

# Nonprofit Board Leadership Program

A joint initiative of the Tamer Center for Social Enterprise and Social Enterprise Club

## The Nonprofit Board Leadership Program (NBLP)

at Columbia Business School provides students with a professional opportunity to work with alumni who are actively serving on nonprofit boards. The program cultivates the next generation of nonprofit board leaders while providing a valuable service to alumni and the nonprofit organizations they serve.

## Program Overview

- Alumni serve as mentors and connect students with the nonprofit's executive director and staff. Together, they agree on a project to be completed during the course of the academic year. The student works independently on the project, drawing on his/her coursework from Columbia Business School.
- Students attend one or more of the nonprofit's board meetings. By attending board meetings, students are exposed to the inner dynamics of nonprofit boards, gain a better understanding of strategic and tactical issues facing the organization, and learn about the differing roles of board members and nonprofit managers.
- Students participate in volunteer functions, staff meetings and other relevant events hosted by the nonprofit to gain a holistic understanding of the organization.

These practical experiences, as well as the training sessions provided by the NBLP, prepare students for future board participation.

"I am learning as much from the students as they are from me, and I feel lucky that some of these friendships will last a lifetime. It is an honor to be part of the NBLP, Columbia Business School's best kept secret."

—Tess Mateo '97,  
Board Member, American Composers Orchestra

## Program Timeline

### September

- Students submit applications
- Selected students are matched with board mentors and organizations based on student interest and business experience
- Students complete the program's orientation and nonprofit board training
- Students refine scope of projects with their mentor

### October–March

- Opening reception
- Students attend volunteer event(s) to gain an understanding of the organization
- Students attend board and/or sub-committee meetings with board members
- Students work on their independent project

### March–May

- Students complete project and present their findings to executive director/board as appropriate
- Closing reception



Mentees Shelia Zeidman '15, Sarah Drew '16, Kendall Miller '15 and AVP Julia Rosenblau '16 at the 2015 NBLP Opening Reception



Cecily Carson (right), Tamer Center for Social Enterprise advisory board member, has served as a mentor to NBLP students.

## Sample Projects

### Cristo Rey

Regina Lee '13 worked with director of strategic partnerships Lauren Decker '09 and her mentor, Kyle Miller '89, to help Cristo Rey forecast the impact of its endowment growth over a 5-10 year period and to create a strategy for the upcoming capital campaign. Regina conducted interviews with financial professionals who have experience in endowment management to understand best practices for endowment investing and rates of pay-down over a given period. Based on her interviews, Regina created proposed next steps for Cristo Rey's capital campaign fundraising and compiled best practices for endowment investing across the industry.



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### Girls Inc.

Daphne Patterson '14 worked with mentor Judy Vredenburg, president and CEO of Girls Inc., to update Girls Inc.'s fundraising plan to better match the organization's new overall strategy. Girls Inc. sought to build more sustainable donor relationships with admirable women who embody the spirit of the organization. Over the course of her project, Daphne researched fundraising models of other organizations, synthesized findings of focus group conversations, conducted interviews, and offered recommendations about the design and implementation of Girls Inc.'s new fundraising strategy.



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### Community Resource Exchange

Matthew Rutter '13 worked for the Community Resource Exchange (CRE) and mentor Prof. Ray Horton, to provide the organization with a menu of focused core services aligned with its mission. Matt's project focused on identifying targeted services that reflect CRE's core values, customer base, competencies, and strengths. Matt also worked to analyze the cost of providing services to CRE's customers in terms of the average hours incurred and additional resources required as well as an understanding of the market dynamics for specific services.



"Before learning about SafeMinds' core mission from individual board members, I understood little about the environmental components of autism and how deeply it affects families daily. My mentor and several leaders took me inside and shared the complex challenges of facing this issue. I feel grateful to have provided my insight into current organizational and developmental programs to benefit the organization here and elsewhere." — Ashley LeMaire '14

"Through the Nonprofit Board Leadership Program, students have the opportunity to apply their business talents and energy to real-world projects and come away with insights into board management gained through first-hand experience. The program provided our organization with invaluable skills to complete critical research and compile leading edge industry data. The work completed will be transformative for our organization." — Melissa Raso '96, Secretary of the Board, All Souls School; Tamer Center for Social Enterprise Advisory Board Member