

VOSS ADVANCED LEADERSHIP UNDERGRADUATE EXPERIENCE

MENTOR HANDBOOK



FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY

LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

Table of Contents

Program Overview & Learning Objectives.....	3
VALUE Tracks	6
Mentor-Student Relationship	8
Mentor-Student Contract	11
Mentoring: Tips.....	13
Mentoring: Frequently Asks Questions	15
Exam Mentor-Student Meeting Notes Page.....	16
Exam Student Assessments	17
Resources Consulted.....	19

This handbook is intended to provide information about the Voss Advanced Leadership Undergraduate Experience (VALUE) program to ensure that you feel supported, informed, and prepared to be involved in the program. The information is intended to help students and mentors have a cohesive, meaningful experience in the program.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW & LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The Voss Advanced Leadership Undergraduate Experience (VALUE) is designed to develop the most promising undergraduates into powerful agents for good, during their educational experience at Fort Hays State University. The VALUE program is a year-long curricular and co-curricular experience for upper-division students. Students are challenged to embrace and dedicate themselves to deep personal and professional development.

Students in the VALUE program are able to explore their personal interests and develop a plan of study for their final year related to one of three tracks:

- Corporate leadership
- Civic/Non-profit leadership
- Scholarship/Leadership research

The exclusive learning objectives to the VALUE program, which serve as a framework, are:

- Operations – To be successful in the leadership process, leaders and followers must be able to move from ideas and concepts to action. They must be able to implement, execute, and transform a vision into reality. Leaders and followers must simply “make it happen.”
- Collaboration – Participants in the leadership process must be able to work in a team environment to be successful. Leaders and followers must be able to exercise collaborative skills, so all are involved in the decision-making and implementation phases.

As a result of participating in the VALUE program, students will:

- Effectively diagnose a situation, understanding the root causes, issues, and underlying problems and challenges
- Demonstrate initiative to both introduce change and persist to see change through to its completion
- Create and execute change plans around their specified track
- Learn to make conscious choices about interventions throughout the change process
- Understand themselves and their role on the team
- Work successfully in a team environment
- Enhance their ability to network and communicate effectively
- Demonstrate the ability to energize and effectively work across factions with multiple stakeholders

ORIENTATION

All VALUE participants will be required to attend a program orientation at the beginning of the fall semester. The purpose of the orientation is to assist students in the identification of a VALUE track—

corporate, civic/non-profit, and/or scholarship/leadership research. Students will participate in self-reflection activities to help them identify their goals for the program, and understand their role in the mentor-student relationship.

MENTORING / COACHING

In addition to traditional academic advising, students participating in the VALUE program will work closely with mentors to think critically about their education, research, career, and/or social justice objectives to align those to their experiences in the program. These mentors are assigned to students based on their chosen track, and may be faculty or staff at Fort Hays State University or professionals outside of the institution. Through deep dialogue with their mentor, students will be challenged to develop their track as an integrated trajectory into their early career work, so that the experiences they have and service they conduct will not end upon graduation.

ADVANCED LEADERSHIP LABS

VALUE students are required to take two courses through the program. These courses are designed to provide students with hands-on opportunities that focus on the learning objectives of operations and collaboration skills. Advanced Leadership Lab I will be held during the fall semester, while Advanced Leadership Lab II will be held during the spring semester.

Advanced Leadership Lab I

In this course theory gives way to practice. Through experiential skill building activities, assessment, and coaching, this course provides students with a wide variety of skills necessary for success. The course requires students to demonstrate a strong conceptual understanding of leadership and the ability to diagnose and plan interventions. This course is a prerequisite to Advanced Leadership Lab II, and will serve as the planning and beginning stages of the execution of a chosen VALUE project and e-Portfolio.

Advanced Leadership Lab II

In this course planning turns into action as students will execute their chosen projects in their full capacity. With the continued assistance of their mentors, the students' projects will be taken to the community by way of internships, serviceships, or other projects. Students will also understand what it means to perform an assessment of their project, as well as create an end-of-program e-portfolio to share their experiences.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Experiential learning is the core of the program as it will create both curricular and co-curricular learning opportunities for students throughout the year. Students' experiential learning will be tied to their chosen track, and mentors will have a significant role in the students' experiences.

Types of experiential learning opportunities might include (depending on chosen track):

- Corporate internship – An internship experience will allow students to be engaged deeper into a corporate leadership project, centered on collaboration and operations.

- Serviceship – Through collaboration with organizations like the Center for Civic Leadership, a service experience will allow students to engage deeply with the community on a social issue, and work toward addressing that need.
- Research – Students will have a chance to work closely with faculty and other VALUE students on undergraduate research projects, conference presentations, and collaborative publishing.

Note: Students may not obtain an internship or serviceship at his/her mentor's place of business.

EPORTFOLIO

Throughout their time in the VALUE program, students will be expected to demonstrate competency across all learning goals and objectives of the VALUE program. To do so, students will build an e-portfolio, which will document their competency in the form of learning outcomes. Students will present their final report and “defend” their e-portfolio via a formal presentation either in person or via Skype. This e-portfolio will be assessed by Leadership Programs faculty team and VALUE mentors.

VALUE TRACKS

Each student is asked to choose a track through which they will experience the VALUE program. There are three tracks to choose from—corporate leadership, civic/non-profit leadership, and scholarship/leadership research. Below are descriptions of each track. Students are expected to choose their track by the first day of class in the fall semester.

CORPORATE LEADERSHIP

Corporate leadership comes with many challenges. While increasing corporate growth and profitability, performing the leadership process is key to engaging the passion and commitment and retention of an organization's employees (Hulsmans, 2000). Simply driving a workforce for the sake of profitability is no longer a sustainable work environment; "today's employees demand personal growth and learning that will engage and stimulate them" (2000). The leadership process assists employees in making strategic decisions that positively impact the organization's people as well as the organization's mission.

Performing corporate leadership requires the ability to recognize long-term success all the while focusing on employee well-being and fulfillment (Hulsmans, 2000). Corporate leaders must be able to create an environment of trust and respect, provide two-way communication about organizational values, be open to criticism, and embrace and foster creativity, innovation, and learning.

In the Corporate Leadership track, you will have the opportunity to complete an internship or project with a local for-profit organization. You will work with the company and your mentor to design an internship that allows you to develop skills necessary to be effective in the corporate world such as: networking, strategic planning and decision-making, developing organizational values, how to work with employees, and many more.

CIVIC/NON-PROFIT LEADERSHIP

Being a leader in the non-profit world requires a person to confront a host of challenges (Crawford, 2010). According to the Manager-Leader Model for Nonprofit Leadership, a non-profit leader must be a strategic thinker, a relationship builder, a collaborative decision-maker, an entrepreneurial achiever, effective communicator, a change leader, and an inspiring motivator (2010). A non-profit leader must also have the ability to understand and value diversity and be passionate about the organization's mission (2010).

All in one day, those working for a non-profit organization may need to address funding cuts from the government, meet with a competing agency about building a partnership, review program data, and work to retain talent; therefore, a non-profit leader must meet financial challenges, competitive challenges, operational/effectiveness challenges, and talent challenges (Crawford, 2010).

In the Civic/Non-profit Leadership track, you will have the opportunity to complete a serviceship or project with a local non-profit organization. Serviceships are much like internships; however, the idea behind a serviceship is service-learning. Through a serviceship, you will collaborate with a non-profit

organization, such as the Center for Civic Leadership, and engage deeply with the community on a social issue, and work toward addressing that need.

SCHOLARSHIP/LEADERSHIP RESEARCH

According to Ronald Riggio, a professor of leadership and organizational psychology at Claremont McKenna College, there is a distinction between the practice of leadership and leadership research. Suggested techniques or models used to improve the practice of leadership need to be based in solid research; therefore, leadership research helps us form the best practices of leadership. Leadership scholars approach research in a variety of ways; more recently, more scholars have begun to look at the overall process of leadership longitudinally over a period of time. Case studies are also a valuable form of leadership research as they provide depth to the understanding of leadership. Empirical research, however, is more generalizable. Leadership studies comes from a variety of disciplines such as social sciences and humanities (literature, film, and the arts), and we are continuing to see leadership research being approached in an interdisciplinary fashion.

In the Scholarship/Leadership research track you will be paired with two leadership scholars—one from FHSU and one from another institution—to guide you through an undergraduate research project. Those who choose this track will have the opportunities to conduct conference presentations, and/or publish collaboratively with faculty and/or other VALUE students.

References

Crawford, J. (2010). Profiling the non-profit leader of tomorrow. *Ivey Business Journal*, May/June.

Hulsmans, L. (2000). Corporate leadership: Are you up to the challenge. *The Banff Centre [Online]*. Retrieved from http://www.banffcentre.ca/leadership/library/pdf/corporate_leadership_article.pdf

Graduate School of Leadership at SPbCU. (2013). *Ronald Riggio: Leadership research*. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHmNWTr297E>.

THE MENTOR-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP

The mentor-student relationship is a major component of the VALUE program. It is through this relationship that the student will develop the ability to communicate openly, understand outside perspectives, enhance their ability to network, understand their role on a team, and work successfully in a team environment.

The mentor and student should establish trust with each other, and sign the agreement located in Appendix A. Should either party not fulfill their commitment to the mentor-student relationship, please contact the director of the VALUE program.

THE ROLE OF THE STUDENT

Students in the VALUE program are willing to go beyond the typical student experience and commit themselves to a deep degree of scholarship service.

As a VALUE participant, students are:

- Are committed to their personal and professional growth,
- Show initiative to improve,
- Are respectful of their mentor's honest, supportive, and constructive feedback,
- Are respectful of their mentor's time,
- Are responsible, organized, and attentive,
- Are invested in their development as well as the development of others,
- Are dedicated to working through the leadership process.

Students are expected to:

- Meet with his/her mentor a minimum of twice per month, during the fall and spring semesters of the academic year,
- Maintain a continuous open line of communication with his/her mentor
- Attend all Advanced Leadership Lab course sessions and complete coursework
- Engage in deep discussion with his/her mentor as well as VALUE peers

THE ROLE OF THE MENTOR

Based on their chosen track, students will be paired with a mentor to guide them through the process of developing expert operations and collaboration skills. Mentors support the student's personal and professional growth by providing opportunities for them to learn about the principles and practices of effective leadership that benefit the professional world and the community.

Mentors:

- Create an environment that allows for student development in business and social settings,
- Are honest, trustworthy, and active listeners,
- Take the student from "backpack" thinking to professional thinking,

- Assist the student to develop strategies for analyzing and solving problems and becoming effective decision makers,
- Challenge the student students to take healthy, positive, and constructive risks,
- Offer honest, supportive, and constructive feedback to help the student improve his/her competencies,
- Share insights of their own expertise and experience to help the student's development,
- Increase individual strengths through positive coaching and experiences,
- Provide guidance to the student on topics for discussion,
- Provide resources for the student to succeed,
- Offer professional and social networking opportunities

Mentors are expected to:

- Meet with his/her student a minimum of twice per month, during the fall and spring semesters of the academic year,
- Remain accessible to his/her student throughout the academic year,
- Maintain a continuous open line of communication with his/her student.

MENTOR-STUDENT MEETINGS

The Mentor-Student meetings should be approached as a time to reflect on the progress of the student's project, but also a time to discuss personal and professional growth as a leader. In addition to being an advising and/or planning session for the student project, mentors should use the questions below as a guide to facilitate discussion with the student. Students should also think about their answers to these questions prior to meetings with their mentor. Meetings may take place via email, Skype, phone, or face-to-face.

Consciousness of Self

- Why do you think it is important to be self-aware as a leader?
- Do you seek feedback from others? How do you react when you receive feedback? Why can it be difficult to receive feedback?
- What are the values that guide how you interact in groups?
- Do you think emotional self-awareness is important for wellness and personal success? Why?
- Discuss the issue or problem that is most important to you and why? How does it relate to your situation? What kind of skills and abilities can you bring towards combating that issue or problem?

Congruence

- What are the things you spend the most time on? If you were to list what you do spend your time on, what might others think your values are?
- What are some obstacles to the proper use of time? How can we ensure that we are spending our time on the things we value? Why are the things we value not always the things we spend the most time on?
- Describe a time that you had to make a difficult decision based on your values.

Commitment

- Where do your interests lie? What topics or social issues are you most passionate about?
- What are some ways you can connect your passions to activity? Are there groups you would like to be a part of, or other projects you would like to take on?
- What inspires and motivates you?
- How can you avoid burnout?

Leadership Development

- What does it mean, to you, to be a leader?
- What has been the biggest test of your leadership ability, so far? What have you learned as a result of this challenge?
- What does it mean, to you, to be a good follower?
- How do you lead from your core values?
- Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Why?
 - “For humans to be truly happy, they have to find meaning in their lives that comes from recognizing they must make a commitment to something larger than themselves, such as humanity, the natural world, or something that transcends human existence.”

Track-Specific Questions

Corporate Leadership

- What is one thing you see in the organization that you would like to change or improve?
- What is the organization doing to change or improve it?
- What could be done to change or improve the process or service?
- What are the challenges the organization may need to overcome?
- What is your biggest fear or worry about attempting to facilitate this change in the organization?

Civic/Non-profit leadership

- What is one thing that you would like to change on campus or in the community?
- What are they doing to change it?
- What could be done to change this issue?
- What are some challenges that may have to be overcome?
- What is your biggest fear or worry about attempting to facilitate this change?

Scholarship/Leadership research

- What topic(s) in the leadership process interests you the most? Why?
- How is this topic applied in a real-world context?
- What questions do you still have about this topic?
- What can you do to answer these questions?

MENTOR-STUDENT CONTRACT

Both the mentor and student should read and complete this contract during their first meeting.

Mentors:

- Create an environment that allows for student development in business and social settings,
- Are honest, trustworthy, and active listeners,
- Take the student from “backpack” thinking to professional thinking,
- Assist the student to develop strategies for analyzing and solving problems and becoming effective decision makers,
- Challenge the student students to take healthy, positive, and constructive risks,
- Offer honest, supportive, and constructive feedback to help my student improve his/her competencies,
- Share insights of their own expertise and experience to help the student’s development,
- Increase individual strengths through positive coaching and experiences,
- Provide guidance to the student on topics for discussion,
- Provide resources for the student to succeed,
- Offer professional and social networking opportunities, if available

I will:

- Adhere to the expectations stated above,
- Meet with my student a minimum of twice per month, during the fall and spring semesters of the academic year,
- Remain accessible to my student throughout the academic year,
- Maintain a continuous open line of communication with my student, using the method agreed upon by both parties.

As a mentor, I agree to adhere to all expectations stated above:

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

I prefer to be contacted by:

Email Phone

My contact information is:

Email _____

Phone _____

MENTOR-STUDENT CONTRACT

Students:

- Are committed to their personal and professional growth,
- Show initiative to improve,
- Are respectful of their mentor’s honest, supportive, and constructive feedback,
- Are respectful of their mentor’s time,
- Are responsible, organized, and attentive,
- Are invested in their development as well as the development of others,
- Are dedicated to working toward a leadership position in the future

I will:

- Adhere to the expectations stated above,
- Meet with my mentor a minimum of twice per month, during the fall and spring semesters of the academic year,
- Maintain a continuous open line of communication with my mentor, using the method agreed upon by both parties.

As a student, I agree to adhere to all expectations stated above:

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

I prefer to be contacted by:

Email Phone

My contact information is:

Email _____

Phone _____

MENTORING: TIPS

Mentoring is a personal relationship in which a more experienced professional acts as a guide, role model, teacher, and sponsor of a less experienced student (Johnson, 2002). A mentor provides his/her student with “knowledge, advice, challenge, counsel, and support” (2002). Throughout your time as a mentor in the VALUE program, you may encounter unfamiliar territory, especially if you have never before been a mentor. These tips will help you develop a quality relationship with your VALUE scholar.

1. Plan ahead

You should always have a list of items to discuss in your mentor-student meetings. These items can be directly related to the student’s project, or they can be more developmental. This handbook offers a variety of questions you could discuss with your student.

2. Share your experiences and insights

In doing so, choose stories that you feel are appropriate and helpful. Be open to sharing your mistakes and failures too, as these are often where our biggest lessons are learned. The way you dealt with various situations might also help them gain insight about how to build resilience.

3. Be a positive role model

Good mentors are respected by their students. A student can learn a lot from their mentor simply by watching how their mentor behaves in any particular situation. Good mentors will also look out for experiences, or even create situations in which their students can become involved to learn new things. For example, providing a look behind the scenes or a glimpse at how other people live or do things.

4. Have realistic goals and expectations

Change does not happen overnight, and setbacks can occur. Understand that your student is a student, and that setting goals can empower them to be accountable for their work, just make sure they are realistic and attainable.

5. Act as a sounding board

Students benefit greatly from the opportunity of having a good mentor listen to them. Allow them to explore their thoughts and ideas openly with you. This will often help them unravel their thinking and gain insights about a situation as they share their concerns with you.

6. Provide a fresh perspective

One of the benefits of working with a mentor is that a good mentor will often provide their student with a fresh perspective on an issue. A good mentor will often have the clarity of distance from an issue or problem that's needed to provide objective feedback to their student.

7. Provide constructive feedback

Not all feedback is constructive. A good mentor knows this and will deliver feedback in a way that will help their student gain insight to further develop specific qualities or skills. For example, a good mentor will always ask for permission to give feedback before doing so. Giving unwelcome feedback can be detrimental to any mentoring relationship.

8. Allow the student to control the direction

During your mentor-student meetings, let the student control the direction of your conversations. You may start the conversation, but let the student guide where it goes. Do not push the student to tell you everything.

9. Offer your advice, but only if your student asks for it (coaching)

It can be very tempting for a mentor to just jump in and offer advice before a student has actually asked for it, especially when you've dealt with a similar situation yourself. Being a sounding board for your student, allowing them to discuss the situation with you, then helping them to think through the situation by asking them questions to draw out the consequences of various actions, is always more empowering for a student than advising them what to do. It helps them work through the issue and come to their own conclusions. By doing so, you ultimately help them to learn to think through issues themselves and trust their own judgement, both valuable life skills.

10. Be genuinely interesting in your student as an individual

A mentoring relationship is often very important to the student, so, as a mentor, you need to get to know your student personally, and learn about their hopes and dreams, so you can help them in a way that meets their personal best interest. Be objective, be patient and listen to your student.

Adapted from:

10 Ways to be a Good Mentor by Blue Sky Coaching

Tips for Being a Great Mentor by Youth Build U.S.A.

10 Tips on How to be a Good Mentor by Calgary Social Voice

Additional Resources

The Blue Pencil Institute's "Guidelines for Giving and Receiving Feedback in Coaching"

<http://goo.gl/4ErUXx>

University of Wisconsin-Madison's "Resources for Each Phase of the Mentoring Relationship"

<https://goo.gl/ZasamY>

University of Albany's "Mentoring Best Practices"

<http://goo.gl/vWQo63>

MENTORING: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How should I communicate with my student?

You and your student should establish communication preferences when you sign the mentor-student agreement. Should your student not respond to your communications within 48 hours, please contact the Director of the VALUE Program.

What should we talk about in our mentor-student meetings?

Your mentor-student meetings can include a variety of discussions. It is important to understand that these meetings are not just “progress reports” about the student’s chosen project for the VALUE program, but these meetings are also time for the student to reflect on what they are learning, being challenged by, or experiencing. The sky is the limit on conversation topics; however, keep the conversations developmental in nature to ensure the student is having a learning experience. This handbook offers questions regarding self-development in the mentoring section.

How long do meetings need to be?

As long as it takes! A meeting can be anywhere from 10 minutes to two hours! As long as both the mentor and student are comfortable with ending the meeting, and feel as though the meeting met its objectives, you may end the meeting at your discretion.

I don’t know much about leadership theory, does that matter?

No! Let the student teach you this time. You are the student’s door to the real-world experiences in this program. Allow them to transfer the knowledge they have of leadership to your experiences and vice versa.

My student has not contacted me to set up our meetings, yet; what should I do?

If your student is not scheduling your mentor-student meetings, please contact the Director of the VALUE Program.

How is confidential information handled?

Trust is an important part of the mentoring relationship. Whenever possible, student confidences should be kept private. However, if a student indicates that he/she, or someone else, may be in danger, mentors are required to immediately notify the Director of the VALUE Program and/or the Department Chair of Leadership Studies.

Whose role is it to prepare to the meeting agenda?

Both the mentors and students may create meeting agendas. It is recommended, however, that meetings focus on the agenda created by the student first; then it is appropriate to discuss mentor items.

EXAMPLE

MENTEE ASSESSMENT – EVALUATE YOUR MENTEE

(Actual evaluations will be administered online.)

Availability: The student initiates contact with the mentor (at least twice per month), and regular meetings are planned.

4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Communication: The student maintains a continuous open line of communication with his/her mentor.

4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Critical Thinking: The student has demonstrated the ability to think professionally, rather than “backpack” thinking.

4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Critical Thinking: The student offers thoughtful responses to reflective questions asked by the mentor.

4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Problem Solving: The student has demonstrated the ability to solve problems as they occur and he/she may even go beyond the help of the mentor to other resources.

4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Feedback: The student looks for feedback and criticism on his/her performance and project so that they can improve.

4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Feedback: The student respectfully accepts feedback and criticism in a professional manner.

4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Commitment: The student is committed to their development throughout the experience.

4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Enthusiasm: The student is enthusiastic about their VALUE experience.

4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Knowledge of Content: The student demonstrates an in-depth understanding of leadership concepts and skills.

4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Knowledge of Content: The student consistently connects their VALUE experience to the practice of leadership.

4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Use of Resources: The student shows exemplary use of resources and materials that may enhance the project's outcome due to the student's mastery and manipulation.

4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Student Learning: There is exceptional evidence that the student not only learns the concepts and skills necessary to complete his/her project, but goes beyond to learn even more.

4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Additional comments:

Please be as detailed as possible.

Resources Consulted

California State University, Stanislaus. (2014). Faculty mentor program: Mentors. Retrieved from, <https://www.csustan.edu/sld/faculty-mentor-program/mentors>

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