

**Brandeis University**  
**International Business School**

**Leadership Internships in Social Impact Organizations (BUS 297C)**

*BUILDING YOUR BRAND OF LEADERSHIP THROUGH INDIVIDUAL  
STRATEGIC AND TACTICAL BOARD FELLOW EXPERIENCE*

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

Leadership Internships in Social Impact Organizations is a two-semester course offering a total of 4 academic credits, 2 each semester. Both semesters are required, not optional. This experiential learning class provides an opportunity for students to individually assume high level strategic, tactical and/or leadership assignments in social impact organizations. Students may become a non-voting board fellow as part of their assignment and/or may be providing board level strategic and tactical consulting, depending on the nature of the host organization and the scope of each student's particular assignment. All opportunities will provide a forum for students to develop and amplify their own unique brand of high stakes contributions to real world social impact organizations.

As part of their work, students will be exposed to high level organizational as well as business leadership from the community. Most partnership organizations will be not for profits, but some may be social for profit enterprises and there may also be foundations and other social funding assignments. Students will emerge from this experience with a unique multifaceted lens into the social innovation sector and their own personal abilities to impact entities, whether it be commercial or not for profit oriented, at a high stakes level.

Each student will be paired with a social impact organization with a somewhat defined responsibility. Through class discussions as well as individual mentorship with the instructor and organization leadership, his or her assignment will be developed and advanced. The objective is to not function as an intern but rather, tackle a challenge with potential strategic impact and tactical feasibility at a senior level. Students will provide weekly communication to their host organization as well as the professor as to their activities.

Participation in this course is by application only, which will consist of cover letter to the instructor @ [gene@brandeis.edu](mailto:gene@brandeis.edu) outlining the basis of a student's candidacy along with an attached resume. A phone interview will also be a part of the selection process for finalists. Class is limited to 24 participants, either at the undergraduate or graduate level.

The primary student outcome is to gain high-level leadership, strategy and tactical experience in real world organizations. As part of this class, students will be tackling roles rooted in one or more of the academic tracks of marketing, real estate, finance and data analytics. All assignments will be with organizations striving for social impact. The course counts as elective credits for the IBS MBA degree and this course will fulfill the general work practicum requirement for the MA students. In addition, with the approval of the relevant program director, this course will also fulfill the work practicum and capstone requirement of the Real Estate, Data Analytics and Marketing concentrations of the MA.

The assignments will involve a variety of high-level organizational challenges and opportunities, such as:

Developing a social media strategy and plan to advance organizational impact and foster community engagement

Construct and early adoption of analytics for measuring an organization's impact

Anchoring the strategic plan for board leadership to achieve its objectives

Assuming a role in shaping the institutional advancement of an organization to attract increased resources

Design and institute financial modeling for organizations with an asset development orientation

Constructing a strategic partnership between organizations to expand impact

Real estate support to include acquisitions/dispositions, tax credits and advancement of affordable housing programming

The assignments/projects will expose students to a wide array of organizational leadership challenges that are found in all types of entities. Sponsoring organizations will range in size from small and local to larger and multi-regional. They may be social enterprises organized as commercial entities or social sector (not for profit) organizations. The scope of student activities will include meetings at the organization and may include a non-voting board fellow role depending on the host organization. Students will be individually accountable however, there may be another student tackling a different role for the same sponsor organization.

During the course of the year the fellows will likely assume a leadership role in a social impact hackathon in conjunction with the Brandeis MakerLab. Most of the preparation will occur in class time, but the 24 event will be held on a TBD weekend and participation is a requirement of the course.

A high degree of maturity and self-motivation are important prerequisites for acceptance into the program. Additionally, assignments will require extensive communication within an organization and its community. Accordingly, English language skills and a strong comfort level with social interactions at various levels are critical.

The class time will include of a combination of class meetings as well as individual meetings with the instructor. During both terms, there will be a series of guest presentations from social entrepreneurs, not for profit executives as well as business leaders active in board leadership. Students should plan on 5 hours per week dedicated to this class that will include a one and a half hour weekly class meeting as well as another 3-4 hours of developing their work and in meetings with their host organization. International students must have work authorization (CPT) to participate in this course. The authorization applies to the 3-4 hours each week a student is engaged with the host organization.

## **LEARNING GOALS & OUTCOMES**

Opportunity to utilize classroom learnings in a real-world experience that focuses on individual professional and personal growth  
Chance to be individually responsible for a high stakes role assignment with strategic impact  
Class will function as a cohort and will include cross training and collaboration among students  
Responsibilities will include a presentation(s) to the organization's board and management  
Exposure for students to high level decision-making for an organization  
Opportunity to advance personal leadership skills as well as tactics and strategy around real-world challenges, opportunities and problems.  
Develop comfort level with functioning around the high-level leadership in organizations that will likely include the board room.  
Enhance students' resumes and contacts with experience working with real organizations  
This responsibility can be noted on your resume with the organization's name but be careful to state your role and **not** suggest or state you were an employee of the sponsoring organization. It provides very interesting topics to discuss at a job interview and distinguishes you from the competition.

**PREREQUISITES:** maturity, self-motivation, desire to succeed and strong communication abilities in English.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Attendance and Participation**

Attendance and active participation in class is essential. Interaction with the class cohort is an important aspect of a successful experience and students will be expected to demonstrate collaborative approach, often cross training one another in this course. Individual meeting times with organizations will be situationally tailored to the host's meeting schedule and are critical to a successful engagement. Participation in the social impact 24 hour hackathon is also a requirement of the class.

## **Academic Honesty**

The instructor will enforce all University rules, especially those regarding to academic honesty and integrity. Note: there is a zero tolerance level in this area. The use of another's material without permission and without recognition is cheating. This applies to text books, solution manuals, study guides, a friend's assignment, past assignments, internet resources or any other material irrespective of the source. You are expected to be honest in all of your work. Please consult Brandeis University [Rights and Responsibilities](#) for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Students may be required to submit work to TurnItIn.com software to verify originality. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Director of Academic Integrity. Sanctions for academic dishonesty can include failing grades and/or suspension from the university. Citation and research assistance can be found at [LTS - Library guides](#)

## **Disabilities**

If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see your program advisor and the consulting field project instructor. Please keep in mind that reasonable accommodations are not provided retroactively.

## **Grading**

The individual student grades will be based on contribution/participation, deliverables, host feedback, extra effort, and work product.

### 35%: DELIVERABLES (QUALITY AND TIMELINESS)

- Development of project time line
- Overall project for host organization
- Self-reflections/evaluation and weekly updates

### 30%: FEEDBACK FROM HOST ORGANIZATION

- Timeliness
- Detail
- Initiative
- Follow through
- Creativity

### 30%: CLASS AND HACKATHON ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

- Leadership in class
- Sharing ideas with class colleagues
- Initiative and engagement

### 5 %: EFFORT ABOVE AND BEYOND WHAT IS ANTICIPATED

The individual student grade will consider such factors as: did the student demonstrate motivation, commitment and collaboration, arrive on time to every class; did the student demonstrate resourcefulness and creativity in generating ideas and strategies to pursue the ideas; did the student meet deadlines; did the student demonstrate critical thinking; did the student demonstrate mastery of the subject matter by the end of the project; did the student effectively participate in class; was; did the student make effective presentations.

## IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW

This class differs in many ways from the conventional course, which will create a number of challenges during the semester. In particular, unlike the traditional class with its well-defined student-instructor role, you must deal with multiple people relationships. First, my role is more of a manager and mentor than a traditional lecturer and, depending on how well the assignment is progressing, I will have anywhere from moderate to heavy involvement in your assignment. You must also deal with your cohort class members who may have different ideas and work styles. You will also have the sponsor host organization, with multiple people playing different roles relating to yours. Your success in this course will depend on your ability to rise to the challenge presented, operating independently, but with mentorship and high level guidance from the instructor.

In taking this class you will experience a number of real-world frustrations, including:

Lack of complete role clarity

Delays in communications and deadlines

Changing assignment scope: bigger, narrower, or different

Organizations can be unsure of what they are seeking from your role

Your assignment may not always seem important to your host

Constituents not responding to calls and emails and requests

Organization sponsors or leaders leave their organizations

I want to assure you that this is the reality of both the business and social sector worlds. Leaders are very busy and, in some cases, various individuals in the client organization might be in survival mode to keep their jobs. **It is essential that you apply personal motivation and individual leadership to your work – develop your path and demonstrate your impact**

This course will expose you to these real-world leadership/management challenges and frustrations, and more importantly, teach you how to rise up to meet them. For example, you will learn how persistence and diplomacy is central to functioning at the right level.

## EXPECTATIONS

The following is an elaboration of what the instructor expects from student teams and how grades will be determined (note that the first two items are of paramount importance to client satisfaction and avoiding getting a low grade). **Remember, in this course you are each an ambassador of Brandeis IBS, the client organization you are**

**representing and yourselves – so always leave favorable impressions.**

Error-free work: facts, figures, and spreadsheets must be error-free. The instructor and - - in particular - - the host organization must not become the quality control department. Consistent errors in work will led to a loss of confidence and a low grade in the course.

Professional conduct: You must maintain a high level of professionalism in undertaking your work including: maintaining client confidentiality; showing up for meetings and conference calls on time; dressing professionally and appropriately for meetings; and fulfilling commitments (e.g., deadlines and deliverables).

Success in this two term four- credit course is based on the expectation that students will spend in addition to the weekly class time of 1 hour and 20 minutes, another 3-4 hours weekly developing their work and in meetings with their host organizations.

Self-motivation: Students should be eager to pursue their role and project work as a matter of self-interest in helping the organization as well as expanding their own personal leadership growth. Accordingly, students should be self-motivated to work throughout both terms pursuing deeper impact.

Independence: Your ability to work with self-sufficiently is critical. To the extent that the scope of work requires instructor input - - as most do - - then instructor/student brainstorming is important, with the student then working independently week to week.

Team orientation: A collaborative approach is an essential aspect of this class. Students are expected to collaborate and share learning with one another through discussions and presentations.

**APPOINTMENTS**

Outside of weekly classes, I will be available to meet with students by appointment. If you need to reach me, send me an email at [gene@brandeis.edu](mailto:gene@brandeis.edu)