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WOODS
INSTITUTE *for the*
ENVIRONMENT

Leading Interdisciplinary Collaborations

The **Leading Interdisciplinary Collaborations (LiNC)** program prepares researchers to work together as effective agents of change. This Stanford Woods Institute initiative provides tools and perspectives to help participants cross traditional disciplinary and sector boundaries, and collaborate with other researchers as well as networks of stakeholders on complex sustainability challenges. LiNC steeps early- and mid-career faculty in collective leadership, an approach that inverts traditional academic norms of one-way knowledge sharing. Through a three-day retreat followed by regular gatherings, LiNC creates an environment that allows fellows to reflect, ask questions, take risks, experiment and practice new leadership, collaboration and systems thinking skills. The result is stronger research, innovation and collaboration capacity.

Objectives for LiNC Fellows

- Deepen awareness of individual leadership style, identify areas for growth and create sustaining practices.
- Learn how to engage a group of people, and think together by asking questions and initiating dialogue.
- Use a framework and tools to diagnose and design systems that inspire innovative, creative and collaborative research projects.
- Create a personal development plan to practice leadership tools, and use them in a range of collaborations.





A Model for Collaboration

LiNC is built around a collaborative approach that values working together over status or roles, empathy over certainty, and diverse stakeholders over experts. In this model, a leader mobilizes a group to action by steering people toward a shared vision. This involves navigating conflict through an iterative process that enables people to serve in their most effective operational roles. Knowledge alone is not the mark of growth, but self-awareness and reflection on learning. The outcomes are more geared toward tools that enable groups to self-organize and transform systems in a networked way, rather than simply improving personal skills and taking positions as new challenges arise.

Areas of Focus

Individual leadership development

This component focuses on deepening awareness of leadership style, identifying areas for growth and development, and creating sustaining practices.

- Assess personal leadership type and qualities
- Articulate a vision of what matters; identify and clarify purpose
- Gain confidence by articulating a leadership plan with a set of practices

Facilitating collaboration and networking

These sessions build capacity to engage a group of people, enabling them to think together.

- Learn frameworks and models for effective working group collaboration and dialogue
- Build capacity for working effectively with staff teams, graduate students and colleagues
- Practice design and leading participatory group conversations
- Develop the art of reciprocity and relationship-building
- Experience an on-going support group where each individual feels safe to share learning

Understanding systems

This component supports the program's goal of making an impact by inspiring innovative, creative, collaborative research projects. Faculty learn to use a framework and tools to diagnose and design four layers of a system: action, structure, tone, and identity.

- Learn systems thinking tools: actor and trend mapping
- Apply systems design framework to a specific individual, group or cohort project

Contact: