



From the Interim Program Director, Dr. Corey Seemiller

Welcome to 2021! While the world has been unpredictable, and our lives have been forever changed over this past year, I am incredibly inspired by all that our students, alumni, and faculty do to contribute to their workplaces and communities. It is times like these where we need leaders who can tackle complex issues and innovate in ways that push the boundaries of what we think is even possible. That is why I believe so deeply in our Master of Science in Leadership Development program. To be able to be a part of your lives as you engage in leadership is an honor. I wish you all a safe, healthy, and prosperous 2021.

Student Spotlight: Daquawna Farrow

Daquawna joined MSLD in Fall 2020 and has been doing amazing work. She just launched her podcast called *Queen Conversations* intended to empower, inform, and inspire women through candid conversations about career, love, faith, food, travel and more! She has also been appointed the Chair of the Faith Based Advisory Board for Gem City Market. In this role, she is engaging the Faith community to encourage involvement and participation in the development and use of the market. She successfully organized a tour for about 15 area pastors. Daquawna has also accepted a role at Declare as their development coordinator, assisting with developing and deepening their relationships and connections with area churches and nonprofits. "9-5PM," she serves as a Senior Manager of an expanding global technical support team. She was elevated to this role this past October. She finds it to be a very interesting and rewarding position as well as a learning experience in leadership.

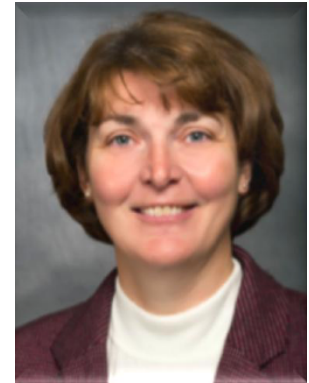


Check out Daquawna's *Queen Conversations* podcast at:

<https://open.spotify.com/show/1MOW99JC1wuePNggpJlvjs?si=pXbWfh5uR6y0SQlQTdsklg>

Farewell and Congratulations to Dr. Sharon Heilmann

Dr. Sharon Heilmann, program director for the MSLD program, left the university in December 2020 for a new role. We wish her all the best and thank her for her amazing contribution to MSLD over the years. Dr. Heilmann shares her insights in a recent interview.



What initially drew you to working with the MSLD program?

The MSLD program allowed me to merge my academic and professional interests. As a retired military veteran, I have had opportunities to lead in a variety of organizations as well as observe a variety of leaders. These experiences, coupled with my academic credentials, made me a nice fit to assume MSLD program director duties.

What have been your favorite or most memorable moments working with the program?

When we moved from offering two courses on the same night to the same cohort to one F2F class on Tuesday evening and one F2F class on Thursday evenings. Cohorts with dinner theme nights, trips to local establishments for conversation and dining, and watching students achieve their goals.

What advice would you give prospective students thinking about MSLD?

Each person has personal reasons for pursuing advanced degrees...try to remember why you started. Have a plan for how you will accomplish the program and understand why you want to earn the degree. It's a bit easier to stay motivated and persist when you can remember why you started. Reach out to your classmates and faculty if you need help and be willing to help your classmates if you can.

What are you up to now (professionally/personally)?

I currently work in the 88th Force Support Squadron/Workforce Development. I still have the opportunity to interact with many MSLD grads around the Base as well as my colleagues from WSU.

Alumni Spotlights



Bret Retherford

Bret Retherford is a 2017 graduate of the MSLD program and a 2018 graduate of the IDDL program. He currently serves as an Innovation Strategist at Wright Patterson AFB. Bret credits both programs for success in helping people think differently about Innovation, including leadership methods to facilitate divergent thinking, problem solving events, and sabbaticals that offer employees an opportunity to prototype new ideas. To promote Innovation opportunities, Bret uses a variety of multimedia methods learned in the IDDL program including information video, audio podcasting, and graphical design products.



Denise Anderson

After graduating from MSLD in December 2019, Denise was promoted to Project Manager for the Division of Student Success, working on a number of initiatives for the eight units comprising the division. An important project she is currently excited about is leading a dedicated group of employees in exploring ways to address and promote inclusive excellence for staff and service to students. Later this semester, Denise is beginning a certificate program through University of South Florida's Muma College of Business for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Workplace.



Katie Gerspacher

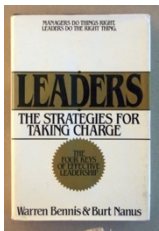
Currently, Katie is assigned to the Criminal Investigations Section as a detective. Katie is also assigned as a victim advocate and juvenile detective, and investigates sex crimes and any crimes involving children victims. Within the last year, Katie became a certified mobile device examiner, which involves obtaining, extracting, and analyzing digital evidence on any mobile device such as a cellphone, tablet, etc. Katie is also one of the department's physical fitness instructors as well as a Taser, ASP baton, and defensive tactics instructor. On a personal note, Katie is recently engaged (just prior to Christmas) and plans on getting married within a year.

MSLD Program to Move Entirely Online

In January, the MSLD program achieved the last approval to permanently move to an entirely online program. The change was decided upon more than a year ago to meet the growing demands for flexible and inclusive graduate learning. To prepare for the move, all of the full-time MSLD faculty were trained and certified in Quality Matters – Applying the QM Rubric, which involves completing an intensive course on quality assurance, accessibility, and inclusive online course design and delivery. We are pleased to be on the forefront of innovative instructional design!



Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Mindy McNutt



For Dr. McNutt's sabbatical, she is excited to be working on a project studying the life and writings of Dr. Warren Bennis. She became excited about his theories and writings during the first semester of her doctoral program when she read his book, *Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge*, that he co-wrote with Dr. Burt Nanus. They described the differences between leaders and managers, with the now famous saying, "Managers do things right. Leaders do the right things." Interestingly, Dr. Bennis graduated with his undergraduate degree from Antioch College, and later in life was the president of the University of Cincinnati, after which he spent the latter part of his career as a faculty member at the University of Southern California. Over the course of his life, he wrote more than 20 books and nearly 300 articles and book chapters. He was called upon as an expert in the field of leadership, working with four different presidents over his lifetime. The objective of Dr. McNutt's sabbatical is to examine his writings in relationship to his life. How did his writing change over the course of his life and what challenges did he have in his life that might have influenced his writing? We look forward to learning more about Dr. McNutt's project!

Words of Impact: Randal Parmenter, MSLD Alumnus



"Even though I had years of 'formal' leadership training and many classes on leadership principles and concepts, one of the things the MSLD program pointed out to me was how essential the human element is to intrinsically motivating people to develop and give their best efforts towards the work. Being able to find the internal motivators for people is what really elevates great leaders. Completing the MSLD program qualified me for a career-broadening opportunity that expands the breadth of my professional experience."

MSLD Recruiting Fall 2021 Cohort

If you know anyone who may be interested in applying to the MSLD program for Fall 2021, please encourage them to reach out to corey.seemiller@wright.edu. More information about the program can be found at <https://education-human-services.wright.edu/leadership-studies-in-education-and-organizations/master-of-science-in-leadership-development>.