



COURTESY UCF

LEAD Scholars Jonathan Ahus, Natalie Gooden, Catherine Crawford, Jill Egnot, and Shamekia Daye do community service at "Give Kids the World," a group that grants wishes to terminally ill children.

# Learning to LEAD

## UCF encourages lifelong leadership

By Catherine Smith

Ten years ago, the **University of Central Florida** began a voyage of guiding scholarly students through the first two years of college by focusing on one of the most important qualities they could acquire—leadership.

UCF's LEAD (Leadership, Enrichment, and Academic Development) Scholars Program helps students become leaders at school, their communities, and throughout the rest of their lives. With concentration on leadership enhancement, academic excellence, and community service, LEAD models a simple yet powerful vision—"To Learn, To Lead, To Serve." "The intent is to develop student leaders on campus and connect them with the UCF and Central Florida community while helping them successfully transition through their higher education experience," says Jan Lloyd, LEAD associate director.

### New LEADers

Each year, first-year students arrive nervous and unsure of themselves. LEAD understands this, and therefore lets 315 incoming freshmen with similar goals and values work together every fall. "Instead of going away to school knowing hardly anyone, I came to UCF with 300 new friends," says Vanessa Bowman, co-executive director.

"The friendships that you make while

in the program is probably one of the best rewards," says Philip Shibly, also co-executive director (see story on p7).

### LEADership Classes

LEAD Scholars take a two-credit-hour leadership course each semester, starting with the Introduction to Leadership class, then onto more advanced and specialized courses. "Any kind of development is progressive, and leadership development should be the same way," says Dr. William Faulkner, director of LEAD and UCF's leadership programs. "Each semester builds on the one before it."

The Intermediate Leadership course is next. "We learned a lot about leadership and personality styles, which helped us to better understand how we can work with other types," says Ashley Ramsey, a second-year LEAD Scholar. Next is Advanced Leadership, which concentrates on community leadership and connections.

The final component is a practical application. "Their second year is more experiential and hands-on, and we're expecting them to go beyond the classroom experience," Lloyd says. Students work with LEAD START (Students Teaching And Role-modeling Teamwork), LEAD FLIGHT (Facilitating Leadership In Guiding High school Teams), and the Mentor Academy.

In the Mentor Academy, "Basically, each mentor has students who they take under their wing and show them everything there is to know about LEAD, college, and adjusting away from home in general," says Meredith Hein, a second-year LEAD Scholar.

### Volunteer LEADers

Community service is another powerful LEAD component. Students say that they grow as individuals through volunteer work. "LEAD has provided me with a new outlook on many situations in my life," says Hein, who worked with the Humane Society.

"My eyes have been opened to many service projects that I never knew existed outside of school," says second-year LEAD Scholar Elizabeth Hendrix, who worked with Give Kids the World and the American Cancer Society.

### Where Hard Work LEADs

Through LEAD's assistantship program, students get paid to work with faculty from their colleges or serve as undergraduate research aids for a semester. "It's a good opportunity for students to be connected with the faculty on campus and to begin learning their field of discipline," Lloyd says.

Most LEAD members, not surprisingly, are leaders in other campus groups, clubs, and organizations. "Each and every organization that I've become involved in on campus is somewhat related to my membership in LEAD through networking," says Lauren Creegan, who graduated from the program in spring 2002.

Director William Faulkner says the program teaches a very important lesson: Leadership is for life. "They almost have an obligation to be of service not only on campus but when they graduate," he says. "This goes far beyond just a two-year program; this is just the beginning of their leadership journey and leadership expectations."

LEAD Scholars' attitudes, skills, and abilities go well beyond those of the average UCF student. "There's a big difference between interviewing a student and interviewing a LEAD Scholar," Lloyd says. "When [LEAD Scholars] interview with other areas on-campus, we hear back from those administrators who say that our kids really know what leadership is."

For more information on UCF's LEAD Scholars Program, contact Jan Lloyd at 407-823-2223, [jlloyd@mail.ucf.edu](mailto:jlloyd@mail.ucf.edu), or visit [www.reach.ucf.edu/~lead](http://www.reach.ucf.edu/~lead).

### To LEAD or Not to LEAD...

LEAD Scholars accepts about 50 percent of the applicants who apply for the two-year co-curricular program. Students are targeted to apply once they are accepted to UCF based on their:

- GPA and SAT scores.
- Leadership experiences (clubs and organization involvement, leadership positions held).
- Community service experiences (the length of commitment, diversity with a variety of organizations, number of service hours (if provided))
- Academic excellence (GPA, SAT, and ACT scores, as well as academic preparation opportunities including national honor society, AP, International Baccalaureate programs, and dual enrollments courses).

In addition, students are required to submit an essay regarding a project they have sustained over a period of time and discuss their motivation toward this commitment.

Learn more about how to LEAD at UCF by visiting [www.floridaleader.com](http://www.floridaleader.com)