

Promoting Civic Leadership Among Agricultural College Students



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
Davis College
Agricultural Education
& Communications™

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Introduction

Civic involvement has steadily decreased in the last 50 years, the “brain drain,” typically known as a term used as a synonymous of the movement of human capital, where the net flow of expertise is heavily in one direction (Giannoccolo, 2009; Salt, 1997). This concept is removing talent from rural areas, and Texas Tech graduates are seeking a sense of purpose and direction for their careers. The purpose of the Civic Leadership Academy (CLA) is to help agricultural college students from the Lubbock region realize their potential to enact change and develop their communities, beginning with themselves. The program aims to develop participants' understanding of their leadership potential and demonstrate the merits of civic leadership through engagement and interaction with entrepreneurship, nonprofits, community development, and community-driven leaders and businesses.



Resources Needed

The proposed budget of the CLA for Year 1 was \$30,000. While this may seem high, many startup costs will not be repeated in supplemental years. Therefore, the initial cost is an investment in the sustainability of the program and long-term implications for the community. Resources needed will vary on the community and the network of scholars and friends of your program who could supply speakers, workshops, and related resources.

Future Plans

The CLA is a program that has the capacity to change individual lives and have a real community impact. Continued funding will keep the CLA moving forward and impacting communities. Future plans for the CLA include:

- Expanding cohort membership
- Increasing community partners
- Collaborations
- Explore grants and endowment opportunities

Results to Date

Throughout the first half of the year, participants have engaged with 22 Texas Tech faculty and staff, five workshop presenters from outside universities, 12 nonprofit agencies represented by 18 staff, 16 local and state government representatives (including the Mayor and a State Representative), and eight agricultural commodity and industry groups. Students report a better understanding of civic leadership and strategies to make a more significant impact across their communities. Many of the students have begun to serve at various nonprofits. Most report a better understanding of their leadership capabilities, which has transferred over to student organizations on campus. Over the summer, participants will partake in the summer reading program and project interviews. CLA will conclude the 2022 cohort by engaging in workshops about international civic leadership and adaptive leadership, a trip to Dallas to hear from national brands and Fortune 500 companies regarding civic leadership, and developing pitches to contribute a budgeted \$10,000 towards community-based projects.

Methods

The program has been developed using the tenets of the Social Change Model of Leadership Development (Astin, 1996; Komives & Wagner, 2016), including:

- *Leadership Development*
- *Values Assessment*
- *Community Development*
- *Agricultural Foundations of Rural Areas/ Entrepreneurship*
- *Real-world Application*

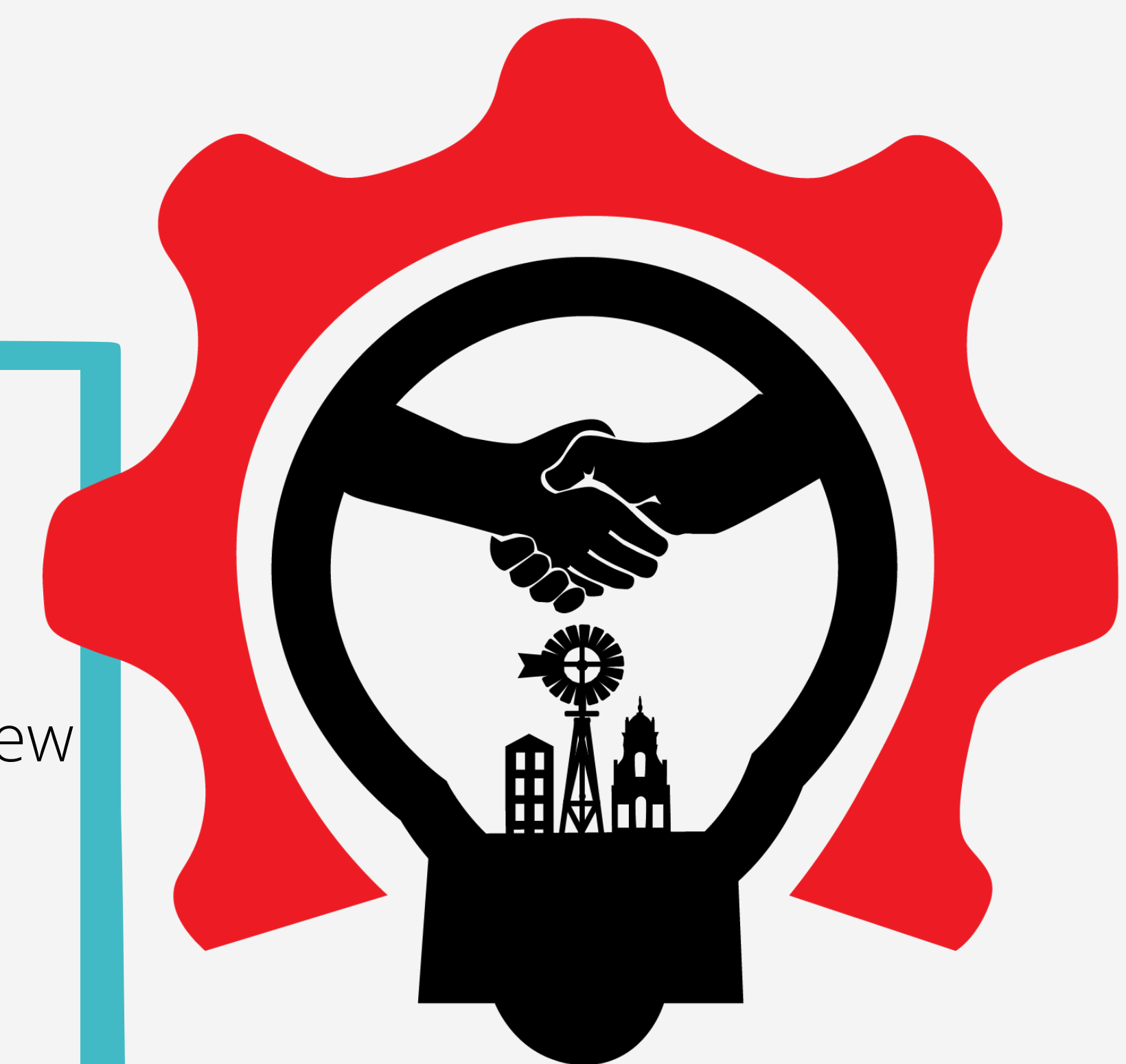


How it Works

College of agriculture students was invited to apply to CLA via email, class presentations, and social media. Twelve students were selected from 48 applicants by an agricultural education, communications, and leadership faculty committee. Participants have been introduced to the world of civic leadership and explored ways of engagement through the experiences of the program on a national, regional, and community level. Participants will propose a project at the end of the program to encapsulate the civic leadership experience. They will carry out their project with a local community partner of the participants' choice.

Advice to Others

There are prime opportunities for faculty members within our disciplines to collaborate and expand service learning for our students across agriculture and the community. Seeking out new ways of collaborating with others across the community for service and civic projects to demonstrate to students their capacity for impacting their college communities and the communities they call home and will settle in for the future.



References

