# Research Project

**Due Date: May 2 2019 at 11.59 p.m.**

**Mode of Submission: As a word document through the Assignments Tab on D2L**

Each student will be required to work on an individual research project on nonprofit governance. For this project, students will need to select a nonprofit organization of their choice (**based in Georgia**) and then study and criticallyanalyze the management and governance systems in place in the selected nonprofit.

# Purpose

The purpose of the research project is to help you understand nonprofit governance and administration in a real-world setting. The knowledge acquired through this project will help you apply theories learned in class to the workplace. You will learn about the challenges being faced by the leaders of the nonprofit sector, and the strategies that are being developed to address these challenges. More specifically, you will learn about various aspects of nonprofit governance – e.g. the scope and impact of the nonprofit sector, strategic planning, Board governance, fundraising, marketing, public relations, and lobbying, inter alia.

Skills

Through this assignment, you will be able to practice the following skills that are not only essential to your success in this course, but that will also help you in your career:

1. You will be able to explain the scope and impact of the nonprofit of your choice
2. You will be able to explain the role and importance of the selected nonprofit in the delivery of public and social services
3. You will be able to analyze and evaluate the leadership function within the selected nonprofit
4. You will be able to examine and critique the strategic planning process in the selected nonprofit
5. You will be able to analyze the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the selected nonprofit and to present the results in a SWOT quadrant
6. You will be able to make recommendations to improve the governance function in the selected nonprofit

# Knowledge

This assignment will also help you to become familiar with the following important content knowledge of the field of nonprofit governance:

1. The definition, scope, and impact of the nonprofit sector
2. The role and importance of the nonprofit sector in the delivery of public and social services
3. The main theories of nonprofit governance and administration
4. The process for the development of a strategic plan
5. The principles of Board development
6. Fundraising
7. Marketing
8. Public Relations
9. Lobbying

# Tasks

Students will need to conduct an **on-site face-to-face interview** with the leaders of a nonprofit organization of their choice, and to submit a report on the findings.

To view a list of nonprofits in Georgia, you can visit [www.Guidestar.org](http://www.Guidestar.org) .

After identifying the nonprofit organization of his/her choice, each student will have to interview key staff, board members, and partners/clients/customers about the organization, its mission, goals and objectives, management systems and structure, its strategies for human resource management, fundraising, and marketing, *inter alia*. In essence, each student will have to conduct an organizational assessment for the selected nonprofit (including a SWOT analysis), and analyze the governance structures of the nonprofit. Students can interview more than one resource person if they wish. However, the requirement is to interview at least one resource person at the top leadership of the nonprofit.

Students are required to conduct on-site interviews with the nonprofit. **Remote interviews are not accepted.**

Students will have to develop their own interview instrument. A sample interview instrument has been uploaded on D2L.

Prior to beginning the project, students must seek approval from the instructor regarding the organization selected by emailing the instructor through D2L, providing the name of the organization, the name and position of the interviewee/s, and the website and other contact details of the organization.

**Selection of organizations to be completed by February 13.**

No two students can work on the same organization; it will be on first come first serve basis.

Once the organization has been approved by instructor, students will need to submit the contact details of the organization and of the interviewee/s through D2L (on the Discussion Forum created for that purpose). This needs to be done only **after that your organization has been approved by the instructor.**

***Students may not work on their nonprofit organizations without seeking prior approval from the instructor.***

Students are encouraged to start thinking about the project early in the semester and to start acquiring appropriate background materials and documents on the organizations of choice as soon as possible. Relevant documents and background materials can be included in the report as appendices.

It sometimes happens that students have to change their selected organization as the interviewee/s may not be responsive or may not find the time to do the interview. You need to plan for this contingency. **It is the responsibility of the student to plan the interview well ahead of the deadline for the submission of the project report so that there is enough time to find another interviewee in case the first one fails to meet with the student.**

The final project report should be about 15 pages in length (1 inch margin; double-spaced), and should include all the sections provided in the grading rubric (if I cannot see the sections clearly demarcated, you will lose the points allocated for the various missing sections). **See the grading rubric for details on how to structure your report.**

# Criteria for Success:

**Grading Rubric for Research Paper (Total 300 points; out of 1000 points for the course)**

**To ensure that you get credit for each of the sections listed below, you need to clearly title these sections in your report. If I cannot easily find the section, you will lose the points allocated for that section.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Paper Components* | *Criteria* | *Score (ranging from not meeting expectations to exceptional* |
| *Introduction*  | * Clearly introduces the purpose and goals of the research project
* Clearly explains the questions and topics to be discussed
* Clearly identifies the organization and the rank of the interviewee/s
 | **0-10 points** |
| *Description of the organization*  | * Provides a good description of the selected organization, providing details on the mission and vision, the values statement, the size of the personnel (including the volunteer pool), the organization chart, the budget size, the various programs and activities, the fundraising structure
 | **0-15 points** |
| *Profile of the interviewee/s*  | * Provides a good description and profile of the interviewee/s, providing details on the rank, the number of years at the organization, the responsibilities, the credentials, and the experience
 | **0-10 points** |
| *SWOT analysis*  | * Provide a SWOT 2x2 grid, with the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats clearly identified in each grid
* Provides a written description for each grid of the SWOT chart – that is, a detailed explanation of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats accompany the SWOT chart
 | **0-60 points** |
| *Findings*  | * Provides a good discussion of the findings of the project, based on an analysis of the information gleaned during the interview, as well as based on the reading and researching of documents related to the organization and the themes under investigation.
 | **0-100 points** |
| *Analysis and Recommendations*  | * Provides a critical analysis of the findings based on the literature and themes covered in class. Analysis clearly references literature on the subject matter, including citations of the assigned readings as well as extra research done by the student on the subject matter
* Analysis and recommendations demonstrate an application of concepts and theories learned in class, and there is reference to the assigned class readings as well as extra research materials (at least six academic publications to be referenced)
* At least **seven assigned readings** (listed in the syllabus) need to be discussed in this section.
 | **0-60 points** |
| *Conclusion* | * Provides a strong review of the findings, and discusses the impact of the research in enhancing understanding of the themes under investigation
* Provides a solid analysis of how this project has helped in furthering understanding of nonprofit governance
* Provides a clear and insightful answer to the basic question: **what did you learn from this project?**
 | **0-15** |
| *Bibliography* | * All sources referenced in the paper are properly cited in a consistent manner.
* I do not require any specific citation style; however, you need to be consistent in your style throughout the paper.
 | **0-5** |
| *Organization and Structure* | * Sentences and paragraphs are well structured and the ideas flow smoothly
 | **0-10** |
| *Grammar & Mechanics* | * Report is free of grammatical errors, spelling errors, typos, and punctuation mistakes
 | **0-10** |
| *Annex* | * Report includes the interview instrument as an annex
 | **0-5** |
| *TOTAL* |  | **0-300 points** |