

SMU



Master of Arts in Arts and Nonprofit Leadership

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This innovative, 100% online, 30 credit-hour arts and nonprofit leadership master's degree program will help prepare you for the synthesis of art and business.



Program Overview

Effective management of nonprofit organizations depends on two critical dimensions: a passion for advocating and nurturing the arts or specific causes, and the business acumen required for operational and strategic oversight. These essential skills rarely converge naturally within the traditional arts or business sectors. However, their integration is crucial for the sustained success and impact of nonprofit enterprises and initiatives.

Bridging artistic disciplines with essential business leadership skills, the online Master of Arts in Arts and Nonprofit Leadership aims to prepare students to excel in nonprofit organizations and arts management. The program's comprehensive curriculum covers a wide range of topics, from strategic planning to social impact and revenue generation for nonprofits.

Students will gain a deep understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities in the arts and nonprofit sectors, and develop the critical thinking, communication, and management skills needed to lead effectively. Upon completing the program, graduates will be equipped to take on leadership roles in arts organizations, nonprofit agencies, cultural institutions, and advocacy groups, driving positive change and making a lasting impact in their communities.

Who Will Benefit?

The M.A. in Arts and Nonprofit Leadership program is ideal for working professionals interested in leveraging their creative proficiencies in tandem with nonprofit business principles while acquiring relevant knowledge and leadership skills. This knowledge can be applied not only within the arts, but also broader, related nonprofit business contexts including culture, heritage, humanitarian aid, education, advocacy and social impact.

Others who will benefit most from this program include:

- Individuals with arts backgrounds looking to translate their experience to the nonprofit sector
- Creative professionals who desire a deeper understanding of nonprofit leadership, financial stewardship, data-driven decision-making, resource mobilization and strategic leadership
- Nonprofit professionals seeking to gain practical skills and knowledge to navigate the evolving nonprofit landscape
- International students wanting to leverage a diverse learning environment and the opportunity to understand arts and nonprofit management in a global context
- Individuals who have a passion for nonprofits and the arts

Nonprofit-Related Careers

Expertise and competencies gained through the M.A. in Arts and Nonprofit Leadership program can have many relevant applications across various nonprofit business industries and job roles.

Potential nonprofit business job roles utilizing the skills and knowledge from this program include:

- Executive Director
- Managing Director
- Development Officer
- Operations Officer
- Marketing Officer
- Financial Officer
- Program Director/Manager
- Project Manager
- Operations Director/Manager
- Regulatory Affairs Director/Manager
- Fundraising Director/Manager
- Development Director/Manager
- Community Outreach Coordinator
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Grant Writer
- Event Planner
- Social Media Manager
- Human Resources Manager

Industries and nonprofit organizations often leveraging business professionals with this background include:

- Arts and Culture Organizations
- Community Development Corporations
- Environmental Advocacy Groups
- Foundations and Grantmaking Organizations
- Healthcare Nonprofits
- International NGOs
- Public Sector Agencies
- Religious Organizations
- Social Services
- Youth and Education Nonprofits



Arts-Related Careers

The M.A. in Arts and Nonprofit Leadership program empowers art-centric individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to discover opportunities in the nonprofit job market and help take their career to the next level.

Potential arts administration job roles utilizing the experience gained from the program include:

- Event Organizer
- Special Events Coordinator
- Exhibition Director
- Gallery Manager
- Arts Program Coordinator
- Cultural Affairs Officer
- Festival Organizer
- Artistic Production Manager
- Concert Manager

Industries and organizations often leveraging arts professionals with this background include:

- Cultural Ministries and Government Agencies
- Theatre Companies
- Dance Companies
- Symphony Orchestras
- Chamber Music and Small Ensembles
- Opera Companies
- Art and History Museums
- Film and Television Production Studios
- Research Foundations and Think Tanks
- Local Government and Cultural Offices



Program Details

The M.A. in Arts and Nonprofit Leadership program offers full-time professionals convenience and accessibility in earning a graduate education online to optimize their development and educational experience.



Weekly synchronous sessions provide real-time online student-instructor and student-student interactions

- Includes Q&A, clarification and expansion of concepts, assignment reviews, conversations with leading arts and nonprofit managers, and other activities



Interact with classmates and faculty in live lectures, discussion boards and group study



Earn your degree in as quick as 20 months*



\$1,000 per credit hour

- Includes \$100 per credit hour distance learning fee



Access coursework on-the-go using the Canvas application



Three terms each year in Fall, Spring and Summer

*Timeline based on students remaining active consecutively from the time they start the program and take the recommended two courses per session.

Students in the M.A. in Arts and Nonprofit Leadership program will gain access to support services, including but not limited to career coaching, student safety, complaint processes, student success coaches, financial counseling regarding student debt, library resources and accommodation services.



Why This Program

The M.A. in Arts and Nonprofit Leadership program offers a distinctive blend of academic rigor, real-world practice, and a commitment to fostering the next generation of leaders who will drive innovation in creative organizations, such as performing arts, visual arts, cultural institutions, music and more.

Interdisciplinary Excellence:

Unlike other programs that primarily focus on specific sectors or industries, this program takes an interdisciplinary approach. Students will not only acquire a holistic understanding of nonprofit leadership principles but also can specialize in the management of the specific art forms they are most passionate about.

Flexibility for Professionals:

The program's online format offers the flexibility to help balance your career, family and educational aspirations. Whether you're already working in the creative sector or transitioning into the field, the program provides a learning path that accommodates most professionals.

Faculty Excellence:

Learn from dedicated faculty who have deep roots in the creative sector community. Professors bring rich industry experience to the classroom, ensuring that you receive practical insights alongside academic rigor.

Tailored for Impact:

The program's curriculum is designed not just to develop leaders with business-acumen but to empower catalysts for innovation. Students will connect with creative professionals, executives, producers and collaborators to bring imaginative visions to life, and gain knowledge to become leaders who can drive meaningful change within arts and nonprofit sector organizations.

Global Relevance:

This program recognizes the global nature of the creative sector. We encourage international engagement, providing opportunities for travel and collaboration with creative leaders and organizations worldwide.

Real-World Integration:

Through experiential learning and collaboration with industry professionals, students will bridge the gap between theory and practice by applying practical skills in real organizations.

Meet the Faculty

The Master of Arts in Arts and Nonprofit Leadership program leverages experienced faculty and renowned industry connections for real-world learning and networking opportunities.



Megan Heber – Program Director

Megan Heber has experience as an active member in various committees and organizations within the North Texas arts community, such as the City of Dallas Cultural Plan Implementation Steering Committee and the Board of Appointed Trustees of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. Heber is currently the professor of practice in arts management and nonprofit leadership at SMU's Division of Corporate Communication and Public Affairs (CCPA).



Doric Earle, Ph.D.

Dr. Doric E. Earle is a tech consultant who now focuses on helping communities, social enterprises and entrepreneurs achieve collaborative, engaging and sustainable solutions. He is the co-founder of the community-based real estate platform the Dallas Unity Fund LLC and the award-winning urban farm, Restorative Farms. Dr. Earle is currently a professor of practice in SMU's Division of Corporate Communications Public Affairs - Corporate Communications Public Affairs.



Daniel Fonner

Daniel Fonner is a researcher whose focus is on data science for social good, employing artificial intelligence to improve public administration and support the arts and culture sector. Fonner was a researcher at BOP Consulting in London (UK) and spent time as the Research and Policy Associate at the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council (PA). He is currently an adjunct lecturer in the Division of Corporate Communication and Public Affairs, as well as the Associate Director for Research at SMU DataArts, the National Center for Arts Research at SMU.



Alicia Schortgen

Alicia Schortgen is a nonprofit researcher and lecturer with experience across various aspects of third-sector topics. Schortgen’s research interests include philanthropic behavior, nonprofit approaches to social problems, nonprofit accountability and outcome measurement, and leadership and executive behavior in nonprofits. Schortgen is currently a Nonprofit Studies Lecturer at SMU’s Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences.



James Jillson

James Jillson is an arts manager with a passion for helping cultural institutions take a data-first approach to developing strategy, navigating change, building audiences and driving revenue. Jillson serves as the Director of Analytics at Dallas Symphony Orchestra. Jillson teaches arts management and entrepreneurship as an adjunct faculty member and supports alumni engagement initiatives at SMU’s Meadows School of the Arts.

Kim Lance



Kim Lance is a B2B communications specialist with experience in serving B2B companies in the professional services, cybersecurity and technology industries. She also provides mentorship and leads workshops to help entrepreneurs tell their stories and refine their go-to-market plans and investor pitch presentations. Lance is currently a professor of practice in Public Relations and Strategic Communication at SMU Meadows School of Arts.



Jim Hart

Jim Hart is Director of Social Innovation, Creative and Arts Entrepreneurship at SMU. Hart has won numerous national awards including USASBE’s “Pedagogical Innovation Award,” “Special Recognition in Entrepreneurship Education Innovation” award, and the Society for Arts Entrepreneurship Education’s “Sharon T. Alpi Award for Innovative Arts Entrepreneurship Pedagogy.” Hart is also currently a professor of practice at CCPA.

Curriculum Overview

The M.A. in Arts and Nonprofit Leadership curriculum includes:



10 required courses

(each course is three credit hours)



15-week sessions

(offered Spring, Summer and Fall)



Weekly 90-minute live, virtual sessions with faculty and classmates



Graduate in as quick as 20 months

(requires full-time status)

Taught by: Megan Heber

ANPL 6300 I Navigating the Arts and Nonprofit Sector: Principles and Practice

This foundational course offers students a journey through the historical and philosophical roots of nonprofit organizations and their connection to arts and related contexts over time. Students will explore nonprofit rationale, leadership principles, and potential for social impact within the broader landscape of nonprofit organizations in the United States.

Prerequisite: None

Taught by: Dr. Doric Earle

ANPL 6305 I Financial Stewardship in Nonprofit Organizations

Students learn principles of design theory, as applied to screen-based and other technical applications and systems. Topics introduced include digital typography and imaging, the grid, color theory, user experience, interface design, virtual ecosystems, generative NFTs and the history of design.

Pre- or co-requisite: Navigating the Arts and Nonprofit Sector: Principles and Practice

Taught by: Daniel Fonner

ANPL 6310 I Data-Driven Decision Making for Arts and Nonprofit Leaders

Students will gain data analysis and visualization skills tailored for nonprofit contexts, including data gathering and cleaning, model building and analysis, stakeholder reporting, and data-driven strategy development. Additional program topics include data ethics, AI, program evaluation and tools needed for effective data storage and analysis.

Pre- or co-requisite: Navigating the Arts and Culture Sector: Principles and Practice

Taught by: Alicia Schortgen

ANPL 6315 | Strategies for Arts and Nonprofit Resource Mobilization

This course provides skills and strategies essential for securing nonprofit funding and resources vital to organizational viability. Additional program topics include grant writing, foundation relations, donor engagement, corporate collaborations and the intricacies of planning fundraising events.

Prerequisite: Navigating the Arts and Nonprofit Sector: Principles and Practice and Financial Stewardship in Arts and Nonprofit Organizations

Taught by: James Jillson

ANPL 6320 | Revenue Generation and Program Innovation in Arts and Nonprofits

This course investigates inventive approaches for marketing and generating earned revenue within nonprofit organizations. This includes components of program design and evaluation, pricing strategies, ticketing, merchandising, audience development, and other innovative methods to generate revenue using a case study and hands-on project approach.

Prerequisite: Navigating the Arts and Nonprofit Sector: Principles and Practice, Financial Stewardship in Arts and Nonprofit Organizations

Taught by: Kim Lance

ANPL 6325 | Building Bridges: Effective Communication in Arts and Nonprofit Leadership

This course applies principles of strategic communication and stakeholder engagement tailored to nonprofit organizations. This includes communication strategy development, advocacy, public relations, social media management, and crisis communication planning, underscoring the importance of navigating political, social, and economic landscapes as an essential aspect of effective nonprofit leadership.

Prerequisite: Navigating the Arts and Nonprofit Sector: Principles, Practice and Financial Stewardship in Arts and Nonprofit Organizations

Taught by: Jim Hart

ANPL 6330 | Social Solutions and Entrepreneurship in Nonprofits

This course investigates principles of creative entrepreneurship, design thinking, venture funding, and social innovation models specifically tailored to nonprofit organizations. This includes planning, crafting and testing of inventive solutions to address real-world challenges to drive positive change.

Prerequisite: Navigating the Arts and Nonprofit Sector: Principles and Practice and Financial Stewardship in Arts and Nonprofit Organizations

Taught by: Alicia Schortgen

ANPL 6335 | Management and Governance of Nonprofit Institutions

This course provides comprehensive coverage of nonprofit governance, compliance, and organizational management, including key leadership areas of board governance, human capital, cultural policy, enterprise technology, legal and regulatory requirements, strategic leadership, and ethical considerations.

Prerequisite: Navigating the Arts and Nonprofit Sector: Principles and Practice and Financial Stewardship in Arts and Nonprofit Organizations

Taught by: Kim Lance

ANPL 6340 | Arts and Nonprofit Leadership Capstone Project with Leadership Intensive

This course applies knowledge and skills acquired in previous courses to address real-world challenges in the arts and nonprofit sector. This includes collaboration with nonprofit organizations to develop strategic solutions and showcase leadership potential in a culminating project. Students additionally participate in a leadership intensive to reflect on their experience, tackle leadership challenges, and focus on personal leadership style to succeed in the field.

Prerequisite: A minimum of 18 hours of program-required coursework; usually taken in the last year of the program.

Taught by: Megan Heber

ANPL 6345 | Strategic Leadership and Transformation in Arts and Nonprofit Organizations

This course applies knowledge and skills acquired in previous courses to the formulation and implementation of strategic plans, planning methodologies, financial/resource planning, change management strategies, communication strategies, and alignment of organizational objectives with mission, vision, and values. Students will utilize case studies and collaborative group projects for application and preparation for leadership roles in the nonprofit sector.

Prerequisite: A minimum of 18 hours of program-required coursework; usually taken in the last year of the program.



Learning Outcomes

The M.A. in Arts and Nonprofit Leadership program aims to fill gaps in career skills and entrepreneurship education that are often missing in traditional arts programs. According to the Strategic National Arts Alumni Project's (SNAAP) 2015 Career Skills and Entrepreneurship Training for Artists Special Report, over 30,000 arts alumni from 50 different institutions reported they would have greatly benefited from more education in the following areas:*

- **Developing Long-Term Strategic Plans:** Learning to create and execute plans to achieve career goals.
- **Mastering Communication:** Understanding the importance of community engagement, public speaking and receiving constructive feedback.
- **Managing Finances:** Developing budgets, raising funds for projects, and financial planning.

*National Strategic Arts Alumni Project, Career Skills and Entrepreneurship Training for Artists, 2015 Special Report Survey at <https://snaaparts.org/uploads/downloads/Reports/SNAAP-Special-Report-2017.pdf>, (accessed May 20, 2024).

Upon successful completion of the M.A. in Arts and Nonprofit Leadership program, you should expect to:

- Understand the historical and philosophical roots of nonprofit organizations and their connection to the arts
- Implement revenue generating techniques to support nonprofit funding and resource support
- Utilize case studies when leading and collaborating with nonprofit organizations
- Apply strategic communication skills and foster stakeholder engagement tailored to nonprofit organizations
- Develop strategies for real-world challenges with a personalized leading style applicable in your field

Leveraging these outcomes toward professional skills development empowers students to maximize their potential in the job market and make impactful differences in their careers. Students will experience an innovative approach to education that connects current and future professionals with the skills and knowledge they need for long-term success in the arts and nonprofit sectors.



Admissions Requirements

Résumé

Candidates are expected to submit a résumé that addresses their professional history, educational background and career interests.

Submission of Official Undergraduate Transcripts

Applicants must submit their official transcripts from their undergraduate studies. These documents play a crucial role in assessing the applicant's academic background and preparedness for graduate-level studies.

Personal Statement

Applicants must submit a personal statement. This should be a reflective essay that provides insights into the candidate's personal journey, motivations for pursuing a career in arts and nonprofit leadership, and any experiences or achievements that demonstrate their potential in this field.

References

Two professional references must be provided. At least one of them should be from a current or recent supervisor.

20-Minute Virtual Interview

After submission of your application, candidates are required to participate in a 20-minute virtual interview with faculty and staff of the program. This is an opportunity for the admissions committee to get to know the applicants beyond their written application and to assess their communication skills, motivation and program fit.

International Students

- **English Proficiency Tests (If Applicable)***

For applicants whose first language is not English, there is a requirement to demonstrate English proficiency. This can be done by submitting scores from standardized tests such as the TOEFL, with a minimum score of 100, or the IELTS, with a minimum score of 6.5.

Applicants holding a four-year equivalent degree from an accredited college or university are eligible to apply for admission. Graduates of colleges that are not accredited may be required to demonstrate their qualifications by submitting satisfactory scores on the GRE.

Students who apply by the priority application deadline are eligible to **waive the \$75 application fee.**

Priority Application Deadlines

- **Spring:** October 1
- **Summer:** February 1
- **Fall:** May 1

Call **469-619-9940** to speak with a representative about program details, the application process, flexible payment options and more.



*This requirement is waived for students whose last school attended or that have primary or secondary citizenship in the following countries: American Samoa, Australia, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Canada (except Quebec), Dominica, Ghana, Grenada, Grand Cayman, Guyana, Ireland, Jamaica, Kenya, Liberia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Singapore, South Africa, Trinidad/Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, United Kingdom, U.S. Pacific Trust, or United States.



About SMU

Southern Methodist University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. The University will create, expand and impart knowledge through teaching, research and service, shaping world changers who contribute to their communities and excel in their professions in a global society.

Formally established in 1969, the Algur H. Meadows School of the Arts has been a leader in linking arts and business for 50 years. The SMU Meadows School of the Arts educates visionary artists, scholars and arts and communications professionals prepared to create sustainable and transformative impact both locally and globally.

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469-619-9940

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