

Recent graduates pave way for next generation of nonprofit leaders

By Nicole Hadley

ASU's fall commencement ceremony marked a milestone for the School of Community Resources and Development and the Center for Nonprofit Leadership and Management (CNLM), as the first graduates of the new Masters of Nonprofit Studies (MNpS) program received their degrees.

Katherine Hoverson of Fargo, N.D., and Amber Martinez of Sierra Madre, Calif., were the first two graduates. They also were among the first students to enroll in the MNpS program, which launched in January 2007.

Hoverson and Martinez were determined to complete the program in one year, so they took evening classes, online classes, and summer classes to make the program work with their schedules.

The MNpS degree is designed to provide professionals in the nonprofit field, or those entering the field, with the technical skills to lead and manage nonprofit organizations. In its third semester, this rapidly growing program has 65 students enrolled, plus 40 more students seeking admission for the upcoming summer and fall semesters.

"We are delighted with the quality and overall diversity of the students in our new master's degree program," says Carlton Yoshioka, the school's director of research and academic affairs. "We are in a search process for four new faculty members that will help us to meet this high de-

mand for teaching and research in the burgeoning field of nonprofit and philanthropic studies."

Hoverson, who launched her own nonprofit organization in 2005, "Unexpected Moments of Magic Foundation," says the skills and the contacts she gained while in the MNpS program helped her succeed.

"When I first started my foundation, I didn't know what I was doing because I had never run a nonprofit before," she says. "And now I feel like I'm finally prepared to do the job that I've been trying to create for the last two years. I'm living my dream. I love it."

Hoverson says the people she connected with in the program continue to support her to this day.

"They're not only helping me through my education, but they're literally helping my organization continue to grow and to blossom," she says.

Martinez is the assistant director of Community Outreach and Advocacy for Refugees (COAR) and recently initiated and co-founded the Phoenix chapter of the Young Nonprofit Professionals Network that is being supported, in part, by CNLM. Martinez says the program effectively prepared her and her fellow students for entering the nonprofit sector.

"The courses that they offered made us really well-rounded," Martinez says. "We have a clear understanding

of all of the different facets of nonprofit leadership and management that we would have to encounter to be effective leaders in the sector today."

Martinez says the best part of the experience for her was forming relationships – both personal and professional – with the other students in the program.

"Everything's been blossoming because we have each other to bounce ideas off of and give encouragement," she says. "I think encouragement is the biggest part of it."

"Nonprofit and philanthropy studies is clearly a field whose time has come, and ASU is in the national forefront in building this emerging discipline," says Robert Ashcraft, the program lead for ASU's nonprofit studies in the School of Community Resources and Development, as well as the director of CNLM. "It is encouraging that high-caliber students such as Kaytee and Amber are attracted to our program for the sort of high-quality content we provide. I am eager to see what difference these first two graduates will make in this world, as they embrace real-world issues and apply contemporary solutions to them as learned by studying in our program."

For more information about the program, visit the Web site <http://nonprofit.asu.edu>.

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