Academy for Innovative Higher Education Leadership

The academy, a partnership between Arizona State University and Georgetown University, is the premier training ground for those who aspire to senior leadership positions in higher education, and those who want to lead organizational change at colleges and universities in the future.

The eight-month design-based program focuses on bringing ideas to practice, linking theory to relevant applications and scaling innovations in teaching today and in the future. Through intense executive coaching, fellows in the academy are trained in the new leadership skills and behaviors required to lead transformation in the 21st century.

Rather than emphasizing the tactical day-to-day aspects of leading institutions, the academy is centered on innovative ideas across a range of challenges facing higher education now and in the future. Fellows learn critical thinking, analysis and the design skills needed to solve complex industry issues.

The principles of design are embedded in the program, allowing fellows to participate in exercises that develop the next-generation governance structures, credentials and financial models.

Program schedule

The program is offered in an executive-style education schedule, combining four three-day intensive face-to-face meetings in Washington, D.C., and Phoenix, with online seminars and executive coaching sessions featured throughout the program.

1. The Context for Innovation
   Georgetown University
   November

2. Understanding the Organization for Innovation
   Arizona State University
   January

3. Designing the Innovative University
   Arizona State University
   April

4. Shifting to an Innovative Mindset
   Georgetown University
   June

*Program titles subject to change
Curriculum

1. The Context for Innovation

Change in any industry is difficult, but it is particularly problematic in higher education with its unique culture and history of shared governance. This module examines the historical context of innovation within colleges and universities, helps fellows define innovation on their own campuses, and explores the points at which innovation remains stuck within institutions. Fellows consider how to create the conditions for change by understanding innovative leaders in higher education and how they are able to prepare their institutions for change.

2. Understanding the Organization for Innovation

The dominant model of higher education is rooted in an industrial age that favored a rigid system. The 21st-century economy demands a more flexible system focused on innovation and creativity. This module explores the current organization and culture of colleges and universities; identifies structures that promote long-term success, including financing systems; and imagines what high-performing universities might look like in the future, as both teaching and research enterprises.

3. Designing the Innovative University

This module allows fellows to apply their learning in a design-thinking context. Design thinking is an approach to problem solving. Until recently, the process of design had been thought to only apply to physical objects. But now the design process is used in more contexts — for strategy, organizational structures and new ideas. Fellows are given an introduction to design thinking and asked to develop new approaches to tackling problems they are facing on their campuses.

4. Shifting to an Innovative Mindset

External challenges both domestic and global are already placing new demands on college and university leaders. Higher education is a disrupted field in need of innovation, but stuck in stasis. Future leaders are reluctant to lead or unprepared to navigate this new landscape. This module will focus on integrating the learning of the previous three modules for each of the fellows, allowing them to develop a bold vision for their own leadership journeys, and to allow them to begin the shift from hesitant leader to a 21st-century leader who will build the innovative university of the future.

Admission and cost

The program is ideal for mid-career and senior administrators as well as faculty with a minimum of 5–7 years professional experience in higher education.

Tuition is $13,500. The rate includes most meals during the program. Travel to/from Washington, D.C., and Phoenix is not included. Participants are expected to have the endorsement of their institutions, which is reflected in financial support. Discounts are available for institutions that sponsor more than one fellow.

For more information and to request application materials, contact Ryanne T. Avina: ryanne.avina@asu.edu