

Interested in the OE Leadership Development Program? See What Insiders Have to Say!

By Marla Goodwin, Supervisory Program Manager, Office of Examination (OE) Staff Development Division

The Staff Development Division (SDD) will soon announce two positions to begin this summer in the Office of Examination's Leadership Development Program (LDP). If you think you might be interested in applying, read on for more information.

The program involves a 24- to 30-month rotation in SDD during which participants attend formal training and receive on-the-job training opportunities to help them develop the "executive core qualifications" identified by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). On-the-job training opportunities include the following:

- Serving as an FCA examiner/trainer
- Helping create and provide formal Commissioning Program instruction
- Overseeing the Summer Internship Program
- Serving in a supervisory role
- Pursuing an individualized development opportunity based on the participant's interests and developmental needs

Rather than describing the program in detail, I've asked three of our second-year participants to give you an honest overview of the challenging opportunities provided by the LDP. Thanks to Lun Nguyen, Shahab Maslehati and Matt Alizadeh for sharing their perspectives.



Lun Nguyen

"When I applied for the Leadership Development Program, I was looking for a change. I was on AED [the Association Examination Division] at the time serving as EIC [examiner-in-charge] for two to three institutions, working on other exams between EIC assignments, and coaching AEs [associate examiners].

"I enjoyed what I did, but I felt like there was more that I could do for OE, and I knew there were other areas in OE that I could experience. I enjoy working with other people and I thought the LDP would be perfect to change things up, gain exposure (personally and professionally), and help others progress through their career.

"Did I think I had enough experience and knowledge to lead and instruct people at the time? I would be lying if I said yes. I had coached a few people while working on AED, but in SDD I knew I would be working with our newest examiners rather than AEs with over two years on the job.

"However, I found my EIC and examination experience helped me answer most questions AEs had. I was surprised by how much I actually knew. And if I did not know the answer to their question, I knew where to find it or who to ask.

"I am now in my second year in the LDP. I truly enjoy working/interacting with AEs, and it is very rewarding watching their progress through the Commissioning Program.

"It is a lot of work, and as a result, it can be challenging to fill out my timecard! Work consists of things you may associate with SDD such as compliance HEAs [horizontal examination activities], loan review, finance review, TE [technical evaluation] review, and pre-com training instruction. And, of course, you still have your EIC responsibilities.

"However, there are several areas you may not anticipate working on, such as serving as a supervisor and delivering performance evaluations; revamping, delivering, and maybe even leading formal training; working on recruitment, formal training, Commissioning Program, leadership, and other OE/agency committees/workgroups; selecting applicants for SI/AE interviews; managing a summer internship program/project; and being part of the EMT [Executive Management Team] managers' meeting.

"Through the LDP, I have experienced many more aspects of OE and the agency beyond the examination of an institution. I have grown in my career because of the LDP, and I would do it all over again if I had the chance."



Shahab Maslehati

"The SDD's Leadership Development Program has been one of the most challenging yet rewarding experiences during my nine-year tenure. Until the LDP, my training and experiences had centered on building a strong technical understanding of examination processes and knowledge of FCS institutions. However, to round out my development and prepare for new opportunities, I wanted to hone a critical aspect of my development: leadership. And the LDP delivered—big time!

"Specifically, the LDP provided unique opportunities to develop my communication and other 'soft skills.' Among the formal training courses I attended, the OPM's Leadership Assessment Program and the University of Minnesota's Coaching for

Executives were two standouts.

"Following those and other courses in the program, I was able to immediately apply learned skills via on-the-job opportunities. A short list of my LDP opportunities included leading the Communications 2 work group in creating and delivering new formal training; assuming delegated supervisory duties of AEs and SIs; serving as reviewer of the 2014 summer intern project; overseeing the 2015 Summer Internship Program; and, most recently, participating in an OE Manager's Meeting. These were in addition to being an active EIC and providing direct on-the-job training to AEs and SIs.

"I highly recommend the LDP program to self-driven, highly motivated individuals looking to take the next step forward in their career. The program encourages and nurtures growth, using objective and comprehensive development competencies to track your progression—so you always know where you stand.

"Furthermore, the personalized coaching and mentoring from SDD's management (and fellow LDP participants) was invaluable and aided me along the way. I look forward to continuing to grow and build on my newly obtained skill set in the coming years in FCA."



Matt Alizadeh

"Participating in the LDP has been a very rewarding experience. One of the most exciting parts of the job is related to the level of enjoyment I received when the 'light bulb' has come on for an employee. It is truly fulfilling when someone has struggled with a concept and you are able to explain it in different terms and they have an 'aha moment.'

"Also, the special projects I have led or been a part of combine with the multiple roles I have played (e.g., trainer, classroom instructor, EIC, acting supervisor) have allowed me to demonstrate and further hone one of my strengths—project management.

"Possibly more than anything else, I have enjoyed the individuals I have worked with in LDP—from SDD leadership to associate examiners and summer interns. The newer employees are very talented, well-rounded individuals who are naturally inquisitive. This reinforced my own technical skills when their questions caused me to investigate particular exam topics, procedures or practices that, over time, I started to take for granted. The enthusiasm newer employees have for the job is contagious and, while I have always been motivated to succeed, I found it further inspired me to be the best I could be both technically and as a leader.

"Ultimately, there are few things more gratifying than knowing your influence will positively impact people and an organization for years to come. I feel greatly rewarded in knowing I have been such an influence."

If you have any questions about the LDP, please contact me, Marla Goodwin, SDD Program Manager. Also, feel free to discuss your interest with our LDP participants!