



## University of Alabama MBA Board Fellows Program Frequently Asked Questions



### Board Fellows 2008-2009 Schedule:

September 15, 2008	Non-profit applications due
October 13, 2008	MBA fellow applications due
November 2008	MBA fellows are matched with non-profit Fellow makes initial contact with non-profit Fellow to attend Net Impact board management seminar
January –September 2009	Board Fellowship and Research Project
September 2009	Project presentation and deliverables due to non-profit

### What is expected of my organization?

- Provide a member of the board who will serve as the Fellow's primary contact and mentor
- Provide a formal introduction to the organization's work and expectations for board members
- Keep the Board Fellows informed about organizational developments
- Communicate consistently and provide feedback about the progress of the Fellow's project
- Conduct a final wrap-up meeting with the Fellow

### Does my organization have to decide its Board Fellows project before the application deadline?

Although it helps to match Board Fellow projects with an MBA student with appropriate skills, your organization does not have to determine its project prior to applying for the program. In this case, your organization will work with the Fellow to determine a project once the Fellow begins the program.

### What steps should we take to create a successful relationship with the Fellow?

A member of the Board or the Executive Director should serve as the Fellow's mentor and point of contact with the organization. This guidance is most effective when provided by both the executive director and a designated mentor from among existing board members. The Fellow should be treated as if he or she were a full board member and invited to all events to which a board member would be invited. The most successful relationships integrate the Fellow into the board committees and regular board operations.

### How much time will my organization need to invest in the program?

Each participating nonprofit must designate a board member who will mentor the Fellow. The mentor orients the Fellow to the organization and helps the fellow understand its mission, strategy, and challenges. The mentor also works closely with the Fellow to identify a meaningful project for the organization. Generally, board members and staff members should expect to spend a total of 5-10 hours working with their Fellow over the course of the year.

**Do Board Fellows receive academic credit or a paid stipend for their work?**

No. Board Fellows volunteer their time and skills to nonprofit organizations.

**Who is in charge of the program and who should I contact with concerns?**

If you have any questions or concerns during the course of the Board Fellows program, please contact:

- Dr. James Cashman, Professor of Management  
[jcashman@cba.ua.edu](mailto:jcashman@cba.ua.edu), 205/348-8940
- Lauren Dupuis, Net Impact President  
[Lndupuis@gmail.com](mailto:Lndupuis@gmail.com), 256/366-1885

**What are some of the projects that Board Fellows undertake?**

Projects vary widely, but are designed to leverage the Fellow's management skills and should engage the fellow to the strategic and operational issues faced by nonprofits. Fellows should not be asked to solicit donations as part of their projects. Examples of projects include:

- Conducting a board effectiveness audit by interviewing board members
- Segmenting the organization's donor base and analyzing current fundraising efforts to increase donations
- Benchmarking the marketing activities of similar nonprofits around the country to understand best practices
- Developing a strategic planning process for the organization
- Develop a survey tool to understand customer satisfaction and needs
- Building a financial model to improve planning and cost tracking.

**How much time will a Board Fellow commit to my organization?**

Fellows are full time MBA students but delight in giving a lot to everything they do. Over the course of the academic year, Fellows commit an average of 6 to 10 hours per month attending board meetings and committee meetings and working on projects.

**What other MBA programs have established a Board Fellows Program?**

- Columbia Business School, Columbia University
- Fuqua School of Business, Duke University
- Haas School of Business, University of California, Berkeley
- Harvard Business School, Harvard University
- Kellogg School of Management, Northwestern University
- McDonough School of Business, Georgetown University
- Michael G. Foster School of Business, University of Washington
- Ross School of Business, University of Michigan
- Stanford Graduate School of Business, Stanford University
- Tuck School of Business, Dartmouth College
- Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania
- Yale School of Management, Yale University