Institute for Nonprofit Organizations
The University of Georgia

MNML 7055,
Internship Course
Syllabus

Purpose:

The internship experience is designed to provide supervised opportunities for graduate students in the MNML program to develop skills in specific areas that have been found to characterize effective leaders in nonprofit organizations. These include the applications of theory and research in the nonprofit field to practical issues of planning, implementation, support, and assessment of community programs in nonprofit organizations. The internship allows students to apply skills of formulating goals and mobilizing concerted actions, negotiating and guiding group activities, applying critical thinking skills and knowledge to organizational matters, communicating effectively with diverse audiences, and producing reports, documents, and other products of importance to the organization.

These skills are developed and applied in the context of a variety of tasks of program design, management of staff and volunteers, communications with internal and external constituencies, program evaluation, resource development and allocation, organizational change, and other practical tasks. The internship also provides access to issues and subjects for student projects that can extend knowledge and refine practice effectiveness in this field. Students may register for 3 semester hours of MNML 7055 in each of their final two semesters in the program, for a total of 6 credit hours.

Objectives:

The student is expected to make use of internship projects to develop, strengthen, and demonstrate competencies in the following areas:

A.   Goal and Action Abilities
1. Efficiency orientation: uses resources to maximize output
2. Planning: organizes intended actions with a clear direction
3. Initiative: takes action prior to problems becoming crises
4. Attention to detail: seeks order by reducing uncertainty
5. Self-control: inhibits own desires and seeks organizational benefits
6. Flexibility: adapts behavior to changing circumstances

B.   Interpersonal Abilities
7. Empathy: understands and supports others
8. Persuasiveness: convinces others of merits of new positions
9. Networking: builds group relationships and alliances
10. Negotiating: leads in resolution of conflicts

11. Self confidence: displays presence and decisiveness
12. Group leadership: stimulates members to work together effectively
13. Developing others: stimulates others to improve performance toward objectives
14. Oral communication: provides effective and persuasive presentations to audiences

C.   Analytic reasoning abilities
15. Use of concepts: uses abstractions to explain and interpret situations clearly
16. Systems thinking: logically orders multiple events and influences
17. Pattern recognition: identifies patterns in unorganized information
18. Theory building: develops thoughtful frameworks that explain information and predict future events
19. Using technology: uses computers and communications technology to perform tasks effectively
20. Quantitative analysis: derives and communicates meaning from use of numbers and mathematical symbols
21. Social objectivity: accurately perceives others' views, especially when different from one's own
22. Written communication: demonstrates appropriate and effective use of writing to explain ideas to others

Course Plan and Learning Contract:
Each student selects internship sites in consultation with the faculty supervisor. The same site may be used both semesters or different sites may be selected, depending on the student's learning needs and goals. The first semester's tasks should provide an introduction to organizational work, culture, operations, and a range of planning and management experiences, while focusing on one or two major projects. Evidence of learning and improvements in each of the competencies set forth above must be included, along with products or reports from the major projects. The second semester must focus on one or more major projects and demonstrate further strengthening of those competencies. A written report and a public presentation summarizing the student's learning on a major project are required at the conclusion of the second internship. In addition to these reports, the student is expected to keep a journal of experiences and learning during each of the semesters, which is for that person's own reflections, not to be handed in.

In order to qualify for receiving interns, the organization must be willing to provide office space for the student; access to staff, programs, and records; an administrative supervisor or mentor; and opportunities for the student to carry out sustained work on issues related to some aspect of the management of the organization's programs. No clerical tasks will be accepted. The organization must provide an on-site supervisor who will assist the student in identifying and planning projects of importance to the organization, developing plans of action and resources, deliverable products to be completed, time-lines, and criteria for assessing the quality of the products. This person will also send the faculty supervisor a brief letter at the end of the semester providing evaluative comments about the student's work.

At the outset of each semester, the student will develop a <u>learning contract</u> that identifies specific projects to be carried out, steps to be taken, and work products to be delivered that will demonstrate gains in each of the skills included in the course objectives. The contract may be designed in the form of a matrix, with specific projects or activities linked to particular skills to be emphasized by each. Specific deliverable products or reports must be identified in the contract and then submitted to the faculty supervisor and organizational supervisor by the conclusion of each semester. The contract will be reviewed and negotiated with the faculty overseeing the internship and the on-site supervisor before implementation. Routine clerical tasks will not be accepted. The student, the supervisor, and the faculty overseer will meet as needed to develop, monitor, and assess student progress on projects identified in the student's learning contract. The on-site organizational supervisor will send a brief letter of evaluation about the student's work to the faculty supervisor at the end of the semester. The student is expected to spend approximately 20 hours per week on these field projects over the course of the semester and to produce reports or other evidence of successful development of skills and completion of projects in the learning contract for that semester.

Examples of possible projects:

1. Identify an issue of human resource development that could be addressed to improve the effectiveness of the organization. Design a systematic approach to working on the issue, including definition of the problem, value components, identification of goals and objectives, analysis of antecedent and consequent factors in the organization, resources to be mobilized for action, implementation steps, criteria and methods of evaluating impacts, ethical aspects of issue and intervention.

2. Design a plan for the expansion of the organization's financial resources, making use of methods of marketing and resource development. Examine its current assets and income sources, its goals and programs, its opportunities and constraints. In light of such information, select and justify an approach to financial development, including consideration of major operational steps, resources, and controls needed for implementation.

3. Identify steps to improve the organization's financial accounting plan that can serve to improve allocation and control of its financial resources in at least one major program area. Attention should be given to assets, income, liabilities, costs, expenses, typical transactions, balances, and reporting. After describing and justifying your system narratively, set up a spreadsheet for it using a software package and demonstrate how your system would work to improve financial accounting for the organization or program.

4. Design an approach to strategic planning for the organization's future. Identify the major problems and issues facing the organization, its strengths and resources, opportunities and threats. Assess the key alternatives it faces and the implications of each. Set forth your recommended strategy and operational plans for implementation, showing how they will address the problems, deal with value issues, and lead to greater effectiveness.

Other possible projects could include
       * carrying out research regarding consumer interests and needs related to the organization's mission and deriving recommendations for improving a program or programs
       * designing tools and procedures for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of a program or service
       * analyzing public policies and laws that impact the organization's activities and recommending approaches and targets for change
       * examining communication channels with internal or external constituencies of the organization and developing procedures for improving communications
       * conducting background research needed to develop or improve fund-raising activities of the organization
       * developing and implementing activities to improve the morale and effectiveness of staff or volunteers

Recommended readings:

Boyatzis, R.E. The Competent Manager: A Model for Effective Performance. New York: John Wiley, 1992.

Edwards, R.L., Yankey, J.A., & Altpeter, M.A.   Skills for Effective Management of Nonprofit Organizations (second edition). Washington, D.C.: N.A.S.W. Press, 2006.

Herman, R.D. & Heimovics, R.D. Executive Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1991.

Schein, E.H. Organizational Culture and Leadership. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992.

Schon, D.A. The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action.   New York: Basic Books, 1993.

Grading:

       This course is graded on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis by the supervising faculty. Input will be expected from the student and from the on-site supervisor at the internship site.