Cultivating the Courage to Lead® at the University of Northern Iowa

Provost’s Leadership Academy, 2018-2019

The Invitation

The Office of the Provost invites members of the UNI faculty, staff, and administration to apply for the 2018-2019 “Provost’s Leadership Academy.” Completed applications are due to Provost Jim Wohlpart in Seerley 20 (or by email to jim.wohlpart@uni.edu) by 5:00 p.m. Monday, June 4. (See below for more information about the application and selection process.)

Program Description

As part of a cohort of colleagues from across the University and throughout the course of an entire year, Academy participants will reflect on deep questions of the meaning and purpose of their work and leadership, their capacity to make a difference in the lives of others, and the connections between the “inner and outer landscapes” of their personal and professional lives. They will consider skills and qualities of adaptive leadership (and similar leadership models); their unique giftedness to be of service in the world; the overall shape of a well-integrated life that balances work, family, and civic engagement; and self-identified challenges and opportunities they wish to address related to their particular contexts at the University. The catalytic combination of vocational reflection (where “vocation” means life-calling, one’s sense of identity and contribution, meaning and purpose) and leadership development will strengthen participants’ ability to lead “from within” in service to the University’s mission on behalf of the public good.

The project will be guided by experienced educator and facilitator Dr. Chris Johnson (www.milkweedgroup.com) utilizing principles and practices of the Circles of Trust® developed by Parker J. Palmer and the Center for Courage & Renewal. In large-group, small-group, and solitary settings, participants will explore the intersection of their personal and professional lives, with insights from the work of scholars, poets, artists, naturalists, musicians, filmmakers, scientists, and various wisdom traditions. Clearness Committees, peer action-learning circles, and other high-integrity and strictly confidential processes of discernment and mutual accountability will be a key component. Since this is an opportunity for professional development, participants will not need to use leave time to attend sessions; some sessions will extend beyond the normal work week.

In the words of past participants:

I’ve gained perspective on so many things, mostly about leading, being led and supporting others at work, but I’ve also tried to apply much of what I’ve gained through this experience in my personal life.

I am extremely grateful to have been part of this. It has changed my life for the better. I now have new friends from all across campus that I probably never would have met. I can never say thanks enough!

The Provost’s Leadership Academy has been the most valuable experience I’ve had in my 17 years here.

Program Schedule

The Academy’s schedule will be as follows:

- Workshop 1: October 18 – 19, 2018 (Thursday dinner – Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 p.m.)
- Workshop 2: January 10 – 11, 2019 (Thursday dinner – Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 p.m.; January 17-18 in case of inclement weather)
- Workshop 3: April 11 – 12, 2019 (Thursday dinner – Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 p.m.)
- Workshop 4: June 13 – 14, 2019 (Thursday dinner – Friday 8:30 am to 4:30 p.m.)
- Closing retreat: September 26 – 28, 2019 (Thursday afternoon – Saturday afternoon) at Prairie Oaks Institute, Belle Plaine, MN (www.prairieoaksinstitute.org)
Additional Program Elements

Peer Action-Learning Circles meet at least once each month. These triads provide continuity between the seasonal large-group sessions, opportunity for additional engagement with questions and ideas raised by the Academy, room to foster collaboration, and a “living laboratory” for working on self-identified projects related to participants’ contexts within the University. We encourage you, therefore, to unleash your imagination: What project or experiment can you see yourself working on for the year in this safe, courageous community of learning and practice, related to strengthening education for the common good at UNI? What idea or possibility might you like to develop in the company of supportive colleagues? This could be, e.g., revising an existing course or program or creating a new course or program to incorporate attention to leadership, reflection and integrative learning, social justice, community engagement, and the like; enhancing student advising or mentoring; leading a book-discussion group with colleagues; fostering new forms of community/university collaboration; tackling a writing project or some other form of creative expression. Your ideas can and likely will evolve throughout the year; the action-learning triads provide both rich “soil” and supportive “container” for them – and you – to grow.

Finally, individual coaching/consultation is available by phone once a month or upon request, and in-person on campus (by sign-up) on Wednesdays and/or Thursdays adjacent to the large-group sessions in January, April, and June.

Academy Goals

1. To strengthen education for the public good at UNI by supporting emerging leaders across multiple disciplines, departments, and divisions of the University.
2. To foster innovative service, teaching, advising, mentoring, and scholarship around issues of vocation, leadership, and the public/civic purposes of higher education.
3. To encourage interdisciplinary approaches to addressing societal needs and cultivating lives of commitment and contribution in a complex world.
4. To support members of the UNI staff, faculty, and administration in their own vocational development and professional growth, and in connecting their vocational commitments to their work.
5. To provide opportunity to study and reflect intensively over an extended period of time with a small cohort of colleagues, and to encourage wider communities of discussion, innovation, and practice across the University.

Academy participants may be asked to contribute to later academies (as guest presenters, co-facilitators, “thinking partners,” and/or peer mentors) and to serve as thought leaders and catalysts in disseminating the spirit and benefits of the Academy across the University.

Application Information

Completed applications are due to Provost Jim Wohlpart in Seerley 20 (or jim.wohlpart@uni.edu) by 5:00 p.m. Monday, June 4. Approximately 15 participants will be notified of their selection by Friday, June 29. The application questions below are meant to be open-ended and evocative; we hope that anyone with an interest in these issues and a passion for deep learning will feel free to apply. A diversity of perspectives, disciplines, backgrounds, and persons will enhance the experience for everyone. The information will also help us to shape the sessions and identify resources to better meet participants’ needs and interests.

To apply, please complete the attached application, with signatures, and submit it with a 1-2 page Word-document which responds to the questions below. Scanned documents are welcome.