

# DEVELOPING CURRICULAR CONSENSUS FOR LAND-GRANT ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS: A DELPHI STUDY



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## Abstract

To face the challenges that beset land-grant universities in the 21st Century, leadership development programs exist to prepare academics for university administration. However, a small percentage of administrators participates in these programs. Furthermore, many academic leaders begin their roles feeling unprepared for the challenges therein. This study sought to attain consensus regarding the educational inputs and outcomes for academic leadership development programs for emerging leaders within the land-grant university system. Expert opinion was solicited through a Delphi study of program directors and educators for two national, land-grant academic leadership development programs. Participants outlined the theories, paradigms, philosophies, and outcomes they felt are important for academic leadership development programs, resulting in 122 items. Of these, 84 items achieved consensus. Highlights included participants valuing adaptive, authentic, transformational, and values-based leadership concepts in academic leadership development curricula. Additionally, learning outcomes for these programs should include a sense of purpose, critical thinking skills, cultural intelligence, design thinking skills, and emotional intelligence. These findings are useful to leadership educators as they prepare emerging leaders across the three land-grant mission areas. Additionally, this study's results could be of use in developing a greater awareness for the types of opportunities available to emerging leaders in the land-grant system.

*Keywords:* land-grant, leadership, curriculum, outcomes, Delphi method

Land-grant education in the 21st Century is an important consideration for the leadership development of emerging academic leaders. Since the inception of land-grant institutions in 1862, the land-grant system has served as a leader among American higher education institutes, effecting positive change in U.S. agriculture, civic engagement, and society (Seevers & Graham, 2012). Nevertheless, like higher education at large, the land-grant schools face their own set of challenges, some separate from or complementary to what non-land-grant schools might face. Broadly speaking, these challenges are best articulated in Gavazzi and Gee (2018) who summarized themes on the challenges faced by 27 presidents and chancellors at public land-grant universities in the United States. The seven themes that emerged from their interviews were:

1. Concerns about funding declines vs. the need to create efficiencies,
2. Research prowess vs. teaching and service excellence,
3. Knowledge for knowledge's sake vs. a more applied focus,
4. The focus on rankings vs. an emphasis on access and affordability,
5. Meeting the needs of rural communities vs. the needs of a more urbanized America,
6. Global reach vs. closer-to-home impact, and
7. The benefits of higher education vs. the devaluation of a college diploma. (Gavazzi & Gee, 2018, p. 9)

Considering these complex issues, it would seem that, now more than ever, land-grant administrators will need to

engage in effective leadership to meet these challenges. Looking to the future, institutional success, be it at a college or university level, will be contingent on emergent leaders undergoing preparation and training in leadership and decision making (Collins, 2001; Lamm et al., 2013; Nistler et al., 2011).

In recent decades, academic leadership development programs arose with the purpose of identifying and preparing leaders who occupy administrative posts and might well continue their advancement through the echelons of university administration (Bisbee, 2007; Gigliotti, 2017; Gmelch, 2000; Gmelch, 2013; Hoppe, 2003; Raines & Alberg, 2003). Although these types of leadership interventions were initially slow to gain sway in the academe, there is a growing attitude of positive sentiment toward academic leadership development programs for emerging leaders, precipitating an increase in the number of programs therein (Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017; Ruben et al., 2017). Indeed, Ruben et al. (2017) noted that “in addition to the number of worthy program themes, there exist numerous leadership development philosophies, theories, and models that inform existing approaches to leadership education in colleges and universities” (p., 98). Notwithstanding, these leadership development programs seem to account for the preparation of only a small percentage of academic leaders. Gmelch et al. (1996) noted that 3% of academic leaders had access to formalized leadership development programs on their campuses. Similarly, in the last decade, Cipriano and Riccardi (2013) found that only 3.3% of department chairs entered their positions with formal training in the skills expected of them.

Many department chairs and deans who resign from their administrative posts cite high stress and low job satisfaction as contributing factors to their resignation (Gmelch & Burns, 1994; Gmelch & Miskin, 2011; Wolverson, et al., 1999; Wolverson et al., 2005). Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, academicians have noted that higher education has also fallen prey to what other sectors recognize as “The Great Resignation” (Odell & Myers, 2021; Thompson, 2021). As early as 2018, a survey of nearly 50,000 administrators across 1,000 institutions of higher learning by the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources found that campus administrators generally have relatively short terms in their roles: a median of five years (Kline, 2018). Specifically, university chief executives (i.e., presidents and chancellors) had a median of 5 years in their positions, while provosts had a median of 3 years in their roles. Regardless of the factors that contribute to administrative resignations on a case-by-case basis, Wolverson et al. (2001) noted that the average time administrators spend in their positions (six years in the early 2000s) likely overlaps with the formative stage of learning the role and the skills necessary to carry it out.

Despite the various means for preparing academic leaders for their assorted roles and careers in administration, Gmelch and Buller (2015) suggested that “many academic leaders begin their jobs woefully unprepared for the challenges awaiting them” (p. 2). American higher education has weathered many storms since the founding of Harvard

College in 1636, but this unpreparedness is noteworthy given the exigence assigned to academic leadership development amidst the shifting sands of the 21st Century’s political landscape, changing economies, and technological advancements (Bolman & Gallos, 2011; Buller, 2014; Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017; Gmelch & Buller, 2015; Ruben, 2004; Ruben, De Lisi, & Gigliotti, 2017).

In a report surveying academic leaders from its member institutions, the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) found that the greatest challenges to be prioritized for APLU schools in the coming decades included a decrease in government funding, student mental health and general well-being, diversity and inclusion efforts, and college affordability (APLU, 2020). The report underscored that these challenges were only to be further exacerbated by the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, 25% of respondents indicated that they either simply did not know if they are prepared or that they are not at all prepared.

As emerging academic leaders enroll in academic leadership development programs, particularly formal experiences at regional and national levels, it will be imperative for leadership educators to employ curricula that are cohesive, relevant, and holistic. This could have significant implications for the success of current and future cadres of land-grant leaders.

### Purpose and Objectives

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The purpose of this study was to develop consensus for the educational inputs and outcomes among academic leadership development programs for emerging leaders within the land-grant university system. This purpose was supported by three objectives:

1. Outline the leadership theories and practices that guide the preparation for emerging academic leaders,
2. Identify the types of programs in which emerging academic leaders may participate, and
3. Summarize the learning outcomes for emerging academic leaders.

### Methods

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To meet this study’s objectives, the Delphi method was employed (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963; Fink et al., 1984; Linstone & Turoff, 2002). The Delphi method is a consensus building technique generally conducted in three to four rounds whereby data is solicited from a panel of experts on the research topic in question. The initial round solicits qualitative data through open-ended questioning. First round data is then categorized and advanced to the second round so that the panel of experts may vote their level of agreement with the categories. Per an established cull point, data from the second round is removed or forwarded to the third round for voting to determine if consensus can be established. In effect, once a “convergence of opinion or when a point of diminishing returns is reached,” the method is considered to have expired and the data collection complete (Fink et al., 1984, p. 980).

## LAND-GRANT ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Since expert opinion was sought to generate data for this study, sampling was purposive in nature and participants were recruited from the publicly listed program directors and educator staff members of two national academic leadership development programs for land-grant administrators: The Food Systems Leadership Institute (FSLI) and LEAD21. Broadly speaking, these individuals comprised senior level university administrators, leadership faculty, unit heads, and leadership educators from consulting firms. It was believed that their collective experiences in leadership education, higher education administration, and professional development would be invaluable in seeking to meet this study's objectives. Linstone and Turoff (2002) noted that the number of participants recruited for a panel of experts can range from 10 to 50 participants. Furthermore, Harder et al. (2021) noted that at least 13 participants could ensure reliability for a Delphi study's panel of experts. In accounting for potential attrition, sampling the total population of 34 program directors and educator staff members seemed a logistically feasible option for this study. For this study, program directors and teaching staff for LEAD21 and FSLI were recruited via e-mail to participate. Of the 34 individuals recruited, 17 consented to participate.

### Data Collection

This Delphi study consisted of three rounds and was carried out over three weeks. Round one served as a generative phase for the study and solicited responses to open-ended questioning via a Qualtrics free response survey:

1. Please list any theories, models, or concepts that are important to academic leadership development in general (including both your program as well as other programs and interventions).
2. Aside from your own program, please list the types of leadership development programs in which emerging academic leaders may participate.
3. Please indicate what you believe the learning outcomes for developing leaderships skills and competencies in emerging academic leaders should be.

In total, 16 of the 17 consenters provided responses to the generative phase resulting in a 94% response rate. The generative phase in round one permitted participants to respond with as little or as much detail as they wished. Subsequently, most participants opted to provide lists of terms or constructs with the occasional short description to clarify information that they provided, which they might have found ambiguous or simply wished to elucidate further. Data generated from round one was filtered and condensed for commonalities (Harder et al., 2021). For example, in cases where a single theory, model, philosophy, and/or idea was referred to with slightly different terms, the concepts were condensed as a single item. In total, 122 unique items were generated from responses to all three questions. The items were organized into five topical categories: examples of models, theories, or concepts important to academic leadership development (43 items); specific leadership development programs academic leaders can participate in

(19 items); specific statewide or institution-based leadership development programs academic leaders can participate in (six items); general types of leadership development programs academic leaders can participate in (eight items); and examples of learning outcomes for developing leadership skills and competencies in emerging academic leaders (46 items). Following this categorical grouping, the 122 items were utilized to build an instrument to carry out round two.

In round two, the 122 items from round one data were presented to participants in five-point-Likert scale format so that they could rate their level of agreement with the items (1 being strongly disagree; 5 being strongly agree). The instrument was designed and distributed via Qualtrics. In line with standard practice when using the Delphi method (Harder et al., 2021; Linstone & Turoff, 2002; Warner & Harder, 2020), a 2/3 cull point was established a priori for this study. This meant that for a single item to advance to subsequent rounds of rating, it must register a minimum percent agreement score of 66.67% (derived from ratings in both the agree and/or strongly agree categories). For round two, 16 participants (94%) of the original 17 consenters responded to the instrument. In total, 84 items advanced to round three.

In round three, the 84 items that advanced from round two were voted on a final time with the same 2/3 cull point (66.67%) indicating retainment or omission. Items that reached the cull point in this round were considered to have attained consensus among the study's panel of experts. For round three, 15 participants (88%) of the original 17 consenters responded to the survey. All 84 items achieved consensus.

## Results

### Round One

The 43 items generated from participant data from question one, regarding leadership models, theories, and concepts important to academic leadership development, encompassed a variety of concepts common in traditional leadership pedagogy (Table 1). Participant data referred to theories or paradigms like adaptive leadership, authentic leadership, charismatic leadership, servant leadership, situational leadership, and transformational leadership. Other constructs that did not necessarily constitute standalone leadership theories or paradigms but that can be considered autonomous constructs complementary to paradigmatic views of leadership, particularly when learning leadership theory and translating it to praxis, were also mentioned. These items included emotional intelligence, mentorship, critical thinking, and conflict management. Also present in the data were relatively new concepts (compared to some leadership theories and paradigms at least) that are presently popular among leadership pedagogues and practitioners alike when taking into account wicked problems and grand-level challenges of the 21st Century. These items included systems thinking, growth mindset, and change theory.

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**Table 1**

*Round One Leadership Models, Theories, and Concepts for Academic Leadership Development*

Item
Adaptive Leadership
Authentic Leadership
Building Trust
Change Theory
Charismatic Leadership
Conflict Management
Courage
Critical Thinking
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Effective Communication Skills
Emotional Intelligence
Equity Centered Leadership Model
Food Systems Perspective
FourSight® Framework/Model (Gerard Puccio)
Futuring
Group Development
Growth Mindset
Independent Thinking
Infinite Game Model (Simon Sinek)
Interpersonal Leadership (working well with others)
Intrapersonal Skills (Self-Awareness)
Leadership Integrity
Leadership Versus Management
Leading Change
Leading Teams
Mentorship
Model of the Psyche (Carl Jung)
Myers-Briggs Assessment
Negotiation Techniques
Peer Coaching
Problem-Solving
Risk Management
Servant Leadership
Situational Leadership
Steward Leadership
Systems Thinking
The Five Dysfunctions of a Team (Patrick Lencioni)
The Powerful Apology Technique
Thought Diversity
Transactional Leadership
Transformation Theory
Transformational Leadership
Values-Based Leadership

Question two was meant to garner perspectives on the types of academic leadership development programs in which emerging academic leaders may participate. However, data generated from this question outlined both generalized program types as well as specific programs. Consequently, the items that resulted, and that were reflective of specific leadership development programs in which academic leaders could participate, oscillated between more national and/or regional programs and state-focused programs. Items in this area were divided between the two themes. For the 19 items that related to more national and/or regional academic leadership development programs, though asked not to, participants still listed their own programs LEAD21 an FSLI. In addition to these, programs predicated on

academic/intercollegiate athletic ties were listed such as the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) Academic Leaders Network Program and the Big Ten Academic Alliance. Other items comprised nationally recognized programs such as the Dale Carnegie Leadership Development Program and the American Council on Education Fellows Program (Table 2).

**Table 2**

*Round One National and/or Regional Programs for Academic Leaders.*

Item
Academic Impressions
Academic Leaders Program
American Academic Leadership Institute (AALI)
American Council on Education Fellows Program
Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) Academic Leaders Network Program
Center for Creative Leadership
Dale Carnegie Leadership Development Program
Emerging Leaders in Academic Medicine (ELAM)
Emerging Leaders Program
Food Systems Leadership Institute
Franklin Covey Leadership Program
HERS Leadership Institute
LEAD21
Mindtools
Senn Delaney Leadership Program
Skillsoft
The American Academic Leadership Institute
The Big Ten Academic Alliance
The SEC Academic Leadership Development Program

For the six items generated for state-based academic leadership development programs, there was varied geography that encompassed three states: Kentucky, North Carolina, California, and Minnesota (Table 3).

For the eight items generated under general program types of leadership development programs, participants made references to private consulting/coaching, as well as state agricultural leadership programs (Table 4). Interestingly, there was mention of formal degree programs including items regarding higher education administration, leadership, and/or governance degree programs. This item went on to be qualified with master's degree and/or doctoral degree, seeing as terminal degree programs of this nature are generally geared toward prospective academic administrators.

**Table 3**

*Round One State-Based Academic Leadership Development Programs.*

Item
California Agricultural Leadership Program
Great Lakes Leadership Program
Leadership Central Kentucky
Leadership Kentucky
University of North Carolina Academic Career Leadership Academy in Medicine (ACCLAIM)
University of North Carolina Bridges: Academic Leadership for Women

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**Table 4**

*Round One General Types of Leadership Development Programs for Academic Leaders.*

Item
Campus-Based ("In-House") Leadership Development
Commercial (National) Leadership Development
Higher Education Administration, Leadership, and/or Governance Degree Programs (e.g., Master's degree and/or Doctoral Degree)
Private Consultants and Private Executive Coaches
Self-Paced, Online Leadership Development Programs
State Agricultural Leadership Programs
System-wide (In-State Universities) Leadership Development Programs

Finally, data generated from question three resulted in a wide array of perspectives on learning outcomes for academic leaders (Table 5). Many of these perspectives were interpersonal and reflective of the process orientation of leadership. Some of these included the ability to inspire, ability to mentor, ability to work in teams, conflict management, and ability to build partnerships. Others had implications for organizational effectiveness and functionality such as the ability to make hard decisions, ability to manage, decision making in an era of ambiguity, and an understanding of organizational structures, dynamics, and bottlenecks. Participants also made references to outcomes grounded in diversity, equity, inclusion, and related constructs. For example, items generated to represent these data included "Cultural humility," Cultural intelligence," and "Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

**Table 5**

*Round One Learning Outcomes for Academic Leaders.*

Item
A Sense of Purpose
Ability to Address Complex Problems
Ability to Articulate Vision
Ability to Build Partnerships
Ability to Foster an Organizational Culture Anchored in Psychological Safety
Ability to Foster Collaboration
Ability to Inspire
Ability to Make Hard Decisions
Ability to Manage an Organization
Ability to Mentor Others
Ability to Motivate Others, Particularly within the Organization
Ability to Work in Teams
Advocating for Change within the Organization Consistent with the Food System Vision
An Understanding of Different Learning Styles
An Understanding of Organizational Structures, Dynamics, and Bottlenecks
An Understanding of the Complexities of Academic Leadership

**Table 5 cont.**

*Round One Learning Outcomes for Academic Leaders.*

Item
Being an Advocate of Employee Development
Being Skilled at Bringing Together Multiple Constituencies to Focus on Major Food System Challenges, Issues, and Opportunities
Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Commitment to Servant Leadership
Conflict Management Skills
Creating positive changes to impact the health of citizens, the environment, the economy, and local communities within their respective states/areas.
Crisis Communication Skills
Critical Thinking Skills
Cultural Humility
Cultural Intelligence
Decision Making in an Era of Ambiguity
Design Thinking Skills
Developing a Personal Leadership Support Network
Effecting Change for the Good of Society
Effective Written and Oral Communication Skills
Emotional Intelligence
Financial Acumen
Fundraising Skills
Grit
Having an Authentic Leadership Presence
Independent Thinking
Interpersonal Skills (Understanding and Working Well with Others)
Intrapersonal Skills (Self-Awareness)
Leading Change within an Organization
Leading with Integrity
Political Savvy
Possessing an Integrated Food Systems Perspective Focused on Health, Humans, Environments, Communities, and Economies
Strategic Planning Skills
Trustworthiness
Understanding of Adaptive Management

### Round Two

Of the 43 items originally put forward as examples of models, theories, or concepts important to academic leadership development, 31 items advanced to round three (Table 6). The twelve items that did not advance ranged in topic. For example, several of these items could be considered precepts traditionally taught in programs grounded in leadership theory. These included Charismatic Leadership (50%), Situational Leadership (56.25%), and Transactional Leadership (31.25%). Charismatic Leadership

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Table 6

*.Round Two Leadership Models, Theories, and Concepts for Academic Leadership Development*

Item	% Agreement	M	SD
Effective Communication Skills	100.00	4.94	0.24
Building Trust	100.00	4.88	0.33
Conflict Management	100.00	4.81	0.39
Intrapersonal Skills (Self-Awareness)	100.00	4.69	0.46
Leading Change	100.00	4.69	0.46
Adaptive Leadership	100.00	4.63	0.48
Authentic Leadership	100.00	4.63	0.48
Critical Thinking	100.00	4.63	0.48
Interpersonal Leadership (working well with others)	100.00	4.63	0.48
Leading Teams	100.00	4.56	0.50
Problem-Solving	100.00	4.38	0.48
Leadership Integrity	93.75	4.75	0.75
Emotional Intelligence	93.75	4.69	0.58
Courage	93.75	4.44	0.61
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	93.75	4.44	0.79
Values-Based Leadership	93.75	4.38	0.60
Independent Thinking	93.75	4.19	0.53
Systems Thinking	93.75	4.19	0.53
Change Theory	87.50	4.44	0.70
Growth Mindset	87.50	4.38	0.70
Mentorship	87.50	4.19	0.63
Transformational Leadership	81.25	4.13	0.86
Thought Diversity	81.25	4.06	0.83
Peer Coaching	75.00	4.06	0.75
Servant Leadership	75.00	4.06	1.03
The Five Dysfunctions of a Team (Patrick Lencioni)	75.00	4.06	0.75
Myers-Briggs Assessment	75.00	4.00	0.71
Risk Management	75.00	3.88	0.78
Group Development	68.75	4.06	0.83
Negotiation Techniques	68.75	3.94	0.90
Leadership Versus Management	68.75	3.88	1.05
Food Systems Perspective**	62.50	3.88	0.93
Equity Centered Leadership Model**	62.50	3.69	0.92
Futuring**	56.25	3.81	0.81
Situational Leadership**	56.25	3.63	0.93
Steward Leadership**	56.25	3.56	0.86
The Powerful Apology Technique**	53.33	3.53	1.02
Charismatic Leadership**	50.00	3.31	0.85
Model of the Psyche (Carl Jung)**	37.50	3.38	0.93
Transformation Theory**	37.50	3.38	0.86
Infinite Game Model (Simon Sinek)**	37.50	3.13	0.99
Transactional Leadership**	31.25	3.06	0.97
FourSight® Framework/Model (Gerard Puccio)**	25.00	3.25	0.83

Note. \*\*Item did not achieve consensus.

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received eight ratings total in either the *somewhat agree* or *strongly agree* categories, while six ratings fell under *neither agree nor disagree* category. In addition, one rating was under the *somewhat disagree* category, and one rating in the *strongly disagree* category. Situational Leadership garnered nine ratings across the *somewhat agree* and *strongly agree* categories while also garnering five ratings were under the *neither agree nor disagree* category. Two additional ratings were under in the *somewhat disagree* category. Finally, Transactional Leadership garnered five ratings across the *somewhat agree* and *strongly agree* categories, while nine ratings fell under the *neither agree nor disagree* category. Another three responses registered in the *somewhat disagree* category, and a single rating fell under the *strongly disagree* category. Additional items that did not advance to round three related to popular press themes in leadership such as Simon Sinek's the Infinite Game Model (37.50%) and Gerard Puccio's FourSight® Framework/Model (25%). The Food Systems Perspective (62.50%) and Carl Jung's Model of the Psyche (37.50%) also did not attain advance to round three.

Of the 19 items originally put forward to indicate specific leadership development programs academic leaders can participate in, three items advanced to round three (Table 7). These were LEAD21 (100%), FSLI (93.75%), and the Center for Creative Leadership (75%). For FSLI, 15 ratings were in the *somewhat agree* and *strongly agree* categories, while all of LEAD21's ratings were in the *somewhat agree*

and *strongly agree* categories. For the Center for Creative Leadership, 12 of the ratings were in the *somewhat agree* and *strongly agree* categories, with four ratings falling under the *neither agree nor disagree* category. All other items' percentage agreements were too low to advance to round three. Overwhelmingly, respondents rated these items in the *neither agree nor disagree* category rather than the *somewhat disagree* and *strongly disagree* categories.

Of the six items that were generated regarding specific statewide or institution-based leadership development programs academic leaders can participate in, none advanced to round three (Table 8). Apart from the California Agricultural Leadership Program (60%), which was two responses away from advancing, the other items' ratings fell under the *neither agree nor disagree* category.

Of the eight items that were provided to outline general types of leadership development programs academic leaders can participate in, six items advanced to round three while two items did not (Table 9). These were Private Consultants and Private Executive Coaches (62.50%) as well as Self-Paced, Online Leadership Development Programs (31.25%). The Private Consultants and Private Executive Coaches item was only one response away from advancing. The reminder of participants rated the item in the *neither agree nor disagree* category. Conversely, Self-Paced, Online Leadership Development Programs registered only five ratings in the *somewhat agree* category and none in the *strongly agree* category. The majority of

**Table 7**

*Round Two National and/or Regional Programs for Academic Leaders.*

Item	% Agreement	M	SD
LEAD21	100.00	4.94	0.24
Food Systems Leadership Institute	93.75	4.63	0.60
Center for Creative Leadership	75.00	4.00	0.71
Dale Carnegie Leadership Development Program**	50.00	3.81	0.88
American Council on Education Fellows Program**	46.66	3.80	0.91
Franklin Covey Leadership Program**	43.75	3.56	0.70
Academic Impressions**	37.50	3.50	0.71
The SEC Academic Leadership Development Program**	33.34	3.40	0.61
HERS Leadership Institute**	33.33	3.53	0.81
The Big Ten Academic Alliance**	33.33	3.47	0.72
Academic Leaders Program**	26.67	3.53	0.88
Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) Academic Leaders Network Program**	26.67	3.33	0.60
Emerging Leaders in Academic Medicine (ELAM) **	26.66	3.40	0.71
Senn Delaney Leadership Program**	21.43	3.36	0.72
American Academic Leadership Institute (AALI) **	20.00	3.27	0.57
Emerging Leaders Program**	20.00	3.27	0.57
The American Academic Leadership Institute**	15.38	3.23	0.58
Skillsoft**	14.29	3.14	0.35
Mindtools**	13.33	3.13	0.34

Note. \*\*Item did not achieve consensus.

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**Table 8**

*Round Two State-Based Academic Leadership Development Programs.*

Item	% Agreement	M	SD
California Agricultural Leadership Program**	60.00	4.13	0.96
University of North Carolina Academic Career Leadership Academy in Medicine (ACCLAIM) **	40.00	3.53	0.72
University of North Carolina Bridges: Academic Leadership for Women**	40.00	3.53	0.72
Great Lakes Leadership Program**	33.33	3.53	0.81
Leadership Kentucky**	20.00	3.33	0.70
Leadership Central Kentucky**	13.33	3.27	0.68

Note. \*\*Item did not achieve consensus.

**Table 9**

*Round Two General Types of Leadership Development Programs for Academic Leaders.*

Item	% Agreement	M	SD
Campus-Based ("In-House") Leadership Development Programs	87.50	4.31	0.68
Higher Education Administration, Leadership, and/or Governance Degree Programs (e.g., Master's degree and/or Doctoral Degree)	81.25	4.06	0.83
State Agricultural Leadership Programs	81.25	4.06	0.75
System-wide (In-State Universities) Leadership Development Programs	75.00	4.06	0.66
Commercial (National) Leadership Development Programs	75.00	4.00	0.71
Professional Association Leadership Development Programs	75.00	4.00	0.71
Private Consultants and Private Executive Coaches**	62.50	3.81	0.73
Self-Paced, Online Leadership Development Programs**	31.25	3.06	0.83

Note. \*\*Item did not achieve consensus.

respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with this item, and three ratings were recorded across both the *somewhat disagree* and *strongly disagree* categories.

Of the 46 items generated to represent examples of learning outcomes for developing leadership skills and competencies in emerging academic leaders, 44 items advanced to round three while two items did not advance (Table 10). The latter were Ability to Foster an Organizational Culture Anchored in Psychological Safety (62.50%) and Possessing an Integrated Food Systems Perspective Focused on Health, Humans, Environments, Communities, and Economics (62.50%). In both cases, each item was only one response away from advancing. The remainder of their ratings mostly fell under the *neither agree nor disagree* category.

### Round Three

Of the 31 items advancing from round two as examples of models, theories, or concepts important to academic leadership development, all 31 items achieved consensus following rating during round three (Table 11). The highest percent agreement score was 100%, while the lowest was 66.67%. Seven items reached 100% agreement. These were Building Trust, Conflict Management, Effective Communication Skills, Leading Change, Leading Teams, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Intrapersonal Skills (Self-Awareness), Critical Thinking, and Mentorship. Negotiation Techniques had the lowest percent agreement score (66.67%).

Of the three items advancing from round two as examples of National and/or Regional Programs for Academic Leaders, all three items achieved consensus (Table 12). LEAD21 registered 100% agreement, while FSLI and the Center for Creative Leadership scored 85.71% and 66.67% respectively.

Of the six items advancing from round two as examples of General Types of Leadership Development Programs for Academic Leaders, all six items attained consensus (Table 13). Campus-Based ("In-House") Leadership Development Programs and Professional Association Leadership Development Programs tied for the highest percent agreement score (93.34%), while State Agricultural Leadership Programs (93.33%), System-wide (In-State Universities) Leadership Development Programs (93.33%), and Commercial (National) Leadership Development Programs (86.66%) were not far behind. Higher Education Administration, Leadership, and/or Governance Degree Programs (e.g., Master's degree and/or Doctoral Degree) had the lowest percent agreement score at 80%.

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Table 10

Round Two Learning Outcomes for Academic Leaders.

Item	% Agreement	M	SD
Interpersonal Skills (Understanding and Working Well with Others)	100.00	4.75	0.43
Ability to Work in Teams	100.00	4.69	0.46
Intrapersonal Skills (Self-Awareness)	100.00	4.69	0.46
Leading Change within an Organization	100.00	4.69	0.46
A Sense of Purpose	100.00	4.31	0.46
Leading with Integrity	93.75	4.81	0.53
Trustworthiness	93.75	4.75	0.56
Ability to Articulate Vision	93.75	4.69	0.58
Ability to Address Complex Problems	93.75	4.63	0.60
Ability to Make Hard Decisions	93.75	4.63	0.60
Conflict Management Skills	93.75	4.63	0.60
Emotional Intelligence	93.75	4.63	0.60
Ability to Motivate Others, Particularly within the Organization	93.75	4.50	0.61
Critical Thinking Skills	93.75	4.50	0.61
Political Savvy	93.75	4.50	0.61
Ability to Inspire	93.75	4.38	0.60
Ability to Manage an Organization	93.75	4.38	0.60
Ability to Foster Collaboration	93.75	4.31	0.58
Commitment to Servant Leadership	93.75	4.25	0.75
Being an Advocate of Employee Development	93.75	4.19	0.53
Understanding of Adaptive Management	93.75	4.19	0.53
Ability to Build Partnerships	87.50	4.50	0.71
Effective Written and Oral Communication Skills	87.50	4.50	0.87
Having an Authentic Leadership Presence	87.50	4.50	0.71
An Understanding of Organizational Structures, Dynamics, and Bottlenecks	87.50	4.38	0.86
An Understanding of the Complexities of Academic Leadership	87.50	4.38	0.70
Decision Making in an Era of Ambiguity	87.50	4.38	0.70
Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	87.50	4.31	0.85
Ability to Mentor Others	87.50	4.25	0.66
Independent Thinking	87.50	4.25	0.66
Being Skilled at Bringing Together Multiple Constituencies to Focus on Major Food System Challenges, Issues, and Opportunities	87.50	4.19	0.81
Cultural Intelligence	87.50	4.19	0.63
Developing a Personal Leadership Support Network	87.50	4.13	0.60
Financial Acumen	87.50	4.06	0.75
Advocating for Change within the Organization Consistent with the Food System Vision	81.25	4.31	0.92
Crisis Communication Skills	81.25	4.25	0.90
Grit	81.25	4.25	0.90
Effecting Change for the Good of Society	81.25	4.19	0.73
Design Thinking Skills	81.25	4.06	0.66
Strategic Planning Skills	81.25	4.00	0.61
Fundraising Skills	75.00	3.88	0.93
Cultural Humility	73.34	4.00	0.73
Creating positive changes to impact the health of citizens, the environment, the economy, and local communities within their respective states/areas.	73.34	3.93	0.85

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Table 10 cont.

Round Two Learning Outcomes for Academic Leaders.

<i>Item</i>	<i>% Agreement</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
An Understanding of Different Learning Styles	68.75	3.94	1.09
Ability to Foster an Organizational Culture Anchored in Psychological Safety**	62.50	4.00	0.87
Possessing an Integrated Food Systems Perspective Focused on Health, Humans, Environments, Communities, and Economies**	62.50	3.88	0.93

Note. \*\*Item did not achieve consensus.

Table 11

Round Three Leadership Models, Theories, and Concepts for Academic Leadership Development

<i>Item</i>	<i>% Agreement</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Building Trust	100.00	4.93	0.26
Conflict Management	100.00	4.93	0.25
Effective Communication Skills	100.00	4.87	0.34
Leading Change	100.00	4.80	0.40
Leading Teams	100.00	4.80	0.40
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	100.00	4.67	0.47
Intrapersonal Skills (Self-Awareness)	100.00	4.67	0.47
Critical Thinking	100.00	4.53	0.5
Mentorship	100.00	4.27	0.44
Interpersonal Leadership (working well with others)	93.34	4.60	0.61
Values-Based Leadership	93.34	4.40	0.61
Emotional Intelligence	93.33	4.73	0.57
Leadership Integrity	93.33	4.67	0.79
Adaptive Leadership	93.33	4.53	0.62
Systems Thinking	93.33	4.27	0.57
Authentic Leadership	86.67	4.53	0.72
Change Theory	86.67	4.53	0.72
Growth Mindset	86.67	4.47	0.72
Peer Coaching	86.67	4.27	0.68
Independent Thinking	86.67	4.00	0.73
Problem-Solving	80.00	4.20	0.75
Myers-Briggs Assessment	80.00	4.13	0.72
Servant Leadership	80.00	4.13	0.88
Thought Diversity	80.00	4.13	0.88
Group Development	80.00	4.07	0.68
Risk Management	80.00	4.00	0.97
Leadership Versus Management	80.00	3.87	1.09
Courage	73.33	4.27	0.85
Transformational Leadership	73.33	4.07	0.77
The Five Dysfunctions of a Team (Patrick Lencioni)	73.33	3.93	0.68
Negotiation Techniques	66.67	3.87	0.88

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Table 12

Round Three National and/or Regional Programs for Academic Leaders.

Item	% Agreement	M	SD
LEAD21100.004.930.26	68.75	3.94	1.09
Food Systems Leadership Institute85.714.710.70	62.50	4.00	0.87
Center for Creative Leadership66.673.930.77	62.50	3.88	0.93

Table 13

Round Three General Types of Leadership Development Programs for Academic Leaders.

Item	% Agreement	M	SD
Campus-Based (“In-House”) Leadership Development Programs	93.34	4.60	0.61
Professional Association Leadership Development Programs	93.34	4.40	0.61
State Agricultural Leadership Programs	93.33	4.47	0.62
System-wide (In-State Universities) Leadership Development Programs	93.33	4.33	0.60
Commercial (National) Leadership Development Programs	86.66	4.20	0.65
Higher Education Administration, Leadership, and/or Governance Degree Programs (e.g., Master’s degree and/or Doctoral Degree)	80.00	4.27	0.93

Of the 44 items that advanced from round two as examples of Learning Outcomes for Academic Leaders, all 44 items achieved consensus (Table 14). Percent agreement scores ranged from 66.67% to 100%. There was a seven-way tie for items that reached 100% consensus. These included Conflict Management Skills, Interpersonal Skills (Understanding and Working Well with Others), Intrapersonal Skills (Self-Awareness), Ability to Work in Teams, Ability to Foster Collaboration, Leading Change within an Organization, and A Sense of Purpose. Fundraising Skills, Independent Thinking, and Advocating for Change within the Organization Consistent with the Food System Vision tied for the lowest percent agreement (66.67%).

### Discussion

This study sought to develop consensus for the educational inputs and outcomes among academic leadership development programs for emerging leaders within the land-grant university system. Regarding the

models, theories, and concepts of leadership to be addressed in these programs, the data suggested that participants support the instruction of major theories and concepts common among leadership educators (Harder et al., 2021; Northouse, 2022). For example, perspectives such as adaptive leadership, authentic leadership, interpersonal leadership, intrapersonal leadership, servant leadership, and transformational leadership garnered participant consensus at the conclusion of this study. This sentiment has implications for academic leadership development programs being grounded in evidence-based leadership theory and practice. This is further underscored by participants’ consensus regarding complementary perspectives to formal leadership paradigms such as critical thinking, emotional intelligence, mentorship, and systems thinking being a part of academic leadership development programs as well.

It is encouraging that subjects of interest to both leadership researchers and practitioners were a part of the final inventory of items (e.g., leading change; growth mindset). These data suggested that, from a theoretical standpoint, participants perceived academic leadership development to be holistic, vast, and comprehensive. This focus on research-based theories is appropriate given the complex issues and challenges that academic leaders, particularly land-grant system administrators, currently face and the changes that will need facilitation in the coming decades (Fehlis, 2005; Gavazzi & Gee, 2018; Gmelch & Buller, 2015; Lamm et. al, 2013). In a related vein, it seems participants did not feel that popular press leadership concepts have a place in these programs, lending more credibility to research-based work. Intriguingly, despite the nature of participants’ backgrounds in the land-grant system, a food systems perspective being absent from the consensus generated within this study gives one pause. The reasons for this are only speculation. For example, it could be that participants felt that the concept was not indicative of a leader nor complementary to leadership practice. On the other hand, it could be that participants were extrapolating their perspectives to non-land-grant academic leadership programs when rating this item. Whatever the reason, this aspect of curriculum (e.g., agricultural and related sciences perspectives) might be of interest in future studies to those that wish to explore this sub-facet moving forward.

Regarding the different programs that exist for emerging academic leaders, considering that most items from the generative phase could not attain consensus, participants could not agree on the viability of academic leadership development programs at the state or national/regional level. This could be the result of a lack of exposure to these programs by the participants themselves. This is especially possible since many of the choices were rated as a neither agree nor disagree. Nevertheless, another reason for this could stem from a place of “who are we to say” that another program is good or bad. This would be in line with FSLI and LEAD21 unilaterally attaining consensus. It remains unclear why the Center for Creative Leadership was the lone program that also attained consensus other than perhaps its reputation was the most compelling to all participants given its mission of utilizing research-based leadership education.

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Table 14

Round Three General Types of Leadership Development Programs for Academic Leaders.

Item	% Agreement	M	SD
Conflict Management Skills	100.00	4.87	0.34
Interpersonal Skills (Understanding and Working Well with Others)	100.00	4.73	0.44
Intrapersonal Skills (Self-Awareness)	100.00	4.73	0.44
Ability to Work in Teams	100.00	4.67	0.47
Ability to Foster Collaboration	100.00	4.6	0.49
Leading Change within an Organization	100.00	4.53	0.50
A Sense of Purpose	100.00	4.47	0.50
Emotional Intelligence	93.34	4.6	0.61
Decision Making in an Era of Ambiguity	93.33	4.53	0.62
Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	93.33	4.47	0.62
Ability to Articulate Vision	93.33	4.27	0.57
Ability to Address Complex Problems	92.85	4.50	0.63
Trustworthiness	86.67	4.67	0.87
Leading with Integrity	86.67	4.60	0.88
Critical Thinking Skills	86.67	4.53	0.72
Ability to Inspire	86.67	4.47	0.72
Effective Written and Oral Communication Skills	86.67	4.47	0.88
Having an Authentic Leadership Presence	86.67	4.40	0.88
Political Savvy	86.67	4.33	0.70
Developing a Personal Leadership Support Network	86.67	4.27	0.68
Cultural Humility	86.67	4.20	0.83
Understanding of Adaptive Management	86.67	4.07	0.57
Ability to Motivate Others, Particularly within the Organization	86.66	4.40	0.71
Effecting Change for the Good of Society	86.66	4.07	0.93
Being an Advocate of Employee Development	85.72	4.21	0.86
Ability to Make Hard Decisions	80.00	4.47	0.81
An Understanding of the Complexities of Academic Leadership	80.00	4.40	0.80
Commitment to Servant Leadership	80.00	4.33	0.79
Ability to Build Partnerships	80.00	4.27	0.77
An Understanding of Organizational Structures, Dynamics, and Bottlenecks	80.00	4.20	0.91
Cultural Intelligence	80.00	4.13	0.88
Ability to Mentor Others	80.00	4.07	0.85
Being Skilled at Bringing Together Multiple Constituencies to Focus on Major Food System Challenges, Issues, and Opportunities	80.00	4.00	0.97
Grit	80.00	3.93	1.39
An Understanding of Different Learning Styles	80.00	3.73	0.85
Ability to Manage an Organization	73.34	4.07	1.06
Crisis Communication Skills	73.33	4.20	0.98
Creating positive changes to impact the health of citizens, the environment, the economy, and local communities within their respective states/areas.	73.33	3.93	1.00
Design Thinking Skills	73.33	3.87	0.62
Financial Acumen	73.33	3.80	1.22
Strategic Planning Skills	73.33	3.80	0.98
Fundraising Skills	66.67	3.80	1.28
Independent Thinking	66.67	3.73	0.93
Advocating for Change within the Organization Consistent with the Food System Vision	66.67	4.20	0.91

## LAND-GRANT ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

By and large, the general types of programs that participants deemed appropriate for emerging academic leaders seem to make sense from the standpoint of the literature (Hull & Keim, 2007; Ruben et al., 2018), but it is noteworthy that both private consultants/executive coaches and self-paced online programs did not attain consensus. It is possible that these items' rejection could be the result of earlier proposed sentiment that participants rely more heavily on-research based instruction and practice (something they might not consider to be guaranteed with a coach). It is also possible that they might perceive a self-paced program to be lacking the adequate oversight from leadership educators to aid in the leadership education for learners therein. Such a program would also lack some of the socialization or peer-to-peer elements that are a part of leadership, particularly in an academic context (Gmelch, 2000; Gmelch, 2013).

Regarding learning outcomes, the majority of items that emerged from participant data seem to align with the various leadership theories and concepts that participants previously articulated. For example, the fact that participants feel that the ability to inspire and trustworthiness should be learning outcomes for academic leaders makes sense considering they felt transformational leadership should be a part of an academic leadership development program's curriculum. Similarly, since participants felt that adaptive leadership is an important curricular consideration, it is only logical that some of their proposed learning outcomes included the ability to address complex problems, an understanding of the complexities of academic leadership, effecting change for the good of society, and leading change within an organization. Interestingly, unlike the items generated for theories and concepts, a food systems perspective was embedded in two of the items for this facet of the study. The reason for this could be that questions two and three from the generative phase did not include language related to leadership-specific concepts (unlike the first question), thus resulting in participants' inclusion of food systems in their initial responses. Still, ambiguity permeates this topic's role in the context of this study, and further research should be carried out to address it.

### Recommendations

Moving forward, we have several recommendations about this topic in both leadership research and praxis.

#### Research

In light of some of the ambiguities inferred from this study, it would be advisable to conduct similar research on the role that a food systems perspective, and related constructs, play in the curricular development and learning outcomes of academic leadership development programs for emerging leaders in the land-grant university system. This is important because it should lead to a greater understanding of how these concepts are interdependent of the leadership constructs and outcomes believed to be integral for academic leadership development programming. Furthermore, it could provide a more holistic understanding

of how agricultural and natural resource precepts exist in the space of leadership development. Additionally, it is recommended that future research initiatives explore the effects that leadership development programming has on the personal development of academic leaders (e.g., family, community involvement, friendships, etc.). Exploring the relationships between these constructs and academic leaders' development could provide relevant insight regarding external factors that influence academic leadership development.

It is also advised that this study be transferred to other contexts to garner additional understanding of leadership curricular consensus among academic leadership programs within the land-grant system. Broader efforts to contribute to consensus in this area of pedagogical research will strengthen any efforts that are made to enhance curricula on the part of program directors and leadership educators. In addition, greater understanding in this area could underpin the development of a prevention science approach toward the mitigation of challenges that emerging leaders in higher education face, particularly those administrative positions across the three land-grant mission areas. It might also be of interest to build consensus around this study's topic at the campus level with in-house leadership programs offered by land-grant universities. Such endeavors could inform both research and best practices for leadership educators in this area.

### Praxis

Leadership practitioners might consider holding town halls or related collaborative sessions with academic leadership development program specialists to share best practices for curriculum development and program execution. This could be useful in garnering new ideas helpful to the program in question and in fostering efforts toward the development of a holistic academic leadership development curriculum locally, regionally, and nationally. This is particularly relevant to land-grant academic leadership development programs given the complexity and similarity of the issues faced by such institutions and their administrators.

Another consideration that might be of use to both researchers and practitioners is the establishment of a publication outlet or a community of practice that facilitates the dissemination of academic leadership development teaching and learning. This could comprise both research papers in addition to best practice papers that could be of use to leadership development educators. All of this could also prove fruitful for the broader field of leadership education from the standpoint of building the literature in an area that is still in a somewhat nascent state. Furthermore, evidence-based practices disseminated from such a community of practice would contribute to the continual leadership development of academic leaders, ensuring that efforts in this space are not siloed nor one-and-done.

### Limitations

We recognize that our study had certain limitations, which we wish to highlight in the spirit of transparency and good scholarship. Though we affirm that the Delphi method was the appropriate method for addressing our study's purpose, we recognize that it is a tool intended to build consensus and might not capture all of the context-rich details relative to the subject under study. Consequently, additional relevant details from participants could have been gleaned with traditional qualitative approaches in follow-up to the Delphi such as interviews or focus groups. These could well be considerations made with future studies in this area.

Another limitation of our study was that we sampled participants from only two academic leadership development programs. While two reputable programs, this does not imply that they are the only programs of their kind nor that the perspectives of other leadership educators from such programs would be invalid in this study's context. As such, additional perspectives from leadership educators from other programs could have enriched this study's scope.

Finally, while we set out to garner consensus around academic leadership development inputs and outcomes for programs designed for land-grant administrators, the data does not encompass the perspectives of other leadership educators from academic leadership development programs not specifically designed for emerging leaders within land-grant universities. This is to say that emerging leaders from land-grant institutions could and likely do participate in academic leadership development programs that are designed for broader audiences. As such, this study might be missing valuable perspective from these programs' educators who work with these emerging leaders and whose input could have influenced the outcomes of the consensus that was garnered in this study.

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