

**NCLC 511 – Managing for Success: Career Development
Syllabus – Spring 2011**

George Mason University
AZA Schools for Professional Development

Instructors

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Teaching Team:

Patty Peters, Associate Zoo Director Community Relations
Columbus Zoo

Nancy Ansel, V.P. Human Resources
Shedd Aquarium

Allyson Atkins, Curator of Education, Group and Satellite Programs
Disney's Animal Kingdom

Scott Barton, Executive Director
Fresno Chaffee Zoo

Rachel Bergren, VP of Education
Lincoln Park Zoo

Bruce Bohmke, Deputy Director
Woodland Park Zoo

Lars Erdahl, Education Director
Minnesota Zoo

Chris Gentile, Director
Western North Carolina Nature Center

Tara Henson, Director of Marketing and Public Relations
Oklahoma City Zoo

Debra Kerr, Executive Director
Youth Muse

Steve Marshall, Director
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Steph Mizer, Human Resources Director
Columbus Zoo & Aquarium

Steve Olson, V.P. of Government Affairs
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Doug Piekarz, VP of Planning and Conservation Programs
Akron Zoo

Christina Pitts, President
Pitts-Aldrich Associates

Bob Ramin, Director of Federal Relations
National Aquarium in Baltimore

Steve Thompson, Sr. VP of Conservation Programs
Lincoln Park Zoo

Alan Varsik, Assistant Director
Oklahoma City Zoo

Tony Vecchio, Executive Director
Jacksonville Zoo

Kris Vehrs, Executive Director
AZA

Martha Wells, VP for Communication
Mote Marine Laboratory

Learning Goals & Objectives

Participants will:

- Receive practical tools and skills to take back to their home institutions to apply at their level.
- Learn how to help their organizations advance and implement their missions.
- Leave with a broadened perspective of both their institutions and the industry.
- Increase their network of resources.
- Understand their role in their institutions and our industry and why they are important.
- Leave with heightened leadership skills.

Grading Requirements

Measures for assessment are class participation and performance on the final class project, and assessment of the written exam for those taking the course for graduate credit.

Participants are expected to participate as individuals in in-class discussions. Much of the week will be spent in group activity, in both small-group activities in class, as well as participation in the final project team. Project teams will work together outside of class time to complete a course project. Each student is expected to fully participate in group activities, and to contribute to the final project in a manner equal to that of project partners.

Students must attend all five days of the session, and are expected to stay at the Oglebay Resort (rather than commute) so that they can participate in required evening work sessions with their project groups.

Students in this course are required to take a written, multiple choice exam at the end of the course and receive a grade (90-100% = A, 80-89% = B, 70-79% = C, 60-69% = D, below 60% is failure).

Schedule of Topics & Assignments

The aquarium and zoo field is unique. The management of one of these organizations is a challenging prospect, more nearly like a hospital than another type of business. The typical mission involves education, conservation, research and public display requiring the delivery of a high-quality entertainment product to customers while furthering wildlife conservation and environment preservation while keeping a living collection alive and healthy.

This course is designed to assist two types of students: the zoo and aquarium employee who has demonstrated leadership skills by rising to a management role in the organization, or a manager who has previous management experience in another field and has moved to a zoo or aquarium. Career Development focuses on understanding the new manager's role within the multiple disciplines working within a zoo or aquarium. The course provides learning experiences that are not offered in traditional business management programs. While giving students some basic management skills, the emphasis is on providing specialized practical management tools for those aspects unique to this field.

Managing for Success: Career Development examines those disciplines required within a zoo or aquarium with special emphasis on how those disciplines must operate within the animal management environment. For example, animal activism issues and the commonalities around competent handling of those issues is the focus of the public relations and marketing segments within this course. Within the employee development segments, issues related to animal handling or field work are covered. Basic skills such as writing and public speaking are not offered, as those skills can be acquired through other means. Organization design and governance, managing volunteers, revenue-producing activities in zoos and aquariums, guest service in zoos and aquariums, and

development and membership are all segments that relate directly to how these organizations operate.

Topics

- Personal goal setting
- Recruiting and diversity
- Interviewing and hiring
- Employment law, policies, and procedures
- Performance management
- Motivation
- Organizational structure and governance
- Public relations
- Introduction to conservation
- Marketing and trends
- Revenue-producing activities
- Development and membership
- Sponsorships
- Guest service
- Volunteers
- Conservation education
- Introduction to AZA
- Budgeting
- Diversity in zoos and aquariums
- Understanding personalities
- Government affairs

The course begins with an introductory session on Monday evening. Class hours are 8 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday. Group project work continues each evening.

Required and Recommended Reading

Students receive a course monograph prior to the class, which contains outlines for each section, reference material, and copies of instructors' PowerPoint presentations. Instructors may provide additional materials during the course.

Prerequisites

Participants must be staff members at a zoo or aquarium, full-time students in the George Mason University Zoo & Aquarium Leadership Program, or have permission of the instructor of record. Students are expected to hold a supervisory position within their organization.

Disability Statement

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please notify AZA's Professional Development Program Manager and contact the Office of Disability Resources at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. Please note that this course is offered at Oglebay Resort in Wheeling, WV, away from the GMU campus. Therefore, students will not have access to campus

support services. Students requiring any assistance should speak with their course instructors who will work with AZA staff to accommodate requests.

Honor Code

George Mason University has an Honor Code, which requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are all prohibited. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee. See honorcode.gmu.edu for more detailed information.

Enrollment Statement

Students are responsible for verifying their enrollment in this class. Schedule adjustments should be made by the deadlines published in the Schedule of Classes. (Deadlines each semester are published in the Schedule of Classes available from the Registrar's Website registrar.gmu.edu.) Note that AZA-managed courses do not always follow the same calendar; in particular, the last day to add a class is three weeks prior to the first day of class.

After the last day to drop a class, withdrawing from this class requires the approval of the dean and is only allowed for nonacademic reasons. Undergraduate students may choose to exercise a selective withdrawal. See the Schedule of Classes for selective withdrawal procedures.

Student Learning Assessment

A survey is sent to each student prior to the course to assess students' level of knowledge in several areas, and to learn from them what they most want to get from the course. Instructors use this feedback to refine their presentations as needed.

Instructors will assess student learning through students' participation in class discussions and small-group activities, and through a team oral presentation on the last day of class. The whole instructor team will provide verbal feedback to each team following its presentation. Course administrators will assess learning by students taking the class for credit by reviewing the written final project that must be submitted two weeks following the end of the course. During the week, open discussion is encouraged. Students may present their experiences or situations, and receive feedback from instructors and fellow students.

During the course week, instructors hold a very brief, informal "check in" with students at the end of each day. This is to resolve any logistical concerns (the room is too cold) as well as assess what students think of the pace of the course, and what could improve the student experience. These course corrections are used each evening by instructors to plan for the following sections.

An extensive informal evaluation is held at the end of the course (an open discussion between students and teachers) to assess the course's overall strengths and weaknesses, and to solicit feedback from students that will shape the following year's course.

In addition, students complete a formal course evaluation form, in which students provide quantitative and qualitative feedback.

AZA Schools Code of Conduct

Professional Development Committee (PDC) members shall make reasonable efforts to disseminate and enforce the following Codes of Conduct, which apply to PDC members, instructors, students, and AZA staff. AZA staff, course administrator(s), and PDC members present at the training course shall review cases of infractions and initiate disciplinary action, which may include dismissal from the course. Individuals subject to disciplinary action have the right to written appeal to the PDC and AZA.

The following types of conduct are prohibited at AZA Professional Training courses and may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including removal or expulsion. This list is not all-inclusive; these are merely examples:

- Reporting to classrooms under the influence of alcoholic beverage and/or illegal drugs or the use, sale, dispensing, or possession of alcoholic beverages and/or illegal drugs during classroom sessions
- Engaging in conduct which is racially, ethnically, or sexually offensive, or which constitutes sexual harassment
- Failure to treat others with courtesy and respect
- The use of profanity or abusive language
- The possession of firearms or other weapons on the premises
- Using violence, threats, intimidation, coercion, or interference
- Theft, destruction, defacement, or misuse of the premise's property or of any individual's property at the course or on the premises
- Immoral, indecent, or unlawful conduct
- Cheating or aiding in cheating effort