

# Leadership Project

ANNUAL REPORT | 2025-2026

The University of Illinois College of Law's Leadership Project recently completed its fifth full year. During the 2025-2026 academic year, the Project hosted or co-hosted the events outlined below, attracting participation from nearly 200 students.

## Leadership Project Lectures

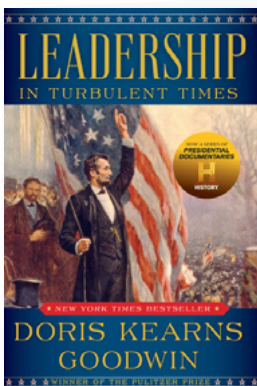
This year, the Leadership Project hosted five discussions with notable leaders:

- **Judge Candace Jackson-Akiwumi**, United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit; 2026 Jurist in Residence
- **Lea Gutierrez**, Illinois Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission (Co-sponsored by the Black Law Students Association & Inclusive Exclusive)
- **Pravin Rao**, Class of 1995; Partner, Perkins Coie LLP (Co-sponsored by Asian Law Students Association)
- **Tim Kenesey**, Class of 1993; CEO, MedPro Group (Co-sponsored by the Business Law Program)
- **Senator Dick Durbin**, (Co-sponsored by the Student Bar Association)

## Leadership Project Book Discussions

In 2025-2026, the Project hosted two book discussions:

- **“Leadership in Turbulent Times”** by Doris Kearns Goodwin. Co-sponsored by the Student Bar Association.
- **“A Different Kind of Power”** by Jacinda Ardern (former Prime Minister of New Zealand). Co-sponsored by the Women's Law Society.



## Leadership Project Classes

During 2025-26, the College of Law offered 28 classes that either focused on leadership expressly, such as Lawyers as Leaders, or that foster skills essential to good leadership. A full list of these classes is available [here](#).

This year's Lawyers as Leaders course, taught in the spring semester, featured two guest speakers – Scott Rice, the University of Illinois system's chief counsel, and Elizabeth Luckman, Clinical Associate Professor of Business Administration in the Gies College of Business. This intensive four-day course challenged students to delve deeply into leadership principles, and explore their own strengths and weaknesses as leaders. New this year, the course featured a series of complex leadership hypotheticals, which required students to wrestle with the kinds of leadership challenges that lawyer-leaders see in real life.



*Lawyers  
as Leaders*



## 2025-26 Leadership Project Scholars

This year, eight students completed the required number of lectures, book discussions, and classes for certification as a Leadership Scholar. This year's Leadership Scholars participated in a half-day retreat led by Greg Miarecki, the Project Director.

See this year's Leadership Scholars on the following page.



Illinois Law



Learn more about the Leadership Project and how to get involved:

[law.illinois.edu/leadership-project](http://law.illinois.edu/leadership-project)

## 2025-26 Leadership Project Scholars



**Shakana Arulthasan**  
*Class of 2026*



**Lindsey Jewel Aden**  
*Class of 2026*



**Arman Ahmed**  
*Class of 2027*



**Christophe J. Godbarge**  
*Class of 2026*



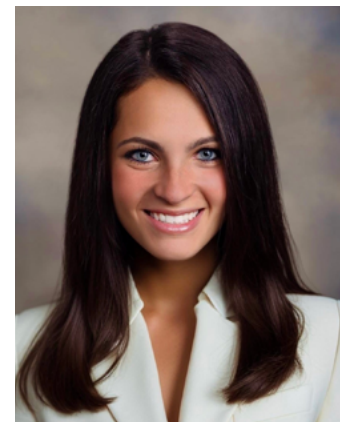
**Shaza Hussein**  
*Class of 2026*



**Nurie Seung Langlois**  
*Class of 2026*



**Parker Mee**  
*Class of 2026*



**Rachel Roth**  
*Class of 2026*

The Leadership Project allows law students to engage in necessary conversations about the essential characteristics of effective leadership and the pitfalls that can create bad leaders. The Project has helped me develop the skills needed to grow into being a leader as my legal career begins. As part of the programs that make up the Leadership Project, students are required to take on the complicated situations and dynamics that leaders of all stripes have to face on a daily basis. In doing so, it asks law students to not only engage with leadership as an abstract concept, but as a practical, everyday reality. **Parker Mee, Class of 2026**