Texas Academic Leadership Academy

Executive Summary

Background

Higher education leaders seldom receive any type of targeted preparation for entry into their roles within institutions (Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017). Though often experts in their field, they may have had little to no training or experience in formal leadership (financial systems, legal precedents, student development theory, and human resource management). The purpose of the Texas Academic Leadership Academy (TALA) is to enhance the leadership skills and capacities of new and mid-level academic leaders who aspire to positions of leadership such as department chairs, associate deans, deans, vice presidents, and provosts. Through a structured, year-long curriculum and mentoring program, the program addresses topics of critical concern and professional development for emerging leaders in Texas.

Academy Activities

The academy consists of three (3) face-to-face meetings, monthly webinars, mentors/coaches, small group sessions, and a 360 evaluation. The academy has included more than 40 different academic affairs leaders, professional staff, and community partners to present on topics about leading professional staff, conflict management, diversity and inclusion, legal issues, and institutional research and effectiveness. The program has also involved representatives from the THECB, Texas Legislature, and state university system offices.

Participation

The Texas Academic Leadership Academy has served 161 participants from 33 different institutions and state university systems. Among those who reported race/ethnicity, approximately 63% of fellows were white and 30% were from historically underrepresented groups. Most fellows were tenured and employed at the associate professor rank or higher.

Impact

Fellows generally viewed the program favorably in its ability to meet their needs and expectations. They also indicated that the academy was well organized with clearly supported goals, resources, and speakers. Sessions on conflict management and opportunities to network with others were perceived as being most beneficial. An area for improvement was the inclusion of more diverse perspectives. Fellows wanted to see and hear from individuals about the challenges of navigating institutional barriers, particularly given the need to improve the number of academic leaders from historically underrepresented groups. Lastly, the fellows were asked about changes in their role following the academy. Approximately 36.4 percent indicated that they have been promoted into a new position since completion of the Texas Academic Leadership Academy.

Background

At a time of tremendous financial constraint and uncertainty, institutions of higher education face unique challenges in recruiting and retaining diverse student bodies, securing campus environments, demonstrating efficacy of their programs, and coping with complex legal issues or constituent complaints. Even those that learn to navigate the contexts of these challenges face difficulties in responding to complex organizational situations. Adequate preparation and training are needed to help emerging leaders respond to these challenges.

The problem is that higher education leaders seldom receive any type of formal preparation for entry into their administrative roles within institutions (Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017). Most institutional leaders are drawn from the ranks of faculty from disciplines across the institution. Thought experts in their field, they may have had little to no training or experience in formal administrative leadership (financial systems, legal precedents, student development theory, and human resource systems).

Issues of accountability, accessibility, and innovation face higher education leaders at all levels, including department chairs and deans. The responsibility of being sufficiently agile to effectively meet the needs of an increasingly diverse group of stakeholder constituencies makes the leader's job more complex than ever before (Gmelch & Butler, 2015). Simply put, today's higher education leaders wear a multitude of "hats," yet little preparation is offered to them for ensuring that they recognize, understand, and know how to "wear" all these responsibilities.

Purpose

Public colleges and universities must meet the needs of the communities they serve. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board implemented a strategic plan (60x30TX) to support Texas higher education leaders' capacity to respond to the state's priorities for higher education. The overarching goal of the strategic plan is to have at least 60 percent of Texans ages 25-34 with a certificate or degree by 2030. Texas' higher education leaders must be prepared to lead institutions toward the accomplishment of these goals. Viewing the outcomes of the 60x30TX Plan as a guiding document for the development of high-quality future leaders, a partnership was created between the Texas Council of Chief Academic Officers (TCCAO) and Sam Houston State University. The result of this partnership was the development of a program (Texas Academic Leadership Academy) to prepare aspiring leaders for the unique challenges facing Texas higher education.

The purpose of the Texas Academic Leadership Academy (TALA) is to enhance the leadership skills and capacities of new and mid-level academic leaders who aspire to positions of leadership such as department chairs, associate deans, deans, vice presidents, and provosts. Through a structured, year-long curriculum and mentoring program, the program addresses topics of critical concern to emerging leaders in Texas.

Program Structure

Face-to-Face Seminars & Webinars

The Texas Academic Leadership Academy meets face-to-face three times per year at different locations across the state. The purpose of this rotation is to ensure accessibility and reduce costs to institutions. Face-to-face meetings have taken place at four different locations over a three-year period. Meeting accommodations have been supported by a local institution and its division of academic affairs. A list of meeting locations is provided below:

Table 1
Summary of Meeting Locations

Meeting	Locations
Fall	Sam Houston State University - The Woodlands Center Campus (2018-2020)
Spring	Texas Women's University – Dallas (2019-2021)
Summer	Austin Hyatt Regency (2019) Texas State University – San Marcos (2020, 2021)

Each face-to-face meeting is centered around a theme. The first meeting consists of a two-day orientation and professional development session including speakers, networking activities, and an introduction to leadership in the academy. The second face-to-face meeting takes place in January and focuses on leadership at the institution level. This meeting includes topics on leading professional staff, conflict management, diversity and inclusion, legal issues, and institutional research and effectiveness. The final face-to-face meeting is held in the summer and focuses on strategic planning at the institution and state level. This meeting typically includes representatives from the THECB, Texas Legislature, and state university system offices.

In addition to face-to-face meetings, monthly webinars are provided to address various leadership topics. Each webinar features speakers and interactive components. Webinars have included topics such as conflict resolution, evaluating personnel, developing curriculum, budgeting and finance, strategic planning, diversity and cultural responsiveness, assessment, and student success, particularly among traditionally marginalized populations.

A summary of meeting topics and webinars is provided below:
- Climbing the Ladder of Administrative Responsibility
- What to Expect When the Unexpected Happens
- Visionary Leadership in Higher Education
- Maximizing Faculty Potential - Development and Evaluation
- Building a High-quality Team

- 60x30TX Leadership Strategies for Decreasing Student Loan Debt
- Tips for Productivity and Time Management for Academic Administrators
- The Art of Leading & Following
- Understanding Basic Financial Models in Higher Educations
- Reframing and Re-envisioning Enrollment and Student Success
- How to Make Diversity Tangible and Obtainable
- Leading Staff Effectively
- Assessment and Strategic Planning
- Crisis Response
- Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act
- Understanding and Embracing the Diversity of Diversity
- Working with Different People: How to Manage Conflict & Build Trust
- Agreeing to Disagree: Turning Negativity into Productivity
- Planning for Further Leadership Development
- Strategic Leadership for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in University Settings
- Navigating the Shift from Faculty Peer to Academic Administrator
- Approaches and Planning for Mentoring Relationships
- Experiences of Administrators in Navigating Career Trajectories
- Managing Legally
- Pieces of the Employment Law Puzzle
- Student Success: Creating Conditions that Matter
- Leadership in Strategic Planning
- True Professionalism: Competence, Courage, Change
- Academic and University Advancement Partnership
- The Role of Governmental Relations in Academic Affairs
- Building Collaborative Relationships with External Partners
- Texas Legislature Priorities and Goals
- Verbal Aikido: Communication for Academic Leaders
- Human Resource Policies and Practices
- Title IX Implications for Administrators
- Academic Planning and Assessment

In-person sessions and webinars have been led by individuals who represent a broad range of roles and responsibilities. In addition to university system staff and senior academic affairs leaders, the program has worked to include staff perspectives given their importance to institutional success. The program has also worked to include local and state community agencies that serve as institutional partners and stakeholders. A full list of Academy speakers during the three-year period is provided in Table 2.

Table 2

Texas Academic Leadership Academy Speakers

First Name	Role/Title	Institution
Dr. Amy Andersen	Associate Provost for Academic Affairs and TCCAO President	West Texas A&M University
Ms. Rhonda Beassie	Assistant Vice President of Human Resources, Equity & Inclusion and Compliance	Sam Houston State University
Dr. Lisa Blazer	Associate Vice President for Enrollment Services	Texas A&M University
Ms. Kimberly Bow	Senior Associate	Stantec
Dr. Barbara Brier	Vice President for University Advancement & Executive Director for Texas State University Development Foundation	Texas State University
Dr. Rebecca Bustmante	Associate Dean, College of Education and TALA Facilitator	Sam Houston State University
Dr. Kimberly Childs	Dean, College of Sciences & Mathematics	Stephen F. Austin State University
Dr. Robin Means Coleman	Vice President and Associate Provost for Diversity	Texas A&M University
Ms. Meredith Conrey	Director of Leadership Initiatives	Sam Houston State University
Mr. Brandon Creighton	State Senator, Chair of Higher Education Committee	Texas State Legislature
Dr. Hristy Crutsinger	Vice Provost for Academic Affairs	University of North Texas
Dr. Jenna Cullinane	Vic President of Institutional Research & Analytics	Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
Mr. Sean Cunningham	Vice Chancellor for Governmental Relations	The Texas State University System
Dr. Stacey Edmonson	Dean, College of Education	Sam Houston State University
Dr. Ken Evans	President	Lamar University
Dr. Carine Feyten	Chancellor and President	Texas Woman's University
Mr. William Funk	Founder and President	R. William Funk & Assoc. Search Firm
Dr. Shonda Gibson	Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs	Texas A&M University System
Dr. Ginger Gossman	Senior Director of Innovation and Policy Development	Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
Dr. Rosemary Haggett	Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs & Student Success	University of North Texas
Dr. James Hallmark	Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs	Texas A&M University System
Dr. John Hayek	Vice Chancellor for Academic & Health Affairs	Texas State University System
Dr. Dana Hoyt	Past President	Sam Houston State University
Dr. James Humphreys	Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs	Texas A&M University - Commerce
Ms. Nicole Finkbeiner	Director, Institutional Research, Open Stax	Rice University

Dr. Matthew Fuller	Associate Professor & Director for the Center of Assessment, Research and Educational Safety (C.A.R.E.S.)	Sam Houston State University
Dr. Danny Kelley	Dean, College of Arts & Sciences	Prairie View A&M University
Dr. Forrest Lane	Chair, Department of Educational Leadership and TALA Facilitator	Sam Houston State University
Dr. Phillip Lyons	Dean and Director, College of Criminal Justice	Sam Houston State University
Ms. Erin Machac	Higher Education Market Leader	Stantec
Dr. Jennifer Martin	Executive Vice Provost	Texas Woman's University
Dr. Christopher Maynard	Vice Provost of Academic Affairs	Sam Houston State University
Ms. Ameerah McBride	Chief Diversity Officer, Director of Equity and Access and Title IX Coordinator	Texas State University
Dr. Patricia McHatton	Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, Student Success and P-16 Integration	University of Texas- Rio Grande Valley
Ms. Sue McMillin	President and CEO	Greater Texas Foundation
Mr. Matthew Olmstead	Director of Financial Planning & Budget	Sam Houston State University
Dr. David Perlmutter	Dean, College of Media & Communication	Texas Tech University
Mr. Dan Perry	Assistant Vice President for Advancement	Texas State University
Mr. Peter Roussel	Phillip G. Warner Endowed Chair, Department of Mass Communication	Sam Houston State University
Dr. David Ryden	Associate Dean, College of Humanities & Social Sciences	University of Houston- Downtown
Ms. Julie Schwab	Executive Assistant to the Provost	Sam Houston State University
Dr. Debbie Thorne	Associate Provost	Texas State University
Ms. Paul Turcotte	Director of Institutional Research & Assessment	Texas A&M University - Central Texas
Dr. Christopher Murr	Director of Financial Aid & Scholarships	Texas State University

Individual Mentors

Every fellow selects a mentor of their choosing. The purpose of the mentor is to provide each fellow an opportunity to connect with a more experienced academic affairs leader at their institution. Fellows are encouraged to seek a mentor in an area and level that matches their career and professional goals. Both the fellow and mentor sign a mentoring agreement. As part of this agreement, mentors are expected to:

- Meet with their fellow/mentee four times during the program year;
- Suggest meetings, associations, trainings, books, shadowing activities;
- Assist the fellow/mentee with network expansion;
- Provide leadership advice on managing contemporary higher education topics.

Small Groups

In addition to individual mentors, fellows are assigned to a small group of approximately 4-5 other fellows with similar administrative responsibilities. Each small group is led by a "Coach" who meets with their small group 1-2 time per semester. The purpose of these small groups is to provide fellows an opportunity to reflect on program activities. It also provides fellows an opportunity to network with and connect to other participants in the program. A list of small group coaches is provided in Table 3.

360 Evaluation

Beginning in 2020, Fellows also participate in a 360 evaluation. This evaluation is based on the EQ-i 2.0, which is a trait-based model of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is set of emotional and social skills that influence the way we perceive and express ourselves, develop and maintain social relationships, cope with challenges and use emotional information in an effective and meaningful way. The EQ-i 2.0 assesses five composite EI dimensions, each made up of three composite subscales:

- **Self-Perception**: Self-Regard, Self-Actualization, Emotional Self-Awareness
- **Self-Expression**: Emotional Expression, Assertiveness, Independence
- **Interpersonal**: Interpersonal Relationships, Empathy, Social Responsibility
- **Decision Making**: Problem Solving, Reality Testing, Impulse Control
- **Stress Management**: Flexibility, Stress Tolerance, Optimism

Administration of the EQ-i 2.0 requires training and/or b-level educational qualifications in compliance with Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing. To meet these standards, the program contracted Developmental Associates to facilitate distribution and scoring of the assessment. Developmental Associates provide 90 minutes of one-on-one assessment debrief with each fellow about their EQ-i 2.0 and 360 evaluation results.

Individual Leadership Development Plan

Each fellow creates an Individual Leadership Development Plan (ILDP), which is developed in conjunction with the mentor from their campus. The purpose of this ILDP is to guide fellows in developing a clear, focused, action-oriented strategic plan for taking their academic leadership knowledge and skills to the next level of university administration.

One impetus for initiating TALA was to prepare academic leaders to enact the state's 60x30TX Plan so their leadership development goals could align with the state's strategic plan. Some general areas of focus in which fellows are encouraged to develop include: leading for student success and completion; budgeting and finance; policies and compliance; development and fundraising; effective engagement of faculty and staff; strategic planning for equity, diversity, and inclusive excellence (EDI); building partnerships.

Fellows are asked to select 3-4 key areas of focus during the program. Throughout their involvement in program, fellows are asked to focus on how to leverage your knowledge and skills as an Academic Leader in ways that build on their strengths and talents.

Table 3

List of Texas Academic Leadership Academy Coaches

Name	Title	Institution
Dr. Rhonda Callaway	Associate Professor, Political Science	Sam Houston State University
Dr. Kim Childs	Dean, College of Sciences & Mathematics	Stephen F. Austin State University
Dr. Shonda Gibson*	Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs	Texas A&M University System
Dr. Stacey Edmonson*	Dean, College of Education	Sam Houston State University
Dr. Rosemary Haggett*	Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and Student Success	University of North Texas System
Dr. DeMarquis Hayes*	Assistant Dean, College of Education & Human Services	Texas A&M University Commerce
Dr. Ken Hendrickson*	Dean, Graduate Studies	Sam Houston State University
Dr. Phillip Lyons	Dean & President, College of Criminal Justice	Sam Houston State University
Dr. Chris Maynard*	Vice Provost of Academic Affairs	Sam Houston State University
Dr. Mitchell Muehsam	Dean, College of Business Administration	Sam Houston State University
Dr. Mary Nichter	Chair, Department of Counselor Education	Sam Houston State University
Dr. Bernnell Peltier-Glaze	Associate Dean for Academic Affairs	Texas Southern University
Dr. Emily Roper	Chair, Department of Kinesiology and COHS Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion	Sam Houston State University
Dr. Rod Runyon		Sam Houston State University
Dr. David Ryden*	Associate Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences	University of Houston - Downton
Dr. Ron Shields	Dean, College of Arts & Media	Sam Houston State University
Dr. Sandra Stewart	Associate Dean, Educator Preparation	Sam Houston State University
Dr. Debbie Thorne*	Associate Provost	Texas State University
Dr. Ryan Zapalac	Dean, college of Health Sciences	Sam Houston State University
Dr. Abbey Zink	Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences	Sam Houston State University

*Current serving as a coach for the 2020-2021 cohort of TALA Fellows.

Participants

Nominations

Nomination for admission into the Texas Academic Leadership Academy opens each year around March 1. All chief academic officers (CAOs) from public institutions within the state of Texas are invited to submit nominations. Nominees then complete an application for admission into the academy. Applications are due by May 15 and notifications about acceptance are shared with nominees by June 1. TALA is currently in its third year of facilitation. In total, the academy has served 161 fellows from 33 different institutions across the state. The largest number of nominations were received during the initial year of the academy. This number was was lower in 2020, but this was due in part to budget and travel restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. A summary of participation by institution and year is provided in Table 4.

Table 4

Summary of TALA Nominations by Institution between AY 2019 – AY 2021

Institution	2019	2020	2021	Total
Angelo State University	3			**3**
Council of Public University Presidents and Chancellors	1			**1**
Lamar Institute of Technology		1		**1**
Lamar State College - Orange	3			**3**
Lamar University	2	1	4	**7**
Midwestern State University	2			**2**
Prairie View A&M University	3	3	3	**9**
Sam Houston State University	2	5	6	**13**
Stephen F. Austin State University	5	1		**6**
Tarleton State University	3	3	2	**8**
Texas A&M International University	3	4		**7**
Texas A&M University - San Antonio	2	1	1	**4**
Texas A&M University - Central Texas	1	1	1	**3**
Texas A&M University - Commerce	3	1		**4**
Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi	4	3	3	**10**
Texas A&M University - Kingsville	1	2		**3**
Texas A&M University - Texarkana	1			**1**
Texas Southern University	2	1		**3**
Texas State University	5	3	3	**11**
Texas Tech University	3	3	2	**8**
Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center			1	**1**
Texas Woman's University	2	3	3	**8**
Texas Woman's University - Houston	1			**1**
The Texas A&M University System			1	**1**
University of Houston - Clear Lake	2			**2**
University of Houston - Downtown	4	2		**6**
University of North Texas		1		**1**

University of Texas - Arlington	4	3	4	**11**
University of Texas - El Paso	1			**1**
University of Texas - Permian Basin		2		**2**
University of Texas - Rio Grande Valley	3	4	3	**10**
University of Texas - San Antonio		1	1	**2**
University of Texas Health Science Center Tyler		4	2	**6**
West Texas A&M University	1		1	**2**
Grand Total	**67**	**53**	**41**	**161**

Demographics

A summary of TALA fellow demographics is reported in table 5. Among those who reported race/ethnicity, approximately 63% of Fellows were white and 30% were from historically underrepresented groups. Most fellows were tenured and employed at the associate professor rank or higher. Several fellows have been nominated by system offices or from non-faculty units within academic affairs (e.g., institutional research/effectiveness).

Table 5

Summary of TALA Nominations by Institution between AY 2019 – AY 2021

Demographics	Percent
Gender	
Female	56.8
Male	43.2
Race/Ethnicity	
White	63.4
Hispanic	13.6
Black/African American	9.1
Asian	4.6
Multi-racial	2.3
Non-Resident Alien	2.3
Unknown	4.6
Tenure Status	
Pre-Tenure/Tenure-Track	2.3
Tenured	93.2
Clinical/non-tenured	4.6
Academic Rank	
Assistant Professor	2.3
Associate Professor	60.5
Full Professor	37.2

Program Evaluation

A survey was distributed to past and current fellows to gather information about their Academy experience. Fellows were asked about their (a) expectations of the program, (b) effectiveness of the program to meet expectations, (c) the most beneficial elements of the academy, and (d) areas for improvement. Survey questions were open-ended to allow for more meaningful feedback. A total of 44 fellows (27%) responded to the survey. A summary of themes to survey questions is provided below.

Program Expectations

Fellows anticipated the program would help them to acquire necessary leadership skills and management tools to effectively lead academic units. They spoke about the importance of opportunities to improve their self-awareness of current leadership traits and characteristics. Many also wanted opportunities to network and collaborate with current leaders from across the state. Several indicated a desire to learn about current issues facing public institutions within the state of Texas.

> *I was most excited to experience the fellowship of getting to know, hear, and talk with other academic leaders…I was also excited to see that TALA was being taken seriously and presented to us in a professional manner."*

> *I was most excited about meeting and interacting with Associate Deans from other Texas universities. When I was a faculty senator, I had similar experiences interacting with other senators at the Texas Council of Faculty Senates, but I missed getting that Texas-wide experience regarding Associated Deans until TALA.*

> *It is the "people management" of leadership that is the most difficult for me…Being an educator 20+ years, the legality and HR areas of chairing a department are training you do not receive, or have, prior to stepping into this role.*

Perceptions About Program Effectiveness

Most survey responses were positive regarding the ability of the program to meet their needs and expectations. Fellows indicated that the academy provided an opportunity to reflect on personal and professional goals. They also indicated that the academy was generally well organized with clearly supported goals and resources. Many commented on the quality of program speakers.

> *All of the in-person sessions were highly professional, high quality, great speakers, and wonderful accommodations. It was a true business/professional feel. At our last meetings of the year, we were met with leaders at all levels of university systems which was engaging and exciting.*

> *TALA exceeded my expectation in terms of the consistent high-quality of speakers that it brought to each of my cohort's meetings. When I first became Associate Dean, my university system held a two-day leadership workshop, but the quality of speaker was uneven. TALA did a superb job by comparison.*

> *Faculty who are getting into administration need to know what is "normative" in Texas. Most of us are facing the same challenges and the TALA program show us how to apply the critical thinking skills we champion to the task of making higher education accessible and effective in the State of Texas.*

TALA allowed me the opportunity to be a part of discussions I previously would not have engaged in because I was not aware of the higher education issues.

Some fellows indicated that they would have preferred more opportunities to explore how to apply theory into practice. There were also challenges during the past-year as the program worked to adjust to needs related to the pandemic.

I expected to learn more from it and to bring more practical, applicable knowledge away from it than I actually got, so in that sense it has not met my expectations, but it did reinforce values I already held and help me to gain confidence in myself.

The networking part is proving to be a little more challenging due to COVID.

The pandemic interrupted Cohort 2, so the last meeting was virtual. I feel TALA's planning group did the best they could given the virtual format.

Most Beneficial Aspects of the Program

Frequently mentioned topics and activities perceived to be most beneficial to fellows included sessions on conflict management and interactions with mentors. Fellows also discussed the value of networking with colleagues from different institutions and across different levels of administration.

Having an external mentor responsible for holding me accountable to the leadership plan.

There were many take-aways from the Texas Academic Leadership Academy (TALA), two of the biggest being forging new relationships with mentors and peers both at our home institution and from colleges and universities across the state, and amassing a library of resources to draw from as I continue my [academic] journey.

Although it was all excellent, the in-person meetings were the best part of the experience. I felt like I benefitted a lot from the discussion from other participants – particularly in the places where there were case studies to look at. Having people at different parts of their careers, some starting out in administrative roles and others who had been in administrative roles for longer was very useful.

I was exposed to the perspectives of other participants and this forced me to consider my own approaches and perspectives. This helped me grow.

Hearing other Associate Deans' experiences and challenges was most beneficial, for it helped me place the pluses and minuses of my institution in perspective.

Opportunities for Improvement

One of the areas for improvement mentioned by fellows was the need to include more diverse perspectives. Particularly given the need to increase the number of academic leaders from historically underrepresented groups, fellows wanted to both see and hear from individuals about the challenges of navigating institutional barriers.

> *My only recommendation is that there would be greater diversity among the speakers, especially regarding Black and Latinx persons who hold positions in academic leadership. I don't think the relative lack of diversity was intentional; rather, it probably reflects the proportion of such groups in positions of high leadership. Nevertheless, it was disheartening for some of my colleagues to experience such a lack of diversity. As the adage goes, if you don't see someone who looks like you in a position, then it becomes harder to imagine yourself attaining that position.*

> *As a woman, and person of color, diversity in student success and advancement was not addressed. Issues of systemic racism continue to plague higher education.*

There were also concerns from the initial cohort of fellows about a lack of organization. There were few of these comments among later cohorts which seemed to indicate the program had improved or addressed initial challenges of beginning the academy.

> *…the program was trying to do too many things. I was in the first cohort. The small group mentoring sessions didn't even happen, the only things I got were the overnight conferences and those were so general and not tailored to my needs that I didn't get much out of them.*

> *Much of the discussions have been theoretical and not very applicable to leaders in higher education.*

Career Advancement Opportunities

Because an aim of the program was to build leadership capacity in academic affairs, fellows were also asked if they had benefitted in terms of career advancement opportunities. Of those who responded to our survey, 36.4 percent indicated that they have been promoted into a new position since completion of the Texas Academic Leadership Academy. The administrative positions that fellows accepted included roles as program chair, department chair, associate dean and dean. Many expressed an increased sense of confidence in their ability to lead program, departments, and other academic units.

> *All three of the people from our campus who were included in the cohort have new titles; two of them advanced to the Dean level.*

> *I felt very supported and valued throughout the program and have grown professionally as a result.*

> *I am able to have confident conversations knowing that I was presented material, case studies, and listened to sessions on higher education issues affecting students, diversity, leadership, and faculty.*