## SFI Omidyar Fellows Leadership Program

## Foundational assumptions

SFI leadership training prepares Omidyar Fellows as thought leaders who shape the future of science. *For Fellows to emerge as academic and institutional leaders they must establish themselves as frontier scientific thinkers.* Thus the prime objective of Fellows is to do high quality, innovative research and communicate it effectively to the scientific community.

SFI leadership training occurs through mentoring, structured instruction, and experiential learning. There is a strong bias to embed training within the context of the fellows' routine professional activities.

We expect that leadership skills gained at SFI will have a long-term effect, but training focuses on leadership preparation for an intermediate horizon of six to ten years. Fellows will remain involved during this time horizon with SFI to build and maintain an active alumni community.

## Modalities of SFI Omidyar Fellows leadership training

*Peer interaction*: The cohort is comprised of "classes" determined by start date; ideally fellow appointments are evenly distributed over a three-year time frame. Interaction among senior and junior classes is an important training component.

*Self-assessment (SA)*: Fellows' initiation includes clear communication of program goals and expectations as well as provides an annual opportunity for fellows' self-assessment of competencies and weaknesses (clarification of personal and professional goals; Meyer-Briggs; leadership style inventory; institutional role of Fellows; and the creation of an Individual Development Plan [IDP]).

Directed skill development (DSD): The curriculum is selected and tailored from a wide array of topics related to leadership and management. Topics include grant writing and funding strategies; communication; project management; team building and collaboration; time management; teaching and mentoring; public communication; career development. Course content and embedded experience build upon each other and are conceptually integrated; training is offered on a regular basis within a coherent timeframe that corresponds to the fellows' professional needs as they mature.

Mentoring: Upon arrival each fellow selects an appropriate resident faculty mentor with guidance from the Program Management Team. This mentor provides overall guidance on professional and personal development. The resident faculty mentor and the fellow together select a member of the SFI external faculty to provide additional academic and professional guidance. In addition, the Omidyar Program faculty director oversees mentorship strategies for the fellow's academic and career development. Fellows receive mentoring but they also have the opportunity to function as mentors themselves, advising undergraduate and high school student interns in residence at SFI.

*Reflection:* The program features extended use of assessment tools and qualitative feedback to build insight and knowledge. Fellows translate data and feedback into actions to address weaknesses and reinforce strengths.

## **Program Activities**

Each of these modalities informs in the program's key leadership objectives identified in the Leadership Project Matrix. As noted, leadership objectives are pursued through structured training ("Leadership Development Activity"), in the context of professional activities ("Individual Development Plan"), and through individual mentoring. *SFI training may be more or less structured for individual fellows depending on the particular leadership training and experiences that each brings to the program.*