

## Leadership Academy 2020

### Summer Online Program for Women and Underrepresented Minority Students in Technology and Engineering from Massachusetts Colleges and Universities

Early career advancement is particularly challenging for women and other underrepresented people in technology and engineering industries. Internships provide critical experiences for underrepresented students to learn the culture of tech and engineering companies and acquire professional skills. Unfortunately, in this challenging time of the COVID-19 pandemic, many students have lost internships and other leadership opportunities for the summer as companies have scaled back and canceled summer internships. To fill this need, a Summer Online Leadership Academy has been created for underrepresented Bachelor's degree students in computer science, technology, and engineering. The program is free of cost for students.

#### Who is organizing the Leadership Academy?

The Academy is hosted by [REBLS, the Researchers, Educators, Business Leaders and Students network](#), funded by the National Science Foundation, and led by [Dr. Nilanjana Buju Dasgupta](#) and a core team of computer science and engineering faculty from the University of Massachusetts, in collaboration with the larger Massachusetts community. The curriculum has been developed by [Dr. Rati Thanawala](#), 2018 Advanced Leadership Fellow at Harvard University. Dr. Thanawala spent 39 years working in the technology industry, most recently as VP at Bell Labs. She created and piloted this leadership program with a grant from Pivotal Ventures, a Melinda Gates Company. The curriculum content on negotiation, a key leadership skill area in the program, will be led by [Dr. Hannah Riley Bowles](#), Chair of the Management, Leadership, and Decision Sciences area at the Harvard Kennedy School.

#### What is the structure of the leadership academy?

The Summer Leadership Academy is a fast-paced 20 hours/week online program that is an accelerator for undergraduate students as they plan their journey to thrive in the tech and engineering sectors. This is a 6-week program from July 6 - August 15, 2020. Students are expected to dedicate 20 hours/week to skill development. The group will meet via zoom 3 times a per week (for synchronous 2-3 hours blocks of time (Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays). It will strengthen students' capacity to:

- Understand what is fundamentally different between college and careers.
- Develop professional skills needed to be successful in the workplace.
- Learn from experienced professionals from diverse backgrounds and industries
- Identify strategic levers to thrive in college and apply the same levers to launch into early careers
- Strategically plan the first few years of their careers

#### Who is eligible to participate?

A group of 50 -100 students enrolled in Universities and Colleges in Massachusetts majoring in computer science or engineering will participate. We will prioritize students who are underrepresented in computer science and engineering—specifically, women, racial/ethnic minority students, students with disabilities, etc. We will offer small stipends to students in order to level the field for students who need funding in order to be able to participate

#### What is the role of businesses in the leadership academy?

- We invite businesses to sponsor students by contributing funding for student stipends.
- We invite industry professionals in tech and engineering to be speakers and role models for students during the academy; to share their career story; offer strategic advice on how to prepare for careers in tech or engineering, and answer students' questions.

- Identify discrete summer projects students can be hired to do remotely for the sponsoring company to allow hands-on work experience (e.g., tasks involving design, computation, etc).

**What's the value proposition for corporate partners? What will they gain?**

- Companies that help fund students in the academy will be recognized as sponsors on the academy website and recruiting materials.
- Platinum level sponsors will be invited to sponsor a day in the leadership academy program and display their logo and information on the online teaching platform.
- Sponsoring companies will have access to a pool of students who are future recruits
- Sponsoring companies will have access to students with skills to do discrete work projects that can be done remotely.
- Sponsoring companies will be prominently named and acknowledged in the annual report to the National Science Foundation for their efforts to broaden and diversify the pipeline of students entering the workforce in technology and engineering. This may be beneficial to companies that apply for federal funding.

**Questions?**

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