

Spotlight on ILA Institutional Members

ILA Members are doing amazing leadership work around the world, from starting new degree programs to nurturing young people who make a difference, from running innovative workshops and seminars to fostering organizational change. We are pleased to shine an ILA spotlight on the programs of our members. If you would like to nominate yourself or another ILA institutional member to be featured on these pages, please contact ILA at ila@ila-net.org.

Spotlight on University of Delaware:

UD Leadership Major: “Find your place and make a difference.”

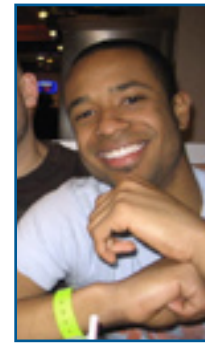
If you were one of the nearly 200 undergraduate students majoring in Leadership at the University of Delaware, you might have found yourself studying leadership and social policy in Ethiopia and Thailand, having dinner sitting next to the Lieutenant Governor of Delaware, working with faculty and graduate students on a research project investigating the effect of leadership practices on community-based senior services organizations, doing so well at your internship at MSNBC that you were offered an immediate position even before you finished your degree, creating and producing a video designed to inspire high school students to study and personally engage in leadership, obtaining a Legislative Fellowship to assist elected members of the Delaware state government, and, of course, being an active participant in your academic courses. And, you would have had all these opportunities—and many more—in the last academic year alone!

Who do you want to be? Many undergraduate majors tell you what you might be, perhaps what you might be doing, likely what you need to know, and certainly in what discipline or field you will practice. The Leadership major at the University of Delaware begins with students finding out who they are

– their values, their perspectives, their strengths, their dispositions, their creative capacity – and then facilitates their examination of leadership theory and practice across many career fields. There is no section in the Help Wanted ads labeled “Leaders”. Leaders emerge within fields of practice, and those with greater understanding and capacity for leadership will do so more rapidly and more successfully. Students majoring in Leadership at the University of Delaware will also lead more mindfully and ethically – focusing on socially responsible strategies, programs, and policies that improve quality of life.

Leadership With A Point of View

The Leadership major was established in 2001 with one essential question: “Leadership for what?” Our origins in the Department of Consumer Studies emphasized the need to design, develop, analyze, deliver and evaluate products, services and policies that improve the quality of life for families and households. We sought to blend this perspective with the need for leadership at all levels of society, from the neighborhood to global organizations. This consumer advocacy perspective calls on leaders to respect and understand the collective social responsibility to help shape and participate in ethical, satisfying public and private environments that im-



prove a society’s quality of life.

“In this major I really feel that you gain the necessary skills for future employment. Many majors teach you facts, but in the Lead major you are learning facts and theories that you can really apply on the job. Every course teaches you something that you can hold on to.”-Sean Gomes

At UD, the required leadership courses encourage students to find the application in theory and to examine leadership across a broad variety of disciplines, sectors, and careers. Effective leadership enhances all fields, and the Leadership major helps students build the knowledge, skills and dispositions for future leadership success. Students then blend their knowledge of leadership theory and practice, consumer behavior and policy, and their personal system of values and ethics to mobilize change resulting in improved quality of life. We hope that students will bring this capacity to any organization, and ultimately make things better by considering social responsibility, quality of life concerns, and the impacts of private and public actions and policies upon people in their most fundamental roles.

15.

Leadership with Content for Career Preparation

While we do not consider leadership to be value-free or even value-neutral, we also do not consider it to be sufficient to study leadership from strictly an ethical, service, skill-development or process orientation.

Thus, our curriculum is carefully designed to give students a content base that is both broad and specific. In fact, of the 120 required credits in the curriculum, only 33 credits are from leadership and consumer policy courses. We balance those courses with 24 credits in communication and humanities, 27 credits in business and economics, and the remainder in the social and natural sciences. In essence, our goal as an educational program is to train our students to be problem-recognizers as well as problem-solvers who actively seek

16. opportunities to improve conditions for their organizations and community. To do this, they not only have to use our classes as “safe laboratories” to practice and hone their leadership and followership skills, but they have to have disciplinary knowledge and expertise outside of leadership. For example, knowledge of accounting and marketing may be vital to not only successful organizational



“Around the World” Leadership majors in Thailand

functioning but also to discovering unethical or deceptive practices.

This multi-sector approach to leadership prepares students for careers in the private, non-profit and public sectors; however, the reality is that most students enter the private sector. UD

Leadership graduates have gone into a variety of fields, including media, marketing, finance, non-profit management, lobbying, higher education administration, public policy, and a variety of management positions in corporations.

In each case, we hope our graduates apply the perspectives learned. For example, many Leadership graduates have pursued careers in Human Resources. We would hope our graduates as HR professionals would be more attuned to the impacts and consequences of HR policies upon individuals and families, and advocate effectively for creative actions within the organization that lead to policies and products that minimize harm and improve quality of life.

“Find your place and make a difference.” The University of Delaware Leadership major prepares students with a set of skills that give them an active voice and confidence in their endeavors—team work, effective communication, decision-making skills, synergistic and creative approaches to problem solving. By further emphasizing their responsibility to work for the greater good, and by ensuring an education that is strongly based in a variety of disciplines, we intend our students to, indeed, make a difference.

Many recent Leadership major opportunities were facilitated, in part, by a UNIDEL Foundation \$250,000 grant to support the Leadership major’s move from the Department of Consumer Studies to its new administrative home in the School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy (SUAPP, formerly a graduate-only unit). As a result of this demonstration of the Foundation’s and the University’s commitment to Leadership as an academic program, students have new avenues to grow as learners, practitioners, and researchers. A few of the initiatives recently developed include:

- *The Exemplary Leaders Circle* which recognizes and links established leaders in the region with emerging leaders in the major.
- *The Leadership Research Grant* program supports the work of research teams composed of faculty in SUAPP, undergraduate leadership students, and graduate students in the public management and public policy degree programs.
- *The Washington D.C. Leadership Internship* provides an extensive experience for students to interact with policy-makers, federal agency heads, and Senators and Representatives.
- *The “Around the World” International Study Abroad* program offers financial support for Leadership majors who might not otherwise be able to participate.



Dafnah Meron, LEAD 07, said, “The Exemplary Leaders Circle has been a wonderful experience for me. I have really enjoyed meeting established leaders in all sectors of the community. Through the connections I have made, I was introduced to, and accepted into, the Legislative Fellows Program.” As a Fellow, Dafnah served with the house minority caucus of the Delaware General Assembly.



Leadership students presented their research, developed with funding from the Leadership Research Grants program, at the Third Transatlantic Dialogue Conference.