

The Leadership Merced Program

BY-LAWS AND STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

I. PROGRAM

The name of this program is Leadership Merced. It is a program of the Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce. The Leadership Merced Steering Committee serves as a committee of the Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce.

1. MISSION OF LEADERSHIP MERCED

The mission of the Leadership Merced program is to develop a diverse network of dynamic business and community leaders, who, individually and collectively, are catalysts for advancing long-term views and actions on issues critical to the quality of life in Merced County. This is accomplished by:

- a. Developing leaders who know and understand Merced County and are committed to its future.
- b. Presenting a program of leadership training that increases in the candidate an understanding of Merced County and of themselves as future leaders.
- c. Affording access to community leaders, gaining first hand experience, knowledge and encouragement for greater business and community involvement.
- d. Offering an opportunity for graduates of the program to maintain affiliation and involvement with and establish a commitment to the leadership program and to the leadership opportunities of the community through performing day chair functions.

2. RELATIONSHIP TO THE GREATER MERCED CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Steering Committee shall support the mission of the Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce and act in accordance with the policies and by-laws adopted by the Board of Directors, with the exceptions noted herein.

a. Role of the Program Coordinator

As an employee of the Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce, the program coordinator will carry out the contracted administrative duties necessary to facilitate the Leadership Merced program, class sessions and Steering Committee meetings. This includes, but is not limited to:

1. Preparing agendas
2. Sending confirmation letters to speakers and Day Chairs and other communication as directed by the Chair
3. Making arrangements for retreat
4. Assisting in the arrangement for transportation /food for class sessions
5. Keeping minutes for Steering Committee meetings
6. Preparing evaluations for class sessions

A detailed monthly timeline of the administrative duties necessary to the Leadership Merced Program will be kept on file at the Chamber. The Program Coordinator will be compensated for his/her time.

3. GENERAL POLICIES

- a. The Steering Committee shall develop and approve an annual budget. Financial record keeping is the responsibility of the Chamber staff and subject to the approval of the Steering Committee. The Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce will provide a monthly financial report to the Steering Committee.
- b. The Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce is/are responsible for the disbursement of program funds. Disbursement of the funds will require two signatures one from the Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce and one from the Steering Committee Chair.
- c. Unless approved by the Steering Committee, Leadership Merced shall not make contributions for promotional purposes, special events, or other use to any group or organization, nor allow its name to be similarly used. Contributions for philanthropic purposes, promotional events or gifts to other civic organizations are not considered proper use of Leadership Merced funds.
- d. Co-sponsorship of any activity or event not under the control of Leadership Merced is discouraged and must have approval of the Steering Committee. Unless funds have been budgeted, Leadership Merced shall not assume any financial losses.

- e. Leadership Merced does not purchase institutional advertising in yearbooks, programs, newsletters or similar publications, nor does it purchase tickets, chances, or advertising to further the cause of any organization or individual.
- f. Leadership Merced does not endorse any political candidate nor participate in any political campaigns or political issues.
- g. All written communications will be on Leadership Merced letterhead and correspondence files will be maintained at the Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce.

II. STEERING COMMITTEE

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the steering committee is to provide leadership, expertise and experience to ensure that the program meets the needs of the participants and the community.

2. DUTIES - The duties of the steering committee shall be:

- a. Plan the annual program
- b. Develop and approve the annual budget
- c. Design and plan the individual class sessions
- d. Help recruit quality applicants
- e. Facilitate and moderate class sessions
- f. Provide guidance and support in the development of a class project
- g. Establish a relationship with the class
- h. Provide leadership to ensure that the class project achieves goals consistent with the objectives of the Leadership Merced Program
- i. Provide leadership to the class or to individual members when issues arise that present "obstacles" to the entire group
- j. Final approval on new class participants and graduates

3. COMPOSITION

The steering Committee shall be composed of approximately 13 of which the majority shall be Leadership Merced graduates representative of a cross section of the community with the following makeup:

- a. A minimum of seven and a maximum of ten at-large members. Non-graduates will be allowed to sit on the committee on a case-by case basis
- b. One Leadership Merced Alumni Association representative.
- c. One Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce representative (the Chamber Board of Directors Vice-chairperson of Community Affairs or their designee). The representative is not required to be a Leadership Merced graduate.
- d. Immediate Past Chair (ex officio)
- e. One Program Coordinator (ex officio)
- f. Ex officio members shall be non-voting.

4. APPOINTMENT AND TERMS OF OFFICE

- a. Appointment to the steering committee

Appointment to the Steering Committee will be made by incumbent Steering Committee members.

- b. Terms of Office
 - 1. The term of the Steering Committee Chair shall be for two years.
 - 2. The term of the Steering Committee Vice-chair shall be for two years.
 - 3. The term of at-large members shall be three years. No member shall serve more than two consecutive three-year terms. A member of the Steering Committee must then remain off the Steering Committee for a minimum of one year before becoming eligible to return.

5. STEERING COMMITTEE/DAY CHAIR RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. Chair shall be responsible for presiding over monthly meetings, enforcement of bylaws, correspondence directed to current class and steering committee regarding attendance violations. Ensure Day Chairs are in place and following the attendance at steering committee meetings. Provide guidance and support to current class regarding class project. Financial oversight of Leadership Merced Program.

- b. Vice-chair of the Steering Committee shall be elected by the Steering Committee. Election of the Vice-chair will be by vote of those voting members present at the Steering Committee Retreat. The vice-chair will preside in the absence of the chair and will be responsible for recruitment for future classes. The vice-chair will automatically move into the position of chair following the expiration of the chair's term, beginning with the retreat.
- c. At-large Member- the Steering Committee At-large members shall:
 - 1. Assist in the planning of class sessions.
 - 2. Attend all monthly Steering Committee meetings and steering committee retreat.
 - 3. Are encouraged to attend class graduation and any class project activity
 - 4. Actively participate in on-going recruitment.
- d. Day Chairs- the Day Chairs shall:
 - 1. Plan and supervise the class session:
 - i. Submit tentative agenda to steering committee two months prior to class session
 - ii. Present final agenda one month prior
 - iii. Attend steering committee meeting immediately following chaired session to review day
 - iv. Fully document each class session for future years
 - 2. Attend class graduation
 - 3. Attend steering committee retreat
 - 4. Actively participate in on-going recruitment

6. QUORUM AND ATTENDANCE

a. Quorum

A quorum will consist of 50% plus one of the voting members of the Steering Committee.

b. Attendance Requirements

Attend all meetings –Three unexcused absences for the program year will constitute removal from the committee.

7. FILLING VACANCIES

- a. The Steering Committee Chair will address the need to fill at-large vacancy(ies). Vacany(ies) will be announced in the Chamber Business Journal.
- b. Members of the Steering Committee will submit a list of candidates along with the list of candidates from the Program Coordinator. The Program Coordinator will contact the listed candidates to confirm their willingness to serve. The list will be compiled by the Program Coordinator and will be presented to the members for voting. The Steering Committee will consider the following criteria in reviewing potential candidates:
 1. Areas of expertise already represented/missing with current Committee membership
 2. Strong, broad-based community leadership experience and connections
 3. Leadership Merced involvement after graduation
 4. Ability to meet the attendance requirements
- c. The Steering Committee members will cast one vote for their choice from the list. The person receiving the highest number of votes will be appointed. In the event of a tie, the steering committee will recast their vote using only the tied candidates.
- d. If a current member of the Steering Committee joined the Steering Committee to complete the term of someone that left before the completion of his/her term, that member would be eligible to serve one three-year term upon completion of the partial term. Under term limits, in no case would any member serve more than six consecutive years.

III. LEADERSHIP MERCED CLASS MEMBERS

1. TUITION

A tuition fee to be determined annually by the Steering Committee will be charged to each participant in the Leadership Merced. The tuition fee is incorporated into the operating budget for Leadership Merced. Participants are supplied materials, meals, and beverages during the session.

Refunds of tuition will be handled as follows:

- a. A full refund of the tuition will be processed if a participant resigns prior to the first session in September.
- b. If a participant resigns following the January retreat no refund will be provided.
- c. Each case will be evaluated individually by the Steering Committee. The decision of the Steering Committee will be final; there is no appeal process.

2. RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

- a. Through a comprehensive campaign alerting the members of the Leadership Merced Alumni Association, the Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce and the community as a whole of the time allocated for accepting applications, nominations will be sought and encouraged from all segments of the community. Applications from individuals, as well as nominations from companies and organizations, will be accepted from those who best exemplify the Leadership Merced philosophy and goals. Applications will be available at the Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce office, on the Chamber website or may be mailed to the applicant upon request.
- b. As a matter of policy, Leadership Merced does not discriminate among applicants and participants on the basis of age, race, religion, sexual orientation, sex, national origin, color, and/or handicap.
- c. To accommodate the year-round interest in applying for the Leadership Merced program, the Program Coordinator will maintain on an annual basis, a mailing list of people requesting information. The Vice-chair will speak to day chairs, community groups and businesses as part of ongoing recruitment. The basic brochure will be mailed to potential applicants along with an application form. Applications will be accepted throughout the year to ensure an adequate pool from which to select. Applicants will be informed that selection of class members only takes place once a year; however, during the summer for the following fall class.
- d. A Selection Committee will be formed and will consist of two At-large members selected by the Steering Committee and chaired by the Steering Committee Vice-chair. Upon the deadline for receiving applications, the Selection Committee, according to

criteria developed and approved by the Steering Committee, will rate all applications and the applicants most nearly meeting Leadership Merced criteria will be selected for interview.

- e. The Steering Committee will then interview the applicants recommended by the Selection Committee and compile a final list of a maximum of 22 and a minimum of 18 applicants to be selected for the Leadership Merced class. This list will be submitted to the Leadership Merced Steering Committee for final approval and to the Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors for their information.

3. COMPOSITION

- a. A representative group of a maximum of 22 and a minimum of 18 participants will be selected annually from a wide cross-section of the community. Leadership Merced seeks potential leaders as well as individuals who have already attained leadership roles in their respective spheres of influence, who have demonstrated a deep commitment to the community, and who are likely to assume greater responsibility.
- b. Once the class has been selected and the class listing has been published and distributed no person may be considered for addition to the class under this or any other provision of the policies of the program.
- c. Participants will sign a written agreement prior to the first day session acknowledging their understanding of the requirements of the Leadership Merced program.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. The members of the current class are responsible for actively participating in all Leadership Merced classes along with completing assigned homework, selecting and implementing a class project that is within the guidelines established by the Steering Committee and contributes to the overall mission of Leadership Merced.
- b. The Leadership Merced sessions for participants shall be conducted on a monthly basis from September through June, with graduation in June. Participants will also be required to attend an orientation in September and a three-day retreat in January.

5. ATTENDANCE

- a. Attendance at all Leadership Merced sessions and retreat is mandatory. Absence may be cause for withdrawing the participant from the program. Participants are expected to attend every session in full. If an absence is needed the participant shall notify the Leadership Merced program coordinator at least 48 hours prior to the expected date of absence. Exception is granted only in the most unusual circumstances and may be granted by the Steering Committee Chair. Appeal of the decision may be made to the Board of Directors of The Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce.

6. CRITERION FOR GRADUATION

- a. A class member may not accumulate more than two absences.
- b. Participants who arrive late, leave early, or miss any part of any day (including lunch and tours) will accrue an absence for that day. Participants shall be considered late if the first speaker has started his/her presentation. Participants who leave prior to being dismissed will be considered as having left early.
- c. Upon the first absence, the participant and his/her employer will be notified in writing and sent a copy of the attendance requirements. If the participant reaches two absences, they will be notified in writing that another absence will disqualify the participant from the Leadership Merced program. The Steering Committee will notify the employer/sponsor.
- d. A graduate who misses a session day will be invited by the Program Coordinator to attend any missed day the following year. A nominal fee may apply.

7. CLASS PROJECT

The Leadership Merced class project is intended to provide an opportunity for class members to work together toward a common goal, putting to work all of the Leadership Merced skills and knowledge while making a difference in our community. Class project recommendations will be presented to the Steering Committee. The class project must be completed prior to graduation.