are connected to the curricular content offer an important opportunity to place classroom learning within an applied context and emphasize issues of public trust, responsiveness and accountability.

Curricular Guidelines for Undergraduate Study

in Nonprofit Leadership, the Nonprofit Sector and Philanthropy

The following Undergraduate Guidelines are separated into two parts.

Part I articulates NACC's goal for what all undergraduates should know about philanthropy and the nonprofit sector before they graduate with a bachelor-level degree. The issues identified in Part I might be captured in a single course or a minor within a larger specialization or degree; the curricular content may be reflected in a number of different courses that would satisfy General Education requirements. The approach to and depth that is addressed in a course would naturally vary according to the specific academic program (e.g., business versus history versus one of the physical sciences). *It is our assertion, however, that all college graduates - regardless of their academic field - would benefit from a working knowledge of the nonprofit and philanthropic sector so that each student will be prepared to more effectively contribute to society as an active and engaged citizen.*

Part II of these Undergraduate Guidelines extends the core knowledge embodied in Part I and assumes that the student would be in some course of study that is explicitly connected to nonprofit leadership, the nonprofit sector or philanthropy. Curricular issues included in Part II represent the range of applied knowledge and skills that would be expected in someone who has the intention of working in the nonprofit or public service sphere upon graduation.

As you read this document, we ask that you keep the following in mind:

- The topics that are outlined in Parts I and II are not intended to correlate to a particular course within a larger curriculum. Nor should these topics be viewed as somehow sequentially related. The manner in which these topics and issues are arranged within a particular curriculum should reflect the specific mission, purpose(s) and audience(s) for the degree that is being offered. Adaptation of these guidelines to a specific cultural and institutional context is assumed and encouraged.
- As we have tried to craft a set of guidelines that will be relevant in different cultural and institutional contexts, the issues in, and limitations of, language have become increasingly apparent. We recognize that words used in one culture or one part of the world may mean something very different in another culture or context. We acknowledge that the words we offer here may need some “cultural translation.”

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With this diversity of language in mind, and for purposes of this report, we have used the word “nonprofit” to include non-governmental, nonprofit, civil society, voluntary and philanthropic organizations. We have used the word “voluntarism” to include all action – both individual and collective – that is not government or business. And we have used the word “philanthropy” to include giving and individual and/or collective voluntary action for the greater common good.

- We are also mindful that each academic discipline brings with it a body of theory, conceptual frameworks and a language that is particular, and possibly specific, to that discipline. NACC, as a membership organization, represents a wide variety of disciplines including arts and humanities, public administration and public policy, business, social work, leisure studies, and others. In attempting to articulate guidelines that would be relevant across disciplines, we recognize that we may be asking people and programs to re-work the information into a language that may more closely resonate with that audience.
- Finally, we are aware that some may view these Guidelines as too representative of the U.S. experience. As noted earlier, we have tried to articulate guidelines in a manner that acknowledges a larger global context and a diversity of language, forms and practices. However, these Guidelines do reflect current thinking and research within English-speaking countries (the U.S., Canada, England and Australia) where academic programs in nonprofit sector and philanthropic studies are currently concentrated. We are aware that there are alternative models and ways of thinking about the nonprofit sector, voluntary action and philanthropy and we look forward to including these voices in the discussion of future revised guidelines.

Curricular Guidelines for Undergraduate Study in Nonprofit Leadership, the Nonprofit Sector and Philanthropy

PART I: The Role of the Nonprofit/Voluntary Sector in Society

The curricular content offered in this section outlines what we believe all undergraduate students need to know before completing their course of study. This foundational knowledge promotes an awareness of society as an integration of public, private and voluntary behaviors and structures—all necessary to prepare an active and engaged citizenry. These guidelines reflect a strong theoretical base that can be adapted to various disciplines and pedagogies.

1.0 Comparative Perspectives on Civil Society, Voluntary Action and Philanthropy

- 1.1 The structure – both formal and informal, individual and collective – of civil society and philanthropy across cultures and contexts
- 1.2 How individual philanthropy, voluntary behavior and volunteerism is expressed in different cultural contexts
- 1.3 The role of voluntary action and nonprofit organizations in social movements and social change
- 1.4 The role of various religious traditions in shaping civil society and philanthropy

2.0 Foundations of Civil Society, Voluntary Action and Philanthropy

- 2.1 The history, role and functions of civil society and voluntary action organizations (nonprofit, nongovernmental, voluntary) across time and place
- 2.2 The size, impact and trends in philanthropy and associational development throughout the world
- 2.3 The diversity of forms of philanthropic action and the diversity of fields of activity
- 2.4 The relationship and dynamics among the governmental, nonprofit, for-profit and household sectors
- 2.5 Various theoretical explanations for the nonprofit/voluntary sector such as economic, political, sociological and anthropological

3.0 Ethics and Values

- 3.1 The values embodied in philanthropy and voluntary action, such as trust, stewardship, service, voluntarism, freedom of association and social justice
- 3.2 The foundations and theories of ethics as a discipline and as applied in order to make ethical decisions
- 3.3 Issues arising out of the various dimensions of diversity and their implications for mission achievement in nonprofit organizations
- 3.4 The standards and codes of conduct that are appropriate to professionals and volunteers working in philanthropy and the nonprofit sector

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4.0 Public Policy, Law, Advocacy and Social Change

- 4.1 Key public policies and their past, current and potential impact on the nonprofit sector, nonprofit organizations and philanthropic behaviors
- 4.2 The legal frameworks under which nonprofit organizations operate and are regulated
- 4.3 Legal and tax implications related to various kinds of nonprofit activity, including charitable giving, advocacy, lobbying, and any commercial activities of tax-exempt nonprofit organizations
- 4.4 The roles of individuals and nonprofit organizations in effecting social change and influencing the public policy process
- 4.5 How individuals and nonprofit organizations shape public policy through strategies such as public education, policy research, community organizing, lobbying, and litigation

5.0 Nonprofit Governance and Leadership

- 5.1 The role of nonprofit boards and executives in providing leadership at the organizational, community and societal levels
- 5.2 The history, role and functions of nonprofit governing boards and how these roles and functions compare to governing boards in the public and for-profit sectors
- 5.3 The role of nonprofit boards and nonprofit executives as agent(s) of and for social change and social justice at both the organizational and societal level

6.0 Community Service and Civic Engagement

- 6.1 The value of community service and civic engagement in the development of civil society
- 6.2 Direct exposure to nonprofit organizations through internships, service learning, community service and/or experiential learning

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PART II: Leading and Managing Nonprofit Organizations

The curricular topics offered below build on the foundational knowledge articulated in Part I and should be offered to those students who would like to focus some portion of their undergraduate study on the nonprofit sector or philanthropy. This focus may be a full degree (either a liberal arts or professional degree), a “major” or “minor” within a degree and/or a certificate that is not specific to any degree or major course of study. The topics that are addressed and the depth of coverage should reflect the particular goals and context of the academic program that is being offered.

7.0 Leading and Managing Organizations

- 7.1 The steps and processes involved in establishing a nonprofit organization
- 7.2 Organizational theories and behavior as they apply in nonprofit and voluntary organizations including issues of work design and implications of operational policies and practices
- 7.3 Theories of leadership and leadership styles
- 7.4 The role of strategic management and organizational planning, including an understanding of ways to identify, assess and formulate appropriate strategies
- 7.5 The role of networks, partnerships and collaborative activity in achieving organizational missions
- 7.6 Methods that managers use to evaluate performance at both organizational and programmatic levels

8.0 Nonprofit Finance and Fundraising

- 8.1 Theory of nonprofit finance, including the various sources of revenues in nonprofit organizations, the strategic choices and issues associated with each type of revenue, and the methods used to generate these revenues
- 8.2 The relationship between and among philanthropic gifts and grants, earned income, and government funding and how they influence fulfillment of an organization's mission
- 8.3 The fund development process and commonly-used fundraising strategies, such as annual appeals, special events, non-cash contributions, major gifts, capital campaigns and planned giving
- 8.4 Recent and emerging trends such as social enterprise, micro-enterprise and entrepreneurship, and their implications for nonprofit performance and for mission achievement

9.0 Financial Management

- 9.1 Application of accounting principles and concepts including financial and managerial accounting systems (including fund accounting) in nonprofit organizations
- 9.2 Financial management including financial planning and budgeting, management of cash flows, short- and long-term financing, and endowment management policies and practices

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10.0 Managing Staff and Volunteers

- 10.1 Human resource processes and practices in both formal and informal nonprofit organizations and how human resource issues, as experienced in nonprofit organizations, are different from the experience in public and for-profit organizations
- 10.2 Teamwork and group dynamics and their implications for supervision, staff development and organizational performance
- 10.3 The role, value and dynamics of volunteerism in carrying out the work and fulfilling the missions of nonprofit organizations
- 10.4 Issues of supervision and human resource management processes and systems for both staff and volunteers
- 10.5 The dimensions of individual and organizational diversity within the nonprofit sector and their implications for effective human resource management

11.0 Nonprofit Marketing

- 11.1 Marketing principles and techniques and their application in philanthropic and nonprofit settings, including the dynamics and principles of marketing “mission” in a nonprofit context
- 11.2 The link between marketing theories and concepts and their use in nonprofit organizations

12.0 Assessment, Evaluation and Decision-Making Methods

- 12.1 Methods and modes of assessment and evaluation
- 12.2 Decision-making models and methods and how to apply them in nonprofit organizational settings
- 12.3 The use and application of both quantitative and qualitative data in improving the effectiveness of nonprofit organizations
- 12.4 The role of information and technology in the pursuit of a nonprofit organization's mission

13.0 Professional and Career Development

- 13.1 Field experiences that are grounded in and linked to curricular goals and projected outcomes
- 13.2 The role of professional associations and mentoring in professional development
- 13.3 The ways that various professionals contribute to and are engaged with philanthropic and nonprofit sectors
- 13.4 Opportunities for service and volunteerism that exist in the community
- 13.5 The standards and context of professionalism, e.g., conduct and speech appropriate to the (respective) profession

Adopted by the NACC membership, 2007.

Additional Resources

Nonprofit Academic Centers Council

There are a myriad of resources that can be utilized or adapted for an undergraduate student population. Below are a sample of such resources.

- **American Democracy Project**, Sponsored by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, www.aascu.org/programs/adp/

The American Democracy Project (ADP) is an initiative of 225 AASCU campuses that seeks to create an intellectual and experiential understanding of civic engagement for undergraduates enrolled at institutions that are members of AASCU. The goal of the project is to produce graduates who understand and are committed to engaging in meaningful actions as citizens in a democracy.

- **American Humanics**, www.humanics.org

The mission of American Humanics is as follows: American Humanics is a national alliance of colleges, universities, and nonprofits; our mission is to educate, prepare, and certify professionals to strengthen and lead nonprofit organizations.

- **ARNOVA** (Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action), Section on Teaching, www.arnova.org

- **Campus Compact**, www.compact.org

Campus Compact is a national coalition of nearly 1,100 college and university presidents – representing some 6 million students – dedicated to promoting community service, civic engagement, and service-learning in higher education.

- **Teaching Resource Center**, Sponsored by the Institute for Nonprofit Organization Management, University of San Francisco, www.inom-trc.org/

The USF International Nonprofit Management Teaching Resource Center (TRC) is a comprehensive source of nonprofit management teaching cases, course syllabi that are available for use by teachers, trainers, consultants, practitioners, and students to enhance the development of nonprofit management education. You may browse and search the educational materials of the TRC. Once you find a teaching case or course syllabus that you would like to use, you may download it, for free, as a PDF.

- **National Service-Learning Clearinghouse**, www.servicelearning.org

Service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse (NSLC) operates America's premier website supporting the service-learning efforts of schools, higher education institutions, communities, and tribal nations.

- **Learning to Give**, www.learningtogive.org

Learning to Give offers lesson plans, activities, and resources to educate youth about the power of philanthropy (sharing time, talent and treasure).

- **The Electronic Hallway**, Sponsored by the Evans School of Public Affairs, University of Washington, www.hallway.org

The Electronic Hallway is an online resource for teaching cases and other curriculum materials valued by faculty teaching public administration, public policy and related subjects.

- **Research on Nonprofit Management Education Programs**, Compiled by Dr. Roseanne Mirabella, Seton Hall University, <http://tltc.shu.edu/npo/>

Membership

Nonprofit Academic Centers Council

The Nonprofit Academic Centers Council (NACC) is a membership association comprised of academic centers at accredited colleges and universities that focus on the study of nonprofit organizations, voluntarism and/or philanthropy. Established in 1991, NACC is the first group entirely dedicated to the networking and support of centers that provide education and research about, and academically-based service for, the nonprofit/nongovernmental sector and philanthropy.

Arizona State University

Center for Nonprofit Leadership and Management

Boston College

Center on Wealth and Philanthropy

Case Western Reserve University

Mandel Center for Nonprofit Organizations

City University, London

Centre for Charity Effectiveness

City University of New York

Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society

Cleveland State University

Center for Nonprofit Policy and Practice

DePaul University

School of Public Service

Duke University

Center for the Study of Philanthropy and Voluntarism

George Mason University

Nonprofit Management Studies Program

Georgetown University

Center for Public and Nonprofit Leadership

Georgia State University

Nonprofit Studies Program

Grand Valley State University

Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership

Harvard University

Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations

Indiana University

The Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University

Johns Hopkins University

Center for Civil Society Studies

Louisiana State University-Shreveport

Institute for Human Services and Public Policy

The New School

Nonprofit Management Program

New York University

Public and Nonprofit Management and Policy Program

New York University School of Law

National Center on Philanthropy and the Law

North Park University

Axelson Center for Nonprofit Management

Northwestern University

Center for Nonprofit Management

Portland State University

Institute for Nonprofit Management

Queensland University of Technology

Centre of Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies

Regis University

Nonprofit Management Program

Rockefeller Archive Center

Seattle University

Center for Nonprofit and Social Enterprise Management

Seton Hall University

Center for Public Service

Texas A&M University

Program in Nonprofit Management

University at Albany - State University of New York

Center for Women in Government & Civil Society

University of California - Berkeley

Center for Nonprofit and Public Leadership

University of California - Los Angeles

Center for Civil Society

University of Delaware

Center for Community Research and Service

University of Maryland University College

Nonprofit and Association Management Program

University of Michigan

Nonprofit and Public Management Center

University of Minnesota

The Public and Nonprofit Leadership Center

University of Missouri - Kansas City

Midwest Center for Nonprofit Leadership

University of Missouri - St. Louis

Nonprofit Management and Leadership Program

University of Pennsylvania

Center for Community Partnerships

University of San Diego

Nonprofit Leadership and Management Program

University of San Francisco

Institute for Nonprofit Organization Management

University of Southern California

Center on Philanthropy and Public Policy

University of St. Thomas

Center for Nonprofit Management

University of Texas at Austin

RGK Center for Philanthropy and Community Service

University of Washington

Nancy Bell Evans Center on Nonprofits & Philanthropy

University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee

Helen Bader Institute for Nonprofit Management

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Institute for Policy and Governance
Nonprofit and Civil Society Program

York University

Nonprofit Management and Leadership Program



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