A cohort of 24 campus information technology professionals interested in strengthening their leadership skills make up the 2018-19 IT Leadership Academy [1] class. The academy is an intensive professional development program that teaches IT professionals how to become more effective managers and leaders. ITLA is offered through a partnership between University Information Technology Services [2] and the Division of Human Resources [3]. A total of 72 participants have completed the program since it began four years ago.

"Our commitment to building leadership capacity is paying off in meaningful ways," said Allison Vaillancourt, vice president for business affairs and human resources and co-chair of the ITLA steering committee. "The IT community is stronger than ever, and working even more collaboratively thanks to the connections that are forged this program."

This year’s cohort represents units across campus, including Arizona Student Unions, the College of Humanities, the Office of Instruction and Assessment and the Campus Health Service.

As executive director of campus IT operations, Tom Bourgeois serves as co-chair on the ITLA steering committee. The academy was created to give IT professionals a stronger voice in institutional activities, Bourgeois said.

"By increasing the opportunity for IT professionals to develop soft skills, or emotional intelligence skills, the idea was that they would have a lot more opportunity and a lot more mobility inside of the organization," Bourgeois added. "It's certainly the case that we need them to because IT is more and more critical every day."

The program consists of seven sessions, held over the academic year, that cover different leadership topics. Past sessions have involved team-building exercises as well as presentations from campus leaders on power dynamics and UA finances.

"The idea is to put people in front of them certainly who have interesting things to say, but also who are University leaders so that they get the opportunity to close some of the organizational distance between those folks and themselves," Bourgeois said.

Susan Miller is deputy director of research cyberinfrastructure at Data7 [4], or the UA's Data Science Institute, which supports research across campus by connecting faculty to computational and informatic researchers. She went through ITLA in 2016-17 after being appointed to a new management role.
"ITLA helped me realize there's a lot to learn and there are a lot of ways that you can get help being a good leader," Miller said.

One of the first lessons Miller learned, she said, was the distinction between being a manager and being a leader — making sure day-to-day tasks get done versus executing the mission of the organization and motivating team members to achieve their goals.

Miller said her fellow classmates proved to be resources, and still are. She continues to meet monthly with former participants.

Miller advised incoming participants to take advantage of the resources the program provides, even if that means stepping out of their comfort zones.

"Try to speak up if you're a shy person," she said. "Many people in IT are introverts. But if you can overcome that and not be afraid of asking whatever you need to ask, it's a great place to do that."

The 2018-19 participants are:
• Jorge Aguilar, Information Technology Manager, University Information Technology Services
• Ben Bessick, Senior Information Technology Support Analyst, College of Humanities
• Josh Butcher, Instructional Applications Support Specialist, Office of Instruction and Assessment
• Willie Cross, Information Technology Manager, Student Affairs Systems Group
• Andrew Eibl, Senior Systems Administrator, University Libraries
• Jayla Fry, Information Security Analyst, Information Security Office
• Tom Gostas, Development Architect, UITS
• Christopher Green, Senior Website Developer and Designer, University Libraries
• Steven Hicks, Principal Information Security Architect, Information Security Office
• Antoinette "Toni" Holloway, Principal Applications Systems Analyst and Developer, Student Affairs Systems Group
• Carlson Anton Holloway-Factory Jr., Information Technology Support Analyst, Arizona Student Unions
• Inara Lysne, Senior Business Analyst, UITS
• Robbie MacPherson, Principal Enterprise Business Analyst, UITS
• Tommy Maynard, Senior Systems Administrator, UITS
• Michael J. Morris, Principal Information Technology Manager, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
• Teresa Maria Portela, Senior Information Security Analyst, Information Security Office
• Michael L. Resnick, Information Technology Manager, Campus Health Service
• Eric Samboy, Website Designer and Developer, Student Affairs Systems Group
• Anthony "Tony" Schlak, Director of Information Technology, College of Pharmacy
• Peter Scorcia, Assistant Director of Enrollment Management Systems, Admissions and New Student Enrollment
• Julie Suess, Information Technology Project Manager, UITS
• Yuta Torrey, Program Director for Programming and Web Development, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
• Mary Veres, Manager for Communications and Marketing, UITS
• Greg Wessels, Senior Business Analyst, UITS

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Links
[1] https://it.arizona.edu/it-leadership-academy
[2] https://it.arizona.edu/
[3] https://hr.arizona.edu/
[4] https://datascience.arizona.edu/