

ACES LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Creating opportunities for students to acquire essential life skills as part of their academic experience is key to developing career-ready graduates with the potential to achieve their ultimate personal and professional potential. Students must have the essential content expertise to create advances and make discoveries in their specialties, as well as the interpersonal communication skills to translate their knowledge and to engage with others effectively. The College of ACES has a rich history of providing leadership development opportunities to students campus-wide through its popular Leadership Studies Minor and the Agricultural Leadership Education major.

OPPORTUNITY:

Dean Kidwell has expertise in interpersonal communications and leader development that compliment current offerings in the College of ACES and through the university's Illinois Leadership Center. She created a leadership training center in her former role at Washington State University that provides experiential-based leadership development opportunities for students, staff, faculty, and external participants. Her portfolio consists of an undergraduate general education course called "Developing Effective Communication and Life Skills", a graduate-level leadership development course, an online leadership development program for adult learners, a faculty leader development program for future administrators, and a series of face-to-face workshops for internal and external participants that collectively have been delivered to hundreds of people over the last 13 years. These trainings are delivered in an immersion-based format that emphasizes engaged learning.

Dean Kidwell will combine expertise with ACES and University of Illinois faculty engaged in leadership development to create an expanded portfolio of leadership and life skill enhancement training opportunities for students, staff, faculty and external participants. These offerings will be utilized to create a new leadership training center called the ACES Leadership Academy at the University of Illinois.

The impact of an ACES Leadership Academy will be extensive.

1. ACES graduates will be prepared to navigate the new job learning curve more effectively, because they will develop resiliency and leadership skills as a component of their academic experience. ACES graduates will become known for having the content knowledge, as well as the interdisciplinary skills required to translate that knowledge effectively to others to improve their ability to be positive influencers and contributors to society.



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2. Course offerings and workshops will be provided to staff and faculty to create leadership succession plans within each unit. Identifying effective leaders to create forward motion and influence on a university campus is a challenge every university faces. We intend to provide opportunities to everyone in the ACES community to access the leader within by participating in these training programs.
3. Industry and external partners will have opportunities to participate in leadership development. Identifying effective pathways to develop middle managers is a concern expressed by many of our industry partners. We will provide those services to industry through customized trainings or general enrollment in the ACES Leadership Academy programs.

Creating easily accessible opportunities for people to achieve their personal and professional potential by engaging in constructive self-awareness and self-management trainings is the ultimate goal of this initiative. It is a natural role for Dean Kidwell as the inaugural holder of the Robert A. Easter Chair to make the ACES Leadership Academy a reality, reflecting Dr. Easter's legacy of leadership in agriculture and at the University of Illinois.

RESOURCES NEEDED:

To fully achieve the potential of leader development for students, faculty, staff, and partners in the College of ACES, we need a senior faculty position highly qualified to develop and implement curricula and programs. Programmatic funding and funding for faculty stipends, awards, and travel is also required.

As the holder of the Robert A. Easter Chair, Dean Kidwell envisions making a particularly meaningful contribution to the college by leading the Dean's Leadership Academy, designed specifically for promising faculty interested in pursuing academic leadership roles. Programmatic funding is required for guest lecturers, travel, and experiential opportunities.



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