



## SES Leader Program

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We are delighted to welcome you to American University's Key Executive Leadership Certificate Program prepared specifically for Office of Inspector General SES-level leaders. The role of inspectors general in Federal departments and agencies is crucial to providing independent oversight, and promoting economy, efficiency, and effectiveness throughout the Federal government. They have a crucial responsibility in achieving the expansive and transformative agenda set forth by our nation's leaders. And since public policy is best implemented by extraordinary public service leaders, it is now, more than ever, that our public sector is in need of SES level leaders with visionary acumen who mold organizational cultures, make sound strategic decisions, inspire those they lead, work and learn collaboratively, change themselves, overcome barriers to institutional change, act with integrity, facilitate useful dialogue, think strategically, and implement public policy at the senior level with skill and fierce resolve. This is the essence of service to our citizens. We welcome you to the Key community of more than 1,400 students and alumni - committed professionals who are passionate about public service.

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Director Key Executive Leadership Programs  
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### Program Summary

Extraordinary leadership is a combination of consciousness and competence. The capacity-building and development provided by the Key Executive Leadership SES Leader Program focuses on both individual and collective leadership development. Those we lead today expect their agencies to utilize their talent and drive in ways that are welcoming, interactive, collaborative, and less bureaucratic. They need to work for leaders who inspire trust, nurture environments of psychological safety and belonging, and articulate a vision that connects them to their agency mission. Participants in the SES Leader Program hone their relational skills and thinking capacity to mentor and develop others and increase employee engagement. They also develop the foresight, insight, and competencies needed to create vision, meet their mission, execute strategic goals, obtain innovative ideas from employees, and foster the teamwork and conviction needed to address today's complex challenges.

This sequential, six-course program is designed based on the Office of Personnel Management Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs) and provides participants with ideas, techniques, experiential exercises, and contemplative reflections to apply those competencies directly to the challenges they face in the workplace. The SES Leadership Program is particularly appropriate for those in the Senior Executive Service, their deputies, and those serving in senior-level positions.

## Orientation

The program begins with a half-day Orientation. The Orientation serves to familiarize participants with each other, the program staff, program requirements, logistics, policies, and expectations, provide team-building opportunities, and ensure participants develop the level of trust needed for them to work collaboratively as a members of a cohort. During the Orientation, participants are exposed to the principles grounded in the American founding and the virtues of public service (**ECQ - COMMITMENT TO THE RULE OF LAW & PRINCIPLES OF THE AMERICAN FOUNDING**). They also work to grow and expand a holistic perspective on well-being, mindfulness meditation practices to develop their resilience and non-judging awareness of their experience and patterns of behavior, skills for developing formal mindfulness habits for daily life, and information on how to stay balanced and resilient irrespective of external circumstances. The Orientation will also include an outline of the program, including the program purpose, primary developmental areas, participant responsibilities, and an overview of the courses. Through the creation of norms, expectations, and the development of social capital, participants create the relationships necessary to learn from the faculty and, most importantly, from each other. The trusted environment that is created during the Orientation session benefits participants by providing a career-long support group, enabling knowledge transfer among the cross-functional mix of cohort participants, offering the opportunity to practice honest feedback, and encouraging the confidence to recreate the same environment with those they lead.

## Course Schedule

The courses are designed to challenge senior leaders on their leadership effectiveness and what they might do in the future to become more impactful. These courses are delivered at the senior-leader level, with active classroom discourse on executive challenges in an unstable and unpredictable environment.

### SES Leader Program (12 Days)

- **Self-Reflection: Defining My Leadership Self (2 days)**
- **Building and Sustaining an Inspired Culture (2 days)**
- **How to Develop Those I Lead (2 days)**
- **The Federal Budget Process – Working It for Success (2days)**
- **Political Savvy for Results: Employing Influence Tactics with Integrity (2 days)**
- **Leading with Integrity (2 days)**

## Executive Coaching

Executive coaching is available as an option with this program. An Executive Coach uses Learning Circle Profile results to enhance a student's potential to create higher engagement, personal development and performance for themselves and others, the core qualities needed of today's change-adept leaders through the creation of a Personal Leadership Development Plan that is regularly updated. The coach's role is to engage the participant in a dialogue in a way that leads the senior leader to self-discovery, empowerment and choice so that they are more able to contribute to their organization and find meaning in their vocation.

Executive coaching services provided include:

- Scheduled conversations on a regular basis conducted in-person and/or by telephone
- Assigned reflective activities to aid in learning and development
- Occasional as-needed support such as email exchanges between scheduled conversations

## **Course Descriptions**

### **SELF-REFLECTION: DEFINING MY LEADERSHIP SELF (2 DAYS)**

#### **ECQS: ACHIEVING RESULTS, LEADING PEOPLE, MERIT AND COMPETENCE**

This course is a deep self-exploration that challenges senior leaders to understand who they are at a higher level, including their higher purpose and most deeply held values, assumptions, beliefs, and expectations that guide their actions. Creating trusting relationships is needed to lead others, and it starts with knowing and appreciating oneself first. One simply cannot lead effectively, especially at the executive level, without going through the hard steps of developing oneself from within. For this reason, developing one's authentic presence is arguably the most important capacity any public sector leader can have in today's VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity) world. Participants will gain deeper insights and self-awareness based on advanced personality and competency-based assessments and will apply what they learn about themselves through specified activities. They will also build on their knowledge and learn how to engage and inspire those they lead and other leaders to continue their development, be more self-aware, and continue their own development.

### **BUILDING AND SUSTAINING AN INSPIRED CULTURE (2 DAYS)**

#### **ECQS: DRIVING EFFICIENCY, ACHIEVING RESULTS, LEADING PEOPLE, MERIT AND COMPETENCE**

In this course, senior leaders explore ways to instill an innovation mindset and culture within their organization and constantly improve how to relate to, interact with, and inspire people – which becomes more challenging at the executive level. They learn strategies for transmitting culture by what they pay attention to, measure, and control. The course also challenges participants to look at their personal leadership style, values, and impact. Leaders will be armed with ideas, actions, and tools to assess and implement changes to improve the operations of their organizations. A broad range of theories about organizations and emergent change is reviewed to identify important factors and dynamics to consider when diagnosing an organization at the executive level. The course identifies the issues and options involved in implementing organizational changes with attention to the role of an executive change agent and the importance of strategic planning as part of the visionary process.

During the course, participants reflect on past and current experiences with organizational change in the public service and prepare a strategic change management plan to address a real situation in their agency. Upon successful completion of the course, senior leaders are able to contrast structural, human resources, political, and symbolic frameworks for understanding, assessing, and diagnosing organizations and organizational behavior; formulate reasoned hypotheses about important factors, forces, and issues to consider during the life of a change project; think through and develop a change management plan that covers the major considerations contributing to a successful change initiative; discriminate among the dynamics of organizational change, the human side of change, and the role of culture in organizational change; assess and compose language forms that promote a strategic vision, transformational learning and change; appraise the role(s) of leadership in a change effort and analyze their own change leadership thoughts, style, and inclinations not to change.

### **HOW TO DEVELOP THOSE I LEAD (2 DAYS)**

#### **ECQS: ACHIEVING RESULTS, LEADING PEOPLE, MERIT AND COMPETENCE**

In this course, executives address one of the more vexing challenges found in today's federal agencies - how to provide steady, continuous “streams” of feedback and coach those they lead in ways that leverage their strengths, overcome self-imposed limitations, and make progress toward realizing their full potential. Effective coaches inspire those they lead to set challenging developmental goals, establish a strategy for

growth, and provide guidance and support as they experiment with new ways of thinking and behaving. When senior leaders invest time and energy in using coaching techniques, those they lead will reciprocate with their trust, commitment, and loyalty. Participants will practice effective techniques for both challenging and supporting those they lead to unleash, and in some cases rediscover, their talent and to more effectively drive toward organizational goals.

### **THE FEDERAL BUDGET PROCESS – WORKING IT FOR SUCCESS (2 DAYS)**

#### **ECQS: DRIVING EFFICIENCY, ACHIEVING RESULTS, MERIT AND COMPETENCE**

Executives face unique challenges when dealing with the Federal budget and process. In this course, participants will gain insight into how to engage the political environment—Congress, political appointees, OMB, and broader stakeholder groups from an executive level in the organization. Senior leaders will also evaluate the challenges and opportunities posed by effective strategic planning for marshaling scarce resources in a hyper-competitive environment.

### **POLITICAL SAVVY FOR RESULTS: EMPLOYING INFLUENCE TACTICS WITH INTEGRITY (2 DAYS)**

#### **ECQS: DRIVING EFFICIENCY, ACHIEVING RESULTS, LEADING PEOPLE, MERIT AND COMPETENCE**

Many senior leaders are skilled and visionary, but they are often stymied by resistance to new ideas, power plays, deceptions, and sabotage. This course provides proven strategies to help participants succeed in the face of challenges to vision, reputation, or career goals. They will leave this course understanding how to apply politically astute tactics from an executive-level position that honors principles of integrity and helps mobilize political support and legitimacy. Topics explored include an appraisal of personal assumptions and beliefs about politics, why human nature precipitates unhealthy politics, how to best discriminate between deception and misleading information from adversaries and manage their identity, describing guidelines for persuasive communication, assessing how leaders can promote a network of allies and advance their ideas; and how to decipher unwritten organizational rules, along with the types of interventions or political tactics that will enhance an executive-level leader's ability to achieve publicly valuable goals.

### **LEADING WITH INTEGRITY (2 DAYS)**

#### **ECQS: COMMITMENT TO THE RULE OF LAW & PRINCIPLES OF THE AMERICAN FOUNDING, ACHIEVING RESULTS, LEADING PEOPLE, MERIT AND COMPETENCE**

According to David Maister, “Winning the power to lead professionals is no easy task. Before a leader can be accepted, let alone succeed, autonomous professionals must agree to be influenced by that person.” How does a senior leader, then, earn followership? Do you have a track record of helping other people succeed?

Do your core values inspire staff to operate with integrity and further the interests of staff, partners, and the American public? The most precious thing a leader has is a reputation for common decency and a fierce resolve to drive positive change. A leader's ability to obtain followership is based on a personal commitment to behave in ways that build trust, exhibit courage when important ethical issues are not being addressed, build an organizational culture that emphasizes integrity, service, and respect, control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods in yourself and others; model civility in everyday interactions and encourage it in others; and use ethical principles in trying to determine the right decision, especially when the answer is not simple or obvious. These themes will be explored in a highly interactive format that emphasizes dialogue and reflective thinking from the executive level. Participants will be engaged in facilitated discussions based on short readings, group exercises, and case analyses.

## Vision of Key Executive Leadership Program

We believe vision is important because vision, which describes the future, influences our choices in the present.

Key Executive Leadership Development Program Values Extraordinary leaders choose to:

- Exhibit a passion for improving public service.
- Lead authentically.
- Learn and work collaboratively.
- Become a force for personal and organizational change.
- Act with integrity.
- Model the behavior sought.
- Empower others to action.

The Key Executive Leadership Development Program challenges good managers to become extraordinary leaders who build an environment for organizational success. Because becoming an extraordinary leader is a journey, the central core of the vision is accepting the challenge to learn and teach, and the responsibility to act on the learning. Extraordinary leaders are “learning leaders.” Learning leaders are alive, engaged, and enthusiastic. Learning leaders accept the responsibility to develop themselves and the responsibility to challenge those they lead to develop.

You are members of the Key “executive cohort.” An executive cohort is more than a collection of individuals. It is more than a “class.” An executive cohort is a tightly-knit community of public service leaders committed to teaching and learning from one another. You are also a member of the Key faculty. In our view, “teaching,” “learning” and “leading” are synonymous because in all parts of our work lives, each of us is, at once, a teacher, learner and leader. We grow as teachers, learners, and leaders when we reflect on our actions and ask questions about the beliefs and assumptions we usually take for granted.

To promote learning throughout our time together, we will, as a cohort, work to create a safe environment in which we simultaneously support, question and challenge each other. Learning is deepest, when it engages the whole person -- thoughts, emotions and actions. As we grow on our leadership journey, we are also learning about ourselves and learning to see ourselves and our organizations more clearly. Welcome to the expedition.

## Role of Reflection

An important element of learning is reflection. Saul Alinsky in his book *Rules for Radicals*, writes that happenings become experiences only after they have been reflected upon thoughtfully. “Reflection is that space suspended between experience and explanation, where the mind makes the connections. Imagine yourself in a meeting when someone suddenly erupts with a personal rant. You are tempted to ignore or dismiss the outburst – you have heard, after all, that the person is having problems at home. However, why not use it to reflect on our own reaction – whether embarrassment, anger, or frustration – and so recognize some comparable feelings in yourself? Your own reaction now becomes a learning experience for you: You have opened a space for imagination, between your experience and your explanation. It can make all the difference.” (Gosling and Mintzberg). We invite you to take time to reflect.