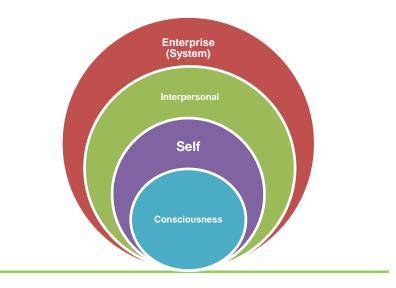# *Leadership for a Democratic Society*
Program Syllabus

Conceptual Framework:

The *Leadership for a Democratic Society* program is designed to support FEI's mission, "to develop visionary leaders to transform Government." To achieve this outcome, the program's tiered conceptual framework is structured to first engage learners in analyzing self in order to identify defaults, core values, strengths and areas for development. This is followed by opportunities for developing skills, behaviors and actions needed for greater interpersonal, as well as team/organization/system-level effectiveness:

Program Overview:

Week 1:

A significant part of the first week of the Leadership for a Democratic Society (LDS) program is devoted to creating a positive learning climate. This begins with the opening plenary, where a conscious effort is made to promote a learning community within the cohort. In simple activities, such as introducing oneself to the larger group, only three items of information are shared: (1) your first name or nickname, (2) where you were born and raised, and (3) what you like to do when you are not working. This information allows linkages to begin among program participants while, at the same time, downplaying such competitive status indicators as advanced academic degrees, position titles, grade levels, or areas of program/policy responsibility. Such job-related information will, of course, emerge over the course of the program; however, the

opening activities of the week seek first to build the learning community around values of mutual respect, trust, openness, collaboration, and supportiveness.

Leadership Development Teams (LDTs) formed the first day are another important component of establishing the learning community. Each LDT consists of six to ten executives and a faculty facilitator. The LDT provides the setting in which most of the LDS self-assessment – the heart of the first week – takes place. These teams have proven extremely valuable in building a supportive learning climate and in creating effective linkages among program participants.

In order for the LDS program community to function and meet the needs of its members, a governance system is established in the first week. The general practice has been for each Leadership Development Team to select representatives to each of the following committees:

- **Community Committee** - forms a liaison between class members and the administration of the Federal Executive Institute. The committee helps create a learning community that recognizes the uniqueness of the individual even as it builds group cohesion. The community is responsible for class social activities as well as communication between class members, Lead Faculty and Program Coordinator. The committee also takes responsibility for the selection of the Class Representatives who maintain contacts among class members following the program.

- **Executive Forum Committee** - has the task of identifying, selecting, and scheduling members of the class to serve as speakers for each of the Executive Forum programs. These forums provide an exciting vehicle for class members to broaden their view of government and to enhance their appreciation of the diverse talents, experiences, and backgrounds of their colleagues. The committee also takes responsibility for the selection of the Class Graduation Speaker.

Following the establishment of the LDTs and the Community and Executive Forum Committees, attention turns to an exploration of values. Participants explore their personal values as they begin to construct their personal leadership stories. They also discuss the U.S. Constitution, the values inherent in it, and the role of the government executive in operating within this framework. This facilitates an exploration of value sets, to identify synergies and potential conflicts that may arise for individual executives.

At mid-week, participants begin to discuss individual differences, focusing on how these affect interpersonal and team behavior. One vehicle for this is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), an instrument that provides insights on how we naturally prefer to gather and process information and reach judgments about that information. The sessions on the MBTI aim to demonstrate that differences among individuals can be creative and useful, and that projecting one's own preferences onto others can lead to conflict.

During week 1, participants receive data on the state of their personal health as part of the FEI Wellness Program. This overall program segment includes a Health Risk Appraisal - with

feedback and analysis of the data, a physical screening, and a program of information and wellness activities, including sessions on nutrition, stress management, fitness and cardiovascular health, health issues at mid-life, and development of a personal fitness plan.

The latter portion of the first week also includes intensive use of the Leadership Development Teams (LDTs) as the focus turns to a further assessment of executive experiences and skills through use of the Executive Case Study (ECS). The ECS that each participant prepares and presents to the LDT is designed to accomplish what John Gardner has referred to as one of the primary requirements for executives of the future – the need to know and understand one's self. Executives in each LDT reflect on how they became the executives they are – what values and experiences have formed them throughout their lives, what competencies they possess, and what areas of learning they wish to pursue. The ECS also includes attention to key leadership issues the executives in the team face and how they can best respond to these challenges. This sharing increases the team's appreciation for the uniqueness of its members as well as for their commonly shared experiences, attitudes, and skills.

The week culminates with a broad view of what executive leadership means and the skills it requires, using the OPM Leadership 360 survey. Each executive receives a survey report, which incorporates feedback from direct reports, peers and supervisors through the lens of the OPM competencies and Executive Core Qualifications. Finally, a team-building exercise serves as the transition point from the first week, which focuses on individual awareness, to the remainder of the program that expand participants' leadership skills and knowledge through seminars and workshops.

Courses:

Each executive selects two weeklong courses, one in each of weeks 2 and 4, from a number of offerings, emphasizing the Institute's philosophy that learning must respond to individual needs. Executives select courses based on their determination of strengths and learning needs uncovered through self-assessment, 360 feedback and one-on-one consultation with their LDT facilitator at the end of week one. Additionally, the entire cohort participates in a single weeklong course in week 3.

Following from the program's conceptual framework, week 2 courses focus on individual skill development and interpersonal relationships as critical foundations for leader effectiveness. In week 3, Executives explore how to employ these strengths and relationships in application to design progress on their particular organizational challenges. Each executive is tasked to write a description of a current or future leadership challenge their team or organization is facing, to include key relationships, constraints, resources and actions taken to date. Executives analyze these challenges using the framework of Heifitz and Linsky's *Adaptive Leadership;* they explore not only the technical aspects of their challenges that can be solved with expertise, concrete skills and knowledge, but also the adaptive components, which require them to examine their own and

others' assumptions and beliefs, as well as relationships that are critical to their success. Participants conclude the week with next steps that they can implement upon their return to work. Week 4 courses then focus on additional skill-building to help them implement these actions and have positive organization/system-wide impact.

All courses employ a wide range of learning methodologies, including readings, lecture and discussion, exercises, assessments, videos, role-playing, simulations, guest speakers, case studies, and visits to organizations in the local area. Classes are structured to promote discussion, facilitate sharing among class members, and ensure sufficient time to focus on individual needs.

Elective Sessions:

In addition to courses, executives select from a variety of ½ day elective sessions that expose them to other topics of interest to leader development that are supportive of LDS program outcomes.

Field Experiences:

Executives choose from a range of off-campus experiential learning opportunities occurring in week 3 in the local Charlottesville area to explore various leadership themes and competencies in action.

Executive Forums:

Executive Forums are a special feature of weeks 2-4. Executive Forums are one-hour sessions, conducted by volunteer program participants, on work or non-work topics of relevance/interest to the learning community. Speakers are chosen by the Executive Forum Committee from among the volunteers. The Executive Forums provide valuable insights on the special skills and experiences of members of the class and demonstrate in practice the Institute's philosophy that participants are teachers as well as learners.

The Leadership Development Plan:

FEI believes that leadership learning is a lifelong endeavor. At best, the four weeks spent in the Leadership for a Democratic Society program are a brief point in an ongoing learning journey. Accordingly, we ask individual executives to capture their learning experiences, thoughts, and newly acquired insights in the learning journal provided. Using these reflections, executives will develop strategies for action in the form of a Leadership Development Plan (LDP) that will help guide them after graduation. Executives work on these plans throughout the program, to include actions they will take to demonstrate enhanced leadership, intended next steps for their organizational leadership challenge explored in week 3, and other key activities to continue their individual professional and personal development. Participants present their LDP to their LDTs for input and coaching immediately prior to the conclusion of the program.

Graduation:

Graduation, the culminating experience of week four and the *Leadership for a Democratic Society* program, provides a way to recognize the achievements of class members and reaffirm their commitment to public service. The conclusion of graduation ceremonies consists of retaking the Oath of Office, a symbolic and practical demonstration of the importance of our Constitutional heritage and responsibility.

Program Policies:

Students are expected to attend all required class sessions (some fitness sessions are optional and not included in the count of program hours). Students must participate in all activities, field experiences and group work, and must present the Executive Case Study and Leadership Development Plan. Participants who miss up to one day over the four weeks may still receive a "pass" for the program if they make up that work in a manner acceptable to the Lead Faculty. Participants who miss more than this will not be certified as completing the program.

Criteria for Success:

Students are assessed using the following learning goals and mastery elements:

The structure and learning experiences of the LDS Program create the conditions that develop expert understanding and practice of leading as participants:

- Develop a *Critical Awareness,* a consciousness of your current self, current strengths, and clarity on moving toward the ideal self, both professionally and personally.
- Acquire *Actionable Knowledge* and engage in *Guided Practice* to enhance your strengths, experiment and explore areas for growth (change in thinking and behaving) needed to close the gap between your current and ideal self and uncover elements for implementing individual change.
- Develop confidence in your ability for *Independent Application* to maintain motivation to learn and grow as leaders with a positive value placed on change.
- Gain functional knowledge for managing, leading, and transforming people and the organization, becoming prepared to begin *Independent Application* of new knowledge, skills, and behaviors and working toward *Skilled Leader Performance*.

At the completion of the LDS program, executives are expected to demonstrate the conceptual and actionable knowledge they have obtained, to espouse a *critical awareness* of current and ideal self, and have a plan for *independent application* (up to 2 years) to foster behavior change and move towards *skilled leader performance*.

Mastery "is a progressive honing of the abilities that make one most effective as a leader" (p. 82 CCL Handbook of Leadership Development, 2010). These become powerful references points sharing a leader's identity and sense of self-efficacy. It is about identifying a journey and the

gap. This journey includes moving from critical awareness to skilled performance in the complexity of leading across time and experiences.

Levels of Learning and Performance

Levels	What Happens at This Level
Critical awareness	Makes the unconscious conscious. Becomes aware of facts, information, terms, and models that previously were not part of awareness.
Actionable knowledge	Learns the conceptual knowledge of the new skills and behaviors. Focuses on how-to and principles.
Guided practice	Actively practices the new skill in a challenged and supported environment, with immediate coaching and feedback on performance effectiveness.
Independent application	Consciously performs new skills or behaviors in selected situations (work and other)
Skills performance	Automatically performs new skills or behaviors without thought as part of everyday leadership.

Source: CCL Handbook of Leadership Development (2010) 3rd edition, p. 83

Versatility is increased and expands the capacity to lead based on new awareness, perspectives, and skills. Mastery represents developing a depth of expertise while versatility represents breadth. This leads to the different learning and interaction that leaders must do in organizations to integrate the various ongoing experiences they have with self, others, and the organization.

Categories of Lessons Learned from Experience

Learning Categories	Definition
Leading Self	Lessons relate to the inner world of the executive and concern for effective ways to lead him or herself and develop fully as a person. These lessons are developmental in nature, involving a transformation of the executive's self-beliefs, attitudes, identity, and habits of self-improvement and self-development (and habits of mind.)
Leading Others	Lessons relate to the world of people and involve interpersonal and social skills that equip leaders (executives) to lead and work with people effectively. These lessons are social in nature, involving insights into other people's perspectives and group dynamics and a greater appreciation of the social process of influence and leadership.
Leading the organization	Lessons relate to working in organizations to address strategic, systemic, and cultural issues. These lessons are technical in nature, concerning strategic, operational, and functional knowledge for getting work done and managing, leading, and transforming the organization.

Source: CCL Handbook of Leadership Development (2010) 3rd edition, p. 84

Levels of Mastery

Mastery Level	Accomplishments
Critical awareness and knowledge	Gains powerful new perspectives on self (impact on my behaviors, impact of others on me, interaction between myself and others); is acutely aware of the need to change in order to be more effective; remembers facts, terms, models, and methods pertaining to leadership and understands them.
Guided application	Practices new behaviors to solve problems and received immediate coaching and feedback on performance effectiveness.
Independent application	Practices new behaviors and uses new knowledge in the work setting; analyzes their effectiveness and seeks feedback on their effectiveness from coaches, mentors, and peers.
Skilled performance	Utilizes new and more effective leadership behaviors as part of one's everyday leadership repertoire; seeks periodic feedback to ensure that new behaviors are creating desired new perceptions.

Source: CCL Handbook of Leadership Development (2004) 1st edition, p. 243

Elements of the Certificate of Mastery

Pre-Arrival Assignments:
MBTI Step II Self-Assessment
360 Degree Assessment (OPM)
Wellness Assessment
Leadership Profile – 3 previous leadership experiences, leadership definition, five characteristics of the best leader; leadership challenge

Week 1:

Actionable Knowledge and Guided Practice

- Community values
- Full Range Leadership
- Values
- Constitution
- MBTI type
- Wellness results
- 360 degree feedback results
- LDT group development

- Executive Case Study
- Ladder of Inference
- Johari Window
- Coaching Theory and Practice
- Developing interpersonal relationships, developing trust, vulnerability
- Paradox of the Founding Fathers
- Right vs. Right dilemma

Demonstration of Learning

Insights and Intentions #1

1. What are the 2-3 key insights that you've learned about yourself through the Week 1 experience at FEI?

2. What concepts have you learned this past week that you believe will enhance your leadership effectiveness? [***Be specific*** –clearly identify the concepts **and** activities or sessions that led to your learning. Your LDT Facilitator is looking for evidence of learning resulting from the program].

3. What is one unexpected area of strength from your 360 that was confirming or disconfirming for you? Name the item and explain why you chose this item over other possible choices and what was confirming or surprising for you.

4. What is one area from your 360 that you are willing to strengthen as part of your leadership development plan?

5. What do you need to learn based upon the critical self-awareness gained through Week One which may serve as part of your continuous leadership learning?

Week 2:

Actionable Knowledge and Guided Practice

- Transforming Individuals & Competing commitments
- Vertical Leadership Development
- Leader-Member Exchange
- Course and leadership elective topics
- Inclusive Leadership
- Options: fitness sessions; public democracy seminars

Demonstration of Learning

- Plan of action from Week 2 course where applicable
- 4 Week Residential Sessions:
    - Draft Leadership Challenge case study for use in Week 3 course
- Applied & Blended sessions:
    - Submit Executive Learning Project end of Week 2
    - Leadership Challenge case for exploration in Week Three Course

Week 3:

Actionable Knowledge and Guided Practice

- Adaptive Leadership Art & Practice
- Technical Problems vs. Adaptive Challenges
- Leadership vs. Authority

- Problem or challenge definition
- Stakeholder analysis
- Leadership Electives
- Transforming Organizations

Demonstration of Learning

Insights & Intentions #2

1. What are the 2-3 key insights that you've learned about yourself through the Week 3 experience at FEI?

2. What concepts have you learned this past week that you believe will enhance your ability to engage in adaptive leadership? [***Be specific*** –clearly identify the concepts **and** activities or sessions that led to your learning.].

3. What did you specifically learn about leading with and without authority by observing patterns from participating in diagnosing case studies? What was new learning for you? What seemed familiar and what is something you already practice?

4. As you think about needed change in your organization, what do you understand about how that change affects the ability for the organization and its people to thrive?

5. What do you need to learn through self-directed practice that will continue to develop your capacity for encouraging the growth of others for making progress on organizational change?

Week 4:
Actionable Knowledge and Guided Practice

- Meta-Leadership
- Course topic

Demonstration & Synthesis of Learning

- Self-determined leadership development plan
- Next steps on your leadership challenge
- Insights & Intentions #3 summary

Insights & Intentions #3

1. What are the 2-3 key insights that you've learned about yourself through LDS?

2. ***Be specific*** – Clearly identifying 2-3 concepts from the LDS program that you plan to integrate into your leadership practice and may teach to others in your organization to implement into their leadership practice?

3. What are the 5 leadership characteristics (one-word each) do you desire to emulate as you practice leadership?

4. As you complete your LDS learning, how do you define of leadership?

5. In one sentence, describe what motivates you to lead in the public sector?