GP 1194 Strategic Leadership for Public Service Organizations
Fall 2012
Tuesdays 6:45 – 8:45 PM

Instructors
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Course Description
Strategic Leadership is an advanced seminar designed to equip mid-career students with the tools, perspectives, and frameworks for executing high-impact strategy within mission-driven organizations. Student performance in this course is evaluated on a pass/fail basis while still requiring significant reading, in-depth team-based casework, intensive classroom participation, and rigorous thought and analysis. Topics include conceptual frameworks for understanding high impact organizations and the role of strategic leadership, analytical tools for developing and assessing strategy, approaches to working with stakeholders to mobilize commitment, and methods for leading change. We will explore a wide range of sources including established approaches to strategic planning and management as well as more emergent practices around innovation. Application of the frameworks explored in the class material will occur through a series of “live case studies” presented by leaders from diverse organizations within the public service field. In addition, we will draw on the experiences students bring to the classroom through small group work and discussion. Students will need access to a nonprofit or public sector organization, as a professional or a volunteer, in order to fulfill the assignments.

The course is co-taught by the Research Center for Leadership in Action’s (RCLA www.wagner.nyu.edu/leadership) executive director and an RCLA senior fellow who is the director of Advancing Women Professionals (www.advancingwomen.org) and an organizational consultant. It combines scholarly readings, live case studies, and a range of activities to support application. We recognize the EMPA students are adult professionals who learn best when they are responsible for their own education and are given opportunity for application. Over the course of the semester, we will delve into the roles and tasks of strategic leaders and the contribution of strategy to building organizations that achieve lasting impact.

Objectives
The purpose of this course is to develop in the EMPA students an understanding of and an enhanced capacity to enact the roles and tasks of strategic leadership in the service of building a mission-driven organization with deep and lasting impact. Specifically, by the end of the course students will be able to:

- Identify critical components of high impact organizations and articulate the role of strategic leadership in building such organizations;
- Apply a set of analytical tools to develop and assess effective strategy;
- Work with others to mobilize the commitment required to deliver on a strategy; and
- Understand a variety of perspectives on how to lead a change agenda.
Revised 9-5-12

Readings
Readings, primarily available on blackboard, are comprised of journal articles and book chapters and are listed under each session below. Please complete the readings for assignment one before the first class on Tuesday, September 4.

In addition, three books and one monograph are required:

- Monograph: Collins, Jim. *Good to Great and the Social Sectors*, 2005. Note: This text may be ordered online for approximately $10 from Amazon.com or another bookseller.

We have indicated on the course schedule below when each book must be completed, but we strongly urge students to begin reading these books as soon as possible.

Course Requirements

Class Participation and Blackboard Contributions
Students must complete all readings before class and engage actively in the discussions and classroom activities. To participate fully, students should allow sufficient time to complete readings and spend time reflecting on how their experience supports or challenges the concepts presented in those readings in preparation for each class. In order to tailor class work and to get students to enter discussion prepared to engage fully, the instructors require all students to submit via blackboard, a substantive comment reflecting on a key idea that emerged from the week’s reading and a thoughtful question that you are bringing into the class. These submissions must be made by midnight the night before class. The instructors have outlined assignments in the syllabus for sessions in which there will be classroom exercises. All students are expected to actively engage in these exercises.

Team Case Analysis
Students work in teams of 3-4 students to use frameworks from the course to develop a case analysis for an organization. The case analysis will describe an organization, analyze its current position and environment, identify strategic priorities and options for addressing them, and develop a strategy for moving forward that considers various challenges to leading the proposed changes.

Each team’s case analysis should follow this general structure:

I. Background & Brief History of the Organization/Initiative
II. Brief Description of Current Organizational Context
   Field/Sector Analysis
   a. Analyze the most important strategic trends in the field or sector within which the organization operates, including economic and competitive characteristics of the sector.
III. Organization Analysis
   a. Based on the findings from your sector analysis, specify how the environment might impact your organization’s portfolio of programs and services. Identify the organization’s/initiative’s most important strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Focus your analysis on the parts of the organization that you believe are most essential to its success in the field in which it is situated.
   b. Identification of strategic priorities: Utilize all publicly available information and gather additional information directly from the organization.
V. Strategy Development
   a. Based on the strategic priorities identified through your organization, develop a set of recommended strategies that addresses the organization’s weaknesses, builds on its strengths, and allows it to respond strategically to its external environment.
   b. Articulate a vision for this organization that could be achieved by advancing these strategies.

VI. Implementation Steps and Concerns
   a. Recommend a set of next steps to implement the strategies proposed. Identify potential roadblocks to implementation and outline a set of metrics to determine if your strategy solutions are working.
   b. Identify various stakeholders who will need to be engaged and mobilized in order to make the strategies successful and discuss how to work with each group.

VII. Brief Description of Alternative Strategies
   a. Develop a brief “Plan B” in the event your proposed strategies are rejected by your client or fail when implemented.

Deadlines
   • Case Proposal – Due by Monday September 17 (Note: there is no class meeting this week, but proposals must be emailed to the instructors on the 17th).
     ○ 1-2 pages briefly describing your organization and why it would make an interesting case.
   • Strategic Assessment (Sections I – IV) – Due by Session 6, Tuesday, October 16
     ○ 5-6 pages (recommended) analysis of your organization, its history, environment and the primary strategic issue that it faces.
   • Draft Final Case Analysis (Sections I – VII) – Due by Session 13, Tuesday, December 11
     ○ 12-15 pages (recommended) case analysis. The case analysis combines your strategic assessment with discussion of how the organization should respond, challenges or barriers to implementation, and a potential alternative course of action.
     ○ Revise the case based on feedback from the class.
   • Final Case Studies – Due by December 21

You will also have a several class application assignments that involve advance preparation. See each session for the specific requirements.

Note: All assignments must be emailed to both instructors prior to the start of the session for which it is due. Please label your document using the following system: Team#_Assignment# (e.g. GodsoeBethany_Assignment1). Include this label as the name of the document itself and as the title at the top of your paper. You may also include a more descriptive title on the paper (e.g. Going Global: A Case for Change at the Research Center for Leadership in Action). Also include the full names and email addresses of all team members on the top of the first page.
Schedule

**Session 1: September 4, 2012**

*Exploration of Key Components of the Syllabus & Reflections on Leadership*

**Readings:**
- Goleman, Daniel, Richard Boyatzis and Annie McKee, *Primal Leadership*, Chapter 6 pp 92-112 (available on blackboard)
- Senge, Peter, *The Necessary Revolution: Working Together to Create a Sustainable World*, Chapter 27. (available on blackboard)

**Application and Assignment:**
Please come to class prepared to participate in small group interviews with your classmates and to:
- Describe an experience that has shaped your leadership trajectory;
- Share a recent or current professional challenge that is relevant for this course; and
- Build your learning agenda based on the “five discoveries” in Primal Leadership

**Group discussion:**
- Why would it make a difference for you to learn how to develop and execute strategy and lead change?

**Team Assignment**
You will be assigned to a team that you will work with over the course of the semester on a 12-15 page case analysis. We will establish your teams during the first class, and invite you to set a meeting time for your group.

**Session 2: September 11, 2011**

*Understanding and Articulating Purpose and Vision*

**Readings:**
Application:
We will practice communicating vision through a “Vision Stand” exercise in which each person will have 1-2 minutes to share his or her personal vision for the impact he or she seeks to have in the world.

Deadline 1: Case Proposal – Due by Monday, September 17

No Class: September 18, 2012

Please read Forces for Good and start reading Private Sector Strategies for Social Sector Success during this week off.

Session 3: September 25, 2012
Understanding Strategies for High Performance
Note: For this session the two sections will be meeting as one class

Readings:
- Collins, Jim. Good to Great and the Social Sectors, 2005. Note: This text may be ordered online for approximately $10 from Amazon.com or another bookseller.

Application and Assignment:
Write at two-to-three-page memo about two of the high impact practices from Forces for Good that are relevant to the organization that you work in now or an organization where you have previously worked. If you do not have a public service organization to write about, use the one you are working on for your team project. Analyze and describe how if at all these practices are cultivated in your organization. What would it take to further your organization’s use of these practices? We will discuss your memos in small groups during class, so please bring your memo in addition to emailing it to your professor in advance of class.

Session 4: October 2, 2012
Reading the Environment & Assessing your Organization Part I
Note: For this session the two sections will be meeting as one class

Readings:

Application and Assignment:
Live Case Study
Session 5: October 9, 2012
Reading the Environment & Assessing your Organization Part II

Readings:

Application and Assignment:
Conduct a SWOT analysis of the organization that you work in now or an organization where you have previously worked. If you do not have a public service organization to write about, use the one you are working on for your team project. Please bring a copy of your SWOT. We will share our analysis in small groups during class.

Fall Break / No Class: October 16, 2012

Session 6: October 23, 2012
Strategic and Business Planning – Part 1

Deadline 2: Strategic Assessment (Sections I – IV) – Due by Session 6, Tuesday, October 16

Readings:
- Pietersen, Willie, Strategic Learning, Chapter 5 and pages 117-119. (available on blackboard as two separate documents)

Application:
There is no preparation required for this week’s application work, which will happen in class.

Session 7: October 30, 2012
Strategic and Business Planning – Part 2
Note: For this session the two sections will be meeting as one class

Readings:
- Case materials on guest speaker’s organization

Application and Assignment:
Live Case Study:
Mindy Tarlow, CEO, Center for Employment Opportunities (TBC)
The Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) is dedicated to providing immediate, effective and comprehensive employment services to men and women with recent criminal convictions. For Ms. Tarlow’s bio please refer to blackboard.
**Session 8: November 6, 2012**

**Cultivating Collective Leadership Part 1**

**Readings:**
- CLASSIC: Wheatley, Margaret J. *Goodbye Command and Control*. Leader to Leader, July 1997. (available on blackboard)

**Application and Assignment:**
Bring in a 3-5 page memo you have drafted to the CEO of your organization or an organization where you have worked previously, recommending moving to a more distributed leadership model. What are the benefits and what are the obstacles? How can it be achieved? Share the memos in trios and suggest refinements. Small groups will be asked to report out on the top three strategies discussed for generating more distributed leadership.

**Session 9: November 13, 2012**

**Cultivating Collective Leadership Part 2**

*Note: For this session the two sections will be meeting as one class*

**Readings:**
- Beyond Diversity: Working Across Differences for Organizational Change, Center for Gender in Organizations, June 2004. (available on blackboard)

**Application and Assignment:**
Live Case Study

**Session 10: November 20, 2012**

**Leading Change Part 1: Change Strategies**

*Note: For this session the two sections will be meeting as one class*

**Readings:**

**Application and Assignment:**
Live Case Study
Session 11: November 27, 2012
Leading Change Part 2: Change Strategies continued

Readings:
- Briefing Notes: *The Campaign Approach to Strategic Change, Strategies for Listening in to an Institution, and Sweeping People into a Campaign for Strategic Change*. CFAR, 1999. (available on blackboard) Note: These are three brief documents.
- Matta, Nadim and Peter Morgan, *Local Empowerment through Rapid Results*, in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Summer 2011. (available on blackboard) NOTE: Please also visit [www.rapidresults.org](http://www.rapidresults.org) and review their approach.

Application:
We will work in small groups to discuss how the theories from the readings this week will apply to the team project.
Over the next three weeks, post an article or other submission on blackboard that speaks to how you think about nourishing and sustaining your capacity to grow and learn and have an impact.

Session 12: December 4, 2012
Leading Change Part 3: Public Sector Innovation
Note: For this session the two sections will be meeting as one class

Readings:
- Live case materials TBD

Application and Assignment:
Live Case Study

Session 13: December 11, 2012
How do you know if you are making progress; how do you know if your organization is making progress

Deadline 3: Draft Final Case Analysis (Sections I – VII) – Due by Session 13, Tuesday, December 11

The final session will synthesize all the key ideas from the course. We will return to your learning agenda, and see how much progress you have made. We will create action plans for future growth.

Reading
Application and Assignment
Bring in a one-pager synthesizing a few key ideas from this course that have been meaningful for you and will influence your work. We will use this to better understand what you have learned from the course and as input to our work on continuously improving this course in future semesters.
Send your draft paper to two classmates (trios will be assigned the week prior) and review their drafts in advance of the session. Be prepared to receive and offer feedback in small group consultations. What points are strongest? Where does the team’s thinking need to deepened and refined?

**Final Case Analysis Due by December 21**