Voluntary Sector Studies Network

LUTHER COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF REGINA

VSSN Certificate Curriculum Survey
Results and Priorities

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VSSN
VOLUNTARY SECTOR STUDIES NETWORK
LUTHER COLLEGE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF REGINA

Table of Contents

SUMMARY

Introduction

This report summarizes results from the October 2015 VSSN survey of the network of organizations and individuals that comprise our e-list to determine the priority of possible courses for the proposed new certificate. As well, the survey asked network participants to provide feedback on the preferred name for the proposed certificate.

Methods

An online survey was distributed to the VSSN network with a list of 14 possible courses for the new certificate. These courses were identified from previous discussions in the VSSN Steering Group, Koffee Klatches, and focus groups. Each respondent was to choose their top 5 courses, provide feedback on their respective top picks, and include a proposed name for the new certificate. Data were entered and analyzed in Excel spreadsheet, and respondent comments were analyzed thematically to determine overarching themes.

Results

The top 5 courses are 1) Foundations of the Nonprofit Sector; 2) Leading and Managing Organizations; 3) Managing Human Resources; 4) Communications and Strategic Relationship Building; and 5) Program Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation.

Based on the network comments, the following themes to guide the proposed certification construction and delivery emerged:
- integrate the core competencies in all courses (knowledge competencies; specific skill capabilities/applications; methods capacities; personal capabilities; cross-cultural, interpersonal and communications capabilities; cognitive and critical thinking capabilities; generic skills);
- ensure that "training on cultural competency and ... a deep respect and understanding for all walks of life is fundamental to the certificate. To successfully serve the populations of Saskatchewan and Canada, a deep and abiding understanding of First Nations history, sociology, spirituality and treaty rights is necessary as well as understanding the importance of incorporating cultural diversity and the benefits of diverse perspectives into all courses" (survey respondent);
- ensure each course has experiential learning opportunities (e.g., real time and real world assignments, practicums, etc.); and
- find a balance in teaching about the voluntary and business philosophies of the sector.

Based on these survey results and further discussion in the VSSN Steering Group, the name of the proposed certificate is Nonprofit Sector Leadership & Innovation (NSLI).

Conclusions

- There was consistency among the respondents in ranking the top courses.

- Important themes on delivery and general course content emerged, e.g. the critical importance of including Aboriginal perspectives and content in all courses.

- Results from our survey indicate the importance of implementing a certificate for undergraduate students as well as people working in the sector who want to advance their knowledge and receive the certificate credential. With these enhancements, individuals as well as whole communities benefit.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes results from the October 2015 VSSN survey of the network of organizations and individuals that comprise our e-list to determine the priority of possible courses for the new certificate. As well, the survey asked network participants to provide feedback on the preferred name for the certificate. This survey was developed based on outcomes from public meetings, koffee klatches, focus groups, pan-Canadian research on courses offered at post-secondary education institutions, and a survey of university students, all undertaken this past year. This new certificate is informed by the VSSN network feedback. The certificate will consist of 4 required courses and 1 elective. The target audiences for the certificate program are undergraduate students who would like to be able to work in the voluntary/nonprofit sector and people working in the sector who want to advance their knowledge and receive the certificate credential.

2. METHODS

An online survey was distributed to the VSSN network with a list of 14 possible courses for the new certificate. These courses were identified from previous discussions in the VSSN Steering Group, Koffee Klatches, and focus groups. Each respondent was to choose their top 5 courses, provide feedback on their respective top picks, and include a proposed name for the new certificate. Data were entered and analyzed in Excel spreadsheet and a weighted sum was calculated to rank each question. For example: Q1 weighted sum = [(# of people who ranked course 1 x 5) + (# of people who ranked course 2 x 4) + (# of people who ranked course 3 x 3) + (# of people who ranked course 4 x 2) + (# of people who ranked course 5 x 1)]. Respondent comments were then thematically analyzed to determine overarching themes. **Please find the questions to this network survey in Appendix A.**

3. DEMOGRAPHICS

A total of **59** respondents completed the survey.

**3.1 Respondent demographics included:**
- Paid staff of a nonprofit/voluntary organization **62.5%**
- Volunteer with an organization **42.86%**
- Student **10.71%**
- Multiple roles in more than two organizations **8.93%**
- Other (staff at a hospital, past director of a NPO, civil servant, program coordinator for CBO, government employee, university staff) **12.5%**

Figure 1: Respondent demographics
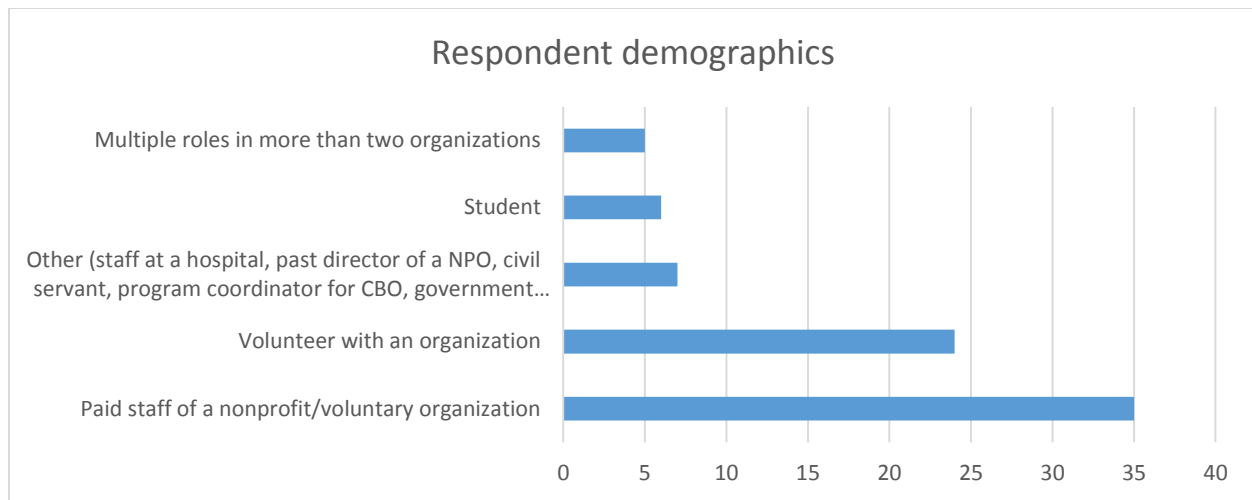
3.2 Sector respondent works/volunteers most frequently in:
- Arts & culture **30.36%**
- University & research **30.36%**
- Health **25%**
- Social Services **25%**
- Sports & recreation **19.64%**
- Religion **17.86%**
- Education & research **14.29%**
- Grant-making, fundraising, volunteerism **14.29%**
- Environment **12.5%**
- Business & professional associations/unions **7.14%**
- Hospitals **7.14%**
- Development & housing **5.36%**
- Law, advocacy & politics **3.57%**
- International development **1.79%**

Figure 2: Sector respondent works/volunteers in

Sector respondent works/volunteers in
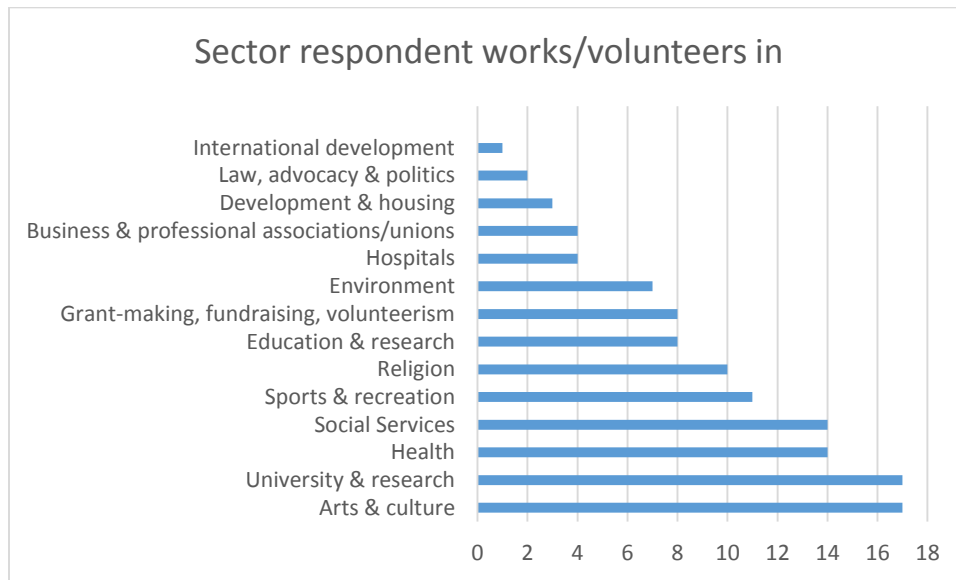
3.3 City/town/community respondent nonprofit organization is located:
Figure 3: Location of respondent's nonprofit organization

Location of Respondent nonprofit organization
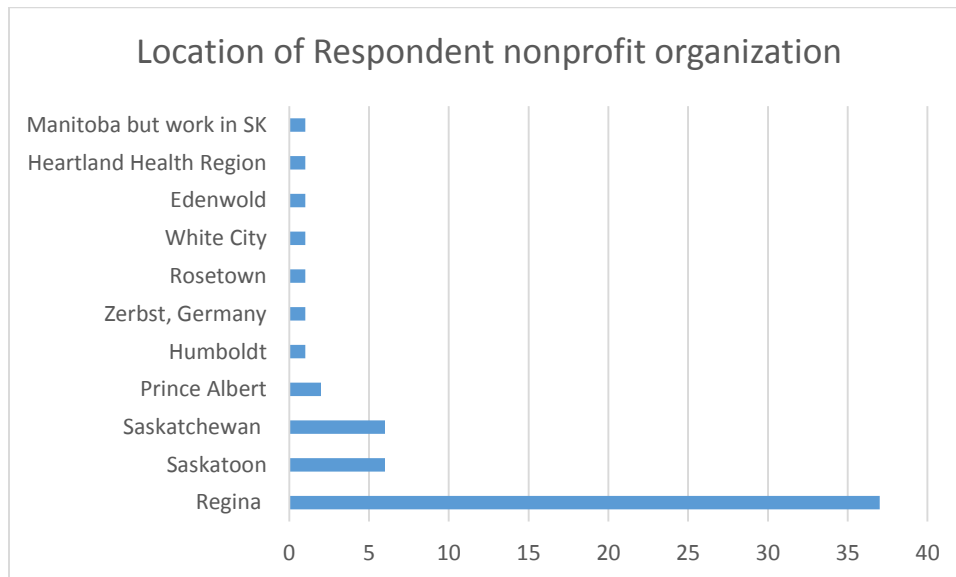
3.4 Respondent organization's approximate annual revenue

- $29,999 or less **9.09%**
- $30,000 - $99,999 **12.73%**
- $100,000 - $249,999 **1.82%**
- $250,000 - $499,999 **5.45%**
- $500,000 or more **40%**
- Don't know **30.91%**

Figure 4: Respondent organization's approximate annual revenue
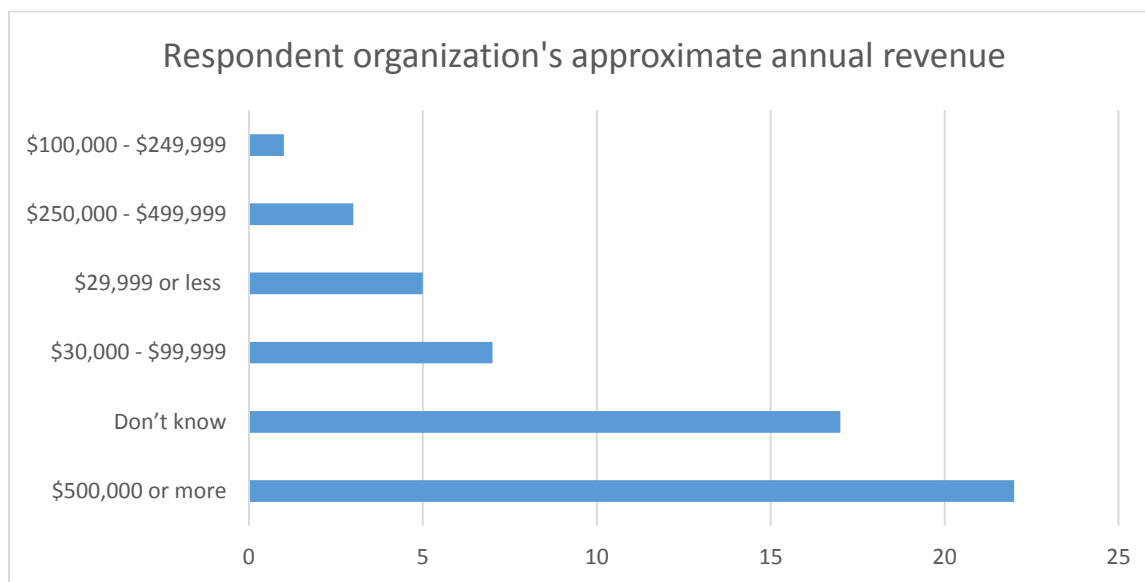
3.5 Length of time respondent worked/volunteered in the nonprofit sector
- Less than 1 year **5.45%**
- 1 to 3 years **9.09%**
- 4 to 6 years **18.18%**
- 7 to 9 years **14.55%**
- 10 years or more **52.73%**

Figure 5: Length of time respondent worked/volunteered in the nonprofit sector
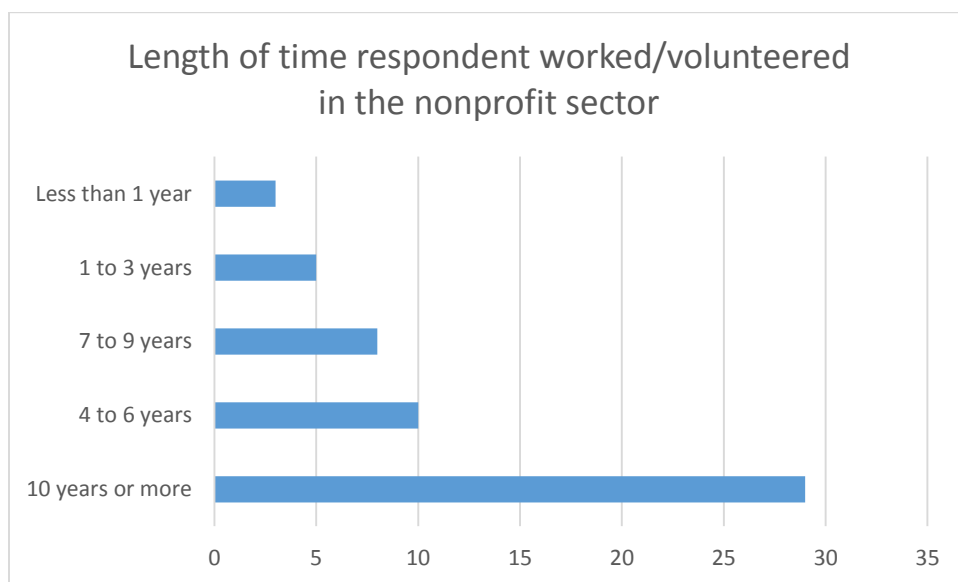
4. RESULTS

4.1 Course ranking

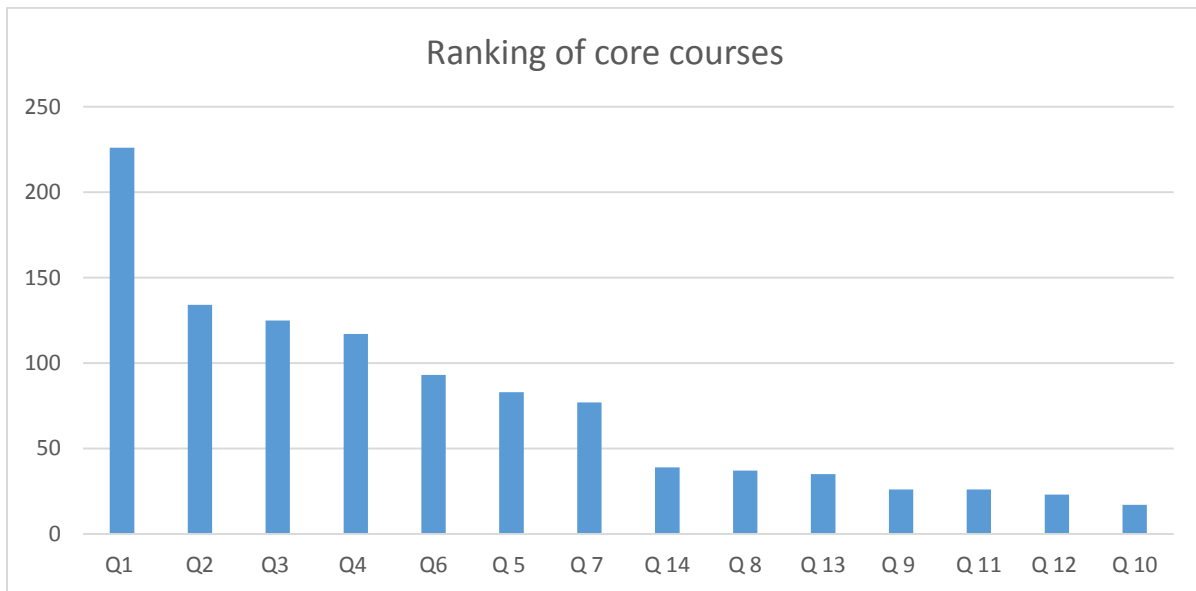Based on the network feedback, the top 5 courses are 1) Foundations of the Nonprofit Sector; 2) Leading and Managing Organizations; 3) Managing Human Resources; 4) Communications and Strategic Relationship Building; and 5) Program Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation.

Figure 6: Ranking of core courses

Rank	Course
1	Q1 Foundations of Nonprofit Sector
2	Q2 Leading and Managing Organizations
3	Q3 Managing Human Resources
4	Q4 Communications and Strategic Relationship Building
5	Q6 Program Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation
6	Q5 Community Development and Advocacy for Change
7	Q7 Financial Management, Philantropy and Revenue Source Innovations
8	Q14 Intro to Business
9	Q8 Governance and Legal Issues in Third Sector Organizations
10	Q13 Intro to Organizational Behaviour
11	Q9 Contemporary Issues
12	Q11The Sociology of Indg Peoples in Canada
13	Q12 People, Power and Politics: An Introduction
14	Q10 NGO's Crossing Borders

4.2 Suggestions regarding all the courses (NOTE: These are not ranked in any way)

Based on the network comments, the following themes emerged:

- integrate the core competencies in all courses (knowledge competencies; specific skill capabilities/applications; methods capacities; personal capabilities; cross-cultural, interpersonal and communications capabilities; cognitive and critical thinking capabilities; generic skills);
- ensure that "training on cultural competency and ... a deep respect and understanding for all walks of life is fundamental to the certificate. To successfully serve the populations of Saskatchewan and Canada, a deep and abiding understanding of First Nations history, sociology, spirituality and treaty rights is necessary as well as understanding the importance of incorporating cultural diversity and the benefits of diverse perspectives into all courses" (survey respondent);
- ensure each course has experiential learning opportunities (e.g., real time and real world assignments, practicums, etc.); and
- find a balance in teaching about the voluntary and business philosophies of the sector.

4.3 Certificate name

There were 40 suggested certificate names and included key themes around "nonprofit" and "voluntary." Based on survey results and feedback from the VSSN Steering Group, the decided name of the certificate is **Nonprofit Sector Leadership & Innovation (NSLI)**.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the survey results, a number of courses were ranked highly and include:

1. Foundations of Nonprofit Sector
2. Leading and Managing Organizations
3. Managing Human Resources
4. Communications and Strategic Relationship Building
5. Program Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

Important delivery and general course content themes emerged, including integrating the core competencies, ensuring cultural competency and Aboriginal content, ensuring experiential learning opportunities, and balancing teaching about the voluntary and business philosophies of the sector.

A number of names for the proposed certificate were suggested by survey respondents. The VSSN Steering Group considered all of these suggestions and decided that the name of the proposed new certificate will be Nonprofit Sector Leadership and Innovation (NSLI) (subject to University of Regina approval).

Results from our survey indicate the importance of implementing a certificate for undergraduate students as well as people working in the sector who want to advance their knowledge and receive the certificate credential. With these enhancements, individuals as well as whole communities benefit.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Survey for VSSN network

Survey: Voluntary Sector Studies Network course priorities for new certificate

Please complete this survey before October 10, 2015

INTRODUCTION

After a very busy first year at the Voluntary Sector Studies Network (www.luthercollege.edu/vssn) and based on the participation of many of you at our community meetings, we have created a draft list of proposed courses for the new certificate at Luther College at the University of Regina. Given your employment and/or volunteer work in the nonprofit/voluntary sector, we would appreciate you sharing your insights in two main areas:
- Rank ordering the draft list of courses
- Suggest a name for the new undergraduate certificate

A third section is simply a series of questions about you as a respondent so that we get a sense of who participated in this survey.

1. RANK ORDER YOUR TOP 5 COURSE CHOICES

Below, you will find descriptions to 14 proposed courses that could be offered in this new certificate. Please rank order the top 5 courses that you believe all students should take in order to graduate with this new certificate. The 5 courses you choose should reflect the skills and knowledge base that you believe students who graduate with this certificate should have.

To rank order the list of courses below, place a number from 1 (1 being most important) to 5 (5 being least important) in the boxes beside the 5 courses that you think all students should be required to take. Please note, a rank of 1 is considered the most important course. Please leave all other courses blank.

Please note that all of these courses will have real-world, experiential and problem-based learning components.

Rank #	Foundations of the Nonprofit Sector – Proposed as the course that all students are required to take before other courses. It is an introduction to the nonprofit/voluntary sector including its unique characteristics and central philosophy/values, volunteerism and philanthropy, scope and size, history, types of organizations, roles in society, relationships with governments and the business sector, economic contributions, ethical challenges and current critical issues and debates. It focuses on Saskatchewan specifically and Canada generally. This sector is often invisible yet it contributes substantially to our quality of life, economy and democracy.

Rank #

Leading and Managing Organizations – This course introduces students to management and leadership principles and practices in an era of constant change. Of particular importance are different organizational types (e.g., registered charities, registered nonprofits, etc.), constitutions and by-laws governance models, decision-making models, strategic planning, ongoing organizational capacity building and learning, leadership styles, change and sustainability, and partnership/alliance types with other nonprofits, governments and the business sector (e.g., P3s), an exploration of the roles of boards of directors in nonprofits including fiduciary duty, liability and risk management as well as regulatory/legal requirements are presented and consideration of the role of technology and open source software in organizational development is presented.

Rank #

Managing Human Resources - Human resources fundamentals and management for both paid staff and Volunteers is the focus of this course. Key areas of recruitment, screening, orientation/training, evaluation, retention, supervision, coaching/mentoring, position duties and descriptions, policies and procedures, records management, communication and recognition are examined. Of major importance is confidentiality, deep understanding of cultural diversity, basics of healthy human relationships, self care and self management, and conflict resolution. Current standards are presented (e.g., Council for Certification in Volunteer Administration and Volunteer Canada standards, labour codes, occupational health and safety codes, Human Rights, etc.)

Rank #

Communications and Strategic Relationship Building – This course focuses on communications with the general public, governments, other nonprofit organizations, the business community, media, funders and donors in order to build intentional relationships with the variety of stakeholders in a nonprofit organization's environment. Both theory and practice are integrated into the examination of the different types of relationships and accountabilities required of nonprofit organizations. Students will learn about the newer role of social media and the importance of a virtual/public presence, branding, key messages and time-sensitive response mechanisms.

Rank #

Community Development and Advocacy for Change – Both theoretical and practical knowledge and skills are the focus of this course. The focus is on community development and community organizing including how to network and work across organizations as well as engage community residents in order to achieve changes in public policies and programs as well as educate the public about societal problems. An examination of power structures, systems, government structures and processes, as well as change theories is undertaken. Students will learn to critically assess the context (e.g., political, social, economic, historical) within which all advocacy work unfolds and make informed choices about appropriate strategies and tactics for their nonprofit organization. Legal restrictions for charities/nonprofits are also explored.

Rank #

Program Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation – The main focus of this course it on how nonprofit organization staff and Volunteers must understand both the shifting external environment in which they operate as well as their internal environment. Thus, central course elements are mixed methods research approaches, external environment trend analysis and projections, internal organization database management technologies and analytic strategies, evaluation and decision-making models for program renewal, outcome and impact measurement and special projects management.

Rank #

Financial Management, Philanthropy and Revenue Source Innovations - This course offers a broad overview of organizational economics and philanthropy that focuses on diverse funding sources and formulas: governments, donors, corporate sponsorships, fundraising, social enterprises, etc. Nonprofits are different from for-profit businesses in that they do not have shareholder equity, thus their financial management is different. Students will be introduced to financial monitoring systems, the roles of different people in the nonprofit organization (e.g., treasurer, bookkeeper, or accountant), creating and monitoring annual budgets, internal and external reports and procedures, cost accounting methods, long range financial planning and building capacity for innovation.

Rank #

Governance and Legal Issues in Third Sector Organizations - This course is designed to investigate the legal issues and management of risk in nonprofit delivery systems. This course will provide a basic understanding of the governmental systems and governing bodies that influence the delivery of recreation services and legal issues students will likely encounter in their future professions.

Rank #

Contemporary Issues - This course examines topics of critical interest in the 21st Century: religious diversity, marginalization and extinction of cultures, social constructions of identity, consumer choices, sustainable livelihoods, and climate change. We will explore ideas about locating ourselves and developing agency in a changing and challenging world. Developing communication and research skills is a focus. Coordinated by one faculty member, this course draws on the expertise of instructional faculty from different disciplines.

Rank #

Non-Governmental Organizations Crossing Borders
Do non-governmental organizations make a difference? How do they interact with and alter the international state system? This course examines the activities and influence of transnational non-governmental organizations such as global struggles against colonialism and slavery; and campaigns for human rights, women's rights, indigenous rights and banning land mines.

Rank #	**The Sociology of Indigenous People in Canada** This course introduces students to the experience of Indigenous peoples in Canada from a sociological perspective. Employing historical and contemporary examples, students are introduced to policies and legislation shaping relationships between Indigenous peoples and other Canadians. Specific topics might include the neglect of Indigenous issues in Canadian sociological studies, applying social theory to the study of Indigenous issues, identity, Aboriginal and treaty rights, self-government, assimilation, land claims, health, education and justice.

Rank #	**People, Power and Politics: An Introduction** An introduction to the issues, concepts and institutions of contemporary politics in both Canadian and international contexts, inviting critical thinking on subjects such as power, citizenship, democracy, diversity, feminism and colonialism. It links these topics to current world political events and issues. The objectives of the course are to introduce concepts and approaches in political studies and to cultivate civic education.

Rank #	**Introduction to Organizational Behaviour** - This course introduces various concepts and tools that will assist you to understand individual and group behaviour, the structure and design of organizations, and how to improve organizational effectiveness. Topics include: roles of the manager, goals, environment, structure/design, motivation, leadership, individual and group decision making, team dynamics, and conflict.

Rank #	**Introduction to Business** - This course provides a broad introduction to business and management concepts. Functional areas – marketing, finance, accounting, entrepreneurship, operations management, human resources, strategy, and organizational behavior – are also introduced. Further, the course covers key processes and topics such as the Canadian business environment, environmental scanning, ethics and risk, and decision-making. The course introduces material seen in higher-level business courses.

2. COMMENTS ABOUT THIS LIST OF COURSES

Do you have any comments to share with us about this list of courses, your ranking of them or anything else we should know about the skills and knowledge bases that you believe should be required of students?

3. NAME THE NEW CERTIFICATE

Now that you've had a chance to think about and rank order the proposed courses, please tell us what you think we should name this new certificate. Your suggested title(s) should not be more than 4 or 5 words long and should appeal to undergraduate students as well as resonate with those who already work/volunteer in the sector. Please add your suggestions here and tell us why:

4. SHARE YOUR INFORMATION WITH US SO WE KNOW WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE SURVEY

Please complete the following section in order for us to get a better understand of who you are.

    a) Which sector do you work/volunteer most frequently in? Please check all that apply to you.

___ Arts & culture (e.g., heritage groups; visual & performing art centres)

___ Sports & recreation (e.g., community recreation centres; youth sport programs)

___ Education & research (e.g., research institutes)

___ Universities and colleges (e.g., educational institutions)

___ Health (e.g., health and wellbeing programs; mental health organizations)

___ Hospitals (e.g., health care services; clinics)

___ Social services (e.g., support agencies; emergency shelters)

___ Environment (e.g., wildlife protection centres; conservation associations)

___ Development & housing (e.g., housing associations; community development programs)

___ Law, advocacy & politics (e.g., advocacy organizations; legal services)

___ Grant-making, fundraising, voluntarism (e.g., foundations; volunteer bureaus)

___ International development (e.g., overseas relief agencies; human rights organizations)

___ Religion (e.g., faith communities)

___ Business & professional assoc/unions (e.g., health associations; labor unions)

    b) Are you a (please check all that apply to you)
        ___ paid staff of a nonprofit/voluntary organization
        ___ volunteer with an organization
        ___ multiple roles in more than 2 organizations
        ___ student
        ___ other, please specify _____

        In what city/town/community is your nonprofit organization located? _____

    c) What is your organization's approximate annual revenue? Please choose one.
        ___ $29,999 or less
        ___ $30,000 - $99,999
        ___ $100,000 - $249,999
        ___ $250,000 – $ 499,999
        ___ $500,000 or more

d) How long have you worked/volunteered in the nonprofit/voluntary sector? Please choose one.

         ___ less than 1 year
         ___ 1 to 3 years
         ___ 4 to 6 years
         ___ 7 to 9 years
         ___ 10 years or more

e) Please include your email address if you are comfortable with us contacting you for more information (if necessary) and for sharing the results of this survey with you.

**Thank you very much for taking the time out of your busy schedule
to share your thoughts/advice with us!**