

NEWS RELEASE

College of Business

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Business for a Major and a Career:

Program Offers High-achieving High School Students Early Exposure to Business Topics

URBANA, Ill., July 11, 2005 – A program designed to interest high-achieving minority students in careers in business welcomed 30 high school students from around the country to the Urbana campus today. Their three-week program will include classes, a case competition, field trips, and team-building exercises.

For the second year, the College of Business at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, in cooperation with LEAD Incorporated, is hosting a LEAD program designed to increase the number of African American, Hispanic, and Native American students who enroll as undergraduates in the College of Business. The Philadelphia-based Leadership Education and Development (LEAD) Program in Business, Inc. is a partnership of business and academe that encourages academically strong minority high school students to pursue business careers. Ten universities are offering LEAD programs this summer. ADM and the JPMorgan Chase Foundation awarded the College of Business a grant to host the program.

Associate Dean Victor Mullins and Assistant Dean Jewell White, both in the Office of Undergraduate Affairs, are coordinating the program for the College of Business. Said White of the students, who arrived on campus this weekend, “We’re pleased to have these academically gifted students from across the country in Champaign-Urbana. Our program will expose them to a variety of business topics and the careers that await them if they pursue a degree in business. The academic schedule is very full, but we have provided plenty of opportunity for them to have some fun.”

Mullins added: “Upon completion of the program, LEAD students become a part of a network of alumni, business partners, and college administrators who offer them opportunities for summer internships. With a degree in business, their LEAD experience, and internships and jobs, students can look forward to rewarding, full-time careers in business.”

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The packed, three-week schedule features classes on marketing, managerial accounting, new product development, and branding strategies. Students will learn how to develop web pages, make effective presentations, and interview for jobs. On Fridays the students visit corporate sites, including trips to ADM in Decatur and to Quaker Oats, PricewaterhouseCoopers, and CNA in Chicago. The students will also visit the Chicago Board of Trade. The students will meet Curly Lee, owner of the Ford dealership in Danville, and Dwight Miller, owner of several McDonald's franchises in the Champaign-Urbana area.

The intensive curriculum provides insight into a variety of business disciplines including marketing, accounting, finance, and economics as well as computer science, ethics, leadership, and entrepreneurship. A real business problem is analyzed using the case study method. For this year's case competition, the student teams will be researching and generating marketing ideas for soy products, a challenge faced by ADM. The students will tour the ADM facility in Decatur as part of their research.

Historically, the brightest minority students have gravitated to professions such as medicine and law, where there are multiple minority success models. As a result, the talent pool of African American, Hispanic, under-represented Asian, and Native American applicants available to businesses and non-profits in the US has been limited. Rapidly shifting demographics and the corresponding diversity needs of corporations require businesses to be more proactive in convincing top minority students that business represents an exciting career. Since its inception in 1980, LEAD has been an effective mechanism for channeling top minority youth into future careers in business. Today's LEAD's alumni exceed 6,000, 75 percent of whom are currently working in the business field.

Nationally recognized as one of the leading business schools, the College of Business at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign has outstanding programs in accountancy, business administration, and finance. The College enrolls approximately 3,000 undergraduates and 850 graduate students in MBA, master's, and doctoral programs.

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