



MISSISSIPPI STATE
UNIVERSITY™

EXTENSION

Thad
Cochran

AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP
PROGRAM

Application Handbook

Investors



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Program Description

The **Thad Cochran Agricultural Leadership Program (TCALP)** is the premier educational and personal development opportunity for emerging leaders in the agricultural industry in Mississippi. Through a series of rigorous seminars, class members will develop team-building skills, including collaboration and conflict management, and enhance their professionalism and communication abilities. They will gain exposure to successful and innovative businesses to improve economic literacy and community decision-making practices. They will sharpen their awareness of policymaking and legislative processes through governmental analysis and an investigation of influence. Class members will deepen their understanding of the full realm of agriculture and rural development to support vibrant communities, creating a vision for the future of Mississippi.

TCALP highlights the diversity and strengths of each region of Mississippi, through a series of **nine seminars** over the course of **22 months**. **Six seminars are held throughout the state**, focusing on the various agricultural commodities of the regions. **One seminar will take place in Washington, DC**, and emphasize agricultural policy and legislation. **Class members will enjoy travel to another state** to experience the breadth and diversity of national agricultural production. Additionally, class members will expand their global agricultural awareness through **an international experience**. Approximately 35 days of intensive instruction can be expected through the course of the 2-year experience.

Each of the seminars will contain a balance of concentrated, rigorous curriculum, challenging class members to **refine and practice their learned leadership skills**, alongside specific, **in-depth exposure to agricultural production and agribusiness** in Mississippi, the United States, and the world. In addition, class members will **expand their personal and professional network**, interacting with each other over the course the program, along with the facilitators, guest speakers, policymakers, program alumni, advisory council members, and many more.

Program Objectives

- Prepare participants to accept leadership responsibility in agriculture, agribusiness, and rural communities.
- Enhance participants' ability to represent agriculture as effective communicators.
- Broaden understanding of major policy issues, especially issues facing agriculture and rural communities.
- Gain an understanding of the effects of globalization on agriculture and rural communities.
- Facilitate participant collaboration with other professionals serving agriculture and rural communities.
- Foster an entrepreneurial culture in rural communities that will adapt to changing markets and changing policies.
- Encourage lifelong learning and leadership development, and share those leadership skills with others.



The logo features the name 'Thad Cochran' in a large, stylized font. 'Thad' is written in a teal, cursive script, while 'Cochran' is in a dark red, serif font. Below this, the words 'AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP' and 'PROGRAM' are stacked in a smaller, gold, sans-serif font, separated by a thin horizontal line.

Thad Cochran

AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP
PROGRAM

TCALP is the premier 2-year seminar series developing early-career leaders in agriculture and rural communities across Mississippi through rigorous instruction, personal development, and educational excursions.

Tentative Schedule*

2019

June	Application materials available
July 31	Deadline to submit application materials
Early August	Candidate interviews
Late August	Class members selected and notifications made
November	Seminar I Orientation: Fundamentals of Leadership (MSU Main Campus)
January	Seminar II Public Policy in Mississippi (State Capitol)
February	Seminar III Adapting to Change and Emerging Technologies (Mississippi Coast)
June	Seminar IV Production and Processes: Population, Production, Consumption, and Global Competition (Mississippi Delta)
November	Seminar V Federal Policy, Legislation, and Agencies (Washington, DC)

2020

January/February	Seminar VI Out-of-State Ag Leadership/Production
June	Seminar VII International Policy, Trade, and Global Markets (International Trip)
July	Seminar VIII Agriculture and the Community: Economic Development (Starkville/Tupelo, MS)
October	Graduation (MSU Main Campus)

**Specific date will be published for each seminar prior to October 1.*

Application/Selection Process

Eligibility Criteria – Applicant must be a U.S. citizen. Applicant must be working in some part of the agribusiness community in Mississippi. This may include production agriculture or an allied industry such as equipment sales, input sales, agricultural consulting, commodity sales and marketing, banking, media, law, etc., if the work is closely related to agriculture. While there are no specific age or educational requirements, participants will be selected with consideration to their breadth, depth, and length of experience.

Application Process – Interested individuals will complete and submit an application packet to include:

- Participant application
- Current résumé
- Statement of interest
- Contact information for three references who can attest to the applicant's qualifications (non-family members)

Application materials are available online at extension.msstate.edu/tcalp or upon request via email from michael.e.newman@msstate.edu. Application materials will be uploaded to website. Only complete application packets will be considered.

The spouse/partner and employer support forms are due upon offer of an interview, and the participant commitment form is due upon acceptance to the program.

Selection Committee/Process – The application review will be conducted by the TCALP advisory council. The advisory council will review all applications and select a slate of candidates for personal interviews. Spouses/partners are strongly encouraged to participate in the interviews. The council will recommend a class of participants to the program director for approval.

Selection Criteria – TCALP classes include 12 to 20 individuals who demonstrate motivation to improve their leadership, management, and communication skills in order to elevate the image and profitability of Mississippi agriculture and to enhance the quality of life in rural communities. The advisory council will assemble a class that is diverse in terms of race, gender, organization/business size and scope, geographic region, agricultural enterprises, agribusinesses, and level of leadership experience. The program seeks individuals who possess:

- A dedicated commitment to agriculture and to the success of TCALP.
- A desire to learn, participate, collaborate, network, and attend all seminars.
- Demonstrated leadership qualities and a potential for leadership growth.
- Character, integrity, personality, and a solid reputation among family members, peers, and employers.

Participant Outcomes

- More informed on local, state, national, and global agricultural issues and the political process.
- Equipped to assume leadership roles in the workplace or community.
- Productive network of policymakers, farm group leaders, educators, and government officials.
- Active in national, state, and local leadership positions.
- Comfortable in educating media, urban audiences, decision-makers, and others on issues affecting agriculture and rural communities.

Participant Expectations

It is an honor to be a part of this program, and participants are expected to be responsible leaders who project a positive image of themselves, TCALP, their communities, and agriculture. All participants are expected to:

- Attend all seminars, study tours, and program activities.
- Be punctual for all seminars and activities.
- Be committed to learning and personal growth.
- Be courteous and respectful to class members, speakers, hosts, tour guides, staff, donors, guests, alumni, and the program director.
- Interact with class members and actively participate in program activities such as assignments, presentations, learning projects, and discussion sessions.
- Moderate/preside over seminar sessions upon request by the director.
- Practice respectful listening to speakers or class members with differing ideas, beliefs, and value systems.
- Complete seminar/program evaluations.
- Send “thank you” notes to speakers and tour guides.
- Grant permission for use of one’s name, photo, and description of farming/business operation for press releases and other program promotional materials.
- Actively participate in alumni activities following graduation.

Code of Conduct

The following items will be reviewed and discussed by the class during the first seminar. At the second seminar, the class will select a three-member panel to assist the directors in addressing any of the following issues or other issues that affect the success/reputation of the program.

Attendance Policy – Applicants accepted into the program must acknowledge they expect to fully participate in the entire 35+/- days of the 2-year program. Attendance conflicts should be communicated to the program director as early as possible and should receive prior approval from the leadership program director in writing (letter or email) no later than 1 week before the seminar. Participants may be responsible for reimbursing TCALP for any expense incurred as a result of their absence, excused or unexcused. Participants with excessive absences may be subject to a continuation review with the program director and members of the TCALP advisory council. We understand that, in some cases, extenuating circumstances and emergencies may prevent ideal prior notice; therefore, the program reserves the right to evaluate each instance on a case-by-case basis, as needed.

Alcohol Policy – As leaders and program participants, you are representing your state, your industry, and the Thad Cochran Agricultural Leadership Program (TCALP). Consequently, excessive consumption of alcohol during any scheduled TCALP event is unacceptable and grounds for dismissal from the program without a participant fee refund. No TCALP program funds can be used to purchase alcohol, and participants are prohibited from consuming alcohol during formal seminar sessions, unless otherwise designated. A hospitality room may be available after formal seminar sessions for participants who want to consume alcohol and socialize in a responsible manner.

Tobacco Products Policy – Tobacco use during any indoor seminar session is prohibited. Participants are expected to abide by any and all local regulations.

Electronic Devices – All electronic communication devices are to be stowed out of sight and out of hearing during formal seminar sessions and study tour presentations. Laptops/tablets may be used only for program activities during seminar sessions. Participants are free to use their electronics during breaks.

Dress Code – Dress and appearance are part of professionalism, and TCALP participants are expected to abide by the following dress codes. Generally, business casual is required for most domestic seminar sessions. Business attire will be required for the Washington, DC, and Jackson travel seminars, while business casual will be appropriate for study tours and international travel. Jeans, athletic shoes, shorts, and caps are strictly prohibited, unless otherwise noted on the seminar schedule.

Business Attire Men: coat, tie, dress shirt, dress pants, dress shoes
 Women: dress or business suit, dress shoes

Business Casual Men: casual slacks/khakis, collared shirt, casual shoes
 Women: casual slacks/skirt, blouse/polo, casual shoes

Funding/Participant Expenses

Program Expenses/Tuition – Participants will be required to pay a tuition fee, which will be determined based on available funding, payable in two equal installments. The first installment will be due after notification of selection and before the start of the first seminar. The second installment will be due one year later. The program fee will be \$2,500 for a single participant and \$4,000 for a couple participating together. In addition to tuition expenses, participants will be responsible for in-state transportation costs to each seminar, hotel/traveling incidentals (telephone, room service, snacks, bar, TV movies, internet use, laundry, taxis, etc.), and a few meals when a group activity is not planned. Participants will also be responsible for obtaining a passport required for international travel. TCALP will cover all materials, lodging, breaks, dining, and other costs associated with each seminar, as well as transportation costs during each seminar and study tour.

Program Funding – The total cost per participant is an estimated \$21,000, with additional in-kind support. Cash costs over and above the tuition paid by class members are funded by the Mississippi State University Extension Service MPAAL Fund for Excellence, program alumni, agribusinesses, farm organizations, and other generous supporters of the program. For a complete and current list of program investors, details on program funding, and ways to contribute, click on the “Investors” link at <http://extension.msstate.edu/tcalp>. All donations will be recognized by the program in various ways and are tax-deductible.

Other Seminar Information

Moderator/Presider – Each class member will serve on a rotating basis as a moderator, presiding over a seminar session. Duties will include introducing the speaker, preparing the room (setting up audio-visuals used by the speaker, adjusting lights and room temperature), taking photos, and facilitating questions/discussion.

Spouses/Partners – Spouses and domestic partners are an important part of this program and, thus, need to be knowledgeable about the program and supportive of their partners. By agreeing to their partner's participation in this program, they are making a sacrifice that, ideally, will benefit their relationship, their community, and agriculture. Partners are asked to submit a spouse/partner commitment form as part of the participant's application. Spouses/partners are encouraged to participate in the first seminar and graduation at the program's expense. Spouses/partners may participate in the out-of-state, Washington, DC, and international trips at their expense in excess of lodging. Additional family members may be invited to the graduation ceremony at their own expense.

Miscellaneous Information

Advisory Council – An advisory council provides input to the TCALP director on the participant selection process/criteria, curriculum, seminar locations, financial oversight, and evaluation of the program. The advisory council members serve on a rotating schedule of 3 years.

TCALP Mailing Address – TCALP
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For disability accommodation, please contact Michael Newman at michael.e.newman@msstate.edu.

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