

**Make a
Living** _____
**Make a
Difference**

**A GUIDE TO
Careers in Nonprofits
FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

CAREERS FOR THE COMMON GOOD

DARTMOUTH COLLEGE CAREER SERVICES

WWW.DARTMOUTH.EDU/~CSRC/

What is the nonprofit sector?

Nonprofits are non-governmental organizations that promote a cause, provide a public service, or otherwise work for the common good, thus qualifying for federal tax-exempt status. There are more than 1.2 million nonprofits in the United States, employing an estimated 11 million people—approximately 10 percent of the nation’s workforce. Among the many types of nonprofits are educational institutions, foundations, social service organizations, museums and other arts organizations, hospitals and health services, scientific and research organizations, religious organizations, and advocacy and political groups.

Why work for a nonprofit?

According to a 2003 national Brookings Institution poll of 1,000 college seniors, almost two-thirds had seriously considered a job in public service. “The nonprofit sector was seen as the best place to go for someone who wanted a chance to help people, make a difference, and gain the respect of family and friends,” the study reported. Another Brookings Institution survey showed that, compared to federal and private-sector employees, nonprofit employees were more likely to say they are given a chance to do the things they do best; characterize their organization as innovative, helpful, fair, and trustworthy; view their colleagues as collaborative and open to new ideas; and feel they are accomplishing something worthwhile. To learn why many Dartmouth alumni work for nonprofits, see:

> www.alumsforsocialchange.org

What can I earn at a nonprofit?

Generally salaries in the nonprofit sector lag behind salaries for comparable jobs in the federal or private sectors. A 25 percent salary differential is not uncommon. However, starting salaries at nonprofits are not that differ-

ent from those in education, publishing, or similar areas. Most entry-level nonprofit salaries fall in the \$20,000-\$30,000 range. According to Idealist.org, “You will be able to make a living, you just may not be able to go to the same trendy restaurants, buy a house as soon, or have the same name-brand clothes as some of your relatives or friends who went into higher-paying jobs.” Many nonprofits provide attractive benefits, however. According to Salary.com, these often include “generous vacation time and sick pay, low premiums on medical and dental insurance, good retirement plans, tuition reimbursement, and sometimes a convenient or flexible work schedule.”

Can I move out of nonprofits?

From entry-level to executive positions, the skill sets developed in the nonprofit sector are easily transferable to the for-profit sector—and vice versa. As they often entrust entry-level employees with more responsibility than do private businesses, nonprofits can be excellent career launchers. At all levels, people routinely move between the nonprofit and for-profit sectors. Dartmouth Trustee Michael Chu '68 is a case in point. Chu started his career as a political organizer in Uruguay, then joined the private sector as a management consultant and investment banker. Applying those skills to microenterprise, he took the helm of Accion, a private nonprofit corporation providing small business loans to people throughout Latin America and the United States. As Chu told Harvard Business School, “The ability to understand a problem, to think of ways to address it, to inspire a team to tackle it, and to make sure you have the proper resources is crucial in any management position. The approach is absolutely the same whether you are doing a billion dollar leveraged buyout in New York or loaning five hundred dollars to an entrepreneur in Latin America.”

Can I mix nonprofit work and business?

Increasingly the lines between the public and private sectors are starting to blur. Not only are nonprofits utilizing business practices and savvy, but businesses are becoming more concerned with ethics, social values, and sustainability. Career areas that combine nonprofit values with business include community foundations, nonprofit management, and nonprofit consulting. In addition, emerging fields include:

Social Entrepreneurship

Bill Drayton, co-founder of Ashoka, an organization that supports innovative solutions to problems around the world, coined the term social entrepreneur to describe “a pathbreaker with a powerful new idea who combines visionary and real-world problem-solving creativity, who has strong ethical fiber, and who is totally possessed by his or her vision for change.” Says Drayton, “Social entrepreneurs are not content just to give a fish, or teach how to fish. They will not rest until they have revolutionized the fishing industry.”

> www.dartmouth.edu/~csrc/careers/entr.html

> www.ashoka.org

Venture Philanthropy

Increasingly, philanthropists want to get involved in the causes they support. “Many donors are interested in the potential for a partnership, not just the opportunity to write a check,” says venture philanthropist Ken Novack ’63. “Increasingly many donors may also be seeking greater accountability from institutions regarding where and how money is used, and focusing more on outcomes and metrics for success.”

> www.den.dartmouth.edu/home

> www.networkforgood.org

> www.vppartners.org

Socially Responsible Business

Businesses should do more than create wealth, according to Tom Chappell, co-founder of Tom's of Maine, "a company that produces innovative, natural care products in a caring and creative work environment." It's a philosophy that is shared by an increasing number and variety of businesses, large and small. To learn more about socially responsible business, see Chappell's book, *The Soul of a Business: Managing for Profit and The Common Good*.

> www.net-impact.org

> www.sustainablebusiness.com

> www.bsr.org

What about graduate programs?

A growing number of graduate programs train people to apply the most up-to-date business management practices to nonprofit organizations. Some, like the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth, teach M.B.A. students skills that can be used in either the nonprofit or for-profit sector. Other programs offer specialized degrees. For example, the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University offers an M.B.A. in Mission-Driven Management, and NYU's Graduate School of Public Service offers a master's degree in Public and Nonprofit Management and Policy. In addition, college graduates can pursue fellowships in public policy research, homelessness, environmental issues, social entrepreneurship, philanthropy, education, health care, the arts, and many other fields. Most fellowships require a one- to two-year commitment, and some lead to a master's degree in public policy or public health.

> www.nonprofits.org/misc/acad.html

> www.idealists.org/career/fellowship.html

Alumni Perspectives

Kate Knight '01

MAJOR: Geography

WORK: Unitus microfinance, Redmond, Washington

“Microfinance helps people in developing countries work their way out of poverty. Unitus brings in resources from the traditional finance and venture capital fields. I help identify and grow the microfinance banks we invest in through analyzing markets and investment opportunities and through strategic consulting to help our partners reach their goals. There is increasing overlap between the nonprofit, political, and business sectors, with nonprofits managing a growing share of the U.S. GDP every year. There’s a ton out there—and many ways to get involved.”

Amish Parashar '03

MAJOR: Biomedical Engineering

WORK: President, International Humanitarian Foundation, London, England

“There is a profound need for dedicated, innovative leaders in the nonprofit world. All majors have something to contribute—anthropologists, philosophers, economists, and engineers. Do not be afraid to try something new and make a difference in whatever ways you can. Many organizations can use your talents in short- and long-term volunteering, paid work, and career-track professional jobs.”

Don Samuelson '62

MAJOR: English

WORK: Government-assisted housing, Lake Forest, Illinois

“I use housing to create service-enriched environments, connecting people to resources and technology. It’s running a business with a strong social purpose. The nonprofit world can be run with efficiency and discipline—all of the best characteristics of the for-profit world. To do real good, you have to do good things well.”

Theresa M. Ellis '97

MAJOR: Religion

WORK: Executive Director, Harbinger Partners, Cambridge, Massachusetts

“I founded Harbinger Partners to connect the for-profit and nonprofit sectors. I saw how resource-starved many nonprofits were, particularly in information technology. I also watched as my friends from college struggled to put the skills that they were learning at McKinsey and AOL and Microsoft to work. I wanted to match the technological know-how of private-sector employees to the technological needs of nonprofits—and see how they would both be transformed by their work together.”

Jon Fine '76

MAJOR: Government

WORK: President, United Way of King County, Seattle, Washington

“Working in the nonprofit field can be extraordinarily rewarding. There are unusually good opportunities to develop skills, be creative, take on significant and early responsibilities, and be exposed to interesting and diverse issues. Nonprofit professionals work on sophisticated applications amongst talented and dedicated people. I have worked for businesses and nonprofits. Nonprofits can be every bit as exciting, important, and career-enhancing as the best businesses.”

Jen Tutak '02

MAJOR: English

WORK: Fairmount Ventures consulting, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

“Nonprofits require the same talent of their employees and management capacity as do for-profit companies—individuals who can think analytically, write well, communicate, multi-task, speak foreign languages, travel, and lead. Young Dartmouth alumni would do well to consider nonprofit work, whether to begin a career championing a cause they believe in, or to hone their skills before moving to another field. It is possible to earn a respectable living at a nonprofit. To keep good staff, employers must offer wages people can live on, and there are executive positions that pay into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Supporting universities, arts centers, medical research, fighting hunger, homelessness, diseases, taking care of infants, children, teenagers, the elderly, educating, ameliorating, discovering, giving, learning—the possibilities are vast and golden.”

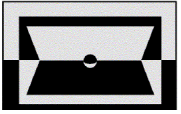
Cortland Barnes '03

MAJOR: Geography

WORK: World Wildlife Fund, Bozeman, Montana

“I’m trying to build my life around the premise that part of being happy is doing work that impassions you and that you find meaningful. I perform most of our in-house Geographic Information Systems work, doing a combination of analysis and mapping. I also provide research and program support—I am as likely to call a meeting of specialists to draft a research proposal as I am to spend a night spotlighting black-footed ferrets in a prairie dog colony. You’re not going to be a starving martyr if you work for a nonprofit. It’s true that nonprofits often can’t pay as well as corporate jobs, but there are many intangibles that corporate jobs sometimes can’t offer, such as decent vacation time and the chance to live in a beautiful place. It is possible to have your cake and eat it too!”

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