



# Excellence in Academic Leadership

## An institutional priority in challenging times

The National Center for Professional & Research Ethics (NCPRE) is establishing cohorts for online leadership programs tailored to the needs of academic leaders and participants. We have conducted workshops for a number of academic institutions and we also welcome applications from cohorts based in disciplinary societies. Participants have reported gaining knowledge, practical tools, confidence, and building sustaining networks.

*Academic Leadership in Challenging Times* is a professional development program focused on leadership skills for the special challenges of the current academic environment. We promote individual and group problem-solving skills, and we foster the development of community. Over the course of an academic year, we hold synchronous sessions online, using a cohort model. This model, with defined groups participating over an extended period, builds skills and provides ongoing opportunities for learning and practicing those skills. It fosters the development of trust and connections among cohort members.

### Why NCPRE?

NCPRE is dedicated to creating and supporting cultures of excellence: for us, excellence and institutional integrity are rooted in ethical leadership that sets organizational tone, fosters meaningful inclusion, and stimulates shared achievements through professional interactions. The skills we foster are relentlessly practical; we believe it is not enough to know what should be done—leaders must have the practice, the skill, and the confidence to take action, especially when facing difficult personalities, conversations, or situations.

In more than ten years of work with colleges and universities, NCPRE has created a wide range of resources for professional development in leadership, ethics, and research integrity focused almost entirely in the academic environment. We have developed and delivered highly-interactive leadership development programs that have been well-received, produced a large library of leadership resources, and provided targeted resources for dealing with challenged academic units. Through our collaborations and sponsored projects, we have researched, created, piloted, and improved our offerings over time, all while focusing on the needs of discrete audiences, from chairs and heads, to PIs/lab leaders, to lab members and emerging professionals, to university business managers. We work continually to listen, to respond, and to develop new content to serve the audience of academic leaders and emerging professionals.

Our group has deep university experience: our director, C. K. Gunsalus, is the author of the well-known books, *The College Administrator's Survival Guide* (second edition pending) and *The Young Professional's Survival Guide*. Nicholas Burbules, our Education Director, has served in faculty governance for many years, including as chair of our campus Senate and the University of Illinois Senates Conference. Robert A. Easter, President Emeritus of the University of Illinois, has served as department head, dean, interim VCR, interim provost, and chancellor. BrandE Faupell is a retired Executive Director of HR at Utah State University.

### Why now?

Many institutions of higher education are facing reduced public and government support as traditional student pools shrink, and it is becoming harder to find worthy individuals willing to undertake the difficult and often lonely challenges of leading academic units. The COVID-19 pandemic has only intensified existing institutional pressures. Most of those in academic leadership positions have never before found themselves navigating such an intense confluence of factors—from operating in a politically-charged atmosphere, to facing challenges of new educational paradigms, to managing anti-racism efforts in complex institutions, to keeping our communities healthy, to managing challenging financial realities. Successful leadership in the academic environment has never been more challenging or isolating.

### What next?

An online cohort can be both cost- and time-effective. If you are interested, please contact us at [ethicsctr@illinois.edu](mailto:ethicsctr@illinois.edu)



## Academic Leadership in Challenging Times

The *Excellence in Academic Leadership* group of the National Center for Professional & Research Ethics at the University of Illinois will guide a cohort through a year-long academic leadership program, designed to build leadership capacity to support academic unit vibrancy in challenging times.

This proposal encompasses a cohort, meeting up to twice a month during the summer and once a month during the academic year. These synchronous sessions will range in length from 90 minutes to 2 hours. Sessions will run online, with opportunities provided, if desired, for in-person group meetings, through guidance for local facilitators or, once travel is again feasible, on-site meetings. There will be both synchronous and asynchronous content, supported by the [NCPRE Leadership Collection](#). Participants will be asked to complete assignments between sessions. Timing will be sensitive to the demands of their positions and the academic calendar.

### The home institution or group:

- Identifies cohort participants
- Assures time and resources to work on the project
- Supports the work with a fee to NCPRE

### Each cohort member:

- Identifies personal goals
- Provides a commitment to participate in programs and in-between assignments
- Identifies individual work and potential team projects to complete with others in the cohort

### NCPRE:

- Conducts intake interviews with cohort members (each member, or a sample, depending upon cohort size)
- Works with each participant to design an individual leadership development plan
- Over the course of the program, provides exercises, assignments, and resources to support leadership development and plans for strengthening unit vibrancy
- Conducts up to a pre-determined number of synchronous group sessions
- Provides guidance on synchronous sessions that are run without us, if any
- Provides guidance on asynchronous work

### Topics include:

- Role of leaders in academia; leadership persona
- Use of the Academic Unit Diagnostic Tool (AUDiT)
- Building unit vibrancy, working effectively to improve challenged academic units
- Conflict resolution
- Effective inclusion
- Negotiation
- Listening and asking questions
- Managing difficult conversations
- The only behavior you control is your own
- Effective mentoring and feedback, career development
- Time management
- Bully-proofing academic units
- Group problem-solving strategies
- *Other topics, as agreed with cohort, liaison*