



TURNING VISION
INTO REALITY

THE STORY OF THE
AGFORESTRY
LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

TURNING THE VISION INTO REALITY

THE STORY BEHIND THE FOUNDATION

The Washington Agriculture and Forestry Education Foundation was incorporated on December 16, 1977. This is the story of the inspiration and effort that led to the Foundation's creation and the history of the Foundation's first thirty-five years.

The story began in 1976 while Stu Bledsoe was Director of the Washington State Department of Agriculture. Vern Divers was an Assistant Director and Supervisor of the Agriculture Development Division. Divers had responsibility for administering the Rural Rehabilitation Trust Funds.

These funds had previously been invested in rural rehabilitation loans through the Farmers Home Administration of the US Department of Agriculture. In the early 1970s, the Farmers Home Administration discontinued the sale of insured loans and requested that the states find other uses for their funds.

With Bledsoe's approval, Divers hired Dr. Arthur Peterson on a personal services contract to identify program needs and priorities, and to determine to what extent Rural Rehabilitation Trust Funds could be used to meet priority needs. Peterson, who had recently retired from Washington State University, identified several possible uses for the funds. They were analyzed and rated on a priority basis.

An agricultural leadership program, similar to one sponsored by Michigan State University with financial aid from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, was given top priority among the alternatives studied.

Dr. Robert Howell, at that time a newcomer to the rural sociology staff of Washington State University, heard about the State Department of Agriculture's interest in an agricultural leadership program. He was professionally interested because he had been in charge of a similar program in Pennsylvania, one of the four state programs which had received financial aid from the Kellogg Foundation. Moreover, Dr. Howell also had a grant from the Kellogg Foundation to assess the impact of these four states' "Public Affairs Leadership Development Programs."

He contacted Vern Divers and suggested that he take a small group to visit California and review their experiences with an agricultural leadership program. The California program had been launched in 1970 by the Council of California Growers with financial help from the Kellogg Foundation.

A group of six people, including Mike Youngquist and Bob Mickelson, representing agriculture, Vern Divers and Dick Harper, representing the Department of Agriculture, Dr. Robert Howell and Dr. Arlen Davison, representing Washington State University, went to California in July, 1977, on an exploratory mission. Upon their return, the group was very enthusiastic about what they had seen and heard. They recommended to the State Department of Agriculture and Dean of the College of Agriculture at WSU that Washington initiate a leadership program similar to the one in California.

Dr. Jack Robins, then Dean of the College of Agriculture, gave his official and personal support to the proposal, as did the new State Director of Agriculture, Gary Strohmaier, and Assistant Director, Dick Harper, who had taken Vern Divers' place with the change in administration. This was important because the Rural

Rehabilitation Funds of the Washington State Department of Agriculture could be used to finance the project with the Director's approval.

The Kellogg Foundation was also asked for financial aid but declined support awaiting the results of Dr. Howell's evaluation. This was not completed until a year later.

An ad hoc committee, with Bob Mickelson as Chairman, was formed and held several planning and development meetings. Another important step at that time was to get the support of farm organizations and the forest industry.

Bob Hulbert took the lead with farm organizations and Stu Bledsoe with the forest industry. Stu had accepted a job as Executive Director of the Washington Forest Protection Association after leaving the State Department of Agriculture.

Art Peterson was asked by the ad hoc committee to aid them with publicity about the leadership program and preparation of the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws and related matters. He was paid through a personal service contract by the Washington State Department of Agriculture to perform these services. Art Scheunemann also worked with this committee, and later, with the Board of Directors.

Second California Visit

Another group of lay people, including Bob and Eleanor Laney, Jerry Sandlin, Bob Crandell and several others, went to California in November, 1977, to observe the start of a new leadership class. While there, they talked with Gene Rapp, Dean Brown and other officials of the California Agriculture Leadership Program. They gained valuable insight into that program and, like the earlier group, came back enthused.

Bob Mickelson, Bob Hulbert and Mike Youngquist signed the Articles of Incorporation of the Washington Agriculture and Forestry Education Foundation on December 16, 1977. Soon after that Bob Mickelson was appointed State Director of Agriculture and resigned from the Board of Directors. He continued to support the Foundation, personally and officially.

The first meeting of the Board of Directors occurred at Sea-Tac Airport on January 6, 1978. All 20 Board members were present. Annual membership dues were set at \$100 and charter memberships for five years at \$500. Bruce Briggs and Bob Mickelson were the first charter members. Jack Bloxom was elected President of the first Board of Directors. Other officers were Bob Lundgren and Bob Hulbert, Vice Presidents; Eleanor Laney, Secretary; and Jon Whitman, Treasurer. Joe Leitzinger of Simpson Timber Company and Jack Wolff of the Weyerhaeuser Company accepted Board positions soon after the Board was organized. Their active participation at this early date provided strong support from the forest industry.

When asked why they supported the Leadership Program, Leitzinger and Wolff are quoted in the minutes of July 20, 1978, as saying, "Agriculture and forestry share many common problems. Both are renewable natural resource industries. For too long, these industries have not aggressively pursued their needs and explained them to the public. This is why timber companies like Weyerhaeuser and Simpson are interested in this type of leadership program. Forestry is a part of agriculture, just a different crop."

About 200 application forms had been distributed to prospective participants by July, 1978. Coordinators for the first five seminars had been recruited from colleges

and businesses. The selection process was developed by a committee appointed by President Jack Bloxom on February 7, 1978. Dr. Bob Lundgren of Walla Walla was Chairman. Other members of the committee were Janet Allison, Ed Minnick and Bruce Briggs. Thirty participants and eight alternates were selected for Class 1 using the process developed by this committee. This class was approved by the Board on September 22, 1978.

Class 1 held its first seminar in Yakima on October 26-28, 1978. Gene Rapp, Director of the California Leadership Program; Dean Brown, President of the California Board and several California graduates came to Yakima to help inaugurate the Washington Leadership Program.

Financial Challenge

To start the financial end of the project, the State Department of Agriculture, at the request of the ad hoc initiating committee, approved a budget of \$65,000 from the Rural Rehabilitation Fund. The money was paid and supervised through a personal service contract between the Department and Art Peterson. The ad hoc committee acted as an advisory group until the Foundation was incorporated. The State Department of Agriculture authorized and approved expenditures as submitted to the Assistant Director in charge of the Development Division under terms of the contract.

Financing the Foundation and the Leadership Program has been a challenge from the beginning. It continues to be a challenge that has been met by dedicated people. The cost of an international seminar for Class 1 and recruiting Class 2 to begin its two-year program in the fall of 1979 were debated at every Board meeting from October, 1978, until the decision to go ahead with Class 2 was made at the Board meeting on May 25, 1979. The minutes of that meeting read, "Jack Bloxom agreed with Harold Cox's observation about loss of momentum if the start of Class 2 was postponed. In the past, he said, the Board had made many decisions when the money was not in hand. He made a motion that Class 2 be put on line in the fall of 1979. Cynda Webb seconded the motion. Motion passed."

In July, 1979, after Dr. Howell's evaluation showed favorable results, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation awarded a grant of \$200,000 over a four-year period, \$75,000 in 1979, \$50,000 in 1980 and 1981 and \$25,000 in 1982. This commitment eased the financial problem but did not eliminate it. The continuing weakness of agriculture and forest product prices in 1981 and 1982 made it especially difficult to get the needed funds.

A professional fund raiser was hired in July, 1980, to head up the fund raising effort but he was not able to fulfill mutually agreed to goals. Following this, a few Board members made an extra effort to raise funds. Their success was good enough that by July 1, 1981, they had turned the situation from a probable cash shortfall to a carryover greater than the amount carried forward on July 1, 1980.

Over the years, in addition to the annual cash receipts and expenditures, large in-kind contributions made a significant difference and are deserving of recognition. These items would have cost thousands of dollars if the Foundation had to pay for them. They include:

1. Services performed without charge, or for less than actual cost, by universities, colleges, and businesses.
2. Hosting of meals.

3. Coordinators, facilities, and educational supplies furnished at little or no cost.
4. Seminar speakers who give their time as a public service. Some receive a token honorarium.
5. Travel expenses of Board members to meetings.
6. Travel expenses of class participants.
7. Time spent at meetings, in travel, raising money, etc.

Building the Network

Membership in the Foundation has grown over the years. The minutes of the Board meeting of July 20, 1978, show a membership of 172. A goal of 300 was set at that meeting; this goal was reached in 1981. Currently the Foundation has over 750 paid members supporting it annually.

In 1982, Art Peterson retired as the Executive Director of the Foundation and Robin Leitzinger was employed as the Executive Director. Under Robin's leadership, the program continued its quality seminars and the funding of the program progressed. In the fall of 1984, Robin retired.

This program has given Board members, participants and contributors opportunity to know and work with dedicated leaders across the state. As Art Peterson said, "Time will water the seeds we have planted and who can guess what the harvest will be." We are thankful to all who made this program possible and look forward to building on the success of this investment in leadership.

On October 4, 1984, Dave Roseleip, after twelve years with the Farm Credit Banks, became the AgForestry Executive Director and moved the office from Seahurst, Washington, to Spokane, Washington. Roseleip is a graduate of Class 1 of the program. He employed Barbara Holloway as the Administrative Assistant, who was key in setting up and administering the Spokane headquarters until she retired in 1993. Barbara, along with Carey Fiess, handled all central database responsibilities, seminar coordination, and recruitment administration for nearly 15 years. Carey Fiess retired in 2002. Other key office personnel who contributed significantly to smooth, efficient operation included Candy Blackmer, Sean Lackner, Shari Cushman, Maureen Stultz and now Melisa Paul who is serving as Assistant Vice President. Dave Roseleip retired on June 30, 2015, after 31 years of service.

On July 1, 2015, Sheryl McGrath began her service as President of the Foundation. Sheryl formerly worked in municipal government and came to the Foundation with significant experience in nonprofit leadership, public policy, education, public relations, fundraising and private business ownership.

In 1989, David L. (Larry) Gueck was hired as Program Director and would later become Vice President. Larry was very instrumental in the successful development of Leadership Classes 11 through 27 and the operations of the Foundation, including fundraising and alumni relations. Larry retired in June, 2006. From 1999 through 2004, Randy Smith, a graduate of Class 8, was contracted to be the Program Director for Classes 22 and 24. During 2005-2007, Ellen Wolfhagen, Class 16 graduate, assisted with Leadership Class 28 and was contracted as Program Director for Leadership Class 30 during 2007-2009. In 2011-2013, Bruce Mackey generously served as the volunteer Program Director for Leadership Class 34. Matt Kloes, Class 36 graduate, was contracted in 2015 as Program Director and is presently working

with Class 38. Deborah Moore, Class 16 graduate and currently Vice President and Program Director, started as the Program Director in the second year of Class 29's program in 2007. She has worked with Classes 31, 33, 35, 36, and 37.

Program Curriculum

When Dave Roseleip assumed the management of the Foundation, Class 6 was half way through the program and Class 7 was just starting their first year. They had been selected early in the summer of 1984. Both Classes 6 and 7 consisted of thirty participants. There were 12 three-day seminars, the national seminar of eleven days, and the international seminar of three weeks (19-22 days).

In January, 1985, Mr. Roseleip led the delegation of Leadership Program participants overseas to Hong Kong, Japan, Thailand, and Malaysia for three weeks. This would be followed in late February with the National Seminar to New York City, Philadelphia, and Washington, DC, for eleven days. At that time, the Washington, DC, Seminar was coordinated by the office of U.S. Representative Tom Foley, Congressman from the 5th District of Washington State. Mr. Foley would later become the Speaker of the House of Representatives, U.S. Congress. Mr. Nick Ashmore was the Congressman's Aide who worked diligently to shape the agenda of the National Seminar in Washington, DC.

Throughout the years, Leadership Classes would experience the following National and International Seminars:

CLASS	NATIONAL SEMINAR		INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR	
	DATES	DESTINATION	DATES	DESTINATION
1	March 18 - 28, 1979	Illinois , Chicago Washington D.C.	January 18 - February 10, 1980	Japan -Tokyo People's ROC -Beijing, Guangchou Hong Kong Indonesia -Jakarta Taiwan -Taipei, Chunan and Taichung, Chaiyi
2	March 16 - 26, 1980	Illinois -Chicago Pennsylvania -Harrisburg, Mannheim, Maytown, Bird-In-Hand, New Holland Washington, D.C.	January 15 - February 4, 1981	Peru -Lima Chile -Santiago, Osorno Argentina -Buenos Aires, Montevideo Brazil -Sao Paulo Venezuela -Caracas
3	March 14 - 25, 1981	Louisiana -New Orleans, Baton Rouge Pennsylvania -Philadelphia, New Holland Washington, D.C.	January 8 - 25, 1982	Mexico -Mexico City, Merida, Yucatan Peninsula Costa Rica -San Jose, Sarchi, Grecia, Cartago, Turrialba Cuba -Cienfuegos

4	February 14 - 24, 1982	Georgia -Atlanta, Rome, Fairburn Pennsylvania -Lancaster County Washington, D.C.	January 4 - 23, 1983	Mainland China Taiwan Hong Kong
5	March 2 - 13, 1983	Washington, D.C.	January 16 - February 6, 1984	Japan Hong Kong
6	February 22 - March 1, 1984	Pennsylvania -New Holland, Gettysburg Virginia -Williamsburg Washington, D.C.	January 23 - February 10, 1985	Japan -Tokyo, Tsukuba Science City, Mirioka, Akita City, Sapporo Hong Kong China -Canton Singapore Malaysia -Kuala Lumpur
7	February 20 - March 1, 1985	New York -New York City Pennsylvania -Philadelphia, Lancaster County Washington, D.C.	January 25 - February 11, 1986	Denmark -Copenhagen Belgium -Brussels Hungary -Budapest Poland -Krakow, Warsaw Russia -Moscow
8	February 27 - March 8, 1986	Georgia -Atlanta Washington, D.C.	January 18 - February 4, 1987	Hong Kong India -Calcutta Thailand -Bangkok South Korea -Seoul
9	February 25 - March 6, 1987	Michigan -Detroit Washington, D.C.	January 19 - February 7, 1988	Argentina -Buenos Aires Brazil -Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Campinas, Piracicaba Chile -Santiago, Concepcion, Vina del Mar, Valparaiso Peru -Lima, Cuzco, Machu Picchu, Ollantaytambo, Yucay
10	February 23 - March 4, 1988	Illinois -Chicago Alabama -Huntsville, Birmingham, Tuskegee, Auburn Georgia -Atlanta Washington, D.C.	January 16 - February 8, 1989	Spain -Madrid, Cordoba, Seville, Granada Egypt -Cairo, Luxor, Aswan Morocco -Rabat, Fez, Marrakech
11	February 21 - March 3,	Illinois -Chicago, Sycamore, Maple	January 24 -	Mexico -Mazatlan, Guadalajara,

	1989	Park Washington, D.C.	February 13, 1990	Periban and Rancho el Tecolote, Mexico City, Marida Costa Rica -San Jose
12	February 20 - March 2, 1990	Massachusetts - Boston New Hampshire - Durham, Rochester Washington, D.C.	Cancelled due to Gulf War in 1991 January 21 - February 7, 1992	Belgium -Brussels Germany -Bonn, Frankfurt, Berlin Poland -Pozman, Warsaw, Krakow Czechoslovakia - Banska Bystrica Hungary -Budapest Austria -Vienna Denmark - Copenhagen
13	February 17 - 28, 1991	California - San Francisco, Napa Valley, Davis, Sacramento Washington, D.C.	January 14 - 31, 1992	China -Beijing, Tianjin, Chengdu Taiwan Hong Kong
14	February 16 - 28, 1992	New York - Upstate New York, New York City Washington, D.C.	January 19 - February 6, 1993	Finland -Helsinki Denmark - Copenhagen Russia -St. Petersburg Lithuania -Vilnius, Kaunas Latvia -Talsi, Riga Estonia -Tartu, Tallinn
15	February 15 - 25, 1993	Virginia - Charlottesville, Williamsburg Washington, D.C.	January 9 - 26, 1994	Korea -Seoul Thailand -Bangkok, Chiang Mai Singapore Malaysia -Kuala Lumpur
16	February 14 - 24, 1994	Tennessee - Memphis Rural Mississippi Washington, D.C.	January 21 - February 9, 1995	Denmark - Copenhagen Germany -Berlin Poland -Poznan, Gdansk, Warsaw, Kr akow Hungary - Budapest, Veszprem, Miskolc, Sopron Czech Republic - Brno, Moravia, Prague
17	February 13 - 24, 1995	Pennsylvania - Philadelphia,	January 18 -	Japan -Tokyo India -Calcutta,

		Lancaster County, Hershey, Gettysburg Washington, D.C.	February 4, 1996	Darjeeling, New Delhi, Agra, Jaipur, Varanasi, Calcutta Thailand -Bangkok
18	February 13 - 23, 1996	Virginia -Charlottesville, Williamsburg Washington, D.C.	January 2 - 29, 1997	China -Beijing, Guangzhou, Hong Kong Vietnam -Hanoi, Hue, Danang, Ho Chi Minh City
19	February 18 - 28, 1997	Texas -San Antonio, Corpus Christi Washington, D.C.	January 14 - 31, 1998	Russia -Uzbekistan, Moscow, St. Petersburg
20	February 17 - 27, 1998	Massachusetts -Boston Washington, D.C.	January 12 - 31, 1999	Spain -Catalonia Region, Barcelona, San Sebastian, Basque Region, Bilbao, Madrid, Toledo, Cordoba, Granada, Seville Morocco -Tangier, Rabat, Fes, Marrakech, Casablanca
21	February 16 - 26, 1999	West Virginia -Julien, Beckley, Mt. Hope, Guthrie, Jumping Branch, Hinton Washington, D.C.	January 12 - 30, 2000	China -Beijing, Kunming, Lijiang Vietnam -Hanoi, Halong Bay, Hue, Danang, Ho Chi Minh City
22	February 15 - 25, 2000	West Virginia -Guthrie, Charleston, Eskdale, Pence Springs, Glen Daniel, Surveyor, Beckley, Jumping Branch, Hinton, Tamarack Washington, D.C.	January 15 - February 2, 2001	Brazil -Sao Paulo, Curitiba, Morretes, Arapoti, Piracicaba, Salto, Manaus, Belem Cuba -Havana, Camaguey
23	February 20 - March 3, 2001	Pennsylvania -Lancaster County, Hershey, Gettysburg Washington, D.C.	January 16 - February 2, 2002	China -Shanghai, Kunming, Lijiang Vietnam -Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City

24	February 26 - March 8, 2002	New Hampshire- Manchester, Concord, Littleton, Shelburne Washington, D.C.	January 2003	Romania Moldova Russia
25	February 25 - March 7, 2003	Maryland, Baltimore Washington, D.C.	January 3 - 17, 2004	Chile
26	February 28 - March 6, 2004	Washington, D.C.	January 12 - 26, 2005	China
27	February 26 - March 5, 2005	Washington, D.C.	January 12 - 26, 2006	Ukraine
28	February 25 - March 4, 2006	Washington, D.C.	January 29 - February 13, 2007	Mexico/Panama
29	February 24 - March 3, 2007	Washington, D.C.	January 22 - February 3, 2008	Baltics and Russia
30	February 23 - March 1, 2008	Washington, D.C.	January 13 - 25, 2009	China
31	February 21 - 28, 2009	Washington, D.C.	January 18 - 31, 2010	Turkey
32	February 27 - March 3, 2010	Washington, D.C.	January 8 - 23, 2011	Chile
33	February 19 - 26, 2011	Washington, D.C.	January 5 - 18, 2012	Vietnam and Cambodia
34	February 25 - March 3, 2012	Washington, D.C.	January 5 - 19, 2013	Costa Rica and Nicaragua
35	March 2 - 9, 2013	Washington, D.C.	January 4 - 18, 2014	Spain and Portugal
36	February 22 - March 1, 2014	Washington, D.C.	January 9 - 23, 2015	Vietnam Cambodia
37	February 21 - 28, 2015	Washington, D.C.	January 5 - 19, 2016	Thailand

Over the course of the history of the Leadership Program, institutions of higher learning and businesses in the agriculture and forestry industries have partnered with the Foundation to provide seminar coordinators, facilities, and speakers, providing a significant educational and financial contribution to the development of astute and well-trained leaders for the natural resource industries and rural communities of the state of Washington.

Institution	Seminars	On-Site Coordinators
WSU	Orientation and Communication Public Policy Presentations	Dr. Robert Howell Dr. Jim Barron Dr. Ron Jimmerson Dr. Pete Jacoby Dr. Emmett Fiske
UW	Public Policy Preparation International Preparation	Dr. John Rushbrooke
CWU	Group Dynamics	Steve Schepman
	Group Dynamics	KayDee Gilkey
Northwest Farm Credit Services	Media Seminar	Linda Hendricksen KayDee Gilkey Jennifer Rohrer Carl Sohn
Weyerhaeuser Company	Forestry Seminar	Gary O'Malley Terry Peck Ellie Lathrop
Green Diamond Resources	Forestry Seminar	John Gorman Patti Case
Boise Cascade	Forestry Seminar	Kevin Arneson
Whitman College	Crime and Corrections	Craig Gunsel Dr. Patrick Frierson Mitch Clearfield
Washington Forest Protection Assn.	State Government	Stu Bledsoe Bill Jacobs Bill Wilkerson Mark Doumit Karen Weiss Jill Reynolds
	Jack Felgenhauer Agriculture Seminar	Tom Buchholtz Mark Grassel Mike Dodds
	Columbia River	Jim Barron Michael Spranger Randall Anderson Stu Trefry Kathy Peters
	Seattle Seminar	Kathy Creahan Doug McClelland Monty Schilter Bill West
PLU	Social Issues	Richard Moe David Atkinson Marie Wutzke Peggy Jobe

		Carol Reed Kathy Russel
WWU	Environmental Seminar	Priscilla Sabin John Miles

Selection

Very important to the success of the Leadership Program is the recruitment and selection of candidates. Every year, six committees of five volunteers interview candidates for the class, followed by a statewide Selection Committee meeting to make the final selection of the class to be presented to the Board of Trustees.

Running the State Selection Committee process, to assure balance in a class is truly an art. This State Selection Committee Chairmanship position has been held by the following dedicated volunteers:

Stu Bledsoe
Alex Goedhard
Turk Ely
Chuck Podlich

Their job has been to assure a completely independent selection of a class, with balance geographically, occupationally, age wise, and philosophically. In addition, the proper balance of production candidates must be adhered to by policy.

Governance

The Board of Trustees has played a major role in the success of the program. By the design of a nonprofit, the Board is a working board with primary responsibility for fundraising. The size of the Board was thirty-three (33) people for the first 12 years of the program; then through the generosity of Peter Fisher, the bylaws were reviewed by legal counsel and updated. In the process, the Board was reduced to eighteen (18) people and the Endowment Fund was formalized.

Board Chairs have provided excellent leadership, as well as support and counsel for the Executive Director (now President upon rewrite of the bylaws). Board Chairs who have served are:

2015-2016	Lisa Bishop
2014-2015	Kevin Paulson
2013-2014	Craig Nelson
2012-2013	Stephan Dillon
2010-2012	Karen Temen
2009-2010	Tom Robbert
2008-2009	Jochen Engelke
2007-2008	Court Stanley
2006-2007	Norm Schaaf
2005-2006	Catherine O'Connell
2004-2005	Scott Swanson
2003-2004	Audrey Gravley
2002-2003	Gene Warren
2001-2002	Phyllis Gleasman
2000-2001	Jeff Light
1999-2000	Ken Lisk
1998-1999	Jim Sayce

1997-1998	Deborah Moore
1996-1997	John Gorman
1995-1996	Dick Siderius
1994-1995	Nick Kirkmire
1993-1994	Dee Eberhart
1992-1993	Randy Smith
1991-1992	Clayton Alford
1990-1991	Joe Niemer
1989-1990	Roger Calhoun
1988-1989	Alex Goedhard
1987-1988	Scott Hamilton
1986-1987	Turk Ely
1985-1986	Ward Armstrong
1984-1985	Jim Wilcox
1983-1984	Ted Tucker
1982-1983	Joe Leitzinger
1981-1982	Eleanor Laney
1980-1981	Bob Hulbert
1979-1980	Bob Lundgren
1978-1979	John Bloxom, Jr.

Curriculum

In addition, the Curriculum Committee (now called the Academic Council) has played a major role in assuring the educational program is up to date and challenging. Leading the Committee as Chairs have been:

Janette Allison
Mike Yeager
Stu Trefry
Joyce Stewart
Ellen Wolfhagen
Deborah Moore

Over the years a “Leadership Framework” was developed to guide our thinking; and in 2003-04, under the leadership of a Research Committee chaired by Joyce Stewart, a Curriculum Guide was developed to set out the objectives of each seminar as well as guiding principles for the program.

Other outcomes of the Research Committee and through input from alumni and focus groups held around the state of Washington, the program was reduced from 71 days to 59 days of seminar activity. This was in response to the input from applicants that time appeared to be an issue when choosing to participate. In addition, research on leadership and other training programs has shown that a group of 24 participants has become the model for maximum learning and group interaction. Thus, the Foundation reduced its class size from 30 participants to 24.

The Curriculum Committee (now Academic Council) has paid very close attention to the participant evaluations completed after every seminar. Input from participants have always been taken very seriously and has helped the program stay on the leading edge. The Committee Chairs guided the committee’s use of this input as well as “scoping the world” for better ideas and concepts.

Most Recent Graduates

On May 9, 2015, twenty-five participants of Class 36 celebrated their completion of the program at a Graduation Celebration in Spokane Valley, Washington, with program alumni and investors looking on.