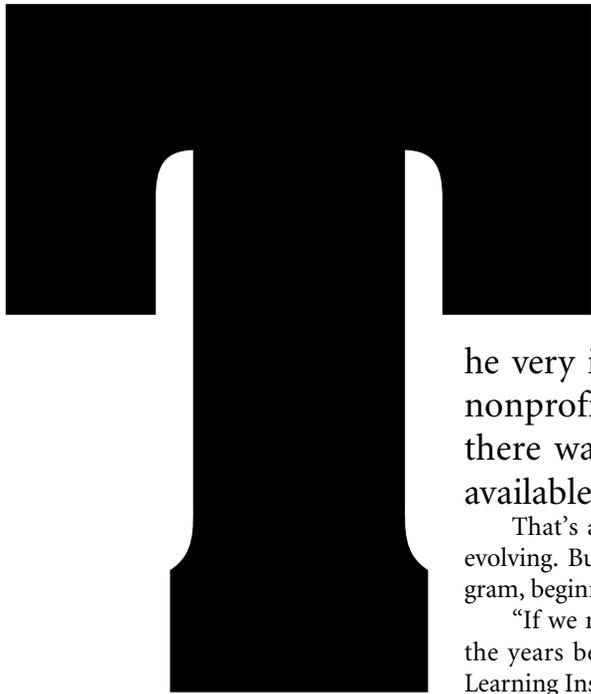


BACK TO SCHOOL

Nonprofit Management Program Unveiled

*CAN'T GET TO A UNIVERSITY? LET THE UNIVERSITY COME TO YOU WITH THIS
NEW CERTIFICATE PROGRAM FOR NONPROFITS.*

BY JILL MUEHRCKE



he very idea of “nonprofit management”—not to mention nonprofit-management education—is new. Ten years ago, there was, perhaps, one degree in nonprofit management available in the entire country. Now there are 76.

That’s a small measure of how fast the concept of nonprofit management is evolving. But even more sweeping changes are in the wind. A new certificate program, beginning this September, may transform nonprofit management completely.

“If we meet our goal, we’ll surpass in one year the number of graduates of all the years before,” says Katie Burnham, executive director of the path-breaking Learning Institute for Nonprofit Organizations.

How is that possible? By using the distance-shrinking power of interactive video satellites, the Learning Institute will bring expert faculty into every town that’s interested. The Institute plans to have 250 sites with 12 graduates at each site, for a total of 3,000 nonprofit management certificate holders the first year.

Begun in 1996, the Learning Institute is a unique partnership that spans all three sectors. (For details, see “What Is the Learning Institute?” on page 39.) During its pilot year, the Institute concentrated on delivering its distance education offerings regionally. Now that PBS Adult Learning Service has signed on as its official distributor, the Institute is ready to take its courses across the United States, Canada, Mexico, and South America, and to offer a certificate attesting to a person’s understanding of core nonprofit-management issues.

“Our courses begin in September and go through May, with one course a month,” Burnham tells us. “Each course focuses on one of the areas that are key to managing a nonprofit organization.” (For a list of classes, see “The New Curriculum” on page 37.) “At the end of the year, you will have earned a Certificate

of Excellence in Nonprofit Leadership and Management from the University of Wisconsin School of Human Ecology.”

Why Satellite?

“The reason we chose video satellite to deliver our courses is because it’s the best way to make training affordable and accessible,” Burnham explains. “Also, we wanted to bring people from the same community together as peer learners.”

The learners—usually around 15 to 30 people—come together at a local facility that has agreed to host the program (see “How to Host a Downlink Site” on page 39.) A typical course begins with the learners working on an activity together. They fax their results to the instructor, who reviews responses from all the sites and comments on them, while students watch the TV screen.

At any time during the course, participants can fax, phone, or e-mail their questions for the instructor to answer. Any questions that can’t be addressed during the course, either because of time or the need for further research, are posted on the Internet after the course along with the instructor’s response.

About halfway through the three-hour course, the group performs another activity together, led by a facilitator. “The on-site facilitator is an important part of the learning experience,” Burnham emphasizes. “We see each course as a team teaching effort between the faculty member in the studio and the facilitator at each site.”

Between these activities, students watch videotaped case studies to illustrate key points. “These case studies are very popular, because you’re listening to people who’ve been there,” Burnham observes. “They’ve taken the steps the instructor is discussing and can explain what worked and what didn’t.”

The last 15 minutes underscore how participants can implement what they’ve learned. The focus is on practical activities. This isn’t just “book learning” but education that’s meant to engender real, measurable change.

Participants wishing to obtain a certificate have additional reading to do before each program and a practical applications-oriented project to complete afterward. Support is available on the Web, along with helpful readings and answers to frequently asked questions for each course.

The New Curriculum

The new Certificate of Excellence in Nonprofit Leadership and Management is based on the following curriculum. These distance education programs are delivered to downlink sites across the United States, Canada, Mexico, and South America.

September 17, 1998. Strategic Planning: Charting Your Course. This program gives a rationale for strategic planning, presents the elements of effective planning, discusses the role of board and staff in the planning process, and delineates the critical steps in the strategic planning cycle.

October 15, 1998. Resource Development: Unleashing Community Generosity. This program summarizes the external environment affecting nonprofits, explores the implications for fund development, and presents key strategies for developing an effective fund development program.

November 19, 1998. Board Development: Building Passion for Mission. This board development program explores why people are motivated to join boards, addresses the roles and responsibilities of board members, discusses board composition and the concept of a balanced board of directors, and delineates the board recruitment process.

January 21, 1999. Marketing Is Everyone’s Business. This program offers essential principles, discusses how marketing is different in a nonprofit organization, and offers strategies for telling the organization’s story through newsletters, publicity, and other concrete approaches.

February 18, 1999. Financial Empowerment: More Mission for Your Money. This program focuses on the importance of using standard business techniques and understanding the meaning of “profit” in nonprofit organizations. It presents the major characteristics of successful nonprofit organizations and develops three characteristics (viable mission, strong staff, and financial empowerment) in detail.

March 18, 1999. Social Entrepreneurship: Merging Mission and Money. This program explores the concept of social entrepreneurship and addresses the importance of maximizing earned income while building on the mission and core competencies of a nonprofit organization.

April 15, 1999. Volunteer Involvement: Attracting and Keeping the Best. This program examines the elements of a successful volunteer program, with an emphasis on designing roles for volunteers, recruiting the most qualified and diverse applicants, and developing productive techniques for working together and maintaining commitment. In addition, it defines and explores the role of a coordinator of volunteers.

May 20, 1999. Strategic Alliances: Extending Your Reach. This program discusses trends which encourage the need for strategic alliances in the nonprofit sector and explores the forms which these alliances might take, including collaborations, joint ventures, mergers, and consolidations. Underlying principles and concrete examples of successful alliances are presented.

The faculty is a mix of experienced practitioners and university professors, all with a practical, real-world teaching style. (For details, see “The Learning Institute Instructors” to the right.) “They’ve all embraced the idea of an interrelated curriculum and of distance education—not just the satellite programs but the work that must be done outside of class to attain the certificate,” Burnham notes.

“Another great thing about this way of learning is the feeling of community it provides,” she adds. “We as nonprofit leaders have very few opportunities to get together and discuss what we do and ways we might work together. The activities built into these courses are ideal for getting to know others in the course and learning about one another’s organizations. The networking advantages are enormous.”

Likewise, the courses solidify an organization’s staff. Since the Learning Institute encourages people to attend in teams, staff members learn together. As Burnham reminds us, “When teams go back to their organizations and work together, they’re more likely to practice what they’ve learned. Since that’s the goal—to create change—teams are more effective than one person acting alone.

“Also,” says Burnham, “our curriculum helps staff gain a sense of the big picture. It’s surprising how many staff members don’t realize where they fit into the nonprofit sector or even into their own organizations as a whole.

“One of our classes put that into perspective recently,” recalls Burnham. “The instructor asked the students—mostly nonprofit middle managers—what percentage of their organization’s funds came from grants, how much from earned income, and so on. Many of them had no idea! If they don’t know where their organization’s income is coming from,

The Learning Institute Instructors

The Learning Institute for Nonprofit Organizations meets a long-standing need of nonprofits—quality education taught by nationally recognized instructors:

Jimmie R. Alford is founder and president/CEO of the Alford Group, Inc. Throughout his 35-year career he has provided leadership to over 300 clients in all aspects of nonprofit management. A noted lecturer and author, he recently served as editor and chapter author for *Building and Managing an Asset Base*, published in 1997. Jimmie serves as chair of the American Association of Fund Raising Counsel and as a member of the Board of Advisors for the Fund Raising School of Indiana University’s Center on Philanthropy.

Jerr Boschee has over 30 years of experience in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. He has been with the National Center for Social Entrepreneurs since its founding in 1985 and has been president and CEO since 1990. He also has been an advisor for the Nonprofit and Public Management Program in the Graduate School of Business at the University of St. Thomas.

Peter Brinckerhoff is a nationally known trainer, author, and consultant to nonprofit organizations. The Nonprofit Management Association selected his books *Mission-Based Management* and *Financial Empowerment* for its highest award in 1995 and 1996 respectively. His latest book is *Mission-Based Marketing*.

Susan J. Ellis is founder and president of Energize, Inc., a training, publishing, and consulting firm. Susan is an internationally known consultant, author, and educator in the field of volunteerism. Her books include *From the Top Down: The Executive Role in Volunteer Program Success* and *The Volunteer Recruitment Book*. She has also taught graduate level volunteer administration courses for Adelphi, Pennsylvania State, and Temple Universities.

Karen F. A. Fox is associate professor of marketing at Santa Clara University in Santa Clara, California. Karen teaches courses in marketing management, services marketing, and international marketing. Her research interests include social marketing and overseas economic social development, marketing for educational institutions, and intellectual capital. Her book *Strategic Marketing for Educational Institutions* builds on her combined background in education and marketing.

Richard L. Jones is president and CEO for Metropolitan Family Services in Chicago, one of the largest family service agencies in the country. He is currently chair of the Council of Agency Executives. In 1997, he was named the recipient of the 1997 Leadership In Nonprofit Management Award by the Mandel Center for Nonprofit Organizations of Case Western Reserve University.

Frank Martinelli has over 24 years of work experience with a variety of nonprofit community-based groups and public agencies. He is president of the Center for Public Skills Training where he specializes in the recruitment, training, and development of voluntary leadership. Frank has provided training and consultation to more than 1,000 organizations, including Peace Corps, Head Start, and Voluntary Action Centers.

Carol Weisman, president of Board Builders in St. Louis, is a practical humorist who is a speaker, trainer, author, and consultant. She has served on 21 boards and has been president of six. Carol is the author of *A Corporate Employee’s Guide to Nonprofit Board Service* and is featured in the video *Speaking of Money* with Hugh Downs. A prolific writer, she is also a regular contributor to *Nonprofit World*.

How to Host a Downlink Site

Help bring accessible, affordable, quality education to nonprofit organizations, their boards, volunteers, and paid staff—and gain new income for your organization at the same time! It's easy and rewarding! Can you do the following?

- Choose and reserve a satellite downlink facility. (PBS can help you locate one nearby.)
- Form alliances with other nonprofit groups in your area to share responsibilities, costs, or opportunities.
- Promote the program locally to recruit learners. (PBS will provide marketing materials to help you in this effort.)
- Provide a local facilitator for each of the programs in the annual series. (PBS will provide facilitator training materials and audioconferences.)
- Duplicate print materials for each participant.
- Pay a site license fee based on one of the following pricing options:

The per-student option. With this option, you pay \$40 per student per program for the license, with a minimum of six students per program. That would work out to \$240 per program. (If you attract more than six students, you would pay another \$40 per student per program for the eight-program series.)

The flat-fee option. With this option, you pay \$500 per program times eight programs for the license. That would work out to a flat \$4,000 for the entire series, and there is no per-student fee involved.

Which option should you choose? The final choice is yours, but we might suggest you consider choosing the per-student option if you expect attendance to be 12 learners or less. Choose the flat-rate option if you expect attendance to be 13 or more. With both options, however, we recommend attendance be capped at 50 learners per facilitator.

Note that you can earn unrestricted income for your organization as well as bring high-quality programs to your community. The amount of income you earn depends on how much you charge beyond the \$40-per-learner cost, how much marketing you do, and how actively you seek collaborative opportunities.

To receive a satellite site application form with more details, please call PBS Adult Learning Services at 800-257-2578.

What Is the Learning Institute?

The Learning Institute for Nonprofit Organizations is a program of the Society for Nonprofit Organizations (6314 Odana Road, Suite 1, Madison, Wisconsin 53719). The program is the result of a unique collaboration among all three sectors:

Murphy Communications, Inc.—the partner from the business sector—is a family-held corporation with a

40-year history of community involvement and participation in projects, business development, and civic initiatives. Its focus in distance learning is on the development and distribution of educational products intended for use by adults, children, families, and the community.

The Society for Nonprofit Organizations—the nonprofit partner—is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit national membership organization that serves as a clearinghouse of information and facilitates wide-ranging education, training, and support services. Through its journal, *Nonprofit World*, and other communications, it seeks to draw together all elements of the nonprofit world, encourages open communication and sharing, and fosters a sense of community in the sector.

The University of Wisconsin-Extension—the public partner—provides a spectrum of lifelong learning opportunities for all Wisconsin citizens through its programming divisions of Cooperative Extension, Extension Communications, Continuing Education Extension, and collaborative relationships with 26 UW campuses and centers, 72 Wisconsin counties, and countless local, state, and federal agencies and groups.

This first-ever collaboration among the three sectors is partially funded with a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. (For more on the ups and downs of forming such a collaboration, see “Nonprofit Education Is Coming to Your Town,” *Nonprofit World*, March-April 1997).

The Learning Institute for Nonprofit Organizations

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Vision: The Learning Institute for Nonprofit Organizations serves as the global gateway to high-quality, affordable and accessible educational opportunities.

Mission: The Learning Institute helps to transform nonprofit organizations and the communities they serve through technology-based, learner-focused education.



“If we meet our goal, we’ll surpass, in one year, the number of graduates of all the years before,” says Katie Burnham, president of the Society for Nonprofit Organizations, with Terry Gibson, professor and director of program development, and Hamilton McCubbin, dean of the School of Human Ecology at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

they don’t know how at-risk their organization’s income is—or how risky their own jobs are!”

The regional pilot program has proved the video satellite model to be a good one. Even attendees who admitted to being dubious about distance education were sold on it after their first class.

“I never dreamed distance education could be so hands-on,” one learner said after her first Learning Institute course. “There’s far more interaction with the teacher than I expected. Getting to know other nonprofits in the community was an added bonus. In fact, we’ve decided to meet for brown-bag lunches before the courses from now on.”

Why This Curriculum?

The Learning Institute curriculum is designed to lay a foundation for managing a nonprofit. “This curriculum is targeted mainly for middle management, the new executive director, and volunteers who are being groomed as board members,” Burnham explains. “Most of our learners are familiar with the key result areas of a nonprofit organization but may not understand the way these important areas interact and fit together.”

Burnham stresses the need for a nonprofit management curriculum apart from a business curriculum. Yes, she admits, there may be an 80 percent overlap between managing in the two sectors, “but the 20 percent that’s not taught in business school is the most important part of nonprofit management! If you’re talking about team building and don’t take volunteer motivation into account, for instance, you’re leaving out a crucial part of the equation.”

It’s also true that there are other programs in nonprofit management, but few have the backing of a university, Burnham points out. Also, she underlines the fact that they’re not accessible: “If you look at a map of current certificate pro-

grams, you’ll see enormous geographic gaps. That’s because they’re all site-based. So unless you’re in their geographic area, they’re unattainable. That’s not true of our programs. Anyone who wants to work with us in setting up a site in their community can do so.” (See “How to Host a Downlink Site” on page 39.)

Where Do We Go from Here?

The Learning Institute certificate program will do far more than transfer skills. It will bring about a set of common principles and help build a strong nonprofit sector across the globe.

“Eventually,” says Burnham, “we want to create a common language—first, within the global nonprofit sector and then spanning all three sectors. When we talk about collaboration among the three sectors, one of the most frustrating things is that we don’t share a common language.

“I see the certificate as a global measure with credibility throughout the world. It will be a big help to board members who head search committees and are looking for executive directors. If they have a stack of resumes and one person has a certificate in nonprofit management, that resume can go right to the top.

“While this core curriculum will stay pretty much the same, we’ll be adding new levels of learning so that people can keep building on their knowledge. These next learning levels may be via the Internet, audio, videotape, or CD-ROM; we’re looking at an array of multimedia options.

“We’ll see how this first year of our national roll-out goes. Then we’ll ask our learners where they want to go next.” ■

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- Wilder Foundation, *Collaboration Handbook*.
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These publications are available through the Society for Nonprofit Organizations’ Resource Center. To order, see the Society’s *Resource Center Catalog* or contact the Society at 6314 Odana Road, Suite 1, Madison, Wisconsin 53719 (608-274-9777).