Net Impact Board Fellows

What is the Chicago Booth Net Impact Board Fellows Program?

Net Impact is a network of 10,000+ graduate students and professionals using business to improve the world. The Board Fellows program matches local nonprofit boards and Chicago Booth MBA students. The program brings valuable business skills to nonprofits, while exposing Net Impact members to nonprofit management and governance.

Board Fellows are students who come from a variety of backgrounds and typically have several years of professional experience. In teams of 2-3, Fellows serve as non-voting board members that engage actively in board meetings and also complete a strategic consulting project. Types of projects could include: cost/benefit analysis; market plan development; strategic planning; evaluation of funding opportunities and revenue sources; and competitor/collaborator analysis. A project should be significant and specific enough to achieve in 3-5 months with approximately 5-10 hours of work per month.

Fellows also receive training on board governance to prepare them to be effective future board members. That includes workshops, coaching with Booth alumni, and support from the Rustandy Center and the Net Impact student group.

What is the goal of the program?

Fellows gain familiarity with board best practices and first-hand experience from watching boards confront real-world challenges. The program provides exposure to nonprofit boards at a relatively early point in most students’ careers, which helps prepare them for future board responsibilities. The experience also encourages ongoing engagement with nonprofits and allows Fellows to add value by completing a consulting project.

What is the timeline of the program?

The timeframe for the current program is March 2020 – March 2021. Final matches are made in February and introductions between Fellows and nonprofits occur at the kick-off breakfast in March. Fellows and nonprofits are then expected to begin scoping projects prior to the end of the academic year. Most projects span from October-February. There are breaks in the program around major holidays, two weeks in December/January, one week in March, and a longer break from mid-June through September.

How are nonprofits and Board Fellows matched?

Before matching, all prospective Fellows and nonprofit partners are evaluated based on a written application. Applications open in the fall and close in December. Approved Fellows will be matched with potential boards based on the Fellows’ expressed sector preference and a match between the Fellows’ skills and those desired by the nonprofit. Every effort will be made to appropriately match Fellows and boards. If issues arise, each situation will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Contact Information

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