



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Contact:** John Gordon, Jr., Director of Communications  
202.274.5998 (o); 202.701.8805 (c); [john.gordon@udc.edu](mailto:john.gordon@udc.edu)

Starshine Roshell, Fielding Graduate University  
(805) 898-4076 (o); [sroshell@fielding.edu](mailto:sroshell@fielding.edu)



**UDC DOCTORAL PROGRAM IS FIRST IN THE NATION TO DEVELOP INNOVATIVE  
LEADERS FOR URBAN AMERICA**

**WASHINGTON**—The University of the District of Columbia (UDC) is first in the nation to offer an innovative doctoral degree program exclusively focused on developing 21st century leaders for urban communities. The new program — a Ph.D. in urban leadership and entrepreneurship — will be launched this fall with an inaugural class of 17 students. The program is a partnership with Fielding Graduate University.

UDC's unique doctoral program is designed to integrate traditional leadership training and distinctly entrepreneurial practices in urban contexts. The program will produce leaders and scholars who create and apply new knowledge to solve complex urban issues. The areas of focus include Urban Government and Political Leadership; Urban Sustainability and Resilience Leadership; and, Urban Entrepreneurial Leadership. Focusing on two fields of inquiry will enable each doctoral student to use multifaceted perspectives to become well-rounded leaders and creative problem-solvers.

"The idea is not that each graduate becomes an entrepreneur, but that they develop leadership skills with an entrepreneurial mindset," said program coordinator Dr. Dwane Jones. "This course of study will prepare graduates to think outside-the-box, and to have profound impacts as leaders and practitioners."

The rigorous, six-year program is housed within the University's College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability and Environmental Sciences (CAUSES). According to CAUSES Dean Sabine O'Hara, adding this course of study enhances UDC's reputation as the only exclusively urban land-grant university in the nation.

"Cities are exciting places, characterized by diversity and density, but also by disparity. The future of urban spaces requires leaders who are entrepreneurial, adaptable, and able to make decisions, not only within their own organizations, but also in collaboration with other diverse organizations and stakeholders. We are excited to engage in the research, community outreach, and teaching work of CAUSES with future leaders who are committed to making cities thriving and sustainable places for all."

Dr. John Austin, a professor in the School of Leadership Studies at Fielding Graduate University, agrees. "With the number of complex challenges in urban environments, it's not enough to understand how to apply existing knowledge. We need people capable of creating new knowledge — and that's what a doctorate is. If our problems are new, complex and interdisciplinary, we need scholars who can see the blind spots in our current frameworks."

With UDC being the nation's only exclusively urban land grant institution and the only public university in the nation's capital, UDC will serve as a living laboratory and become the model for new training in urban leadership, says UDC's president Ronald Mason.

“As UDC evolves as an advanced public institution of higher learning, it is critical that we leverage our land-grant expertise to create meaningful partnerships with government and industry,” says Mason. “With this new program, we are uniquely positioned to provide research and training in key areas such as sustainable and resilient communities, security, energy, medical technologies, and policy informatics that will ensure leadership in the critical questions associated with urban growth in the new millennium.”

UDC’s partnership with Fielding Graduate University follows a hybrid format with both face-to-face and online instruction, which draws on the varied expertise of each institution, their strong national and local networks of faculty and students, as well as their strong linkages to other experts, institutions and organizations. The degree is accessible to working adults and students no matter where they live, and is delivered in a distributed model that includes online learning, mentoring, national and regional residencies and cluster meetings in Washington, DC.

“For more than 40 years, Fielding has used this distributed model to successfully provide doctoral education,” said Fielding Graduate University President Katrina Rogers. “That’s why I am excited about this national opportunity to lend our leadership expertise to addressing the plight of urban America—one of the most important challenges we face as a society in the 21st century.”

The inaugural Ph.D. cohort consists of 17 students with diverse backgrounds, ranging from those who already have undertaken graduate studies, to others seeking to enhance their professional knowledge or undergo a career change. From medical practitioners to city planners, teachers, nutritionists and environmental engineers, each student brings different perspectives and learning objectives to the program.

“One of the exciting things about the program is the combination of depth and breadth that is represented by the diversity of students represented in the inaugural class,” said Dr. Susan Kliman, associate professor in UDC’s School of Architecture. “Traditionally, Ph.D. students spend most of their time with other students who are studying a topic very closely related to their own. In this program, students will regularly interact with other Ph.D. students studying problems of a quite different scale and nature.”

For more information about the doctoral program, please link to our Media Tool Kit:

<https://www.udc.edu/causes/phd/phd-e-tool-kit/>

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#### About the Partners

- *The University of the District of Columbia (www.udc.edu) supports a broad mission of education, research and community service across its colleges and schools: The College of Arts and Sciences; the College of Agriculture, Urban Sustainability and Environmental Sciences; the School of Business and Public Administration; School of Engineering and Applied Sciences; the Community College; and the David A. Clarke School of Law. The University has been designated as an 1862 federal land-grant institution and a Historically Black College and University. The University of the District of Columbia is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.*
- *Fielding Graduate University (www.fielding.edu) is a nationally recognized leader in doctoral education that provides an education and research experience largely for adult learners, within a competency-based, distributed model. Fielding only offers graduate study, largely at the doctoral level, and it has placed a high value throughout its history on producing scholar-practitioners who value social and ecological justice. It has a well-respected PhD program in leadership studies, housed within a School of Leadership Studies, which offers doctoral concentrations in 11 specialty areas, delivered by a highly regarded, multidisciplinary faculty. Its other school is the School of Psychology, which offers doctoral programs in Clinical Psychology and Media Psychology.*