An Open Letter to Nonprofit Organizations Employing Graduate Students in USD’s Nonprofit Leadership & Management Program

Dear Employer:

A staff person from your organization is applying for admittance as a graduate student in USD’s Nonprofit Leadership & Management Program.

If this individual is accepted and enrolls in our program, your organization has the opportunity to benefit greatly from this affiliation with us. In exchange we ask you to be supportive of your employee throughout his or her academic career. This letter briefly describes the main advantages to your organization and the ways in which you can be helpful to an employee who is enrolled in the program.

The greatest benefit to your organization is that it is eligible to be the recipient of pro bono products (worth thousands of dollars) that each student must produce in order to meet the degree requirements. As a “host” organization, your employee may complete 2/3 of these products for your organization. We would like you to be aware of the possibilities so that you can advise your staff which of these products would be most beneficial to your organization. They include but are not limited to the following:

- Governance Project – creating or re-writing a governance document such as by-laws, personnel policies, volunteer manual, employee evaluation form.
- Ethics and Accountability Audit – using a national set of evaluation standards.
- Board Manual or Board Recruitment Plan
- Fundraising Plan for a Nonprofit Organization
- Marketing Plan for a Nonprofit Organization
- Research Pertaining to a Strategic Planning Process including items such as trend analysis, internal management audit, constituent surveys, focus groups, benchmarking performance against similar organizations, etc.
- Advocacy Campaign – creating a legislative or advocacy campaign at the city, county or state level
- Researched-based nonprofit program proposal with social marketing plan and evaluation component built into the program design.
- Capital Campaign Plan
- Community Organizing Strategy
As you may have discerned, this degree program is focused on practice. The vast majority of our students are professionals who work in mid-to-senior level administrative roles in the nonprofit sector. As such they have significant work responsibilities in addition to the academic rigors of this program. The lion share of our courses are offered during evening and weekend hours which do not interfere with a regular work schedule.

Given all that, we ask you to understand that your employee may need to:

- Leave work on occasion to work on a product assignment for another nonprofit organization, attend an early class, or a special meeting.
- Be reassigned from committee assignments that require evening commitments.
- Have access to you and/or organizational documents in a timely manner pertaining to the creation of a work product for your agency. For example, a project involving the editing of by-laws would require access to your existing by-laws, relevant board members, your input and if possible, access to legal counsel.

USD has made a significant commitment to underwrite tuition costs for nonprofit practitioners who are enrolled in the program. The University not only discounts the tuition rate considerably, we also raise funds that allow us to provide each practitioner with a substantial scholarship. If possible, we also ask employers to contribute to the cost of the degree for their employees. We do so because we believe the contributions each employee makes to his/her nonprofit are well worth your investment.

We have drafted the enclosed Memorandum of Understanding between employers and their student-employees to help you and your employee reach a mutual understanding about your respective commitments.

I would be happy to answer any questions you have regarding the USD Nonprofit Leadership & Management Program and the opportunities it affords your organization. Please contact me at (619) 282-8875 or at plibby@sandiego.edu. You can also visit our web site at www.sandiego.edu/nonprofit to learn more about us.

Sincerely,

Pat Libby
Director, Institute for Nonprofit Education and Research
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
BETWEEN GRADUATE STUDENT AND HOST NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

I, ___________________________________, the ___________________________ of
    Name       Title

________________________________________________, a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization,
Name of Organization
do hereby pledge to provide the following type of support for ___________________________
    Name of student

Check all that apply:

☐ Financial support to help underwrite tuition costs in the amount of $________.
☐ The flexibility to leave work early on occasion to attend classes, meetings or to undertake
  a product assignment for another nonprofit organization.
☐ Time off from work so that your employee can work on project assignments.
☐ The flexibility to release said individual from evening work commitments.
☐ Appropriate access to organizational documents and personnel for purposes of school-
  related work products that will benefit this organization.

Other items you agree to:

Attention: Applicants to USD’s Nonprofit Leadership & Management Program who
are employed by (or otherwise act as employees of) 501 (c) (3) corporations.
Dear Prospective Student:

Thank you for your interest in the Nonprofit Leadership & Management Program. Should you be accepted, an important part of your learning experience will be a series of practice projects that you will undertake with nonprofit organizations throughout the course of your studies. Towards the end of your degree, you will submit several of those projects as part of a portfolio that demonstrates your proficiency in a number of areas. If you are affiliated with a 501 (c) (3) organization, you may elect to do two thirds of those projects for your organization. We believe your learning experience will be optimized if your employer understands the potential impact of this work on your organization, the benefits to it, and the support that you will need as you go through the program.

Accordingly, we have prepared the attached materials to help facilitate your employer’s understanding of our program. You may simply give the “Open Letter” to your employer or use it as a jumping off point for a discussion about your application. If you work for a 501(c) (3) corporation, we require that you submit the enclosed Memorandum of Understanding with your application.

Should you have any questions about the program or the application process, please contact me at (619) 282-8875 or pllibby@sandiego.edu.

Sincerely,

Pat Libby
Director