

# Florida's Leaders in Training

## A roundup of leadership programs statewide

By Lisa Sheaffer

**W**hen new students first arrive on campus, they have nothing more to guide them than a campus map, making getting to class seem like an odyssey. However, when it comes to their leadership aptitude, students have more than just a legend to guide them. In fact, more and more schools across the state are noting the importance of leadership on campus and in the community, yielding emerging and growing leadership-training programs. Here, we present schools that are blazing a trail in our second annual roundup of Florida leadership building programs.

### Private Schools

#### Barry University

**What:** BLAST (Barry Leadership and Skills Training) focuses on teaching leaders and future leaders self-understanding, self-respect, respect for others, and acknowledgement of the responsibilities inherent in leadership positions. The program is tailored so that both experienced leaders and new leaders can learn and benefit from the activities within BLAST. Furthermore, the program works to encourage students to take on community leadership as a way to affect needed social change.

There are four different components of BLAST. The first component is leadership retreats, which offer students experience-based learning by having the seasoned and new leaders interact with one another to share their knowledge. Adventures in leadership include a low and high ropes course that allows the students to work together as teams and solve problems. Leadership luncheons allow student leaders to communicate with campus administrators and learn about the faculty leaders on campus. Finally, the recognition program highlights the importance of leadership on campus by awarding student leaders, advisors, and student organizations for their contributions on campus.

**Why:** BLAST makes an effort to educate future leaders and also continue to help current leaders grow and improve their leadership qualities.

“BLAST programs are designed to meet both the immediate and long-term leadership needs of our students,” says Tessie Alvarez, assistant director for student activities. “Through a variety of programs, students can choose the course of action that best fits their individual needs and interests.”

**Who:** Contact Alvarez at 305-899-3963 or [talvarez@mail.barry.edu](mailto:talvarez@mail.barry.edu).



*The Space Needle? The Eiffel Tower? UT students build structures and leadership skills, one pool noodle at a time.*

#### Rollins College

**What:** LEAD (Leadership Education and Development) is a program that was created in the fall of 2000 and is available for all Rollins students. LEAD offers training, education, and activities where students learn through experience.

Students can participate in LEAD by taking classes for credit or by taking part in leadership retreats. The off-campus retreats focus on peer education, ropes initiatives, and group collaboration. Group faculty advisors also benefit from LEAD through advisor training sessions and recognition programs. An advisor recognition program

is run by the students and allows them to not only recognize excellent advisors but also put their skills to use by organizing luncheons and awards receptions for the advisors.

**Why:** LEAD's programs were implemented to get students prepared and ready to participate in campus organizations, to get students to engage themselves in the community, and to promote active citizenship among the students.

“LEAD promotes the philosophy that all individuals are capable of serving as leaders and change agents, whether they do so locally, nationally, or on a global level,” says Cara Meixner, program director. “This program is so important because it empowers students to create their own definitions of leadership, citizenship, and social action and then live these definitions on a day-to-day basis.”

**Who:** Contact LEAD at 407-646-2624, or visit [www.rollins.edu/OSIL/LEAD/main.htm](http://www.rollins.edu/OSIL/LEAD/main.htm).

#### Saint Leo University

**What:** The PEAK (Pride, Emerging leader, Advanced leader, and Knowledgeable leader) Leadership Program, instituted in 2000, is a four-year program where students learn to become well-rounded leaders. All students are welcomed to take part in the program, but they must begin in their freshman year.

First-year students begin with the PRIDE (Personal development, Responsible stewardship, Integrity, Development of community and stewardship, and Excellence) program where they become familiar with leadership opportunities on campus and in the commu-

nity. Active participation is a major part of the PRIDE class due to the open-discussion atmosphere. Over the course of their second year, students focus more on their leadership style. The following year, they absorb leadership concepts, and finally, during their last year, students apply their skills in the real world. Students who are involved in PEAK also are required to attend the student government fall and spring retreats, participate in the Saint Leo community service days, and attend programs.

**Why:** PEAK builds leaders for clubs, organizations, and the community. It

attempts to build a foundation where leaders can learn, grow, and hone their leadership abilities.

"PRIDE was a very beneficial class for me this semester and in my life," says Josh Campbell, freshman class president and PRIDE leader. "There were a lot of times in class that we would discuss things amongst the class. That is the real way to learn anything in life, by hearing and experiencing what other people have gone through."

**Who:** Contact Sarah Hard, assistant director for student involvement and special projects, at [sarah.hard@saintleo.edu](mailto:sarah.hard@saintleo.edu).

### University of Tampa

**What:** ELITE (Educating Leaders in Today's Environment) began four years ago and promotes leadership growth, especially among freshmen. Freshmen begin before they even attend orientation, attending a pre-orientation retreat that allows them to network with others who want to become involved on campus. When school begins, students are paired up with returning students who are already involved on campus.

Students can also participate in the mentoring program where upper classmen are encouraged to apply to become a mentor. They are paired with two or three freshmen, with whom they meet at least once a month to act as a sounding board or resource.

To fully participate in ELITE, students must become involved in the program as freshmen, but students who don't become involved as freshmen can still be members of the student organization, which oversees monthly workshops that help students learn the importance of time management, integrity, and ethics.

**Why:** The program focuses on getting students involved from day one. "We get students who become leaders further down the road and who hold influential roles on campus," says Kristen Piwowarski, coordinator of leadership and student programs.

**Who:** Contact Piwowarski at [kpiwowarski@ut.edu](mailto:kpiwowarski@ut.edu), or visit [www.utampa.edu/studentlife/activities/leadership](http://www.utampa.edu/studentlife/activities/leadership).



### Public Universities

#### Florida International University

**What:** The Center for Leadership Development & Civic Responsibility, which began in 2000, offers several programs and services to help students become effective, civic-minded leaders.

Programs within the LDCR aspire to enhance student learning and development through self-knowledge and leadership competence. Programs range from workshops and training sessions to lunchtime dialogue groups, credit courses, and certificate programs.

Organizations can schedule team-building sessions with LDCR, allowing the groups to focus on their strengths and weaknesses. Topics range from decision-making to communication skills.

**Why:** The program inspires students to become leaders who are involved on campus, in the community, in their workplaces, and in the world.

"Having a center that provides leadership development is important because the world we live in today, and especially the world we'll inhabit tomorrow, requires all of us to assume leadership roles regardless of title or position," says Beverly Dalrymple, educational director of LDCR. "We're all called to take an active part in creating change for the common good on campus, in the community, in the workplace, or in the world."

**Who:** Contact Dalrymple at 305-348-1402 or [dalrympl@fiu.edu](mailto:dalrympl@fiu.edu), or visit [www.fiu.edu/~leaders](http://www.fiu.edu/~leaders).

#### University of Central Florida

**What:** EKCEL, which operates under the motto, "Every Knight Can Excel in Leadership," was formed in 2002 after the merging of two different leadership programs. Their new mission is to provide all UCF students with the opportunity to improve their leadership abilities. EKCEL works with students through a leadership development workshop series, retreats, a campus-wide student leadership conference, and fund-raising projects. EKCEL is open to working with students on an individual or group basis.

EKCEL mentors and consultants were at one time those individuals who sought leadership advice from EKCEL.

After participating in the program for one year, students who have completed the required training sessions are nominated, interviewed, and selected to become the next mentors and consultants.

**Why:** The program was instituted so every student would have access to leadership training and could explore the possibilities that leadership provides.

"Our mission is to cultivate leaders in the UCF student community through training, mentoring, and consulting," says Emily Kukulies, assistant director of student activities. "We will achieve our mission by facilitating organizational and individual growth and ultimately demonstrating that every UCF Golden Knight can excel in leadership."

**Who:** Contact Kukulies at 407-823-6471 or [ekukulie@mail.ucf.edu](mailto:ekukulie@mail.ucf.edu), or visit [www.osa.ucf.edu/ekcel.htm](http://www.osa.ucf.edu/ekcel.htm).

#### University of Florida

**What:** IDEAL (Informing and Developing Emerging and Active Leaders) began five years ago to build leadership within the general student body. IDEAL works to teach students—especially students who are new on campus—the benefits of becoming involved with campus organizations. IDEAL uses events such as a student organization fair where each organization on campus sends representatives to answer questions and talk to students who may be interested in joining.

Once the students become involved, IDEAL continues to work with them through leadership education such as retreats, workshops, and leadership conferences for any organization that requests their services. It isn't unusual for IDEAL to host anywhere from 15 to 20 workshops a month covering a range of topics from leadership theories to executive board training. During retreats, students take part in open-field tasks and games in an effort to improve group collaboration and problem solving.

**Why:** IDEAL sees leadership building as a process that students have to continue to work toward.

"Leadership is a constant learning process," says Sergio Rodriguez, training director. "From the newest members to the





oldest members, there are always ways for them to learn how to become better leaders.”

**Who:** Contact Rodriguez at 352-392-1655 ext. 311 or [ideal@union.ufl.edu](mailto:ideal@union.ufl.edu), or visit [www.union.ufl.edu/ideal](http://www.union.ufl.edu/ideal).

### Community Colleges

#### Broward Community College

**What:** Twelve students are selected by a committee of students, faculty, and staff each year to participate in the year-long Competitive Edge Presidential Leaders program, instituted in 1988.

Students are enrolled in a three-credit leadership course. Through this course, they take part in retreats, shadow a member of BCC’s president’s staff for at least three days, serve on a college-wide committee, and observe the state legislature in session. Finally, at the end of the course, they shadow one of the legislators.

The course focuses its curriculum on developing visions and goals, applying ethics, making decisions, managing conflict, building teams, and practicing servant leadership.

Students need a 3.0 GPA, 15 credit hours, and prior experience as a leader in order to take part in the program. In addition, they must go before the committee to be assessed on their level of leadership experience, ability to complete the program, and willingness to represent BCC.

**Why:** The Competitive Edge program was implemented to offer students a chance to observe real-life leaders.

“Competitive Edge provides an academic and theoretical foundation to leadership issues and then builds on this curricular experience by exposing students to ‘real life’ leaders and the challenges they face,” says Neil Cohen, district director of student development services.

**Who:** Contact Cohen at [ncohen@broward.edu](mailto:ncohen@broward.edu).

#### Central Florida Community College

**What:** CFCC’s Student Activities Board aims to give students a more well-rounded college experience by exposing them to leadership, confidence, and team-building

techniques. During each meeting, the board devotes time to developing these techniques.

The board sponsors conferences and retreats, among other activities. The retreats include an above-ground ropes course to practice team-building skills. Any student can become a member of the board by attending the meetings and events; however, to serve on the board, students have to submit an application and undergo an interview before the committee. Best of all, most of the board’s activities are free to participate in.

The board hosts workshops on topics such as student volunteerism, leadership skill development, and interview and business etiquette. In both the fall and spring semesters, the board will be offering a workshop and lecture series.

**Why:** “The board is important in order to get more student involvement,” says Roy Lightfoot, program director. “Students need leadership skills for when they get out of college.”

**Who:** Contact the Center for Civic Education and Student Leadership Development at 352-854-2322 ext. 1578.

#### Florida Community College at Jacksonville

**What:** The Florida Community College Nassau Outdoor Education Center gets physical with its leadership participants. The center offers an outdoor environment where students learn as they take in the fresh air. Here, students take part in challenge courses, wall climbing, environmental education, and even wilderness education. Students are pushed just above their comfort level so that they don’t become overly stressed but have to work as a team and challenge themselves. The Outdoor Education Center offers customized programs for organizations based on their needs and objectives.

The center also offers courses that can be taken for credit, including wilderness adventure training, leadership, backpacking, cycling, and canoeing.

The first part of the Outdoor Education Center began in 1992 and served fewer than 100 students; however, it’s since grown to assist more than 3,000 students



involved in campus organizations.

**Why:** The Outdoor Education Center plays an important role in developing the future campus leaders at FCCJ. “This program was the dream of several past leaders of FCCJ, and it’s designed to fulfill the school’s broader mission of creating enlightened leaders,” says Carolyn Woods, program director.

**Who:** Contact Woods at 904-548-4490 or [cwoods@fccj.edu](mailto:cwoods@fccj.edu), or visit <http://www.fccj.edu/campuses/north/nassau/>.

#### Santa Fe Community College

**What:** The Leadership Institute has worked for the past three years to assist hundreds of students and faculty members. Faculty benefits from the Leadership Institute through training conferences for certification in leadership education at no cost.

The institute conducts several seminars a year, gaining the attention of numerous departments and organizations. In fact, one athletic team—coach included—plans to attend the fall retreat together.

The annual two-day retreat is held at Camp Crystal Lake and focuses primarily on team-building through the high and low ropes course, rope climbing experience, and the simulated rock wall.

This program has not only received recognition from the departments at SFCC but also from state fire departments that have contacted the institute to develop leadership curriculum for their needs. However, the institute opted to focus on the growth and development of their organization at SFCC and within the academic community.

**Why:** The institute aims to educate students on leadership theory, principles, and applications to enhance their personal leadership capacity and focus on the skills they need to succeed in life.

“The importance of the program can be seen in its growth over the three years to multiple sections of the classes, including significant representation in the number of students in Student Government leadership positions and on athletic teams,” says Bruce Tucker, advisor.

**Who:** Contact Tucker at 352-371-3824 or [bruce.tucker@santafe.cc.fl.us](mailto:bruce.tucker@santafe.cc.fl.us), or visit <http://www.santa-fe.cc.nm.us/SFCCLI>.

