

# ATHLETE LEADERSHIP UNIVERSITY

## THE MISSION OF ATHLETE LEADERSHIP UNIVERSITY

Athlete Leadership University exists to enhance the lives of athletes with ongoing leadership training and experience in the areas such as communications, events, governance, health and fitness, sports, technology, and visual arts; it brings together talented athletes in an atmosphere of sharing, knowledge, trust, and respect.

- Special Olympics Indiana, October 2021

## DEFINITION OF ATHLETE LEADERSHIP

- Allowing athletes to choose HOW and in what ROLE they participate in Special Olympics.
- Encouraging athletes to take meaningful positions of influence and leadership throughout the organization to help determine policy and set direction.
- Providing training for coaches, volunteers, and parents as they welcome athletes in their new roles.

## ELIGIBILITY

Athletes who sign up for Athlete Leadership University must be at least 16 years old.

Each athlete must be accompanied by a volunteer (mentor) who works with the athlete during each course and locally during the required practical experience. Information on mentor responsibilities is available in the “Handbook for Athlete Leaders” and “Mentor Fast Facts.”

- Parents are allowed to be mentors for their child on a trial basis. Other relatives of the athlete can be mentors.
- Unless otherwise stated, each athlete attending Athlete Leadership University must have a mentor (one-on-one).
- Exceptions to these rules are subject to the approval of the Athlete Leadership University Management Team.

## ATHLETE LEADERSHIP UNIVERSITY PREREQUISITES, CURRICULUM AND CREDIT

The curriculum chart on the following page outlines the plan of study for Athlete Leadership University. The first course for all students is Introduction to Athlete Leadership. The second course for all students is Understanding Leadership. After the completion of these courses, athletes can choose a major and take courses as outlined in the chart. The final course to graduate with a major and each new major is Leadership Capstone.

## PRACTICUM WORK FOR CREDIT IN A COURSE

Each course requires the completion of a practicum in order to receive credit for the course. The practicum certification must be sent to the State Office within five months of taking the class. Some leeway is given for the Sports core courses if the sport the athlete is interested in does not happen within five months.

**NOTE:** All practicums must include a statement from the mentor and sign off by the County Program’s Athlete Leadership Coordinator. All practicums are tracked and approved by the instructors. Instructors will inform SO Indiana when an athlete completes the practicum.

## CONTINUING EDUCATION

Athlete leaders are encouraged to repeat courses on a periodic basis to update their leadership knowledge and skills. Course content changes over the years as new concepts are introduced.

## HANDBOOK FOR ATHLETE LEADERS

For complete details on Athlete Leadership and Athlete Leadership University procedures and policies, see the “Handbook for Athlete Leaders” available at each Athlete Leadership University and posted at [SOIndiana.org](http://SOIndiana.org) on the resource library page.

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COURSE CURRICULUM FOR ATHLETE LEADERSHIP UNIVERSITY						
Introduction to Athlete Leadership						
Understanding Leadership						
COMMUNICATION MAJOR	EVENTS MAJOR	GOVERNANCE MAJOR	HEALTH & FITNESS MAJOR	SPORTS MAJOR	TECHNOLOGY MAJOR	VISUAL ARTS MAJOR
Global Messenger I	Event Planning	Introduction to Governance	Introduction to Health & Fitness	Athletes as Coaches	Any two Technology courses	Leadership Through Visual Arts I
Global Messenger II	Event Management	ALCs and Boards & Committees	Health & Fitness Advocates	Training Fundamentals		Leadership Through Visual Arts II
One elective class	One elective class	One elective class	One elective class	Introduction to Health & Fitness	One elective class	One elective class
Leadership Capstone						
Introduction to Athlete Leadership is the required first course, Understanding Leadership is required second and Leadership Capstone is the final course and is only available to those athletes who have satisfied all the necessary prerequisites and practicum hours for their chosen major. Courses in the athlete's area of concentration require participation in the course and completion of a practicum within five months. Exceptions to the five-month rule are granted if an athlete chooses to coach a sport that does not take place within that timeframe.						

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Each course is seven hours. Athletes may register for one class only per semester.

COURSE	DESCRIPTION	PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE
INTRODUCTION TO ATHLETE LEADERSHIP	Overview of ALPs choices, input councils, and basics of leadership concluding with development of personal mission statement and selection of a major.	Volunteer at least 10 hours at area, county or state events and become a Class A volunteer.
UNDERSTANDING LEADERSHIP	Builds basic leadership skills to give athletes a foundation to fill a leadership role with confidence.	Complete the assigned reflection questions.
GLOBAL MESSENGER I	Initial training for athletes who want speaking experience and would like to learn speaking skills.	Conduct at least five speeches to community, school, or civic groups.
GLOBAL MESSENGER II	Additional training for athletes who have speaking experience and would like to refine their skills.	Conduct at least five speeches or media interviews
PRINCIPLES OF COACHING	Develop coaching philosophy, learn effective coaching techniques, and the basics of team management.	Create personal philosophy, self-assess skills, and interview experience coaches
TRAINING FUNDAMENTALS	Learn to create training plans that teach new tasks, reinforce previously learned tasks, and apply both to competition.	Create an eight-week training plan and get feedback from an experienced coach.
INTRODUCTION TO GOVERNANCE	Covers definition of governance and policy setting as well as how to read a financial statement. Includes practice board and committee meetings.	Attend five meetings and reflect on how well they met the principles of good governance.
ATHLETE LEADERSHIP COUNCILS/BOARDS & COMMITTEES	Covers SO mission statement; Athlete Leadership Council structure; practice and working together in meetings; discusses athlete's role as a decision maker.	Attend five Athlete Input Councils or committee meetings and reflect on how well they meeting and governance criteria.
BASIC POWERPOINT	How to build PowerPoint® presentations, including use of digital photography.	Prepare at least two new PowerPoint® presentations to be used by county/area management team or the state office.
DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS	How to use social media tools (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) to promote Special Olympics and communicate with our audiences. How to use email, internet and search engines.	Complete eight technology-related tasks using a computer.
DIGITAL MEDIA	How to use photography and videography in your role as an athlete leader.	Complete eight technology-related tasks using a computer or camera.
INTRODUCTION TO HEALTH & FITNESS	Overview of basic health and fitness information, and provides hands-on practice to develop your skills as a Healthy Lifestyle Messenger to your fellow peers.	Set two personal health & fitness goals; and one community leadership goal.
HEALTH & FITNESS ADVOCATES	Provides athletes with guidance and support to develop their advocacy skills. Athletes build on their personal successes and community leadership experiences from the Intro to Health & Fitness course practicum.	Develop plan for role as an H&F advocate. Complete the steps to register with SOI as a Health Messenger.
LEADERSHIP THROUGH VISUAL ARTS I	Through visual arts, athletes will develop necessary skills such as confidence, collaboration and self discipline, that will prepare them for any leadership role and can be applied to all aspects of life. No prior experience required.	Complete poster for SOIN state conference and Special Olympics inspired art piece.
LEADERSHIP THROUGH VISUAL ARTS II	A deeper study of the necessary skills learned through visual arts and how to apply them to become a confident, disciplined, inspiring leader.	Research artist as community leaders; complete personal artist bio, and one Special Olympics inspired art piece.
EVENT PLANNING	Covers what to consider when planning and staging a Special Olympics event including budgeting, divisioning, ceremonies, awards, and competition guidelines.	Plan one event, interview event planners, and create a personal skills development plan.
EVENT MANAGEMENT	Covers the basic concepts of event management including personnel, planning, volunteers, and risk management.	Evaluate one event, interview event managers, and create a personal skills development plan.
LEADERSHIP CAPSTONE	Focuses on the difference between effective and enduring leaders through value-based leadership.	Leadership project(s) chosen by the athlete leader.