

A Tradition of Excellence

2020 - 2025

Strategic Action/Plan



Introduction

The Nebraska LEAD (Leadership Education/ Action Development) Program was founded in 1981 by the Nebraska Agricultural Leadership Council to “better prepare men and women for leadership responsibilities within the agricultural sector of the state.” The program was undertaken to address:

- 1) The increasing concern with respect to the aging of the present agricultural leadership and the lack of a pool of highly qualified new leaders to assume key leadership positions; and
- 2) The growing concern with respect to the perceived lack of understanding between agriculture and other areas of Nebraska’s economy which could hinder productive development.

The program was designed to speed up the leadership development process, through exposure to a broad array of topics, issues and concerns, to ultimately develop those problem solvers, decision makers and spokespersons necessary to lead agriculture and the state in the years ahead.

The Nebraska LEAD Program is a statewide program and involves the selection of up to 30 “Fellows” each year:

- With two groups of up to 30 “Fellows” participating concurrently, there are always up to 60 participants in the program.
- Program delivery occurs through 12 three-day seminars at public and private colleges and university campuses across Nebraska over the two-year period.
- The focus is on local, state and national problems, issues and concerns during the first year of the program and on the international level the second year.
- A 10 day U.S. study/travel seminar is conducted during the first year and a 14 -16 day international study/travel seminar the second year.

Much has been accomplished during the first 40 years of operation of the Nebraska LEAD Program. It has attained a national and international reputation, and achievements and outcomes are readily visible. Yet much remains to be done. The rapid changes taking place in society must be reflected in the Nebraska LEAD Program as a result of a well developed strategic/action plan.

This strategic/action plan, “A Tradition of Excellence,” will serve the board, management, and others in focusing on the vision necessary to advance the Nebraska LEAD Program into the future. This plan has been developed in concert with the strategic planning process of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.



Assumptions

- The original Nebraska LEAD Program mission remains appropriate.
- There remains a great need for the education of professional leaders in agriculture.
- There remains a highly qualified pool of individuals who can benefit from the Nebraska LEAD Program and who will carry the skills and talents acquired from the program into leadership positions at the local, state, national, and international levels.
- There remains a firm financial base to continue the program into the foreseeable future in partnership with the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Nebraska–Lincoln.
- American consumers are farther removed from the agricultural industry, thus preparing spokespersons, decision-makers, and problem solvers for the agricultural industry continues to be an important priority.
- The leadership theories that underpin the Nebraska LEAD Program are servant leadership and transformational leadership.
- Nebraska is blessed with a profoundly significant and diverse agricultural complex that gives it great economic momentum as a leader in the ever-expanding global food economy.
- The demographic in Nebraska will continue to change, increasing the need for more leadership opportunities for women and racial and ethnic minorities.
- The Nebraska LEAD Program values the diversity of ideas and people.



Goals and Objectives

This Strategic/Action Plan identifies four key program areas and describes goals and action objectives for each. Detailed action steps will be developed by the individual(s) responsible for each objective.

Selection and Recruitment

Attract sufficient numbers of high quality applicants.

- Conduct necessary research to better understand the potential candidate population.
- Collect data for the further development of a master database which will insure a pool of high quality applicants for the annual selection process.
- Support and enhance efforts to further develop and maintain the desired candidate balance with respect to gender, ethnicity, and between production agriculture and agribusiness “Fellows.”
- Increase public awareness of the Nebraska LEAD Program through the media, Nebraska LEAD alumni, and the use of commodity board, grower association, and trade association newsletters.
- Provide opportunities for program participation for individuals underrepresented in Nebraska in the agricultural sector.

Program Delivery/Curriculum

Develop programming sensitive to change and the expanding roles of agriculture in the world.

- Refine and expand education in sustainable food, fiber, water and natural resources, and energy systems.
- Refine and expand education in servant leadership and transformational leadership.
- Refine and expand education that addresses the changing demographics in Nebraska.
- Refine and expand education in information technology, conducting effective meetings, and becoming an effective board member.

- Examine and implement (as feasible) expanded learning opportunities via the Internet and other possibilities to strengthen the curriculum.
- Examine and implement (as feasible) opportunities for partnering with other leadership programs for curriculum exchange, development, and delivery.

Communications

Publicize the program to potential applicants, donors, and the public.

- Develop demographic data to target audiences and state geographic areas through the ongoing collection of data from LEAD alumni, current LEAD Fellows, and LEAD supporters.
- Build upon the LEAD brand with the incorporation of the logo, banner, and etc. on all printed materials.
- Market the brand utilizing the internet with updates to the Nebraska LEAD Program website while also investigating the use of and expanding the Nebraska LEAD Program's participation in other forms of social media.
- Utilize current LEAD participants and LEAD alumni in press releases and public speaking opportunities to bring more attention to the LEAD Program.
- Enlist current donors and supporters in order to promote the Nebraska LEAD Program.

Resource Development

Develop an ongoing program of funding that supports the mission and objectives of the Nebraska LEAD Program.

- Evaluate current short- and long-term fundraising efforts and identify additional prospects for financial support through increased public awareness of the Nebraska LEAD Program.
- Increase the Nebraska LEAD Program endowment fund at a rate of not less than 10% per year and operating income from private donors by not less than \$7,000 annually.
- Personally thank all major donors to the LEAD Program as well as develop and promote additional opportunities for donor recognition.
- Secure necessary funding for new and innovative programming and projects.
- Annually develop a success or "ROI" (return on investment) report for current donors and prospects.
- Annually evaluate endowed and non-endowed investment performance and investment options and make recommendations to the board of directors.



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Nebraska LEAD Program

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