

## Introduction and Need for Idea

The North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission Agricultural Leadership Development Program is a two year program for early and mid career agriculturalists to further develop their personal and professional leadership skills.

- Provides in-depth leadership training through theoretical frameworks, case studies, domestic and international study tours, personal assessments, and networking opportunities.
- Evaluation of program alumni indicated the need for more discussion surrounding their own personal and professional goals and avenues to achieve those.
- Past programs utilized coaching sporadically. Only occurring following assessments (Myers Briggs, Human Patterns, Emotional Intelligence, and Crucial Conversations).
- Individual coaches facilitated sessions with little guidance.
- Based on past evaluations, coaching component was not providing the impact nor the additional depth of discussion surrounding the instruments as hoped.
- For the 2020-2022 cohort, program leaders wrote and acquired a grant that provided funding for the hiring of a lead executive coach and additional executive coaches for the entirety of the program.

## How It Works and Methodology

The North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund grant provided:

- A lead coach to direct and collaborate with the ALDP leadership team and plan monthly coaching sessions.
- Seven additional executive coaches to work with 2-5 individuals for two years. The lead executive coach communicates monthly with the executive coaches and shares topics and monthly assignments. This ensures that each program participant has a similar coaching experience.
- Monthly coaching sessions that help participants develop personal mission statements, personal and professional leadership development plans, and engage in richer dialogue surrounding those topics discussed within the leadership sessions.

While the coaching sessions are planned, the executive coach does have the flexibility to also discuss and work with their mentees on specific items that are pertinent to their lives.

## Results to Date and Implications

A mid-program evaluation occurred with both ALDP participants and executive coaches and provided the following feedback:

- Participants shared that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the coaching component.
- The majority of the participants indicated they had a "vision" for their future, a strong majority shared that prior to the program they did not have a mission statement, three identified long-term goals, and both a personal and professional leadership development plan.
- Words and phrases such as "**life changing**" and "**major impact**" were present throughout the open ended questions.
- Coaches emphasized that their mentees were prepared for coaching sessions and meeting goals and deadlines for specific tasks.
- As participants continue their work with their executive coaches, ALDP leaders are excited for the future outcomes and already witness the impacts of the executive coaches within the program and agricultural commodity associations.

## Future Plans and Advice to Others

While the executive coaches are funded through a grant for the current program, they have made a significant impact on the participants and will be an added component for future programs.

- Future grants and/or increased fundraising/sponsorship efforts are needed to continue the executive coaching component for future cohorts.
- A lead executive coach is vital to the consistency and continuity of the coaching efforts.
- Emphasis and incorporation of coaching homework assignments is needed during the leadership sessions.
- Time is allotted during the ALDP sessions for participants to work in small groups to discuss and share coaching components with one another to help establish accountability.
- Program directors communicate and share the curriculum, recordings, and other ALDP session topics in the event the participants want to discuss any of those items with their coach.

*Thank you for assigning him to me to coach during the Ag Leadership Program. I don't know if I have ever had a so eager a mentee to learn. He writes down every thing I suggest, carries it out and reports on it at our next session. He orders and reads books that I suggest, and he usually goes beyond any assignments that we agree upon. He not only developed the expected 5-year plan, he developed a 10-year plan and a 20-year plan. Never in all my 30 years of working with strategic planning and development planning have I had that happen with an individual. We ended our session with his thanking me sincerely for being his coach and telling me how much he has learned from me. (I almost teared up.)"*

- ALDP Executive Coach

*"My participation in the program and my coaching experience gave me the confidence that I needed to leave my job and start my own business, a goal that I have had for a long time."*

-ALDP Participant

*"My coach has brought me out of the expectation that all information is handed to me and I will need to put in the work for my expected outcome."*

-ALDP Participant

## Cost and Resources Needed

- \$60,000 grant sponsors the majority of the executive coaching costs..
- Each coach is paid with the exception of the two coaches employed by the NCTTFC ALDP..
- Lead executive coach is paid more than the other coaches due to their increased responsibilities and time.
- One of the coaches did not wish to receive any payment for their work and chose to donate their time to the program.
- All of the executive coaches have prior experience with coaching and are familiar with the various personal assessments that are used within the program.
- Grant funds are also set aside that will cover travel expenses for their attendance at graduation.

*Special thanks to the North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund for their continued support of the North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission Agricultural Leadership Development Program and their additional grant support for the executive coaching component.*