ILA members are doing amazing leadership work around the world, from starting new degree programs to nurturing young leaders who make a difference, from running innovative workshops and seminars to fostering organizational change.

Northwestern University Center for Leadership

There are leadership programs at many colleges and universities, but few have been around quite as long as the one at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL. Professor Paul Arntson founded the Undergraduate Leadership Program (ULP) in 1990, with a grant from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

In 2009, the ULP was transformed into its current incarnation as the Center for Leadership. Associate Director Todd Murphy says the ‘repurposed’ Center still offers the popular academic certificate for undergraduates it did in its previous incarnation. It also now offers a competitive Fellowship in Leadership for Ph.D. students and for “high potential staff” who work with Northwestern students. Murphy says the new focus of the center enables it to achieve “greater penetration” on campus and be “much more effective.”

“Our biggest thing is we’re not trying to build out a lot of programs,” said Murphy. “Our charge is to reach the entire university, to come up alongside existing programs and add a leadership component.”

A big advantage of the Center is that leadership development gets more integrated into what the Northwestern community is already doing. Murphy says the main purpose is to train students to apply leadership skills in any setting they may find themselves in, anywhere in the world.

“Leadership IS it’s own discipline,” says Murphy, “but the approach we use is different. The number of students we affect is much greater now.”

The Center’s services, available to all students, faculty, academic departments and programs, and student affairs programs at Northwestern University, include the following:

- Leadership Coaching
- Leadership Consulting
- Leadership Crucible
- Leadership Space
- Leadership Workshops

Northwestern has been an ILA group member since the association’s beginnings and Murphy believes the value of membership is evident.

“The ILA respresents all intersections, and we, as a center, really sit at the intersection of academia, business, and nonprofit,” he says. “The ILA isn’t just an organization for practitioners or an organization just for academics, it’s an organization that represents all and frankly that’s a big part of what leadership is.”

ILA membership helps the Center in its quest to develop a national and international profile. Murphy believes the Center’s credibility will be dependent on it having a global presence. The diverse networking opportunities provided by the ILA are a great help in this. “It’s a huge strength,” he says.