The Evolution of Nonprofit Management and Philanthropic Studies in the United States

Are We Now a Disciplinary Field?

Roseanne Mirabella
Timothy Hoffman
Terence K. Teo
Seton Hall University

Mary McDonald
Muskegon Health Project

Abstract

This article looks back at the recent history of delivering university education to future nonprofit leaders and the substantial growth of these programs by region and location during this period. It includes an analysis of the course offerings in the 340 programs providing curriculum in nonprofit management and philanthropic studies (NMPS) and how these offerings have changed (or have not changed) over time. Employing social network analysis, we examine NMPS curricular elements for top-ranked universities in the various accrediting networks to establish the extent to which the field has become a distinct discipline. We found convergence among NMPS course offerings by disciplinary orientation and homogeneity among curricular offerings for each disciplinary group. However, we found the field of NMPS education programs to be much more heterogeneous; that is, there is less similarity of course offerings across disciplinary boundaries than there is within disciplinary boundaries. The *field* of nonprofit management and philanthropic studies has yet to come into its own.

Keywords: nonprofit education; social network analysis; philanthropic studies

Roseanne Mirabella is a professor, Department of Political Science and Public Affairs, Seton Hall University. **Timothy Hoffman** is director of the Center for Community Research and Engagement, Seton Hall University. **Terence K. Teo** is an assistant professor, Department of Political Science and Public Affairs, Seton Hall University. **Mary McDonald** is a Community Health Worker for Muskegon Health Project. Please send author correspondence to mirabero@shu.edu

Nonprofit management and philanthropic studies programs in the United States have grown tremendously over the past 20 years,[1] reflecting in part our continued national preference for delivery of services through third sector organizations over public organizations as well as an increased demand for community services including health care, social services, and employment training (Rathgeb Smith, 2012, p. 30) and to prepare professionals to lead these organizations. Looking back at our recent history of delivering education to future nonprofit leaders, this article describes the substantial growth of these programs by region and location during this period, including an analysis of the course offerings in the 340 programs offering curriculum in nonprofit management and philanthropic studies (NPS) and how these offerings have changed (or have not changed) over time. After looking at where we have been and where we are today, we then look forward and provide recommendations on where the field might go from here, particularly given the similar patterns that have emerged in curricular offerings across universities and the impact of institutional isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, pp. 151–152) on opportunities for curricular diversity.

Method

Seton Hall University has been tracking the growth of nonprofit management and philanthropic studies (NMPS) programs in the United States for over 20 years. We conducted the initial survey of universities and colleges through the mail, but moved to online data collection when the Internet became universally available. More recently, we have updated the information for individual universities annually using the following process. We review all information and links submitted by university representatives for accuracy and check course offerings against online descriptions and brochures. We share draft documents for each university with university representatives for further verification when necessary. In addition, representatives from university-based programs reach out to us on a regular basis to request an update to program information or to add their program to the database. Over and above this, each year, through the ARNOVA and ISTR electronic mailing lists, we announce to the nonprofit management and philanthropic studies community when data are being updated. Although we have made every attempt to include all NMPS programs in the database, among those programs that may have been missed might be schools with one or perhaps two courses within an established discipline or programs offered through the community college system. Undoubtedly programs have been missed, and we cannot definitively state that we have captured the "universe" of NMPS programs; however, we are fairly confident in the comprehensiveness of the database of nonprofit management and philanthropic studies on which this analysis is based. The tables presented below reflect historical data in the archives and data collected in 2016.

Following this descriptive analysis of NMPS curricular offerings, we use social network analysis to help reveal the values in the NMPS network through an examination of the patterns of course offerings between traditional disciplines generally and the field of NMPS more generally. To examine these hypotheses, we collected course descriptions for the top 10 programs nationally ranked in each of the four disciplines: business, social work, public service, and nonprofit management and philanthropy. Many

---

[1]We based this paper, in part, on data annually collected by Seton Hall University beginning in 1996.

studies of educational programs employ the use of rankings to study curricular trends and programmatic content (Mirabella & Wish, 2000; Nelarine, Wallace, & Tassabeji, 2007; Saidel & Smith, 2015; Segon & Booth, 2012; Wiley & Berry, 2015). We likewise chose to use reputational analysis of highly ranked programs to examine current trends in curricular offerings as highly ranked programs are often identified as exemplars in the field. U.S. News and World Report ranked nonprofit management specialties for business schools and schools of public service. As rankings do not exist at this level of specificity for social work schools, we included the 10 top nationally ranked social work programs with nonprofit curriculum. Finally, for NACC member schools, we included all schools that are within the NACC network *and* listed on U.S. News and World Report as top-ranked national universities.[2] (The Appendix provides a list of programs.) We collected course offerings and descriptions for these universities and coded them using Atlas/ti, a software package designed for qualitative data analysis.

20-Year Evolution of Nonprofit Management and Philanthropic Studies Programs

Figure 1 shows the historical growth of NMPS programs. The number of programs in NMPS has more than doubled since we began tracking programs, from 284 in 1986 to 651 programs today, with the number of institutions offering NMPS courses also increasing, although at a slower rate, from 179 institutions in 1996 to 339 today. The number of universities offering all types of courses—undergraduate, graduate, noncredit, continuing education, and online courses—has increased over time as well. While the number of universities offering graduate courses continues to grow, the growth in graduate programs has slowed somewhat over the past 5 years. Similarly, the number of noncredit and continuing education courses offered on college campuses has not increased much in the past 5 years. The major area of growth in NMPS courses over the past 5 years has been in online offerings, reflecting national trends in the growth of distance education. Finally, the number of universities with NMPS undergraduate courses over the past 2 years has slightly decreased, from 153 to 150.

Graduate Programs in Nonprofit Management and Philanthropic Studies

In this section, we examine the historic trends in graduate education in NMPS. As noted, the number of universities with courses in NMPS has almost doubled over the last 20 years, though the number has stabilized somewhat over the past 5 years.[3] When the tracking of NMPS programs by Seton Hall University began, we defined a concentration in NMPS as a university offering three or more courses. As the field evolved, quite a few universities began to offer a defined concentration in NMPS. Figure 2 reflects the historic growth for both the older definition and the newer definition of concentration adopted in 2006. Of the 249 colleges and universities offering courses

[2]U.S. News and World Report employs the Basic Classification system of the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education. We selected top research universities (those with highest research activity) for inclusion in this study, that is, those considered National Universities. https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/ranking-category-definitions

[3]Note that the number of programs reflects the sum of the addition as well as the elimination of programs over the 20-year span.

in NMPS, more than 85% offer three or more graduate courses, an increase of more than 20% over 1996, when fewer than 65% of those offering courses had three or more courses. As the field has grown, with its concomitant growth in faculty and scholarship in the field, curricular content has expanded as well. The number of NMPS programs with a concentration has grown by more than one quarter over the past 10 years, from 125 to 160.
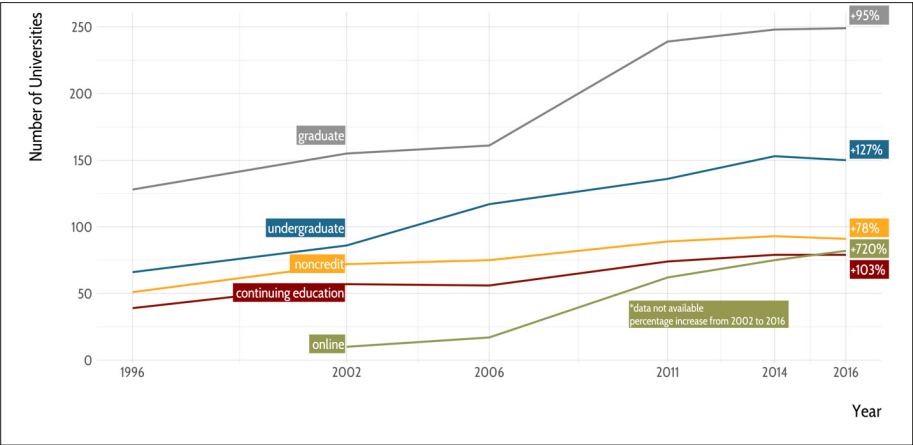

Figure 1. Universities with nonprofit management and philanthropic studies courses for select years, 1996 to 2016.
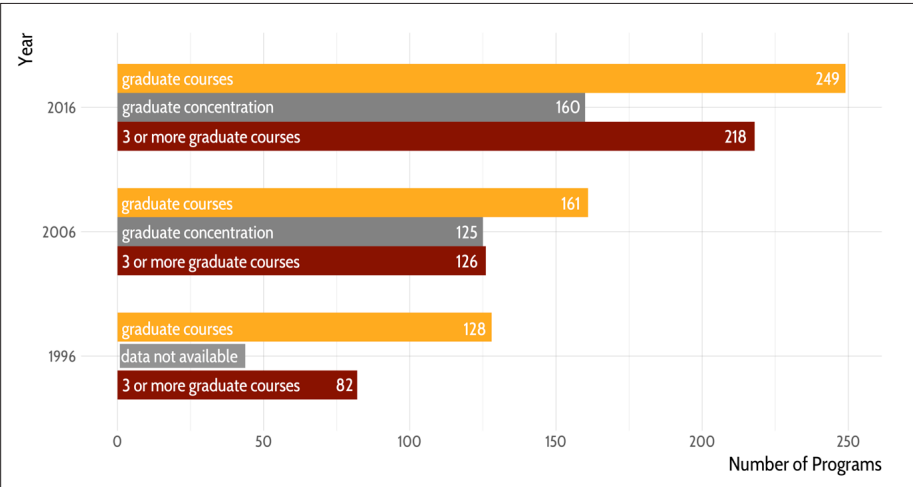

Figure 2. Historical growth in nonprofit management and philanthropic studies programs by decade.

In Figure 3, we present the changes in institutional location of NMPS graduate programs over the past 20 years for universities with three or more courses and for those offering a formal concentration in NMPS. As reflected in the figure, more than half of the programs in NMPS are located within either a College of Arts and Sciences or a School of Public Affairs and Administration (56%), although there are proportionately fewer universities offering three or more courses in a Colleges of Arts and Sciences today than there were 20 years ago. The number of concentrations in Schools of Business or Schools of Business and Public Administration has declined from 21% in 2006 to 17% today, while the number of concentrations in Schools of Social Work has remained relatively stable. There were more interdisciplinary programs 10 years ago than there are today; some no longer exist and several were absorbed by other colleges within the university. Included among those no longer standing on their own is Case West Reserve University, led by the distinguished nonprofit scholar Dennis Young. In his prescient work "Games Universities Play," Young described the university situations within which nonprofit academic centers must operate, using the metaphor of games to describe the environment. He concluded,

> It may eventually be recognized that the difficulties of centers are essentially structured and can only be fully addressed by reorganizing them so that their key stakeholders (the latent groups) have requisite authority and leverage. In other words, change the rules of the game. This would mean transforming nonprofit academic centers into more traditional university structures, such as schools or colleges, and empowering students, alumni, faculty, nonprofit communities of interest, staff, and directors in the conventional ways that legitimize and normalize their authority within the university setting. Given the extant games that must be played to achieve this state, *such a transformation may be a long time in coming* [emphasis added]. (Young, 1998, p. 136)

For Case Western and other universities that have lost their independence and been absorbed by more traditional schools or colleges, the transformation did not come quickly enough. Perhaps the establishment of the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University in Indianapolis, founded in 2012, the world's first school dedicated solely to the study and teaching of philanthropy, may be a bright light on the horizon for nonprofit management and philanthropy programs.
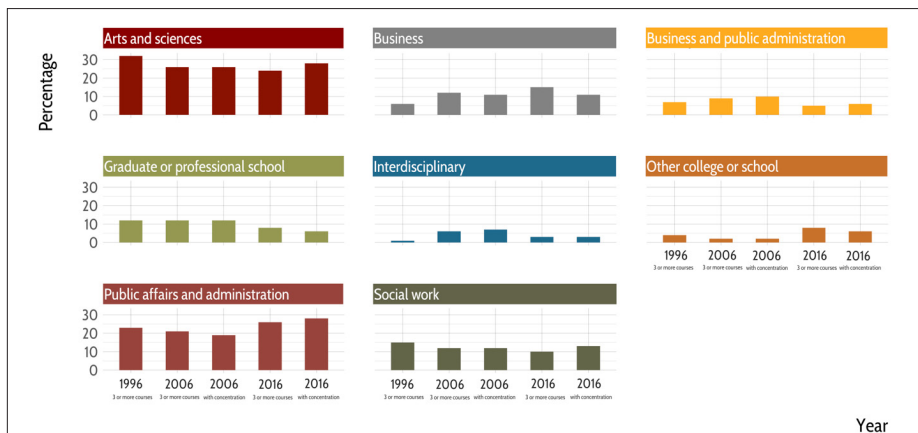

Figure 3. Institutional location of NMPS graduate programs by concentration type by decade.

Figure 4 displays the historic changes in regional location of graduate programs with concentrations in NMPS 4. The most marked historical difference is the decline in the percentage of NMPS with three or more courses in universities located in the Midwest. While 20 years ago the Midwest had the greatest percentage of universities with three or more courses—almost 40% were located in the Midwest—today that number is slightly more than a quarter. The number of universities in the Northeast offering three or more courses increased from 27% in 1996 to 35% today. Universities in the South also saw an increase in the number of NMPS programs with three or more courses, from 16% in 1996 to 20% today. Finally, the percentage of universities located in the West has remained relatively stable over the past 20 years.
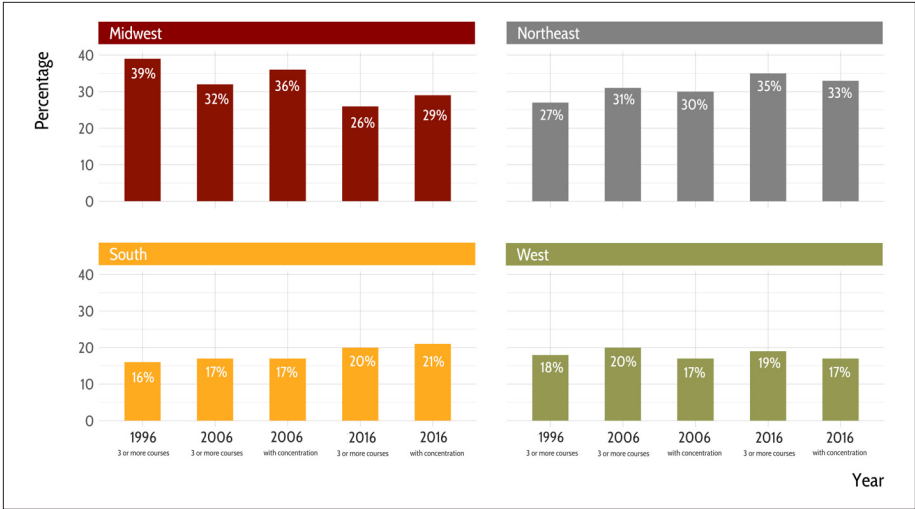

Figure 4. Regional location of NMPS graduate programs by concentration type and decade.

The NMPS census of universities has included an analysis of functional categories of courses within these programs (Figure 5). Drawing on Young (1987), Mirabella and Wish (2000) developed a curricular model of NMPS programs. The courses are categorized in three content areas related to the expertise and skills needed for managing activities within third sector organizations: outside functions, inside functions, and boundary spanning functions. Over the past 20 years, the number of courses with content related to inside management functions has grown slightly from 49% to 53% of all courses. However, a closer looks shows that the distribution of courses across the three categories included within this function—internal management skills, financial management, and human resource management—has changed significantly. While in 1996 about 1 in 4 of all courses focused on internal management skills, today more than 4 in 10 of all courses have this focus. In contrast, courses in financial management and human resource management have seen a percentage decline of 5%–8% and 5%, respectively, of all courses. This shift more than likely reflects the entry into the field of additional universities that have developed one or two courses in NMPS, with a generic

course in nonprofit management, the course most frequently offered. The boundary spanning functions identified by Young in his seminal work have continued their decline as a percentage of the total, with 3% of all courses offered covering legal issues and strategic planning. Figure 5 shows that the percentage of courses with an emphasis on outside functions of leadership in the third sector has remained about the same over time. However, the number of courses in fundraising increased by 3% during this period, while courses in philanthropy and the third sector and in marketing and PR each declined by 1%. It should be noted that we have included social entrepreneurship courses in the fundraising category, which explains a portion of the increase in this category. Although increasing slightly about 10 years ago to a high of 15%, the number of courses with a concentration in advocacy, public policy, and community organizing has reverted to the percentage offered in 1996, 10%.

The data show a rapid growth in NMPS over the past two decades. Although there has been retrenchment in some areas, particularly among interdisciplinary programs, the field has seen steady growth. Michael O'Neill observed that the field's evolution could be traced to three development contexts: "professional education, management education, and the growth of the U.S. nonprofit sector following World War II" (O'Neill, 2005, 5). Particularly in graduate education, universities have become 'training grounds' for professionals in those fields warranting advanced education, including management education. Business management was the first to develop management education in the late 1900s, with public administration following closely on its heels (O'Neill, 2005, 9). With the rapid growth of the nonprofit sector, particularly after World War II and the proliferation of government programs in the 1960s and 1970s, the need for professional education for those that would lead these organizations became apparent. Realizing this need, 'academic entrepreneurs' began developing coursework and programs in NMPS in the 1980s and 1990s. The growth in the field and the trends identified above reflect the rapid evolution of O'Neill's developmental contexts.

Curricular Variation in NMPS Degree Programs
by Disciplinary Field

In their discussion of the "best place" for nonprofit management education programs, Mirabella and Wish (2000) noted that the curricular elements varied by the institutional location of the programs, whether they were in schools of business administration, public administration, or social work. In this work, they focused on the major curricular elements in each type of program, how the curricular elements of these programs compare with generic management degree programs, and the central challenges facing managers of nonprofit organization, and how these challenges were addressed in each setting. Prior to this in 1990, Cleary undertook a similar review of the curriculum of public administration programs to determine if schools and colleges of public administration were "making a difference" in the life of the polity. He found that although these programs were serving the educational needs of the public sector "reasonably well," managers were being trained to be "technically competent"—he questioned whether our programs were developing the type of individuals we would want to entrust with significant power over our lives (Clearly, 1990, p. 672). More recently, Kettl (2000) likewise suggested that we need to understand "how civil society has become hard wired into the process of managing government programs" (p. 30) and develop resolutions for the politics and administration dichotomy within this new

governance model. For example, Rathgeb Smith (2012) suggested that "all students receiving [public management] degrees should be familiar with basic principles and concepts related to nonprofits" (p. 35). Are we preparing future managers in the field with the strategies necessary for success within Kettl's new reality? Do our curricular offerings in NMPS thread the needle between skills required by future managers to lead effective organizations and the skills sets necessary to navigate the choppy waters of an increasingly intersectoral environment? In the next section, we further explore these questions by examining the social networks guiding the development of the field. We first introduce social network analysis as a methodological approach and then propose a framework for analysis of curricular variations by field.
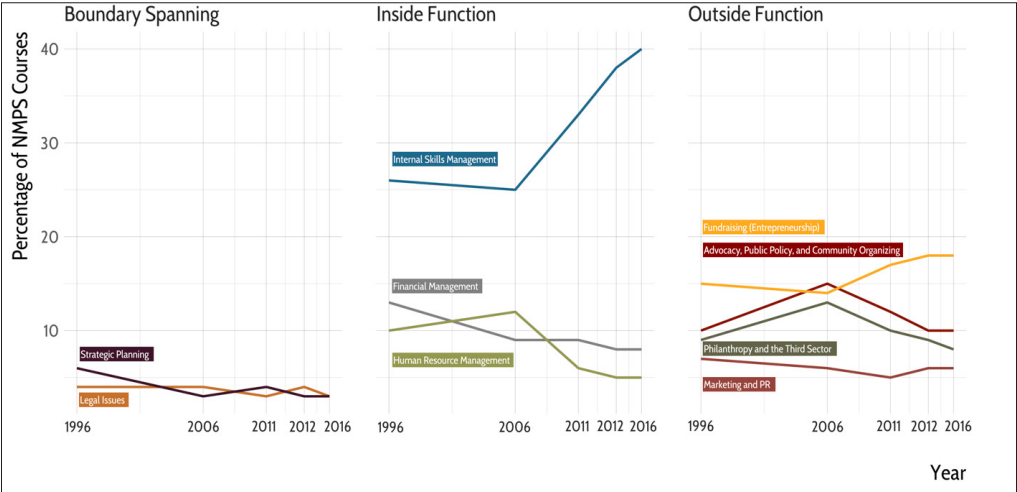

Figure 5. Frequency of NMPS programs by function for select years: 1996–2016.

A Social Network Approach

Social network analysis is a methodological approach in the social sciences that can help us to capture and better understand the patterns of relationships among various entities including individuals, groups, organizations, and nation-states (Knoke & Yang, 2008; Thomas, 2000). By focusing on "networks" of people, institutions, or nations, we can further our understanding of decisions that individual entities make with regard to decisions of other actors in the network. In fact, an assumption in network analysis is that participation in the group will lead individual actors to adopt certain behaviors or approaches that they may not have adopted absent their group membership. To better understand the curricular approaches of the universities offering NMPS programs, we can view them as them as groups of universities socially bound by their membership and participation in the various accrediting bodies to which they belong. We have identified (Table 1) at least four accrediting bodies within the NMPS field. Each accrediting body—AACSB, CSWE, NACC,[4] and NASPAA—is dedicated to excellence in education in their respective fields: business, social work, nonprofit management and philanthropy, and public service.

[4]The Nonprofit Academic Centers Council's members recently voted to move forward with an accrediting process for standalone nonprofit and philanthropy programs.

Table 1

NMPS Accrediting Bodies

Accrediting body	Mission	Field
The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)	The mission of AACSB International is to foster engagement, accelerate innovation, and amplify impact in business education. This mission aligns with AACSB International accreditation standards for business schools. AACSB International strives to continuously improve engagement among business, faculty, institutions, and students so that business education aligns with the needs of business practice. To fulfill this goal, AACSB International encourages and accelerates innovation to continuously improve business education. As a result, business schools will have a positive impact on business and society—and AACSB International will amplify that impact.	Business
Council of Social Work Education (CSWE)	CSWE is a national association of social work education programs and individuals that ensure and enhance the quality of social work education for a professional practice that promotes individual, family, and community well-being, and social and economic justice. CSWE pursues this mission in higher education by setting and maintaining national accreditation standards for baccalaureate and master's degree programs in social work, by promoting faculty development, by engaging in international collaborations, and by advocating for social work education and research.	Social Work
Nonprofit Academic Centers Council (NACC)	The Nonprofit Academic Centers Council is a membership association comprising academic centers or programs at accredited colleges and universities that are devoted to the study of the nonprofit sector, philanthropy, and voluntary action to advance education, research, and practice that increase the nonprofit sector's ability to enhance civic engagement, democracy, and human welfare.	Public Service
Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NSPAA)	NASPAA's twofold mission is to ensure excellence in education and training for public service and to promote the ideal of public service.	Nonprofit Management and Philanthropy

For example, NACC was "created to support the work of university-based centers for nonprofit management education and philanthropic studies" (O'Neill, 2005, p. 13), and for our purposes here, the network becomes particularly relevant to a curricular analysis, as NACC has adopted a series of curricular guidelines that are moving toward becoming the institutional norm. Similarly, each other accrediting body has developed standards for curricular content and program management.

In the social sciences, we employ social network analysis to capture and better understand the patterns of relationships among various entities including individuals, groups, organizations, and nation-states. The two basic elements for examination within a social network approach include actors and relations. Our examination of the various networks to which NMPS belongs (also referred to as an affiliation network or a membership network) represents the involvement of a set of actors—in this case, the members of various accrediting bodies—and how they relate to each other through their curricular offerings. The affiliation networks may help us to understand the relationship between the member institutions and the relationship they have to each other in terms of their curricular elements. Through an examination of curricular elements for universities in the various accrediting networks, we seek to understand relationships and patterns among these member institutions through their participation in the development of courses that contain certain similar or dissimilar curricular elements.

By examining social networks in this interorganizational context, we can begin to understand the relationship between the universities in the various networks, rather than focusing on members as autonomous actors. Zaheer, Gözübüyük, and Milanov (2010) suggested that "the network approach changes the perspective from an autonomous, self-reliant view of organizational action to one that is essentially relational" (p. 62). An examination of university relationships through analysis of the pattern of courses offered by member institutions in each network can reveal the structure of the relationship *between* the organizations. To understand fully the various networks of universities offering education in NMPS, we must examine the relationship between the member institutions and the *pattern* of these relationships.

Further, in addition to understanding the structure of the relationships in the network, we need to consider another basic principle of network theory, the structural duality. Mohr and White (2008) emphasized the importance of duality of individuals and of groups to network theory. Drawing on the insight of Simmel, they suggested that "individuals are largely defined by the social groups that they are members of but, at the same time (and dually), social groups are defined by the individuals who are included as members" (Mohr & White, 2008, p. 490). The notion of duality assists us in understanding how one type of structure links with another, individuals to groups and groups to individuals, extending "to linkages among different kinds of social orders" (Mohr & White, 2008, p. 490).

The universities in our study are defined by membership in several social groups or networks, the local university, the department and college of which they are a part, their membership in an accrediting institution, as well as their membership in the larger universe of graduate institutions offering similar NMPS degrees. Each action or practice by an individual university within the accreditation network, for example, adds to and informs the institution that we have come to call AACSB, CSWE, NACC, or NASPAA. These actions or practices are not random or haphazard; however, they

are grounded in the notion of styles. According to Mohr and White (2008), "Styles can be thought of as a fundamental specification of how individual agents live their lives through an ongoing process of combining understanding of situations with sets of practices arrayed across lives embedded within social networks (netdoms)" (p. 491). These regularities by individual actors give institutions their "material existence." However, there is a duality of styles of individual members and of the institution of which they are members. The styles of individual agents can only be understood within the social context in which they operate, that is, through the institutions. Style is thus enabled and constrained by the institution.

In short, when individual universities adopt a particular curricular approach or style, these actions shape the accrediting networks, and at the same time, membership in the accrediting networks constrains and informs the development of the curricular approach. While the curricular approach of individual universities gives shape to the accrediting networks, membership in the network significantly informs curricular approaches in the local university:

> Over time, graduate programs in NMPS began to converge in their content and orientation. This was a natural process, nicely fitting the concept of "institutional isomorphism" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983) wherein organizations in the same field tend to grow more similar over time because of common environmental pressures and incentives as well as behavioral tendencies to imitate and adopt the successful ideas of competitors and colleagues. External developments and advances in professional thinking also influenced nonprofit management curricula in ways that made the universe of nonprofit management education programs more homogeneous. (Mirabella & Young, 2012, p. 44)

Our task here is to discover these multiple relationships and examine the structural patterns in each. Figure 6 provides a guide to this exercise. Consider the institutional order of NMPS. This institution includes several networks, each generating its own style. The first, referred to as the "local" by Mohr and White (2008), is the individual university department, with a variety of specialties forming the disciplinary unit. There are actions and practices associated with this department, which give meaning to and material substance to the department, some related to the procedures of the university of which it is a part, some emanating from the department, its rules of conduct and procedures, while others result from the various specialties within the unit. This set of actions and styles, if you will, is represented by the circle identified as the "self" in Figure 6. Each NMPS study is housed within a disciplinary department in each university, made up of unique and varied collections of specialties within numerous departments, undergraduate and graduate, of which the NMPS program is one. Although O'Neill (2005) admitted that tensions certainly exist within the modern university as a result of this coupling, he observed that the relationship between undergraduate liberal arts programs and graduate professional programs, including those in nonprofit management, work well enough (p. 6). On the other hand, Palmer and Bogdonova (2008) provided a more cautionary tale in their exploration of factors leading to the closing of what they maintain was "world's first voluntary sector course at the London School of Economics" (p. 79). They found that an "inattention to the way the university operates"

and a failure to "nurture key relationships within the department and university" were partially responsible for the closing of the course (p. 91).

In addition to being specialties within a particular university, each NMPS program connects to similar specialties in various disciplinary departments in universities across the country. The particular specialty spreads across a larger network of university departments and becomes larger than the unit in its local setting or the individual university department. The circle labeled "group" in Figure 6 represents the network of each accrediting body. Many activities occur within this wider network of specialists, including recruitment of new members, defining and redefining the field and its boundaries, and the development of standard rules and norms. Often, the activities of the group occur within a collaborative model, but sometimes there is competition within the group for dominance of narratives or stories.
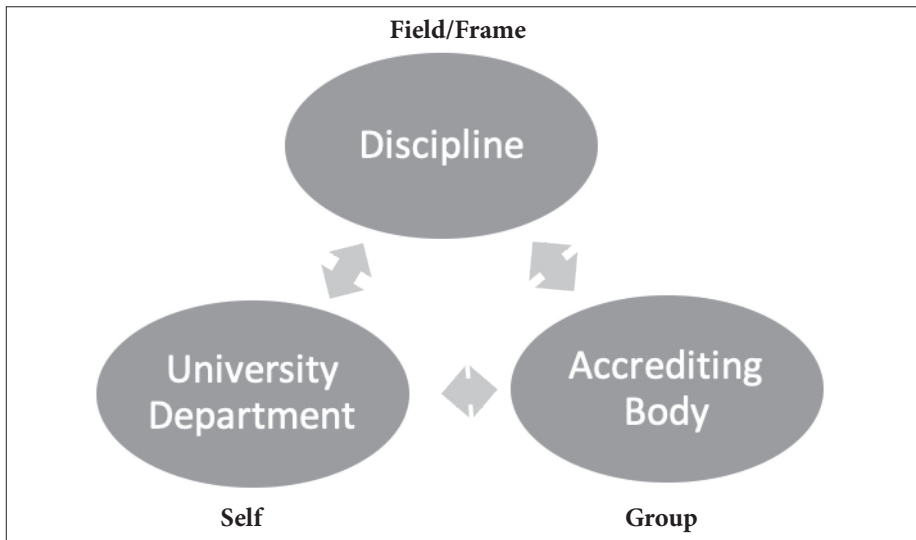

Field/Frame

Discipline

University Department

Accrediting Body

Self   **Group**

Figure 6. Institutional order of NMPS. Adapted from "How to Model an Institution," by J. W. Mohr and H. C. White, 2008, *Theory and Society, 37*(5), p. 496.

Finally, both individual universities and accrediting bodies connect to the larger field of NMPS, in what Mohr and White (2008) referred to as the "invisible college." This is the field of NMPS—research activities, publications, and scholarly exchanges—the third circle in Figure 6 labeled "discipline" that "subsumes the relational sub-systems" (Mohr & White, 2008, p. 496). The activities that occur within this network are what facilitate and bring about change. The reification of individual departments within universities makes change from within the university almost impossible. It is through the activities of the cluster of academics working across university boundaries through the invisible college that change in local style becomes possible. "Ironically, invisible colleges do provide a way, about the only way, to change local styles of departments, which tend toward an extraordinary degree of ossification when there are no active sub disciplines to shake them up" (Mohr & White, 2008, p. 501).

We use social network analysis to help reveal the values in a network through an examination of the patterns of course offerings between individuals or groups, particularly when examining value systems that developed by those participating. As the field of NMPS has grown, we would expect to find similarities in course offerings among universities associated with each accrediting body. We might also anticipate finding synergies among all universities identified as part of the "field" of NMPS as the field becomes more homogeneous. To examine these hypotheses, we collected course descriptions for the top 10 programs nationally ranked in the four accrediting bodies: business, social work, public service, and nonprofit management and philanthropy. U.S. News and World Report ranked nonprofit management specialties for business school and public service. As rankings do not exist at this level of specificity for social work schools, we included the 10 top nationally ranked social work programs with nonprofit curriculum. Finally, for NACC member schools, we included schools within the NACC network *and* listed on U.S. News and World Report as top-ranked national universities.[5] (The Appendix provides a list of programs.) We collected course offerings and descriptions for these universities and coded them using Atlas.ti, a software package designed for qualitative analysis data. We present our findings in the following section.

Findings

The disciplinary field of NMPS shows signs of convergence (or clustering) among groups or accrediting bodies. By convergence, we refer to the number of courses offered in common by universities within each group. Table 2 lists the names of courses offered by more than half of programs within each group, ranked by frequency of occurrence. For example, the course offered most often within a business school is social entrepreneurship, while a course in fundraising and resource development is most often found in a NASPAA-accredited school or a NACC member program. With this measure of convergence, we see that NACC member institutions offer more courses in common (19) than any set of universities within the other groups. NACC has published curricular guidelines for nonprofit programs with 16 curricular elements that it recommends be included in NMPS programs. Through publication of these guidelines, NACC has defined the field and established boundaries for curricular offerings. We are not surprised, then, to find that this group of universities would be most apt to follow the standard rules and norms promulgated by the group of which it is a part. None of the accreditation standards for the other three groups promulgate standards at the level of specificity for concentrations that NACC has through its curricular guidelines. Social work programs with nonprofit curriculum accredited by CSWE have 13 courses in common among the top 10 schools. The accreditation standards for programs in public service promulgated by NASPAA include five domains for universal competencies, but do not specify required competences for specific concentrations. For all universities in this group, only nine courses are offered in common by more than half the programs, one of which is public policy, a course considered a universal competency by NASPAA. AACSB accreditation standards, similar to NASPAA accreditation standards, provide recommended competencies for general business and management

knowledge areas, but do not specify competencies for the specialized disciplines. For the 10 universities with AACSB accreditation, we found only five courses offered by more than half of the universities.

Table 2

Courses Offered by a Majority of Schools Within Group Accrediting Body

Accrediting body	Courses
AACSB (5)	Social Entrepreneurship
	Nonprofit Management and Administration
	Social Investing
	Social Innovation and Change
	Governance of Nonprofits
CSWE (13)	Human Resources Management in Nonprofits
	Community Assessment, Program Design, and Change
	Leadership in a Changing Workplace
	Program Evaluation and Performance Management
	Fundraising and Resource Development
	Community Organizing and Social Change
	Marketing and Public Relations for Nonprofit Organizations
	Grant Writing for Nonprofit Organizations
	Nonprofit Management and Administration
	Nonprofit Advocacy, Law, and Policy
	Strategic Planning and Management
	Social Innovation and Change
	Development
NASPAA (9)	Fundraising and Resource Development
	Nonprofit Management and Administration
	Social Entrepreneurship
	Program Evaluation and Performance Management
	Nonprofit Sector
	Public Policy
	NGOs
	Philanthropy
	Human Resources Management in Nonprofits

Table 2 (cont.)

Accrediting body	Courses
NACC (19)	Fundraising and Resource Development
	Human Resources Management in Nonprofits
	Nonprofit Management and Administration
	Program Evaluation and Performance Management
	Governance of Nonprofits
	Strategic Planning and Management
	Social Entrepreneurship
	Nonprofit Sector
	Philanthropy
	Leadership in a Changing Workplace
	NGOs
	Nonprofit Advocacy, Law, and Policy
	Collaborations and Cross-Sector Relationships
	Grant Writing for Nonprofit Organizations
	Marketing and Public Relations for Nonprofit Organizations
	Capstone
	Volunteer Resource Management
	Quantitative and Qualitative Reasoning
	Database and Information Management

For AACSB-accredited business schools, almost one quarter of courses offered cover aspects of social entrepreneurship. Nonprofit management and leadership, and social investing each comprise 11% of all NMPS courses in a top business school. These course offerings reflect the mission of AACSB to align business education with business practice. Ten percent of all NMPS courses within a social work school have content covering community assessment and program design, and community organizing and social change, both courses directly connected to the mission of the CSWE to promote community well-being, and social and economic justice. On the other hand, NASPAA-accredited schools and NACC member institutions have course distributions more evenly distributed among the categories.

To analyze the relationship among the universities within each group, we conducted chi-square tests of proportions to test the significance of differences or similarities among the distribution of courses within each group. If the chi-square test statistic is larger than the critical chi-square value, we reject the null hypothesis, which in our case shows that course proportions differ significantly in each group. Are the courses included in business school settings similar to each other or are courses in

public service schools similar to each other? While the small sample size limits gener-alization and models better suited to assess trends, these tests nonetheless show differ-ences among university course offerings within each accrediting body. Table 3 shows the results of the chi-square tests for each group. In the case of the three groups that have accrediting bodies (AACSB, CSWE, and NASPAA), we found no significant dif-ferences in the proportion of courses offered across the universities in each group. In the case of NACC, the one group that we included *without* an independent accrediting body, we found a statistically significant difference in the proportion of courses. The NACC network includes NMPS programs housed within a business setting, a public service setting, a social work setting, and other schools. As argued in the model above, the strength of the relationship among NACC members to their disciplinary home and associated accrediting body appears to be stronger than the relationship with NACC as measured by the similarity among the group in course offerings. To test this assertion, we examined the relationship among the five universities in the NACC group that are also housed within schools of public service. Taking this group alone, we found that the *F* statistic is less than the critical value and shows similarity among the means for this group ($F = 2.21$ and $F_{crit} = 2.55$). As NACC moves forward with its own accrediting system, it will be interesting to see if convergence of courses among these universities begins to match the convergence of courses for universities within long-standing ac-crediting systems.

Table 3

Chi-Square Tests of Course Proportions Within Accrediting Body or Group

Statistic	AACSB	CSWE	NASPAA	NACC
χ^2 test statistic	10	14.85	12.72	26.66
Degrees of freedom	9	9	10	8
p value	0.35	0.10	0.24	0.00

How much clustering and convergence do we see within the "invisible college" or field of NMPS? Figure 7 shows the courses most frequently offered within the field of NMPS, detailing the percentage of courses offered within each group. For example, the most frequently found course was social entrepreneurship, with 41% of the 49 courses in social entrepreneurship found within a business school. Similarly, 91% of the 11 courses in social investing are taught within a business school. On the other hand, of the 21 courses in community assessment, program design, and change, 81% are located in a social work program, as are 89% of the courses in community organizing and social change. As mentioned, public policy courses are most often found in a public administration program (55%). Moreover, more than half of the courses in philanthro-py (53%) and nongovernmental organizations (50%) are in a school of public service. The courses within NACC programs are more evenly distributed, as noted. However, a course in collaborations and cross-sector relationships is more frequently found within these programs (55%).
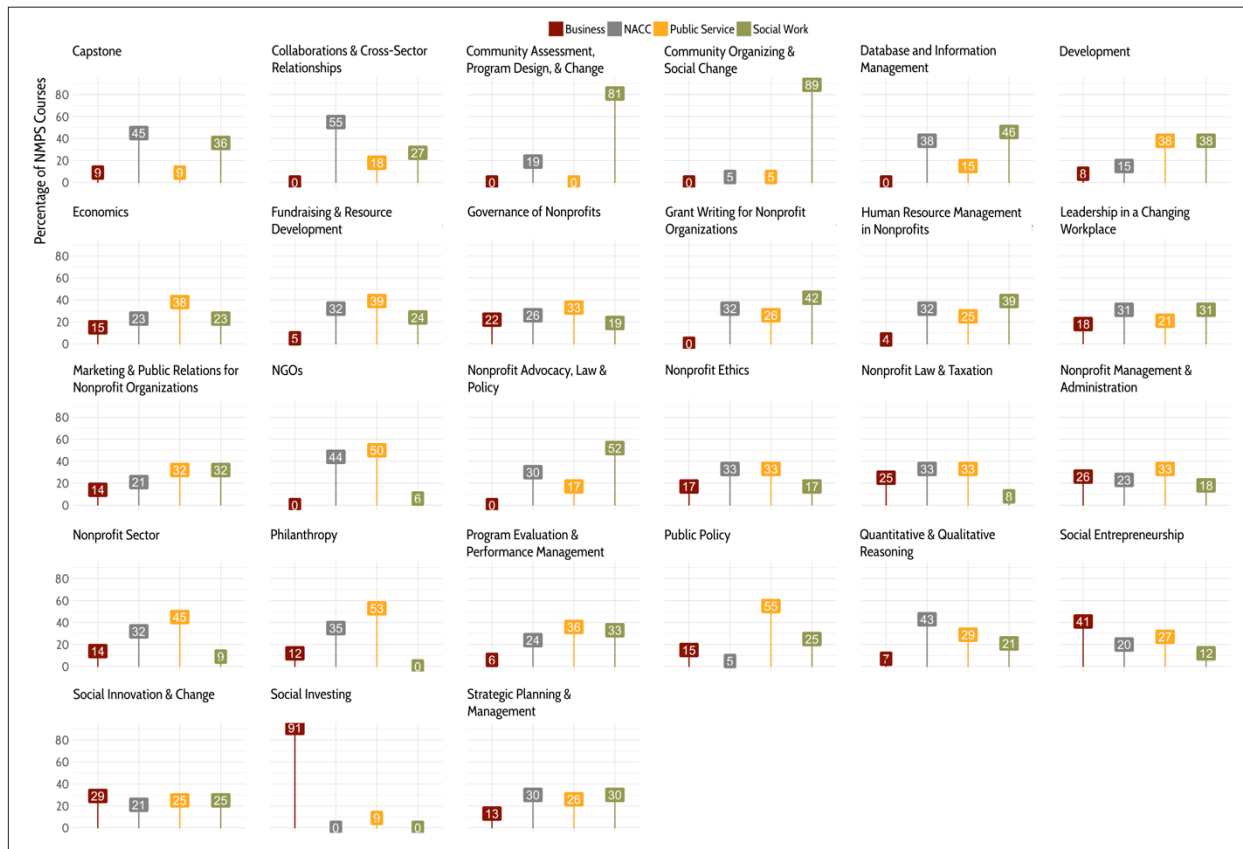
The Evolution of Nonprofit Management

Figure 7. Frequency of NMPS courses within each group.

Finally, to what extent are the course offerings among the four groups within NMPS programs similar? We compared the groups to each other on the rank average for each course within the particular groups using Spearman's *r* to measure the strength between the rank order for each group, with rankings from -1 to 1 (Figure 8). The rank average for schools in public service has a strong linear relationship among the rank average of courses within NACC member programs (.66). There is a moderate linear relationship between schools of public administration and schools of business administration. We found that social work programs have weak relationships for their rank averages with those in all other groups, including a negative relationship with the rank average of courses for business schools (−.17).

Discussion and Conclusion

Our analysis of the affiliation networks of NMPS programs shows clustering among course offerings for universities affiliated with a particular accrediting body. These findings support the notion of "institutional isomorphism" with organizations in the same field growing similar over time because of environmental pressures and incentives as well as behavioral tendencies to imitate and adopt the successful ideas of competitors and colleagues. Our analysis of highly ranked programs in NMPS have revealed these tendencies. Graduate programs in NMPS have strong similarities in their content and in their disciplinary orientation. We noted the homogeneity among course offerings, with a large number of courses in common among the universities within each group. For schools accredited by AACSB, almost one quarter of the courses covered aspects of entrepreneurship, reflecting the mission of AACSB to align business education with business practices. Likewise, schools of social work have curricular offerings directly connected to the mission of its accrediting body, CSWE. Courses in community organizing and social change reflect the mission of CSWE and its focus on social and economic justice. Programs located in public administration settings had a more even distribution of courses across the board, perhaps reflecting NASPAA's more generic mission of promoting public service. While the programs of NACC member institutions showed an even distribution as well, its mission of enhancing engagement, democracy, and human welfare, is much more specific than NASPAA's. Our networked analysis showed no significant difference in the proportion of courses offered across the universities in each disciplinary group (AACSB, CSWE and NASPAA), but we found a statistically significant difference in the proportion of courses for NACC, the one group without an independent accrediting body. Our study finds that the strength of the relationship among NACC member institutions to their discipline and accrediting body is stronger than the relationship with other NACC members.

However, we also found that the *field* of NMPS or the "invisible college" continues to be quite heterogeneous. Universities in the network appear to work across boundaries within the group or accrediting body, which reflects the disciplinary structure, but do not appear to work across boundaries that transcend traditional disciplinary fields. These relational sub-systems or groups (Figure 6) have not been "subsumed" by the growing NMPS field. Furthermore, content emphasized in one group, for example social entrepreneurship within a business school setting, are vastly different from those emphasized within another group, community organizing and change within a social work setting. Our analysis of the rank averages for courses within particular groups revealed a strong linear relationship between schools of public administration and
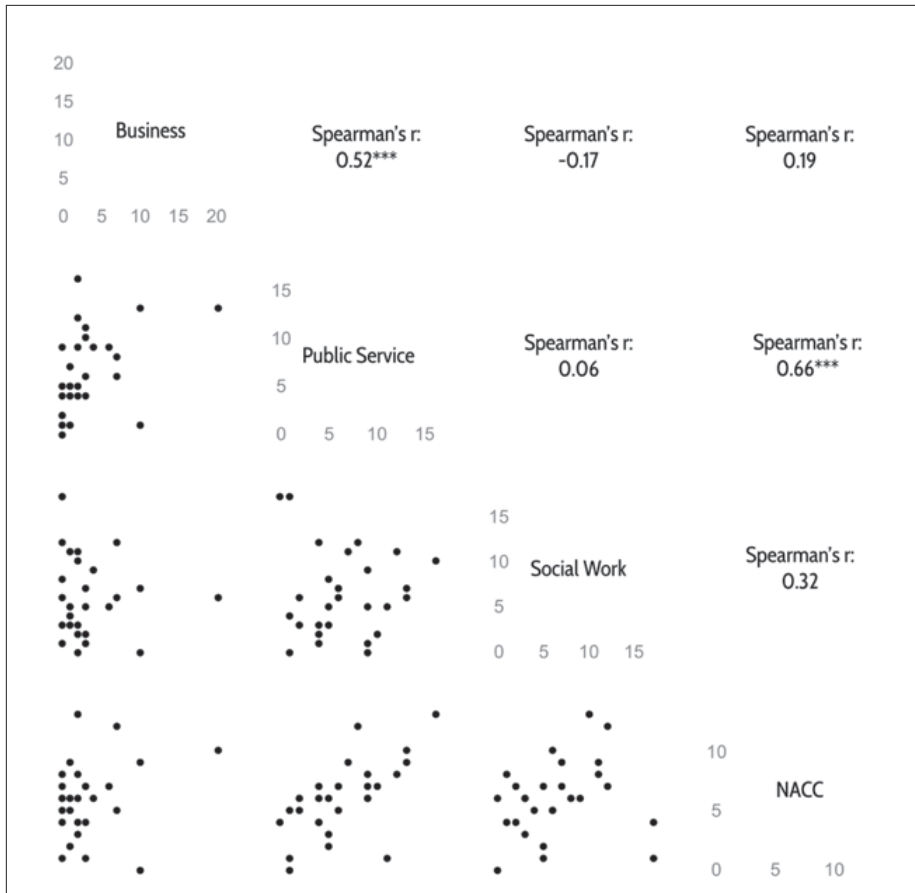
Figure 8. Spearman's correlation coefficient by group. ***p < .01.

NACC member programs, a more moderate relationship between schools of public administration and business administration and very weak relationships between schools of social work and the other groups.

In sum, this study shows that the *field* of nonprofit management and philanthropic studies has yet to come into its own as the institutional order of course offerings continues to be largely determined by membership within accrediting body and discipline, which may not necessarily be a problem in need of a solution. Perhaps the field of NMPS would be best served by a variety of disciplinary approaches, each with their own specific "constructed" perspective on the "definition and role of values" (Miller-Stevens, Taylor, & Morris, 2015, p. 2429). For example, NMPS programs in business schools have the scholarly expertise to develop entrepreneurial managers for the sector, while schools of social work, with their emphasis on community organizing and social change, will prepare future leaders as agents of social change. Faculty in each discipline would continue to be guided by the values and mission of the discipline in the development of curricular options. These values would stem, in part, from the

mission and values as articulated by the accrediting body of each discipline, NASPAA, AACSB, and CSWE.

On the other hand, as the nonprofit sector becomes increasingly affected by neoliberalism with its emphasis on privatization, marketization, and corporate philanthropic forms (Eikenberry & Mirabella, 2018), there may be a need for educational programming that is more robust so that we can further emphasize the importance of democracy and participatory governance as missions central to the emerging field of NMPS. More pointedly, the nonprofit and philanthropic sector may indeed be a bulwark against growing trends toward corporatism and privatization of all three sectors, reclaiming the values of the third sector in contrast to growing trends. As Clohesy (2000) argued,

> In a society in which both business and government agents frequently privatize their relations with the people they serve and with the expectations those people have of their institutions, TSO's [third sector organization's] members should set forth an insistently public alternative, and speak for the reemergence of public spirit and public action in the lives of citizens and their institutions. (p. 251)

Those of us who educate the future leaders of nonprofit and philanthropic organizations would be wise to heed his call.

References

Cleary, R. E. (1990). What do public administration masters programs look like? Do they do what is needed? *Public Administration Review, 50,* 663–673. https://doi.org/10.2307/976977

Clohesy, W. W. (2000). Altruism and the endurance of the good. *Voluntas, 11*(3), 237–253. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1008923809507

DiMaggio, P. J., & Powell, W. W. (1983). The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields. *American Sociological Review, 48*(2), 147–160. https://doi.org/10.2307/2095101

Eikenberry, A. M., & Mirabella, R. M. (2018). Extreme philanthropy: Philanthrocapitalism, effective altruism, and the discourse of neoliberalism. *PS: Political Science & Politics, 51*(1), 43–47. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096517001378

Kettl, D. F. (2000). Public administration at the millennium: The state of the field. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, 10*(1), 7–34. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.jpart.a024267

Knoke, D. H., & Yang, S. (2008). *Social network analysis* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412985864

Miller-Stevens, K., Taylor, J., & Morris, J. (2015). Are we really on the same page? An empirical examination of value congruence between public sector and nonprofit sector managers. *Voluntas, 26*(6), 2424–2446. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-014-9514-6

Mirabella, R. M., & Wish, N. B. (2000). The "best place" debate: A comparison of graduate education programs for nonprofit managers. *Public Administration Review, 60*(3), 219–229.

Mirabella, R., & Young, D. R. (2012). The development of education for social entrepreneurship and nonprofit management: Diverging or converging paths? *Nonprofit Management and Leadership, 23*(1), 43–57. https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.21049

Mohr, J. W., & White, H. C. (2008). How to model an institution. *Theory and Society, 37*(5), 485–512. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-008-9066-0

Nelarine, C., Wallace, J., & Tassabeji, R. (2007). An analysis of corporate social responsibility, corporate identity, and ethics teaching in business schools. *Journal of Business Ethics, 76*(1), 117–135. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-006-9271-6

O'Neill, M. (2005). Developmental contexts of nonprofit management education. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership, 16*(1), 5–17. https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.87

Palmer, P., & Bogdanova, M. (2008). The British are not coming! UK higher education and the nonprofit sector. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership, 19*(1), 79–99. https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.206

Rathgeb Smith, S. (2012). Changing government policy and its implications for nonprofit management education. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership, 23*(1), 29–41. https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.21054

Saidel, J. R., & Smith, S. R. (2015). Nonprofit management education in schools with public affairs curricula: An analysis of the trend toward curriculum integration. *Journal of Public Affairs Education, 21*(3), 337–348. https://doi.org/10.1080/15236803.2015.12001839

Segon, M., & Booth, C. (2012). Are MBAs meeting business's needs? *World Journal of Management, 4*(2), 1–13.

Thomas, S. L. (2000). Ties that bind: A social network approach to understanding student integration and persistence. *Journal of Higher Education, 71*(5), 591–615. https://doi.org/10.1080/00221546.2000.11778854

Wiley, K. K., & Berry, F. S. (2015). Teaching social entrepreneurship in public affairs programs: A review of social entrepreneurship courses in the top 30 U.S. public administration and affairs programs. *Journal of Public Affairs Education, 21*(3), 381–400. https://doi.org/10.1080/15236803.2015.12002205

Young, D. R. (1987). Executive leadership in nonprofit organizations. In W. W. Powell (Ed.), *The nonprofit sector: A research handbook* (pp. 167–179). New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Young, D. R. (1998). Games universities play: An analysis of the institutional complexities of centers for nonprofit study. In M. O'Neill & K. Fletcher (Eds.), *Nonprofit management education: U.S. and world perspectives* (pp. 119–136). Westport, CT: Praeger.

Zaheer, A., Gözübüyük, R., & Milanov, H. (2010). It's the connections: The network perspective in interorganizational research. *Academic of Management Perspectives, 24*(1), 62–77. https://doi.org/10.5465/amp.24.1.62

Appendix

AACSB Accredited Schools

Columbia University

Duke University

Harvard University

Northwestern University

Stanford University

University of California at Berkeley

University of California at Los Angeles

University of Notre Dame

University of Michigan

Yale University

CSWE-Accredited Schools

Boston College

Case Western Reserve University

Columbia University

University of Chicago

University of Michigan

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

University of Pittsburgh

University of Texas at Austin

University of Washington

Washington University at St. Louis

NASPAA-Accredited Schools[a]

Arizona State University

Georgia State University

Harvard University

Indiana University - Purdue

Indiana University - Bloomington

New York University

Syracuse University

University at Albany, SUNY

University of Minnesota

University of Southern California

University of Washington

NACC Member Schools[b]

Arizona State University

Case Western Reserve University

DePaul University

The New School

University of Central Florida

University of Oregon

University of San Diego

University of San Francisco

University of Southern California

[a]Inclusion of 11 schools reflects ties in ranking.
[b]Inclusion of nine schools reflects the number of NACC members that are top-ranked national universities.