Nonprofit Education Now Gives 360-Degree View

By Richard T. Lee

Enrollment in nonprofit education, whether advanced degrees, certificate programs, or multi-day intensives, is booming. In at least one case, participation has doubled during the past four years.

Participant demographics also are changing. Those seeking nonprofit operational education are getting younger and are seeking knowledge earlier in their careers.

In 2016, fundraising certification organization CFRE International, in Alexandria, Va., reduced the amount of time candidates had to be in paid fundraising positions from five years to three. During that time, the number of certificants has grown by 20 percent.

The rigor of the testing remains the same. But Millennial fundraisers—those born roughly between 1982 and 2000—are more likely to embrace self-guided learning than their predecessors.

“We felt [reducing the tenure requirement] was appropriate because of the growth in available resources for learning best practices in fundraising, whether traditional [means] such as going to conferences or professional associations, or other providers of continuing education or academic study of the nonprofit sector,” said CFRE President and CEO Lisa E. Aldrich.

“In the past, fundraising was not necessarily a first profession,” Aldrich added. “A lot of people ended up going into fundraising because they were working for nonprofits on the program side, and they were drawn into fundraising.”

The rise of online fundraising has made revenue generation more attractive to these “Digital Natives,” as has the trend toward service learning, which incorporates volunteer efforts into academic settings.

The basic tenets of fundraising have not changed, however, and neither has a relative weakness among certificate seekers. While certificants tend to do well across the six domains CFRE tests, if there is a lag it is usually in donor research. These functions have become increasingly sophisticated within nonprofits, and are more likely to be self-contained units. Someone coming up through a nonprofit’s ranks might not need to have in-depth exposure to...Continued on page 4

COVID-19 Pushes Schooling For Professional Development

By Mark Hine

The number of people working from home these days has exploded since social distancing efforts began in March to stem the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). Videoconferencing has taken on a more prominent role at offices around the country, with no shortage of “ Brady Bunch”-spun co-workers log in from their laptops.

Telecommuting is slowly becoming more common throughout the country and nonprofits have been no exception. Almost a dozen employees of St. Baldrick’s Foundation work from home all year long, in different regions of the country, and a few more telecommute on a part-time basis, according to CEO Kathleen Bready.

The Monrovia, Calif.-based charity is the second-largest funder of childhood cancer research behind only the federal government. “Our service is that we raise money to make grants to research institutions and all hospitals in the country that treat kids with cancer,” Bready said. “We don’t have vulnerable populations coming to the office to receive chemotherapy,” she said, adding that it’s not site specific or dependent on a particular...Continued on page 5

Coronavirus Inflicts Giving Managers forced to find new revenue

By Brian C. Wilson

Staff members at Girls on the Run in Charlotte, N.C., had to be quick— with their feet and brains when the coronavirus hit and shut almost everything down.

“We had to adjust quickly in many ways,” said Theresa Miller, chief engagement officer for Girls on the Run, which has 280 chapters nationwide. “We’re an in-person, after-school program. We created at-home programming, which we never had before because our focus had been on getting girls together and connecting in a physical space. We pulled together younger staff members who know how to use YouTube and make videos submitted from coaches.”

Sydney Mark shifted from being the Girls on the Run program coordinator to creating and editing eight video lessons in four weeks, with more to come. “I’ve learned new skills [and] strengthened old ones... as we pivot to meet the current demands,” she said.

Megan Stout, normally the organization’s graphic designer, translated the videos and other new, at-home materials into Spanish. “It was necessary to quickly shift gears and work on the immediate needs [for] our Spanish-speaking girls...Continued on page 9
If there is no trust in the nonprofit sector, people will not give and give generously.

– Eva E. Aldrich

and accounting, commitment to becoming certified and belonging to professional associations, that include codes of ethics. All those are items fundraising has embraced to some degree, but not as much as other professions. These are going to be important in order to make certain fundraising is strong and respected.”

Movin’ On Up

The impulse toward certificates, degrees and other recognitions of knowledge and competence might be partly demand-driven, especially for second-level nonprofit positions. “If you see job postings, nonprofits might not require a masters, but they prefer them,” according to Sylvia de Haas-Phillips, director and assistant professor, at Bay Path University in Longmeadow, Mass. “I see that in both the fundraising and nonprofit (management) index.”

Like Aldrich, de Haas-Phillips has seen increasing numbers of students in their late 20s and early 30s, and relatively fewer in their 40s, than in years past. They are also getting more diverse, as more Latinos and African-Americans have been enrolling.

“We are getting younger students with less field experience, but with the desire to learn more about the field,” de Haas-Phillips said. “It’s not that their educational background is somehow lacking, but they might not have access or experience in a particular area.”

She continued, “We have a whole course on board governance. A person who is entry to midlevel is not going to be exposed to the board, so the student might not have the opportunity to apply some of those concepts and tools we are using.”

Bay Path professors have addressed this by integrating additional case studies into more of their classes to simulate disciplines beyond their professional responsibilities.

Curriculum Changes

According to de Haas-Phillips, upper-level nonprofit management is increasingly about fundraising, and fundraising has moved far beyond being driven by grant writing. Bay Path still has a grant writing program, but a year and a half ago administrators strengthened the ties between two of its offerings.

“We now enable students to both a degree in nonprofit management and certificate in fund-raising, so they can have credentials in both areas, which will build their resume and their marketability,” de Haas-Phillips said. Similarly, students primarily studying fundraising can earn a certificate in nonprofit management and governance.

This change was implemented during the fall 2019 session. During fall 2020, Bay Path will modify its strategic fundraising degree to include a greater emphasis on nonprofit finances, as well as research development departments. Many of the most recent curriculum changes at Bay Path have been in the fundraising areas. One course in understanding nonprofit finance, and another in managing a fundraising department, had been deleted.

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– Sylvia de Haas-Phillips

impetus started earlier, with the financial crisis of 2008.

“The financial crisis forced nonprofits to think strategically about how they fund their organizations and what their revenue mix is,” explained Jennifer Paul, director, Nonprofit Executive Programs at Kellogg. “Leaders have become more sophisticated, thinking ‘if 70 percent of my income is coming from the government, perhaps I need to think about building my individual donor base. How am I going to do that?’”

Part of the answer has been deepening ties between marketing-related offerings and fundraising. “Marketing can be seen as a little silly, like you are manipulating folks into doing something, but when it is tied to fundraising people understand a little better,” Paul said. “Now we have a specific program on branding your organization, and we get 40 to 50 nonprofit leaders in it every year. We don’t talk about fundraising as all. It is purely about building your brand for the organization.”

Similar to Bay Path, Kellogg School administrators have added programming geared toward top executive-level concerns, such as human resources, major gift department staffing and other management issues.

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