

Research and Recommendations for
A Center on Non-Profits
At the University of Wisconsin-Madison:
A Summary of Findings from the Faculty Survey

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With the
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Summary of Findings from the Faculty Survey

A total of 176 faculty responded to the taskforce's solicitation for survey input. Survey content concentrated on the importance of possible nonprofit center activities and goals and the importance of competencies to be addressed by a degree program.

Description of the Faculty Respondents

The 176 faculty who responded to the survey can be grouped in two ways. One measure is whether they have contact with nonprofits (through research, outreach or by incorporating service learning). The other is whether they teach or train content that would be relevant to students interested in nonprofits.

Over half (59.1%) of faculty teach or train content that is relevant to students interested in nonprofits. Slightly more (64.8%) of the faculty who responded to the survey had contact with nonprofits through research, outreach or service learning. Slightly less than half (44.9%) indicated that both were true and 21.0% indicated no contact with nonprofits and non-relevant content.

Ranked Importance of Possible Activities and Goals for a Center

Approximately 70% of faculty respondent rated student internships and workshops, forums, and symposia as important center activities (scored as 4 or above on a 5-point scale where 5 is most and 1 is least important). Activities and goals rated slightly less frequently (by 60-66% of faculty) were courses or training for non-profit staff development and board development, a resource center/information clearinghouse, and research support for studies of nonprofit organizations.

Faculty who have contact with nonprofits were significantly less likely to rate research support for studies of nonprofit organization as important compared to faculty with no contact (48.9% and 68.4% respectively).

Ranked Importance of Competencies for a Degree Program

Almost all of the competencies listed were rated as important by half or more of faculty respondents (scored as 4 or above on a 5-point scale where 5 is most and 1 is least important). The only exception was international issues specific to nonprofits, rated as important by 40.9% of faculty respondents.

Organizational planning and structure, program evaluation, fundraising, as well as integrity and ethics were rated as important competencies to be addressed by a degree program by 65-75% of faculty. Sixty to 65% rated accounting and finance, coalition building, public policy, volunteer development, and marketing for nonprofits as important competencies for either an undergraduate or graduate program. Half rated philanthropy as an important competency and 41% said international issues specific to nonprofits were important competencies.

Faculty willing to participate on the feasibility planning team

Faculty willing to participate on the feasibility planning team were more likely than any other group to indicate that an undergraduate and/or graduate degree program were an important center activity (45.5% rated an undergraduate program as important and 57.6% rated a graduate program as important; see Table 8).

Table 1
The Importance of Possible Center Activities and Nonprofit Organizational Competencies
by Faculty

	Has Contact with Nonprofits Through Research, Outreach or Service Learning		Total Sample
	No	Yes	
Total Count	57	92	149
Importance of possible activities and goals for a center (Scale of 1 to 5, 5 being most important)			
Courses or training for non-profit staff development	59.6%	66.3%	63.8%
Courses or training for non-profit board development*	47.4%	64.1%	57.7%
Undergraduate degree or certificate	28.1%	27.2%	27.5%
Graduate degree or certification	35.1%	35.9%	35.6%
Resource center/information clearinghouse	64.9%	64.1%	64.4%
Workshops, forums, and symposia	64.1%	72.8%	68.5%
Nonprofit website	56.1%	44.6%	49.0%
Research support for studies of nonprofit organizations*	68.4%	48.9%	56.4%
Internships for students	73.7%	70.7%	71.8%
Online education	37.1%	38.6%	38.1%
Importance of competencies (Scale of 1 to 5, 5 being most important)			
Organizational planning and structure	75.4%	68.5%	71.1%
Accounting and finance	68.4%	62.0%	64.4%
Program evaluation	71.9%	70.7%	71.1%
Fundraising	68.4%	75.0%	72.5%
Marketing for nonprofits	52.6%	64.1%	59.7%
Coalition building	56.1%	67.4%	63.1%
Integrity and ethics	71.9%	65.2%	67.8%
International issues specific to nonprofits	47.4%	37.0%	40.9%
Public policy	61.4%	65.2%	63.8%
Volunteer development	59.6%	65.2%	63.1%
Philanthropy	52.6%	50.0%	51.0%

Note: 27 respondents (15.3%) declined to rate possible activities and goals.

Table 2
The Importance of Possible Center Activities and Nonprofit Organizational Competencies
by Faculty

	Teaches or trains content that would be relevant to students interested in nonprofits		Total Sample
	No	Yes	
Total Count	62	87	149
Importance of possible activities and goals for a center (Scale of 1 to 5, 5 being most important)			
Courses or training for non-profit staff development	61.3%	65.5%	63.8%
Courses or training for non-profit board development*	53.2%	60.9%	57.7%
Undergraduate degree or certificate	24.2%	29.9%	27.5%
Graduate degree or certification	27.4%	41.4%	35.6%
Resource center/information clearinghouse	62.9%	65.5%	64.4%
Workshops, forums, and symposia	62.9%	72.4%	68.5%
Nonprofit website	54.8%	44.8%	49.0%
Research support for studies of nonprofit organizations	48.4%	62.1%	56.4%
Internships for students	69.4%	73.6%	71.8%
Online education	34.7%	40.4%	38.1%
Importance of competencies (Scale of 1 to 5, 5 being most important)			
Organizational planning and structure	72.6%	70.1%	71.1%
Accounting and finance	71.0%	59.8%	64.4%
Program evaluation	77.4%	66.7%	71.1%
Fundraising	71.0%	73.6%	72.5%
Marketing for nonprofits	58.1%	60.9%	59.7%
Coalition building*	53.2%	70.1%	63.1%
Integrity and ethics	66.1%	69.0%	67.8%
International issues specific to nonprofits	45.2%	37.9%	40.9%
Public policy	59.7%	66.7%	63.8%
Volunteer development	62.9%	63.2%	63.1%
Philanthropy	56.5%	47.1%	51.0%

Note: 27 respondents (15.3%) declined to rate possible activities and goals.

Summary of Comments from the Open-Ended Responses of the Faculty Survey

Positive Benefits of a UW Center for Non-Profits

28 of the 71 responses to the faculty survey emphasized the positive benefits a UW Center for Non-profits would provide for the university, the local community and the state.

- “Given the history of this university and state, it is almost unthinkable that such a center does not already exist.”
- “With the UW-Madison mission so closely tied to supporting the social and economic contribution of for-profit organizations to the state ... this is an opportunity to draw attention to the contribution and necessity of the non-profit sector to the state and to encourage the state legislature and campus administration to support university research, teaching and service projects dealing with this non-profit sector”
- “This would be such a boon to Wisconsin and really level the playing field for small, local groups that serve the very great needs of a few individuals.”

Suggestions for successful development of a UW Center for Non-Profits

23 of the 71 responses to the faculty survey provided an array of suggestions of how to facilitate the development of a UW Center for Non-profits.

- “Let it be driven by a lot of student initiative.”
- “I think that as professors, doing more work to integrate courses ... is very important.”
- “I would be interested in opportunities for faculty/staff of existing departments to transfer into a new non-profit center.”

Potential models and sources of information

- The Foundation Center, New York City
- The Peabody School of Education’s Human Resource Major, Vanderbilt University
- Wisconsin School for Workers, UW-Extension

Potential UW Partners:

- The Non-profit Business Law Center
- The Morgridge Center
- The Wisconsin Institute for Discovery Center
- The Memorial Library Grants Information Center
- The UW Foundation
- The WAA
- Andy Lewis, Center for Community Economic Development, UW-Extension
- Andrew Taylor, Bolz Center
- Lisa Alexander, Law School faculty
- Additional Law School Faculty
- University administration (i.e. Provost, Chancellor)

Audiences of the UW Center for Non-profits

12 of the 71 respondents suggested particular audiences to whom Center planners should attend.

Students:

- Environmental Studies graduate students (Nelson Institute)
- International affairs and public affairs graduate students
- Urban and Regional Planning graduate students
- Students in fine arts programs
- Human Development and Family Studies undergraduate and graduate students

Non-profit organizations:

- “A nonprofit center should...focus considerable attention on communities and community groups who are traditionally underserved by Extension.”
- Arts organizations
- Organizations that serve communities of color and Latin American communities

Programs and services of the UW Center for Non-Profits

18 of the 71 respondents suggested programs and services that the Center should offer.

For students:

- “...a way for students to link up and provide internships and service.”
- Courses in fundraising, the general non-profit sector, structures of non-profits, and leadership
- Undergraduate and graduate certificates

For non-profit organizations:

- Practical education and resources that addresses short-term and long-term needs
- Informal education opportunities (i.e., not degree-based)
- Affordable education
- Assistance with marketing, fundraising, grantwriting
- Volunteers
- Translation of technical knowledge for non-technical audiences
- Community building and capacity development
- Lending library
- A legal “umbrella” system for new non-profit organizations and consulting services

General suggestions:

- “I strongly feel that any efforts in this area need to incorporate and international component....such a center should reflect the globalization of NGO activity.”
- “...there are many of us trying to do charitable work in the community but battling the bureaucracy at the UW can get in the way rather than facilitate such programs. Having a center that would link a program to related resources and services would be ideal.”
- Action research
- Attention to issues of disadvantaged groups, inclusivity and diversity
- Networking – non-profit organizations with departments and with one another

- Faculty affiliations from diverse departments

Cautions in developing the UW Center for Non-Profits

15 of the 71 respondents expressed concerns that they wanted Center planners to consider.

- “If you are going to do this, you must make it accessible to the non-profit community and not just use this as a resource to study them/us!...Affordability will be key here.”
- “I think that this center and its planning team needs to make sure it includes FULL-TIME non-profit workers and is not developed by just academics who partner with community non-profits. I don’t mean just the directors, but also the frontline workers who actually engage with the public.”
- Lack of faculty time and energy, due to other commitments and tenure pressures
- Duplication of efforts of other UW (e.g., UW-Extension, Morgridge Center, Business School) and community groups
- Funding
- University bureaucracy