



**J.W. Fanning Institute
for Leadership Development**
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

DEVELOPING COMMUNITY LEADERS IN UNPRECEDENTED TIMES

The COVID-19 pandemic has compelled adult community leadership programs to innovate, re-envision and transform.

THE PRESENT:

- Communities saw their programs interrupted abruptly due to COVID-19, with not a lot of time to adjust.
- In many communities, coordinators took their programs online at least to check in with their classes.
- Classes that started in the fall shifted to a virtual format to finish or cancelled them altogether.
- Programs that started in January are planning to resume in the fall, if conditions permit.

THE FUTURE:

- Communities are wanting to restart their programs in August or September as they would normally, in person if at all possible.
- That said, much remains unknown about what the coming months will hold, what will be allowed and what in-person programming will look like.
- Major concerns revolve not around interest or participation, but around finding larger venues and taking state and federal health guidelines into account.
- Coordinators are aware that conditions may require them to shift programs back online, limit “field trips,” or make other adjustments due to the pandemic.

THE POSSIBILITIES:

- Program coordinators are re-envisioning their programs and looking at opportunities to transform and innovate their programs.
- Alumni engagement is a specific area that coordinators are considering as a way to continue program momentum and ensure program support and sustainability.
- The possibility exists to innovate new programming for new groups in their communities.
- Current events in our country are increasing communities’ interest in making dialogue training and conflict transformation part of their programs.

FANNING CAN HELP:

- We provide communities resources and support to re-envision and innovate throughout their leadership programs.
- Our faculty can deliver all leadership programming in-person or virtually, allowing programs to transform quickly.
- Leading difficult conversations and conflict transformation training is a core subject in our leadership curriculum, or can be offered separately within communities.
- We can assist communities with creating innovative alumni engagement efforts and advanced leadership programming.



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DEVELOPING FUTURE LEADERS IN UNPRECEDENTED TIMES

The COVID-19 pandemic has compelled youth leadership programs to adjust to innovate, re-envision and transform.

THE PRESENT:

- Many community-based youth leadership programs came to an immediate halt because schools converted to a virtual format.
- When possible, sessions shifted online, utilizing email and digital content.
- Coordinators attempted to maintain contact with youth by writing them notes and hosting virtual check-ins.
- The pandemic also hit at a time when many youth programs begin recruiting the next class.

THE FUTURE:

- Coordinators are planning for new leadership classes to begin in the fall or on their usual schedule.
- However, school system operations in each community will drive what the community/school leadership program looks like.
- Recruiting classes could be a challenge depending on how schools operate in the fall.
- Overall, there are “a lot of unknowns” still out there that program coordinators have to account for.

POSSIBILITIES:

- The pandemic has given coordinators a chance to evaluate and re-envision their programs and curriculum.
- Program coordinators are looking for online resources that they can use to supplement and enhance their programs.
- Current events in our country are increasing the interest from communities to include conflict transformation into their youth leadership programs.
- Coordinators are looking at ways to impact more students with leadership training.

FANNING CAN HELP:

- Our faculty can deliver all leadership programming in-person or virtually, enabling programs to transform quickly.
- We can work with youth programs to incorporate training on conflict transformation and facilitating difficult conversations.
- Working with communities, we can help envision innovative ideas to broaden the reach of leadership programming to increase impact in your community.
- We already offer – and are continuing to add – virtual leadership resources on our website, www.fanning.uga.edu.



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