

**From:** [Smith, Randy](#)  
**To:** [Tepper, Bennett](#); [Shanahan, Jen Knox](#)  
**Cc:** [Sutherland, Sue](#); [Smith, Randy](#); [Griffiths, Rob](#); [Reed, Katie](#); [Duffy, Lisa](#); [Hunt, Ryan](#); [Croxtan, Keely](#); [Chandrasekaran, Aravind](#)  
**Subject:** Proposal to redesign the Dean's Leadership Academy  
**Date:** Friday, June 12, 2026 2:56:25 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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Ben and Jen:

The proposal from the Fisher College of Business to redesign the Dean's Leadership Academy was approved by the Council on Academic Affairs at its meeting on June 11, 2026. Thank you for attending the meeting to respond to questions/comments.

No additional level of internal review/approval is necessary. This action will be included in the Council's next [Annual Activities Report](#) to the University Senate (July 2026).

The Office of the University Registrar will work with you on any implementation issues.

Please keep a copy of this message for your file on the proposal and I will do the same for the file in the Office of Academic Affairs.

If you have any questions please contact the Chair of the Council, Professor Sue Sutherland (.43), or me.

I wish you success with this important program development.

Randy



**W. Randy Smith, Ph.D.**

Vice Provost for Academic Programs

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April 3, 2026

Randy Smith  
Vice Provost for Academic Programs  
The Ohio State University

Dear Randy:

The Fisher College Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs, Keely Croxton, have endorsed proposed revisions to the Dean's Leadership Academy (DLA) certificate program. I write to express my strong support for these changes.

The proposed revisions are well aligned with the college's strategic plan, particularly its emphases on developing principled leaders and expanding meaningful experiential learning opportunities for students.

Collectively, we believe these changes will enhance the DLA's appeal to a broader range of students while increasing both participation in and completion of the program.

Sincerely,

Aravind Chandrasekaran  
Interim Dean  
John W. Berry, Sr. Chair in Business

# Proposal to Redesign the Dean's Leadership Academy

The Dean's Leadership Academy (DLA) is a certificate program launched in 2017 by the Fisher Leadership Initiative (FLI) in partnership with the Fisher College of Business' Department of Management and Human Resources (MHR). It is a 15-credit hour program that is open to all Ohio Student undergraduate students with a 3.0 GPA and that is designed to introduce students to a range of evidence-based leadership competencies, give them opportunities to practice those skills, and connect students with proven community and organizational leaders. The first DLA certificate was conferred in spring of 2018. Since the program's inception, 469 students have completed the certificate (approximately 560 will have completed it by the end of Spring 2026), 87% of whom are BSBA students. Many DLA alums have gone on to work for some of the top hiring organizations in the country, including Crowe LLP, Owens Corning, National Air and Space Intelligence Center, The Superior Group, Cigna, Deloitte Consulting, KeyBank, Amazon, Deloitte, Oracle, PolyOne, PNC, Cisco, JP Morgan Chase, EY, Grainger, PwC, and London Financial Group. Starting salary and job placement rates for DLA graduates (\$71,646; 91% placement) are higher than the Fisher College average (\$68,832; 88.5% placement).

**Oversight:** The DLA is led by an academic program manager who oversees student recruitment and enrollment, coordinates with the Fisher College Undergraduate Program Office and with the University Registrar regarding student progress through the program and the conferral of certificates, coordinates with MHR leadership on course staffing, supports and trains student ambassadors, and engages in community outreach activities including sourcing leadership projects and fund-raising.

**Strengths and Challenges:** The DLA has seen steady enrollment through the first eight years of the program's existence. Surveys of current students and alumni identify as program benefits (1) high quality instruction, (2) a sense of community, (3) opportunities for practical application of in-class learnings, and (4) participation in leadership projects that benefit community partners (e.g., The Mid-Ohio Food Collective, Childhood League Center, The Ohio Environmental Council, TechCorps, Ronald McDonald House, Volunteers of America, Huckleberry House, StarHouse, GEMS, NC4K, & Lifecare Alliance). An additional strength of the program is an active DLA Alumni group and a DLA Ambassador Team, a group of 10-12 volunteer students who are empowered to further the DLA student community and scale the program's impact across the university. These ambassadors develop and execute community-based programs and lead recruitment events. However, as we approach the end of the DLA's first decade, the time is right to recognize the program's challenges and corresponding opportunities for improving its reach and student experience. The most pressing matters center on completion rates and the program's content.

**Challenges: Completion Rates:** Most DLA students complete the fifteen hour program during the third and fourth year, after they have completed the general education requirements and, in the case of BSBA students, the business foundations courses. The program can therefore be difficult to complete for many students who also pursue credit-heavy specializations such as finance or accounting (i.e., up to 27 hours beyond the gen ed requirements, business foundations, and major core). As a consequence, 49% of DLA registrants do not complete the program. Focus groups and survey studies with these individuals suggest that the primary

impediment to completing the program is its length and that a small decrease in required credit hours would have a substantial impact on completion rates. Mindful of the constraints within which DLA enrollees operate, and in keeping with the philosophy that the DLA was always meant to be an introduction to leadership concepts and practices rather than an immersive experience (of the sort offered by the FAES leadership studies minor or by the A&S leadership major), we are proposing that the certificate program be reduced from fifteen hours to twelve hours.

**Challenges: Program Content:** Currently, DLA students are required to take MHR 2210 Personal Leadership and Team Effectiveness for three credits plus twelve hours of elective coursework. MHR 2210 is a project based course that emphasizes experiential learning and making it a requirement was consistent with research suggesting that individuals learn by doing, particularly with respect to complex skills like leading.<sup>1</sup> The electives from which students may choose touch on specific leadership competencies such as negotiating, coaching, character, holding difficult conversations, and team building. The variety of elective offerings affords students considerable flexibility to structure their studies around features of leadership that fit their idiosyncratic interests. However, the DLA program structure also comes with several tradeoffs that warrant attention.

First, the DLA lacks coursework that provides grounding in the fundamentals of social science. Leadership instruction and development is pervasive, but not always evidence-based and it is important that students be imbued with the skills to distinguish between leadership fads and leadership science. We are therefore proposing that DLA students be required to take MHR 2200 Leadership Science, a course that in its formal description contains the following characterization of its primary aims: *(1) introduce students to leadership science (i.e., the systematic study of leadership concepts and processes using the tools and theories of social and behavioral science), (2) equip students with the ability to use evidence-based concepts and criteria to critically evaluate perspectives on leadership that are promulgated, and (3) cultivate in students the ability to recognize and use leadership practices that are informed by state of the art research.*

Second, the DLA program lacks coherence in the sense that the coursework is not integrated around a clearly articulated point of view on leadership. In keeping with the Fisher's College's emphasis on developing principled leaders, we are proposing that DLA students be required to take MHR 3211, Leadership and Character.

Third, scaling the DLA is constrained by the current requirement that all students complete MHR 2210. This course affords students the opportunity to participate in real world projects, work closely with organizational leaders, and learn through experience. However, the workload for the MHR 2210 instructor is considerable. It is incumbent on the instructor to source and scope each project and to maintain productive relationships with participating organizations. As a practical matter, MHR is only able to offer the course two times per year, and enrollment must be capped at a manageable level. Ideally, the redesigned DLA would offer students multiple opportunities to learn leadership by doing, of which MHR 2210 would be

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<sup>1</sup> Mumford, Marks, Zaccaro, Connelly, & Reiter-Palmon (2000). Development of leadership skills: Experience and timing. *Leadership Quarterly*, 11(1), 87-114. McCall (2004). Leadership development through experience. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 18(3), 127-130.

one option. We are therefore proposing that in the redesigned DLA, students be able to pursue multiple experiential learning opportunities (as many as seven three-credit courses to choose from).

Fourth, the DLA consists entirely of coursework offered by MHR. DLA Students would benefit from opportunities to take elective courses on leadership from outside the Fisher College. Leveraging expertise, resources, and coursework from outside Fisher would also help achieve the goal of scaling DLA further. Potential courses to be included in the redesigned DLA are Philosophy 2390: Ethics and History 3676: Leadership in History offered by the College of Arts and Sciences. MHR would also be open to creating and including in the DLA relevant courses that are team-taught with faculty from outside Fisher such as the Glenn School.

**Summary of Proposed Changes to the Design of the DLA:** See Table 1 for an overview of the current and proposed DLA curriculum. The proposed changes can be summarized as follows:

1. Reduction in program length from fifteen credit hours (3 required and 12 elective) to twelve credit hours (6 required and 6 elective).
2. Course that is required in the current program – MHR 2210 Personal Leadership and Team Effectiveness – becomes an experiential learning elective in the redesigned program.
3. Course that is an elective in the current program – MHR 2200 Leadership Science – becomes a required course in the redesigned program.
4. Course that is an elective in the current program – MHR 3211 Leadership & Character – becomes a required course in the redesigned program.
5. All coursework in the current program is offered by MHR; elective coursework in the redesigned program includes choices from outside the Fisher College.

**Table 1: Current and Proposed DLA Program Curriculum**

<p align="center"><b>Current DLA Program Curriculum (15 credit hours)</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>Proposed DLA Program Curriculum (12 credit hours)</b></p>
<p><b>Required (3 hours)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MHR:2210 Personal Leadership and Team Effectiveness (3)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Required (6 hours)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MHR 2200: Leadership Science (3)</li> <li>MHR 3211: Leadership &amp; Character (3)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Electives (12 hours)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MHR 3211: Leadership &amp; Character (3)</li> <li>MHR 3360: Impact 360 (3)</li> <li>MHR 3500: High Stakes Leadership (3)</li> <li>MHR 4228: Organizational Coaching (3)</li> <li>MHR 4235: Developing Leaders Through Practical Exercises (3)</li> <li>MHR 4236: Crucial Conversations (3)</li> <li>MHR 4244: Negotiations (3)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Electives (6 hours)</b></p> <p><b>Electives that emphasize experiential Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MHR 2210: Personal Leadership and Team Effectiveness (3)</li> <li>MHR 3500: High Stakes Leadership (3)</li> <li>MHR 4228: Organizational Coaching (3)</li> <li>MHR 4235: Developing Leaders Through Practical Exercises (3)</li> <li>MHR 4236: Crucial Conversations (3)</li> <li>MHR 4244: Negotiations (3)</li> </ul> <p><b>Electives from outside the Fisher College</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PHILO 2390: Ethics and Leadership (3)</li> <li>HIST 3676: Leadership in History (3)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Challenges associated with current structure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Difficulty for many students of completing in four years the requirements for their major field of study <u>and</u> a 15 credit hour certificate program</li> </ul>	<p><b>Solution achieved through redesign</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce the program’s requirements to 12 credit hours while maintaining the immersive experience that current DLA students currently enjoy</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Absence of solid grounding in the fundamentals of social science as it applies to understanding leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require MHR 2200, Leadership Science</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of integration around a coherent theme: Principled Leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require MHR 3211: Leadership and Character</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Position the program to be able to offer experiential learning coursework at scale</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer multiple elective options that offer students experiential learning options</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All coursework offered by MHR</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include as values based and experiential learning electives courses from outside the Fisher College</li> </ul>

## Abbreviated Course Descriptions for Redesigned Dean's Leadership Academy<sup>2</sup>

### Required (6 hours)

- **MHR 2200: Leadership Science:** A foundational course that leverages the theories and methods of social and behavioral science to bring an evidence-based perspective to the examination of leadership. Through interactive lectures, research translations, case studies and film clips, decision-making scenarios, simulations and role plays, self and other assessments and reflections, team discussions, and experiential learning activities, we will explore the major theoretical perspectives on leadership that have been proposed and rigorously examined.
- **MHR 3211: Leadership and Character:** Prepares you to live with personal integrity by focusing on essential values to leading a life of character. Includes assignments and in-class experiences to examine your virtues, test your decision-making, and help you lead with character.

### Electives (6 hours)

- **MHR 2210: Personal Leadership and Team Effectiveness:** Builds leadership self-awareness through assessments, feedback, and work in teams through real-world leadership project. Cultivate essential project management skills while delivering a project in the community.\*
- **MHR 3500: High Stakes Leadership:** Leading Expeditions is a transformational co-curricular opportunity to immerse yourself in the study and application of leadership. These experiences allow you to apply knowledge gained in the classroom during an exhilarating outdoor adventure in one of the most beautiful settings in the U.S.\*
- **MHR 4228: Organizational Coaching:** Class will explore the various roots and perspectives of modern coaching while building the skills of coaching including but not limited to deep listening, coaching presence, business acumen, cultural dynamics, and powerful questioning.\*
- **MHR 4235: Developing Leaders through Practical Exercises:** Refines personal and team leadership through active simulations designed to test participants' leadership behaviors and provide real-time feedback.\*
- **MHR 4236: Crucial Conversations:** Covers essential skills for handling high-stakes, emotional, and contentious conversations. Emphasizes practical techniques for managing disagreements, enhancing accountability, and improving performance through structured dialogue.\*

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<sup>2</sup>All courses listed are 3 credit hours.

- **MHR 4244: Negotiations:** Builds practical skills for managing conflict, creating value, and handling complex, real-world professional discussions via simulations and high out-of-class engagement.\*
- **PHILOS 2390: Ethics and Leadership:** Students will engage with leading scholarship on the justification of authority, democratic citizenship, morally responsible decision-making, and virtue ethics to understand how citizenship in a just and diverse society shapes our ideals and practices of ethical leadership.<sup>3</sup> \*\*
- **History 3676: Leadership in History:** This course employs the lessons, models, and narratives of history to consider different characteristics of leadership and analyze how those qualities might shape students' own vision of what it means to be an informed citizen, leader, and follower. We encourage students to apply historical thinking to answer the questions: what does leadership and followership mean? What responsibilities do we have as citizens to identify and protect the needs, objectives, and values of our communities? How should we act in order to be the kind of people we would wish to follow?\*\*\*

**\*Elective courses with a strong experiential learning component**

**\*\*Elective course from outside the Fisher College of Business**

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<sup>3</sup>Pending input and approval from the Philosophy Department