



Designing Nonprofit Programs for People: Powered by Technology

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Who has the perfectly administered nonprofit program?



**Keely O'Sullivan Kurtz,
MS, ACNP**

Director of CNP Programs



Gene Moses, MPA, CNP

Director of Technology &
Program Strategy

Adopting a Culture of Community

1948

Founded

Envisioned by Kansas City civic leader H. Roe Bartle.

2010

New Name

American Humanics becomes Nonprofit Leadership Alliance and moves content online.

2019

6-month Cohort Model

Launches the Professional Track with sequential courses.

First Graduates

First American Humanics class graduates college.

1952

Community mindset = adopted

Digital training platform debuts; 114,000+ trained since.

2019

A vibrant online community of learning and networking for professionals and college students

Today and beyond

Technology should support the journey, not define it.



How program design can be your best recruitment tool



Meet participants where they are

Build programs with flexibility and listen to your customers.



Rethinking program format

If the program is failing, change it.



What technological roadblocks are driving people away from your program?

Case Study: Professional Track Program Transition

8-Course Program

Non-sequential courses didn't tie participants to a similar timeline

No start and no end point

Enrollment required for each course

Incredibly complex to communicate and difficult to track participant progress

6-Course Program

Cohort model

6-month defined

One-time enrollment

Distinct learner pathway in integrated SSO environment

Designing with Participants in Mind: What Keeps People Coming Back?



Respond in real time

Adapt the learner experience based on participant feedback and needs as they progress through the program.



Build meaningful relationships and loyalty

Demonstrate that participant input directly shapes their experience.



Balance technology with human touch to keep participants engaged.

Case Study: Exam Woes for Campus Program

What we tried:

- Very flexible requirement timeline
- No exam gatekeeping

What went wrong:

- Too many accidental exam attempts
- Campus complaints

How we fixed it

- Nimble technology allowed for new process to access exam

If you know what your participants need, what's keeping you from making changes while the program is still underway?

Designing for Staff and Participant Success: Finding the Right Balance



Enable targeted staff support

Clear visibility into where participants are in their learning journey will let staff know what support is most needed.



Empower participants with self-service pathways

Help them confidently navigate requirements, milestones, and next steps.



Software that empowers participants, empowers administrators

Case Study: Journey through Software

**Self-sorting enrollment
process**

**Overlapping program
milestones**

Different timelines

**Participants have
different journeys**

What Keeps Alumni Connected and Invested After the Program Ends?



Elevate alumni expertise and visibility

Center alumni voices, experiences, and leadership within the learning community.



Create meaningful ways to give back

For example, mentorship initiatives allow alumni to support emerging professionals while strengthening their connection to the network.



Consider technology that allows for lifelong participant journeys

Case Study: Disconnected Alumni

Past

There was no programming for Alumni

We didn't have a way to easily and regularly update information

We had a name and branding switch and lost that connection

Alumni are largely tied to local connections, not national organization or broader community

Today and Beyond

Have easy way for alumni to update information

Provide value to them all along their journey

Provide ways to share expertise and give back

Invited into our virtual community free-of-charge

Final Thoughts

- **Human-centered design leads to stronger participant engagement, retention and outcomes.**
- **Decreasing size of software stack simplifies administration.**
- **Don't choose software that boxes you by cost or functionality.**
- **Culture: Look forward but respect the past.**



Thank You

Interested in joining the CNP community? We'd love to hear from you!

Gene Moses, MPA, CNP
Keely O'Sullivan Kurtz, MS, ACNP

info@nla1.org | nla1.org | @Nonprofitleadershipalliance