Welcome to Aspire Auburn

Auburn University aspires to achieve the pinnacle of excellence as one of the most sought-after institutions in the country, for both students and employees. Such aspiration can only be achieved through our greatest asset: our people. We are committed to becoming a leading organization in growth and innovation by developing our teammates (University Staff, Administrative Professionals, Faculty) to their full potential. To help university employees achieve their full potential, Auburn University's has created a robust Leadership Development program called, "**ASPIRE AUBURN**" which was implemented in August 2024. Together, we will **Aspire to Everyday Excellence.**

Our Journey Here

Results from the July 2023 employee performance management assessment identified the need for improved leader development. In August 2023, an Advisory Group was formed (Appendix 1) with seasoned and senior leaders to discuss campus needs and to build a framework for a series of leadership development initiatives. In January 2024, a sub-committee was created to implement the Leadership Development Framework. The following is a result of over a year of dedicated analysis and effort by several members of our Auburn family.
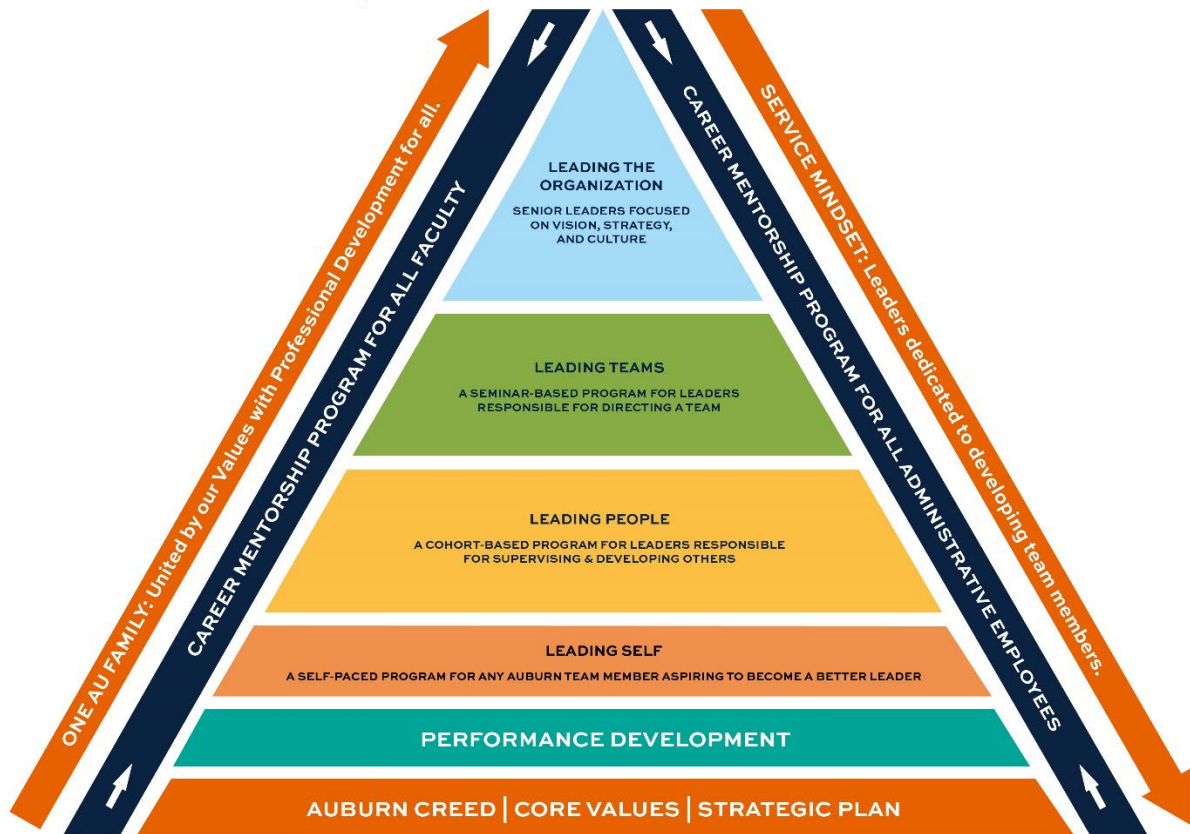
Aspire Auburn Program Basics

Aspire Auburn Objectives

Aspire Auburn will:

1. Promote a shared definition, foundation, and expectations for leaders.
2. Create a culture of effective leadership that benefits all employees.
3. Provide resources that empower leaders to achieve their full potential.
4. Prepare supervisors for healthy conversations with direct reports to articulate goals, priorities and focus areas.

Aspire Auburn's Purpose

The primary purpose is to build leaders who are enabled, inspired, and equipped to cultivate the next generation of leaders. Together, we will strengthen our values-based culture and preserve our legacy as a premier higher education institution. Our main objective is to ensure leaders at every level (from day one employee up to the President) are provided the tools necessary to grow and succeed as an employee, a supervisor, a faculty leader, a director, or an executive leader at Auburn University.

ASPIRE AUBURN

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
Building a Culture of Excellence

ONE AU FAMILY: United by our Values with Professional Development for all.

CAREER MENTORSHIP PROGRAM FOR ALL FACULTY

CAREER MENTORSHIP PROGRAM FOR ALL ADMINISTRATIVE EMPLOYEES

SERVICE MINDSET: Leaders dedicated to developing team members.

LEADING THE ORGANIZATION
SENIOR LEADERS FOCUSED ON VISION, STRATEGY, AND CULTURE

LEADING TEAMS
A SEMINAR-BASED PROGRAM FOR LEADERS RESPONSIBLE FOR DIRECTING A TEAM

LEADING PEOPLE
A COHORT-BASED PROGRAM FOR LEADERS RESPONSIBLE FOR SUPERVISING & DEVELOPING OTHERS

LEADING SELF
A SELF-PACED PROGRAM FOR ANY AUBURN TEAM MEMBER ASPIRING TO BECOME A BETTER LEADER

PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT

AUBURN CREED | CORE VALUES | STRATEGIC PLAN

The Foundation

The foundation for Aspire Auburn is the Auburn Creed, Auburn Core Values, and the 10-year Strategic Plan.

- **The AU Creed** is synonymous with our great institution. The AU Creed is included with student acceptance letters, is etched in stone on campus, and proudly displayed in several office spaces. In short, the AU Creed is timeless, defines our culture and articulates our deeply held beliefs.
- Closely tied to the AU Creed is the adoption of specific **core values**. Values are powerful. The most successful organizations are values-based because they define what they believe in, then work together to uphold their articulated values. Core values can also be timeless; however, they may be modified as other values deeply tied to our culture become evident. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, **"First we define our values; then our values define us."** The Auburn University Code of Conduct and Ethics was published in September 2024 and identifies the university core values of **Excellence**, **Integrity**, and **Respect**. **https://www.auburn.edu/administration/oacp/Code.php**
- **AU's Strategic Plan** was published in December 2024 and articulates our vision for the next decade. **https://www.auburn.edu/administration/president/strategic-plan/** Detailed within the strategic plan are several aspirational pillars/goals: 1) Exceptional Student Experience; 2) Impactful Research and Scholarship; 3) Commitment to Excellence and Innovation; 4) Catalytic Engagement; and

April 2, 2025

5) Distinctively Auburn. One of the Key Performance Indicators in the strategic plan includes employee enrollment in the Aspire Auburn leadership development programs.

Aspire Auburn Components

The components for Aspire Auburn include Performance Development, Mentorship; and a program for four different leadership development levels. Consistent throughout the continuum is a commitment for leaders to seek out and provide **professional development opportunities** for themselves and their teammates.

- **Performance Development**: Align, Collaborate, Evaluate (ACE) Performance Development was previously called Performance Management. Changing from the word "management" to the word "development" captures our new focus on developing people. Developing people to their highest potential is a basic leadership responsibility. Performance Development is ***the process of developing people to achieve optimal performance through collaboration, goal setting, and growth opportunities***. In collaboration with multiple stakeholders, campus partners, and working groups, the AU Human Resource Development team has built a new performance development process that is simple, intuitive, and based on both performance and values. The three phases are Align (job clarity), Collaborate (regular communications), and Evaluate (final review). A new standard has been identified at Auburn which is adherence to the Auburn core values; Aspire Auburn provides training to model and uphold those standards; and ACE Performance will hold employees accountable to those standards.
- **Mentorship**: AU's Leadership Advisory group recognized the importance of formal and informal mentorship programs within each department/unit. Such programs are highly encouraged to be built and managed by individual units within Auburn University.
- **Development Levels**: Each program has distinct learning outcomes structured with the same five components; 1) Foundation, 2) Application, 3) Self-Assessments, 4) Keynote/Closing event, and 5) Continuing Education/Development
    a. Leading Self (page 5)
    b. Leading People (page 7)
    c. Leading Teams (page 9)
    d. Leading the Organization (page 11)

Aspire Auburn is provided as a free benefit to all university employees. In addition to each leadership development program, a number of course electives will be available through Human Resource Development (via ElevatED, Auburn's Employee Education Center).

Code of Conduct and Auburn Core Values

The Auburn University Code of Conduct & Ethics was approved by the Board of Trustees at its September 2024 meeting and applies to all four divisions on Auburn University. A code of conduct is a set of principles and expectations that guide the behavior and actions of all members of our university community. It reflects our commitment to uphold the highest standards of integrity, respect, and excellence in our educational pursuits and professional interactions. The code is a declaration of our shared values and serves as an aspirational document to guide decisions and actions. The Auburn Core Values are:

1. **Excellence**:
    a. We are committed to excellence. We take pride in doing our jobs well, with initiative and professionalism.
2. **Integrity**:

3

a. We are people of integrity. Our words match our actions. We communicate honestly with others. We are truthful, own our mistakes, and do not misrepresent ourselves for personal gain. We hold ourselves accountable for what we do or fail to do.
3. **Respect:**
    a. We are fair and equitable. We treat people with dignity and respect. We ensure others feel welcomed, valued, respected, and engaged.
    b. We will be **collaborative teammates**. We have a positive attitude and work well with others. We approach teamwork with focus, compassion, and empathy.

Auburn University is a family who functions as a team. Teams trust one another, enable each other to grow, and perform their roles to the best of their abilities. Employees will embody core values detailed in the Code of Conduct which were derived from the campus assessment, multiple working groups, and discussions across campus. Regardless of your position or role at Auburn, each of us has a part to play in assuring Auburn University becomes synonymous with the words Excellence, Integrity, and Respect.

Leadership Principles

Supervisors will ensure people feel valued, welcomed, respected, and engaged. In addition to adhering to Auburn University's core values, any employee who supervises another person is expected to model the following leadership principles:

1. **Empower, Enable, and Encourage Direct Reports**:
    a. Supervisors should foster an open dialogue. They should encourage accountability and responsibility for our work. They should define success and ensure team members are equipped to achieve organizational goals. Supervisors should communicate in a manner that builds meaningful relationships, finds win/win solutions, and solves problems together. They will act in the interest of others to build trust.
2. **Develop Self and Direct Reports**:
    a. Supervisors will provide tasks and assignments that promote development. They will hold frequent development discussions and seek growth opportunities for self and others. They will be aware of team members' career goals and construct compelling development plans.

Program Implementation

Aspire Auburn began in Summer 2024 with the launch of ACE Performance, Auburn University's Performance Development (for university staff and A&P teammates). In July 2024, the *Leading Self* program began. The *Leading People* program was implemented in July 2024, and in early Spring 2026, the *Leading Teams* program will be implemented. The *Leading the Organization* program has already been implemented demonstrating Auburn's commitment to Aspire Auburn by leading the charge for this impactful opportunity for all.

4

Leading Self

Implemented in July 2024, the *Leading Self* program is designed for any Auburn team member aspiring to become a better leader. In partnership with LinkedIn Learning, the *Leading Self* program provides foundational leadership development classes for any employee who desires to grow personally and professionally. Participants will explore the essential principles of self-leadership. Through a robust and intentional series of self-paced courses, participants will enhance their ability to lead themselves with purpose, authenticity, and impact. As of April 2, 2025, over 1,200 employees have enrolled in the program with 360 employees having completed the training.

Course Objective:

This program empowers participants to lead themselves authentically and have a positive impact at Auburn University and beyond.

Learning Outcomes (LO):

1. **Analyze** the essential principles of self-leadership.
2. **Understand** Auburn University core values and **apply** them to daily work.
3. **Apply** course concepts and practices to grow personally and professionally.
4. **Identify** your personal values through self-reflection and connect them to course concepts.

Course Delivery:

This course consists of 14 classes including two self-paced classes provided by HRD and twelve self-paced LinkedIn Learning-provided classes. The *Leading Self* program will be completed within ElevatED, Auburn's Employee Education Center. Classes were carefully selected by Auburn University's Leadership Development Working Group and approved by the Advisory Group. Learners can expect to devote 12-14 hours to courses and exercises. Once all 14 classes are complete, learners will be awarded the **Auburn University Leading Self Certificate** and digital badge.

		Duration
1) Leading Self Foundations:		
a. Course Intro and Core Values	(LO 1)	30 minutes
b. Visualizing Your Leadership Journey	(LO 1,3,4)	60 minutes
c. Leading Yourself	(LO 1, 2)	51 minutes
d. Holding Yourself Accountable	(LO 1,2)	36 minutes
e. Goal Setting	(LO 1,3)	42 minutes
2) Leading Self Application:		
a. Developing a Service Mindset	(LO 1,2,3)	41 minutes
b. Improving Your Mental Health at Work	(LO 1)	58 minutes
c. How to Resolve Conflicts	(LO 1,2)	52 minutes
d. Communicating with Empathy	(LO 1,2)	37 minutes
e. Communicating with Emotional Intelligence	(LO 1,2)	44 minutes
3) Self-Assessments:		
a. Developing Self Awareness	(LO 1,4)	57 minutes
b. Connecting Your Work to Your Purpose	(LO 1,2)	65 minutes

      c. Self-Awareness, Authenticity, and Leadership   (LO 1,3)   23 minutes

4) Keynote/Closing Event:
      a. Successful Leadership Habits   (LO 3,4)   30 minutes
           i. Initiative, Teamwork, Humility

5) Continuing Education/Development
      a. The ElevatED course catalog is updated quarterly. Some additional classes teammates may consider include 1) Employee Motivation, 2) How to Support a Grieving coworker, and 3) Emotional Intelligence.
      b. Numerous additional LinkedIn Learning courses are also available.
      c. Employees are encouraged to review all HRD course offerings found at the following link: [ElevatED - Auburn's Employee Education Center | Office of Human Resources](#)

April 2, 2025

Leading People

Implemented in January 2025, the *Leading People* program is designed for any Auburn leader serving as a supervisor of one or more team members. This program provides the tools necessary for supervisors to more effectively lead others. Supervisors will learn how to enable their team members' full potential, while exploring the essential principles of leading others with a focus on Auburn Core Values and Leadership Principles. Through a robust and intentional series of in-person classes and one self-paced course, participants will enhance their ability to lead people with purpose, authenticity, and selflessness. Active participation and commitment to personal growth are essential for successful completion of this course.

Course Objective:

This program helps supervisors develop and refine skills to lead people more effectively. Participants will learn techniques to empower, enable, and encourage their direct reports to: 1) Model the core values of Excellence, Integrity, and Respect, 2) Have a sense of purpose and take pride in their work, 3) Be empowered and enabled to excel in their jobs, 4) Recognize the value they bring to Auburn University, and 5) Feel a sense of ownership in Auburn University's success.

Learning Outcomes (LO):

1) **Articulate & Apply** Auburn University core values.
2) **Strengthen and improve** effective methods to empower, enable, encourage, and develop employees.
3) **Apply** the foundational skills necessary to effectively lead people.

Course Delivery:

This course will consist of **30** hours of training that includes 10 in-person classes and one self-paced learning pathway. Class size is limited to 50 participants per cohort. Classes were carefully selected by Auburn University's Leadership Development Working Group and approved by the Advisory Group. All classes are provided by Auburn University personnel. Each class is 75 minutes in duration except for the 7-hour self-paced law and policies learning path. Once all coursework is complete, learners will be awarded the **Auburn University Leading People Certificate, a Leading People lapel pin, a digital badge, and 3 Continuing Education Credits.**

		LO	When
1)	Leading People Foundation:		
	a. Foundational Law and Policies (Self-paced)	LO 2,3	Week 1-6
	b. Course Intro and Orientation	LO 1-3	Week 1
	c. Organizational Values	LO 1-3	Week 1
	d. Leader's CARE	LO 1-3	Week 2
2)	Leading People Application:		
	a. Effective Communications/Active Listening	LO 2, 3	Week 3
	b. Leading in Today's Environment	LO 1-4	Week 4
	c. Leading Multiple Generations	LO 2,3	Week 4
	d. ACE for Supervisors	LO 1-3	Week 5
	e. Mindful Leadership	LO 2,3	Week 5
	f. Leading from the Middle	LO 1-3	Week 6

g.	Expert Panel	LO1-3	Week 6

3) Self-Assessments:

a.	Emotional Intelligence	LO 2,3	Week 2
b.	DiSc Assessment	LO 2,3	Week 3

4) Keynote/Closing Event:

a.	The Invisible Medal	LO 1-3	Week 6

5) Continuing Education/Development
   a. The ElevatED course catalog is updated quarterly. Employees are encouraged to review all HRD course offerings found at the following link:
   [ElevatED - Auburn's Employee Education Center | Office of Human Resources](#)
   b. Recommended courses include: Aspire Auburn Leading Self Program; LD104: Cultural Wallpaper; PP109: Kindness: It's Place in the workplace; PP102: Bullying in the Workplace; SM108: Mindful Leadership; TW102: Working with High Conflict People; TW104: Emotional Intelligence Basics; LD102: Maxwell's Five Levels of Leadership; LD103: Organizational Culture; TW105: Building and Sustaining a Winning T-E-A-M; LD101: Professional Ethics; SM105: Employee Motivation; SM104: Succession Planning; SM503: Coaching Fundamentals; TW 500: Building and Sustaining a Service Culture; SM103: Decision-Making and Delegation; CM104: Working Among Multiple Generations; SM504: Feedback in a Flash; SM507: Getting Started with Continuous Improvement; LinkedIn Learning content in ElevatED.

April 2, 2025

Leading Teams

To be implemented in early Spring 2026, the *Leading Teams* program is designed for any Auburn leader serving as a leader for one or multiple teams (i.e. Directors and Department Chairs). This program will empower participants to build, lead, and enable teams to have a positive impact at Auburn University and beyond. Team leaders will be equipped to perform mid-level management and director leadership responsibilities. They will learn how to enable their team's full potential in keeping with Auburn Core Values and Leadership Principles. Participants will develop the foundational skills necessary to build and sustain a winning team. Through a robust and intentional series of in-person classes, participants will be active and engaged in seminars focused on discussion and analysis of leadership concepts. Active participation and commitment to personal growth are essential for success.

Course Objective:

This program will empower and enable participants to lead teams more effectively.

Learning Outcomes:

1. **Apply** concepts and practices to develop team-leadership skills.
2. **Analyze** various time management techniques.
3. **Model** trust, mentorship, mission, vision, and values.
4. **Empower** and enable your team's full potential.
5. **Analyze** your core values, priorities, and ethical decisions.
6. **Effectively** lead a team.

Course Delivery:

This course will consist of 10 seminar sessions with a class size of no more than 25 people. Each seminar will last for 3 hours and is focused on team learning and discussion via an andragogy of learning from and with peers. Class topics will be carefully selected by Auburn University's Leadership Development Working Group and approved by the Advisory Group. All classes will be facilitated by Auburn University personnel. The keynote closing might be presented by an external speaker. In late April 2025, the *Leading Teams* working group will review and finalize the curriculum which may include the following:

1) **Leading Teams Foundation**:
    a. Modeling Core Values
    b. Ethical Decision-Making
    c. Time Management for senior leaders   (LinkedIn)
    d. Team building and Collaboration
    e. Lencioni's Five Dysfunctions of a Team
    f. Maxwell's Five Levels of Leadership

2) **Leading Teams Application**:
    a. Vision and Leading Change
    b. Organizational Culture
    c. Continuous Improvement/Lean 6 Sigma
    d. Succession Planning
    e. Performance Development for 2nd Level Reviewer
    f. Trusting Teams/Safe Space

       g. Problem Solving, Action-Mapping, Planning

       h. Sinek's Infinite Game

       i. The 6 Critical Practices for Leading a Team (one day Symposium)

3) **Self-Assessments**:

       a. Emotional Intelligence

       b. Cliffton's Strengths

       c. How to Define Success

           i. Finding your Purpose, Understanding Bias, Discover your Values

4) **Keynote/Closing Event**:

       a. The T-E-A-M-S Leadership Philosophy

5) **Continuing Education/Development:**

       a. The ElevatED course catalog is updated quarterly. Employees are encouraged to review all HRD course offerings found at the following link:

       [ElevatED - Auburn's Employee Education Center | Office of Human Resources](#)

Leading the Organization

Leading the Organization will be comprised of Auburn University's Strategic Leadership Team (SVPs, Deans). This level will provide a venue for AU's senior leaders to discuss leadership development and cultural concerns for the broader Auburn family. Members will share one another's experience and different perspectives. Opportunities for self-assessments, professional development, retreats, and external speakers should be scheduled as desired/required by the members. Members will discuss core values, leadership principles, performance development, and ensure employees are equipped to cultivate our unique culture.

Course Objective:

This program will provide a venue for senior Auburn University leaders to collaborate on leadership-related concerns and opportunities.

Learning Outcomes:

As determined by the senior leadership team.

Course Delivery:

Leading the Organization is not currently a structured course; however, senior leaders have expressed a desire to create a course like the other Aspire Auburn leadership development levels. The objective is for senior leaders to meet regularly and consistently to discuss cultural and leadership trends, concerns, and opportunities Auburn University is or is likely to encounter. They are the custodians of Auburn's culture.

Some key areas for discussion may include:

Core Values

Leadership Principles

Self-Assessments (i.e 360 for senior leaders)

External advisors, consultants, and speakers

AUBURN UNIVERSITY

Auburn University

LEADER DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY GROUP

INTRODUCTION

Results from the July 2023 performance management assessment identified the need for improved leader development at Auburn University. President Roberts has approved the creation of a Leader Development Advisory Group comprised of seasoned leaders to discuss campus needs and curriculum for a series of leadership development initiatives.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The group will serve as a cadre of 12-15 senior faculty and non-faculty leaders formed to identify leadership development opportunities.

The Director of Human Resource Development will coordinate efforts and administer periodic meetings. Topics include:

1. **Supervisor's Leader Workshop (For current Supervisors)**
   a. Half-day mandatory workshop focused on leadership, performance management, and coaching/developing direct reports
   b. Develop the framework no later than 8 December 2023
2. **Campus-wide Leadership Development Program (For all employees)**
   a. **Employee Leader Development:** For aspiring leaders
   b. **Supervisor Leader Development:** For supervisors and managers
   c. **Director Leader Development:** For Directors/Executive Directors/Dept. Heads
   d. **Executive Leader Development:** For Associate VPs/Associate Deans and above
3. **Best practices and professional development opportunities**
4. **Emerging leadership trends or concerns**
5. **Building synergy among AU leadership development stakeholders**

CONCLUSION

Establishing a Leader Development Advisory Group is a strategic step toward maximizing leadership effectiveness and cultivating a culture of leadership excellence at Auburn University.

Kelli D. Shomaker
SVP, Business & Administration and Chief Financial Officer

April 2, 2025