Program: Nonprofit Leadership and Management, MA  
Institution: University of San Diego – School of Leadership and Education Sciences  

Executive Summary

Exit Survey Overview

The School of Leadership and Education Sciences (SOLES) - Office of Assessment administers the Exit Survey to graduating students at the University of San Diego (USD) annually. The Exit Survey affords students the opportunity to reflect on their program experiences and to provide valuable feedback utilized for program review. This report is specific to the results for the Nonprofit Leadership and Management, MA Program for 2014, with 2013 data provided for comparison purposes. General survey items address students’ satisfaction with courses, faculty, advisors, intellectual climate, support services, and communication. Graduating students are also provided with program specific survey items relating to nonprofit management skills and knowledge.

Rating Scale

A five-point rating scale was used in this survey. The goal is to have response ratings in the four to five range, where 5 is Strongly Agree and 4 is Agree.

Response Rate

Table 1 shows the percent of USD-Nonprofit Leadership and Management, MA graduating students who responded to the Exit Survey in 2014, with 2013 data provided for comparison purposes. Thirteen of the twenty graduating students responded to the Exit Survey in 2014 and fifteen of the twenty-one students responded in 2013; yielding response rates of 65% and 71% respectively.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Completion Year</th>
<th>Total Number of Nonprofit Leadership and Management, MA Graduates*</th>
<th>Total Number of Nonprofit Leadership and Management, MA Respondents</th>
<th>Exit Survey Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Refers to the number of graduates for which correct email addresses were obtained.
Summary of Findings

Graduating students were asked to rate aspects of the Nonprofit Leadership and Management, MA Program in seven areas: faculty, advisors, intellectual climate, program support and communication, university support, enhanced management skills and knowledge, and program satisfaction. All of the 2014 mean ratings were in the desired four to five range (using a 5 point scale). All 2014 Cronbach’s alpha values were in the .78 to .93 range, suggesting relatively high internal consistency of survey item responses. (Note that a reliability coefficient of .70 or higher is considered “acceptable” in most social science research situations.) Figure 1 shows the comparison of 2014 means with 2013 means. These ratings indicate high levels of student satisfaction with the Nonprofit Leadership and Management, MA Program at the University of San Diego.

![2014 and 2013 Graduate Students’ Exit Survey Ratings of the Nonprofit Leadership and Management, MA Program (N=15 in 2013 and N=13 in 2014)](image-url)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean Faculty Rating</th>
<th>Mean Advisor Rating</th>
<th>Mean Intellectual Climate Rating</th>
<th>Mean Program Support and Communication Rating</th>
<th>Mean University Support Rating</th>
<th>Mean Rating of Management Skills and Knowledge*</th>
<th>Mean Satisfaction of Overall Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Factors Most Important to Overall Satisfaction with the Nonprofit Leadership and Management, MA Program

When Nonprofit Leadership and Management, MA graduating students were asked which factors were most important in their overall satisfaction with the Nonprofit Leadership and Management, MA Program, they cited professors, rich course content and practical experiences, cohort networking, applied projects, theory to practice, high ethical and academic standards, diverse network of nonprofit practitioners, library of research, and network of alumni as contributing to their overall satisfaction. A sample of graduating students’ comments regarding overall satisfaction is shown in Table 2 and in Table A13 in the Appendix of the full report.

Student Suggestions for Improving the Nonprofit Leadership and Management, MA Program

When Nonprofit Leadership and Management, MA graduating students were asked for suggestions for improving the Nonprofit Leadership and Management, MA Program, they listed: careful monitoring of new professors, adjustments to course levels and offerings, web-friendly access to portfolio guidelines and program documents, additional assistance with job searches, increased clarity of project expectations, and an exploration of new areas for international studies. A sample of graduating students’ comments is shown in Table 3 and in Table A14 in the Appendix of the full report.

When Nonprofit Leadership and Management, MA graduating students were asked to share what particular skills, areas, or topics not covered - but should be in the Nonprofit Leadership and Management, MA Program, they listed: religious nonprofits and community involvement, human resources and volunteer management, project and facilities management, financial management, more leadership theories, how to start a nonprofit, social media marketing, time management and organization for executives, and technology.

Fulfillment of Program Goals
Exit survey data from Nonprofit Leadership and Management, MA graduating students serve as evidence of program goal fulfillment.

✓ Provide existing and aspiring nonprofit practitioners with cutting-edge leadership theories and state-of-the-art management tools that can be used to create high-performing organizations.
✓ Grant students the opportunity to learn new ways of conceptualizing their work through their studies with noted faculty from the School of Leadership and Education Sciences, as well as from prominent practitioners who teach in our program.
✓ Offer courses that include consulting projects with locally-based nonprofits and foundations where concepts learned in the classroom come to life.
Table 2

Sample of Students' Comments Relating to Factors Most Important to Overall Satisfaction with the Nonprofit Leadership and Management, MA Program

The course content was rich and challenging, yet appropriate. The program gave me the tools that were able to connect my head to my heart (theory to practice) and give me a greater roadmap on how to create change.

Applied projects and interaction with various client nonprofit organizations.

It provided a well-rounded education, personally, professionally, and of the nonprofit sector. The things taught were practical and useful.

Cohort/networking, in class discussions with cohort, group projects/work, presentations and papers.

Quality of education and breath of courses.

Professors and course content.

Applied projects working with nonprofit organizations; Student lead presentations; Network of alumni; Library of research available.

The high ethical and academic standards of USD and the program. The support, care and leadership that Pat Libby provides to the program and that is reflected in all the faculty. I feel very privileged and grateful at being part of such a professional, ethical and caring community of professionals.

I would highly recommend this program to others. I greatly enjoyed having the leadership theories threaded throughout the program-- I would have liked to have even more leadership courses during the program. The opportunities to network with people from different fields in the nonprofit sector added a tremendous amount to my learning. Some courses included more dialogue amongst the professor and classmates, which always added another dimension to the experience and learning. The professors held extremely high expectations of the groups, and I learned a great deal from their experience.

I was most engaged and satisfied when the course professor(s) could effectively teach theory and identify meaningful opportunities for the students to apply the theory. Additionally, it was helpful when the professor(s) was confident in his/her subject matter and was charismatic in his/her delivery approach. This combination created a stronger learning environment that "stuck" with me over time.

Variety of course offerings, professors with theoretical savvy and significant practical experience and expertise, applied projects and the high level of responsibility granted for producing professional products, gaining a diverse network of fellow nonprofit practitioners (both peers and clients), and the general approach to leadership theory.
Table 3

Sample of Students' Suggestions for Improving the Nonprofit Leadership and Management, MA Program

More help with job searching.

More clarity on program and applied project expectations.

Explore new areas for international studies; Many classes highly reliant on PowerPoint lecture, I would ask for a more varied approach.

More experienced professors. There were a few teachers who were not very good, although what they taught made up for the difference. The more effective teachers drove better discussions rather than long lectures.

The public speaking course and collaboration course should be a requirement for the program - there should be two types of finance and fundraising courses: basic / advanced - the legal course should be a semester long.

Since the cohorts are so diverse and at so many different levels in their career, some courses were too basic for some or too difficult for others. While this does give balance to the class and allow some to assist others, some courses (e.g. finance) should be split into a basic and advanced so that students can get what they need out of the class.

Improving the finance course or perhaps add two courses in financial management. While I recognize that this is not a MBA program, nonprofits are businesses and like for-profits must identify opportunities for cost savings, overall efficiency improvements, and innovation.

Not much! It's so evident that so much care has been taken to make this a well-rounded, accessible, relevant program. A few small suggestions I have: - Make the portfolio guidelines and other program documents easier to find on the nonprofit program website. Right now, it is embedded in the general SOLES forms and it was very difficult for me to figure out where these crucial documents are kept. - The board class zips by and seems too short for all the foundational material it covers and to do a solid project. I would recommend lengthening it to fit across the semester and up it to 3 units. - Several electives I signed up for didn't fill, which created the stress of rearranging my schedule at the last minute. Is there a way to still move forward with the courses anyway? Or offer them less so that they will have a better chance of filling? - More marketing in the Resource Development class, please!

The quality of instruction in the financial management course & the resource development and marketing course were very poor, and unfortunately, these are two critical courses... especially for anyone in a leadership position in the nonprofit field. I think that the program would be stronger if new professors were visited by the program director (and were also required to observe other strong professors) to get feedback on their teaching strategies and be more reflective in their own teaching. Strictly using a lecture format is not a strong way to teach. I think that the program also needs to find a better way of holding group members accountable for the work.