Proposal for a New Graduate Course

Department: Master of Public Administration
Graduate Program: Master of Public Administration

Course Number & Title  PUBA 655 Nonprofit Capacity Building (3)
Total hours/week: 2.45
Number of Credits Lectures: 3 Lab: 

Will this course be cross-listed with an undergraduate or other graduate course? ☐ YES ☒ NO
If yes, please complete an attach to this proposal a Permission to Cross-List a Graduate Course form.

Course will first be offered Fall 2010

Catalog description (Please limit to 50 words):
The course will examine the current research on capacity building for nonprofits. Students will investigate the components that contribute to an organization’s effectiveness and sustainability over time and the tools and approaches utilized by nonprofits to adapt and thrive in the midst of a rapidly changing environment.

Prerequisites (or other restrictions)
None

Rationale/justification for course (consider the following issues):
What are the goals and objectives of the course?
At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to discern how to both strengthen the capacity of individual nonprofits and the infrastructure of our local nonprofit sector as a whole.
How does the course support the mission statement of the department and the organizing principles of the graduate program? It provides students with the most up-to-date information on a topic very relevant to the public sector. This helps us to fulfill our mission of preparing public service leaders.

Are other departments affected by this course? ☐ YES ☒ NO
(Please attach letters of support from the chairs of each department indicating the Department has discussed and supports the proposal.)

Is this course part of a joint program? ☒ YES NO If yes, at what institution? USC

Method of teaching: Seminar – discussion, some lecture, active learning applied projects

If more space is needed for any section, please attach additional sheets to this form.

November 2007
Expected changes

a. Address potential enrollment pattern shifts in the Department or University-wide as it relates to the offering of this course. None expected – course has been offered as a special topics course and this is an attempt to make it permanent.

b. Address potential shifts in staffing of the departments as it relates to the offering of this course. None – we have already been offering it and the same faculty will continue to teach it.

Requirements for additional resources made necessary by this course. (Note: course requiring additional resources will need special justification.)

a. Staff: none

b. Budget: none

c. Library: none

Attach course syllabus, reading list, or any additional documentation that can help the committee evaluate this proposal. A syllabus is mandatory.

Signature of Program Director: ___________________________ Date: 8/16/09

Signature of Department Chair: ___________________________ Date: 8/16/09

Additional Chair’s Signature*: ___________________________ Date: 8/6/09

Signature of Schools’ Dean: ___________________________ Date: 8/17/2009

Additional Schools’ Dean Signature*: ___________________________ Date: 8/17/2009

Signature of the Provost: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________ 

Signature of Budget Director**: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________ 

*For interdisciplinary courses.

**Business Affairs Office

Return form to the Graduate School Office for Further Processing

Signature of Chair of the Faculty Committee on Graduate and Continuing Education ___________________________ Date: 9/23/09

Signature of Chair of Grad Council: ___________________________ Date: 11/16/09

Signature of the Faculty Secretary: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________ 

If more space is needed for any section, please attach additional sheets to this form.

November 2007
PUBA 655
Local Nonprofit Administration and Capacity Building

Janet Key  
953-6692  
953-6694 (fax)  
keyj@cofc.edu

Fall 2010  
Thursday  
5:30-8:15 pm

Course Description
In March 2002 a group of more than 550 grantmakers gathered in Washington DC for their national conference, Capacity-Building for Impact: The Future of Effectiveness for Nonprofits and Foundations. Describing the sector at a crossroads, the attendees agreed that in the years ahead the central challenge for nonprofits would be the achievement and sustenance of higher performance. The time had arrived for nonprofit leaders to invest the necessary time and resources to improve the sector’s performance. If this investment was not made and leaders refused to alter existing assumptions and practices, the sector’s influence and impact on local and global problems would steadily decline. Over the last six years, much research has been conducted and analyzed on capacity building for nonprofits. The course will examine the current research and its applicability.

Also we will investigate the multiple components that contribute to an organization’s effectiveness and sustainability over time as well as the tools and approaches that can be utilized by nonprofits to adapt and thrive in the midst of a rapidly changing political and economic environment. In his book Pathways to Nonprofit Excellence Paul Light wrote, “At a minimum (to redeem the concept of being nonprofit-like), it should refer to high performance in the service of the public good and not in being mediocre or hanging on for survival’s sake.”

Finally we will examine the local landscape of our nonprofit sector and attempt to diagnosis its organizational health by asking questions such as those below.
- How many nonprofits can a community support?
- How much duplication of services is occurring?
- How distinctive are the services each organization is offering?
- How can an organization ensure its relevance and productivity?
- How can the community ensure the nonprofit sector is being responsive to its needs?
- To what degree are local nonprofits engaged in collaborative efforts and partnerships?

At the conclusion of this course, we should be able to discern how to both strengthen the capacity of individual nonprofits and the infrastructure of our local nonprofit sector as a whole.

Texts
The two texts are listed below. Additional readings, including articles and chapters, are listed by class dates and topics.

The Foundation Center, 2003.

Became the Largest Environmental Organization in the World.

Topics and Readings

Week 1-
Overview of Course and Assignments
Week 2
Capacity Building

1. Blumenthal, Chapter 1 “The Need for Capacity Building” and Chapter 2 “Research on Nonprofit Effectiveness and Improvement”

Week 3
Capacity Building Practices

1. Blumenthal, Chapter 7 “Designing a High-Impact Capacity Building Program” and Chapter 8, “Improving Impact: Conclusions from the Field.”

Week 4
Capacity Building Core Components
1) Vision, Values, Mission and Governance


Week 5
2) Strategic Thinking and Planning

2. Birchard, Chapter 4 “We Can Work With You: The Care and Feeding of a Dynamic Culture”

Week 6
3) Program Assessment and Development, Implementation and Evaluation and Data Collection and Analysis

1. Murray and Tassie, “Evaluating the Effectiveness of Nonprofit Organizations”
2. Firstenberg, Paul B., “Performance Management”
3. Thomas, John C., “Program Evaluation and Program Development
5. Birchard, Chapter 5 “We’re Not in Kansas Anymore: The Road to Realizing New Ambitions”

Week 7
Speaker, Gladys Washington, Program Director Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation

Week 8—October 23
Midterm Exam

Week 9
4) Resource Development-Grants, Consultants, Foundations

1. Blumenthal, Chapters 3-Capacity Grants, 4-Development Partners, 5-Structured Programs and 6-The Developmental Consulting Approach
2. Birchard, Chapter 6 “The Power of We: Engaging Every Constituency for Breakthrough Performance”

Week 10-11
5) Constituent Relationships and Collaboration

4. Birchard, Chapter 7 “More Than the Sum of Its Parts: Teaching the Organization to Work as One”

Week 12
6) Leadership and other Human Capital

1. Birchard, Chapter 8 “Manage Thyself: Leadership in a Shared-Power World” and Chapter 9 “Global Dynamo: Taking the Organizational International”
2. Austin, Chapter 6 “Managing the Relationship”

Week 13
No Class-Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 14
7) Breakthrough Performance

1. Birchard, Chapter 10 “Accountability and Governance in the Face of Crisis”
2. Lichte, Paul, Pathways to Excellence. Chapter 2 “Imagining a Nonprofit-like Future” and Chapter 5 “Pathways to Excellence”

Week 15
Final Exam (Tentative)

Course Assignments

First Assignment
To get into the spirit of planning and capacity building, our first assignment is for each of us to set a goal, professional or personal. Develop a plan on how to achieve this goal over this semester. Use a format you are comfortable with, but be sure to include dates, steps, costs and other needs (material, emotional, spiritual) to achieve your goal. We will be discussing each other’s progress over the semester and offer support and gentle chastisement where necessary.

Readings Assignments
One student and I will be responsible leading the discussion of the reading assignments for that class. All other students are expected to participate. To that end, the student(s) assigned for that
class and I will need to meet on the Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday before that class to discuss the readings and come up with an interesting and unique presentation.

**Research Assignment**
Each student will choose a topic involving nonprofit capacity building, performance, collaboration or strategic planning. (May be from reading topics, but does not have to be.) This will be your research paper for the course and it should be comprehensive in nature and length. We will work on these papers extensively as a group and at the end of the course, we will put the papers together in a handbook which will be available to local nonprofits and other interested groups and individuals.

**Project Assignment**
This project will involve hands-on experience in program assessment and evaluation using survey research, interviewing clients and presenting results to organization’s board of directors. (Specifics to follow)

**Examinations**
You will have a midterm exam and final exam. Given the great deal of work during the rest of the semester, the final exam will not be difficult.

**Grading**
- Midterm Exam 25%
- Research Paper 40%
- Project 25%
- Final Exam/Participation 10%

**Class Attendance**
Attendance is critical. Everyone has to be prepared to contribute to the reading discussions. If you do have to miss class, please let me know ahead of time. If an emergency arises, please call or email me the next day for any information about class and/or the assignment for the next week.

**Assistance**
If you need any special assistance, or accommodation, to participate in this course, please discuss your needs with me as soon in the semester as possible.

**Bibliography**


