



AG

Leadership

Leading California's Agricultural Future

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE PROGRAM



NON CREDIT • FALL 2026

Presented in association with the F3 Initiative

Scholarships available for students

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A seven week experience connecting students with California agricultural leaders and state policy makers.

Leading Agriculture Through Relationships

California agriculture needs professionals who can connect business, people, markets and public policy.

Agriculture is more than production. It is a network of businesses, commodity associations, public agencies, community partners and policy makers. Effective leaders understand how these systems connect and how decisions affect farms, workers, consumers and the Central Valley.

The Ag Leadership Professional Certificate gives participants direct access to California agricultural leaders. Through candid conversations and guided reflection, participants will see how professionals address finances, marketing, organizational development, nutrition, workforce challenges and government relations.



BUSINESS

PEOPLE

POLICY

Ag Leadership In Figures

7

Consecutive Fridays

12

Classroom Contact Hours

7

Featured Agricultural
Leaders

1

State Capitol Immersion

\$340

Program
Fee

\$0

Possible Cost for Eligible
Students

Dates: Aug 21 and 28; Sept 4, 11, 18 and 25; Oct 2, 2026

**Classroom sessions meet 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. in North Hall, Room 123 at
Fresno Pacific University, 1717 S. Chestnut Ave, Fresno, CA 93702.**

The Aug. 28 Capitol trip is an all-day experience.

About This Certificate

7 Fridays

Non Credit

\$340

AG

LEADERSHIP

The Office of Continuing Education at Fresno Pacific University is offering a non-credit professional certificate program in Ag Leadership. It is open to students from every major and to community members.

Participants will meet with California agricultural leaders from commodity associations, agribusiness, government and public policy. Each session combines a guest leader conversation with a facilitated leadership lab led by Dr. Suzana Dobrić Veiss.

The program includes an all-expenses-paid trip from Fresno to the California State Capitol to meet with professionals who shape agricultural policy affecting the Central Valley.

During This Program, You Will Learn to...



Explain how commodity associations, agribusinesses, agencies and lawmakers interact.



Recognize leadership challenges in finance, marketing, organizational development, nutrition and government relations.



Ask informed questions and communicate professionally with agricultural leaders and policy makers.



Compare leadership approaches used across business, nonprofit and government settings.



Connect academic strengths and career interests to opportunities throughout agriculture.



Create a leadership and career action plan informed by guest speakers and the Capitol experience.

Who Will Benefit From This Program

Applied learning for students and community members exploring agriculture, business and public leadership.



AGRICULTURE NEEDS MANY KINDS OF LEADERS

01

STUDENTS FROM ANY MAJOR Students who want practical industry exposure and a professional certificate that adds value to their degree.

02

STUDENTS EXPLORING AG CAREERS Participants interested in associations, policy, business, public service and careers beyond production agriculture.

03

COMMUNITY MEMBERS Professionals and emerging leaders who want a stronger understanding of the institutions shaping California agriculture.

04

FUTURE BUSINESS & PUBLIC LEADERS Participants interested in finance, marketing, nutrition, organizational development, government relations or community leadership.

Your Program Facilitator at a Glance

Guided dialogue connects each guest conversation to leadership practice.

Suzana Dobrić Veiss

Associate Professor of Strategic &
Organizational Leadership



Dr. Suzana Dobrić Veiss

Program Facilitator

Suzana Dobrić Veiss, Ph.D., is a nationally and globally regarded consultant, educator and speaker specializing in organizational leadership, communication, change leadership, collective efficacy, resilience and organizational development. As an associate professor of strategic and organizational leadership at Fresno Pacific University and a seasoned consultant, Dr. Veiss brings knowledge and experience to her work.

With a Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership from Regent University and experience serving on executive leadership teams and nonprofit organizations, Dr. Veiss helps students and clients improve communication, navigate change, build efficacy and develop followers and leaders. She has presented at International Leadership Association Annual Global Conferences and is a sought-after speaker and trainer for national and global settings.

Featured California Agricultural Leaders

Guest leaders bring perspectives from commodity associations, agribusiness, government and public policy.

01

George Soares

Partner at Kahn, Soares & Conway, LLP

02

Richard Matoian

Former President of American Pistachio Growers

03

Connie Conway

Executive Director of Farm Service Agency; Former U.S. House of Representatives

04

Manuel Cunha

President of Nisei Farmers League

05

Ryan Jacobsen

CEO of Fresno County Farm Bureau

06

Ken Melban

President of CA Avocado Commission

07

Karen Musson

Partner at Gar Tootelian Inc.

Each conversation may explore career path, leadership lessons, industry priorities and advice for students.

Program Outline

Fall 2026 • Classroom sessions 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. • North Hall, Room 123

01

AUG 21

PROGRAM LAUNCH & AGRICULTURAL LAW, POLICY AND LEADERSHIP

Featured: George Soares, Partner at Kahn, Soares & Conway, LLP

Examine how agricultural leaders translate complex legal and regulatory issues into practical strategies while building the relationships needed to influence California policy.

Leadership Lab 1:

Leading from Within: Self-Efficacy, Resilience and Hope

Participants will:

1. Identify personal strengths and experiences that shape leadership confidence.
2. Apply strategies that strengthen self-efficacy and resilience.
3. Develop a personal commitment for responding to leadership challenges with hope and purpose.

02

AUG 28

CALIFORNIA STATE CAPITOL, PISTACHIO LECTURE & LEADERSHIP IMMERSION

Featured: Richard Matoian, Former President of American Pistachio Growers

Travel to the California State Capitol to engage with policymakers, political influencers and agricultural advocates who shape decisions affecting the Central Valley. A presentation on pistachios will be given on the bus ride there.

Leadership Lab 2:

Leading with Vision: Strengths, Purpose and Action

Participants will:

1. Identify strengths, values and experiences that support leadership excellence.
2. Create a positive vision aligned with personal purpose and future aspirations.
3. Translate that vision into actionable priorities and strategies.

03

SEPT 4

FEDERAL AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS, PUBLIC SERVICE & POLICY

Featured: Connie Conway, California State Executive Director, USDA Farm Service Agency; Former U.S. Representative

Gain insight into how federal agricultural programs, public service, and political leadership connect government resources with the needs of farmers and ranchers.

Leadership Lab 3:

Leading with Trust: Self-Awareness, Relationships and Collaboration

Participants will:

1. Identify behaviors that strengthen healthy professional relationships.
2. Apply openness, consistency and feedback to build trust.
3. Recognize personal strengths and blind spots to improve collaboration.

Program Outline Continued

04

SEPT 11

AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE, IMMIGRATION & INDUSTRY ADVOCACY

Featured: Manuel Cunha, President of Nisei Farmers League

Understand how agricultural organizations unite diverse growers, address workforce and immigration challenges and represent both producers and farmworkers in public-policy discussions.

Leadership Lab 4:

Empowering Change: Communication, Collaboration and Commitment

Participants will:

1. Distinguish between the process and people sides of organizational change.
2. Apply communication, collaboration and commitment to build change-capable teams.
3. Use shared values to establish meaningful goals and guide a desired future.

05

SEPT 18

CENTRAL VALLEY AG LEADERSHIP, NETWORKS & CAREER PATHWAYS

Featured: Ryan Jacobsen, CEO of Fresno County Farm Bureau

Discover the organizations, relationships and leadership pathways that shape Central Valley agriculture while identifying opportunities to become meaningfully involved in the industry.

Leadership Lab 5:

Adapting Your Leadership: Followership and Situational Leadership

Participants will:

1. Identify leadership and followership behaviors that influence group decisions.
2. Adapt directing, coaching, supporting and delegating styles to individual needs.
3. Use influence and shared responsibility to strengthen collaboration and achieve goals.

Program Outline Continued

06

SEPT 25

COMMODITY LEADERSHIP, MARKETING & INDUSTRY STRATEGY

Featured: Ken Melban, President of the California Avocado Commission

Examine how a commodity commission balances grower advocacy, strategic marketing, trade expansion, food safety and long-term industry viability in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

Leadership Lab 6:

Generating Peace During Times of Conflict: Conflict Styles

Participants will:

1. Recognize the causes, stages and personal styles of conflict.
2. Select constructive strategies for engaging and resolving conflict.
3. Apply peacemaking tools to restore trust, accountability and healthy relationships.

07

OCT 2

INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP, CAREER ACTION PLAN & CERTIFICATE CELEBRATION

Featured: Karen Musson, Agricultural Business and Community Leader

Learn how values-based leadership can sustain a family agricultural business while advancing innovation, responsible resource management, philanthropy and service throughout the Central Valley.

Synthesize leadership insights, identify career pathways, complete a professional action plan and celebrate certificate completion.

Leadership Lab 7:

Fostering Team Success: Team Development

Participants will:

1. Recognize the stages and characteristics of effective, high-performing teams.
2. Apply communication and trust-building strategies to strengthen collaboration.
3. Balance people and task priorities while motivating and valuing team contributions.

AUGUST 28 IS AN ALL-DAY, ALL-EXPENSES-PAID CAPITOL EXPERIENCE.

Departure and return times, transportation, meals, dress expectations and the final itinerary will be shared with registered participants.

Certificate of Achievement

Professional recognition for engaged participation and applied reflection.

Participants who successfully complete the program will receive a Fresno Pacific University Certificate of Achievement in Ag Leadership. The non-credit certificate is intended to strengthen professional credentials, career readiness and confidence engaging with agricultural leaders.

Completion requirements include active participation, attendance, professional conduct and completion of a brief leadership reflection and career action plan.



LEARN FROM CALIFORNIA AG LEADERS.

ADD A PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE TO YOUR FUTURE.

EXPERIENCE THE STATE CAPITOL.



PROGRAM DETAILS

Aug 21 - Oct 2, 2026
Fridays, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
North Hall, Room 123 • Fresno Pacific University
Zoom available for non-local attendees

Capitol immersion: August 28, all day

OFFICE OF CONTINUING EDUCATION

prof.dev@fresno.edu
1-800-372-5505
ce.fresno.edu/ag

[REGISTER HERE](#)

\$340 • Scholarships available