

MISSOURI LEADERSHIP ACADEMY DCI GRADUATES REFLECT ON THEIR EXPERIENCES

Launch of MO APPRECIATION is a direct outcome of the program

The Missouri Department of Commerce & Insurance (DCI) has had eight graduates go through the **Missouri Leadership Academy** program, with four team members currently enrolled in the latest class that wraps up in December. But what does this commitment and curriculum entail?

“The curriculum focuses on problem-solving, learning to be a better listener and the importance of effective communication,” said Nick Bestgen, Class 6 graduate and Review Examiner for the Division of Finance. “The time commitment typically consists of a two-day class session each month, and then there are also additional meetings outside of class based on team consensus. Like many things, your level of commitment really influences what we are able to take away from the Academy.”

The program brings together emerging leaders from across all state departments to build new skills and become better leaders. Camille Anderson-Weddle, Insurance Product Filing Manager with the Insurance Market Regulation Division, represented DCI as one of the first team members in the inaugural 2018 class.

“We were lovingly dubbed as ‘Pathfinders’ because we helped build the foundation of this experience for our future colleagues,” Camille said. “As a manager, I often reach back to those experiences and incorporate the knowledge I’ve gained into my work to share these techniques and skills with others.”

Since the summer of 2018, there have been two classes a year – a session in the spring and one in the fall, with class sizes ranging from 23-32 students.

“My experience with the Leadership Academy was very rewarding,” said Katie Hansen, Senior Bank Examiner with the Division of Finance and Class 8 graduate. “I met incredible people from all branches of government and made connections that are still meaningful today. I feel like I have a much better understanding of what other departments do and why they are vital. On top of that, I feel like I have gained a broader support and resource system through the connections I made.”

State team members who have an interest and discuss involvement with their supervisor can apply and are chosen through a **selection process** to attend intensive leadership training over six months.

“The overall experience was worthwhile,” said Mick Campbell, Class 3 graduate and Division of Finance Acting Commissioner. “It’s not always easy to take on this kind of commitment in addition to your other responsibilities, but everyone here was very accommodating. I gained a greater appreciation of our agency’s mission and a better understanding of how our work plays into the larger framework of state government. Each of our departments are unique in what we do and how we serve Missouri citizens.”

In addition to the opportunities for self-reflection and growth, networking, and team experiences, classes are split into five teams and are entrusted with capstone projects where participants work together, finding creative solutions to make state government more effective.

“The capstone project is definitely the most time-intensive part of the program,” said Brian Hammann, an Examiner-in-Charge with Insurance Company Regulation and Class 3 graduate. “Go in with an open mind and a willingness to grow. There will definitely be times when you will be taken out of your comfort zone. But if you put in the work, you will definitely find the Leadership Academy a rewarding experience.”

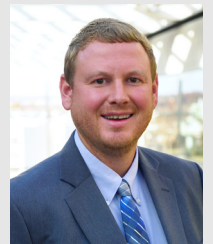
DCI team members and Class 7 graduates Sara McNeely (Insurance Company Regulation) and Danielle Smith (Insurance Company Regulation) have had an active role in their capstone project coming to life, with the launch of MO APPRECIATION earlier this year. Their topic came directly from state team member feedback through the Quarterly Pulse Survey (QPS) and was quickly assigned as a priority project through the Governor’s Cabinet.



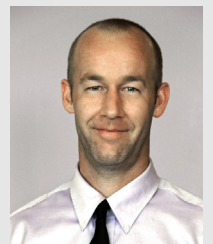
Camille Anderson-Weddle, Class 1



Mick Campbell, Class 3



Brian Hammann, Class 4



Nick Bestgen, Class 6



"50 percent of team members had said that they are thanked and praised, but only 21 percent of those team members said that they get meaningful non-financial recognition," Danielle said. "I'm data-driven by nature, so to me, those numbers represented the need for improving how we acknowledge and support state team members when they are doing a good job."

The team was asked to create a statewide approach to address meaningful rewards and recognition in the workplace. MO APPRECIATION is now a centralized hub of resources to showcase how each state department recognizes and celebrates team members for their hard work. This public-facing website also gives anyone access to submit positive feedback.

"As state team members, we're also consumers," Danielle said. "So, if you have an awesome experience with someone at a different department, this tool is another option to express your gratitude for their efforts and assistance."

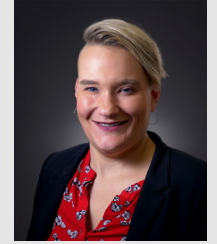
The next phase has been recruiting **MO APPRECIATION** ambassadors, a council of peers who will be a voice for each department to bring new ideas and expand recognition and rewards. More than 115 applications have been submitted across state government so far.

Brogan Dinolfo, Brad Gerling, Kelly Hopper, and Ben Terrell are part of the current Leadership Academy class, working diligently to finalize their capstone projects for presentation to the Governor's Cabinet on December 6.

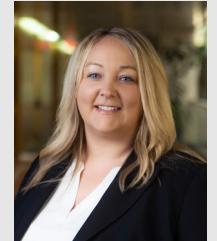
"I was most excited to be a part of Leadership Academy because of the connections I was hoping to make with state employees from other departments across state government, and I have not been disappointed," said Kelly. "I am looking forward to carrying those connections forward beyond the program."

Class 10 of the Missouri Leadership Academy will kick off in January. Ronald Musopole with Insurance Company Regulation, Claire Eubanks with the Public Service Commission, and Jamie Sanning with the Division of Finance were selected as DCI's team members to participate in the 2023 spring session.

Article was published in November 2022.



**Sara McNeely,
Class 7**



**Danielle Smith,
Class 7**



**Katie Hansen,
Class 8**

CURRENT CLASS



**Brogan Dinolfo,
Class 9**



**Brad Gerling,
Class 9**



**Kelly Hopper,
Class 9**



**Ben Terrell,
Class 9**

UPCOMING CLASS



**Ronald Musopole,
Class 10**



**Claire Eubanks,
Class 10**



**Jamie Sanning,
Class 10**

