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## TECHNOLOGY

## Program aims to strengthen IT leadership among Pittsburgh companies



Duquesne Light Co. is one of the companies participating in the Pittsburgh IT Leadership Development Program's second cohort starting in September.

DUQUESNE LIGHT



By Julia Mericle  
Technology Reporter, Pittsburgh Business Times  
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New Hampshire-based Ouellette & Associates Consulting Inc. had been offering consulting services to IT professionals for about 25 years when the company decided it wanted to scale up and offer those services on a city-wide level.

The company looked to Pittsburgh as the ideal place to test out that idea, and in partnership with Carnegie-based Plus Consulting, launched the first cohort of the Pittsburgh IT Leadership Development Program last year.

The program's second cohort, capped at 30 participants, will start in September.

Ouellette & Associates and Plus Consulting organize and lead the seven-month long program, which features three workshops, three networking sessions, three one-on-one mentoring meetings and three peer problem solving sessions.

Participating companies support the program by registering their employees, serving as mentors and hosting sessions in their office spaces. Participants include BNY Mellon, FedEx, Highmark, MSA, PPG and UPMC.

Dan Roberts, CEO of Ouellette & Associates, said the goal is to put high-potential employees on a track to leadership. He said the program should strengthen succession plans for CIOs and establish Pittsburgh as "the IT place to be."

Mark Miko, CIO at Duquesne Light, sent one of his "up-and-coming potential managers" to attend the first cohort. While Duquesne Light already operates its own leadership development program, Miko said he wanted to test whether the new program could serve as a useful supplement.

"We wanted to make sure that it gave additional experiences to our employees before committing, and once we were able to determine that with the first cohort that is why we signed up for the second one," Miko said.

Duquesne Light registered two employees to participate in the second cohort, and Miko signed up to serve as a mentor.

Miko said the program exposes CIOs and other IT professionals to industry challenges and solutions across a wide range of companies, providing a space to share best practices and strategies.

Bill Fortwangler, CIO of Dollar Bank, agreed. Three Dollar Bank employees participated in the first Pittsburgh IT Leadership Development program cohort and four more are registered for the second cohort.

“The face of tech and what leadership looks like is changing,” Fortwangler said.

He added that the program addressed the need for IT professionals to have both technical expertise as well as communication and business skills.

Miko said CIOs are a tight job market, and the participating companies warned Roberts before starting up the program that they did not want it to become a “poaching ground” for top IT talent. The companies put together an informal agreement for the mentoring CIOs, he said.

“It’s for the betterment of the overall community in Pittsburgh,” Miko said. “...We’re not going to pillage the folks from others.”

After starting in Pittsburgh, Ouellette & Associates expanded the program model to St. Louis, and Casey Scheinler, executive director for client success at the consulting firm, said they expect to expand it to four more cities by the end of the year.

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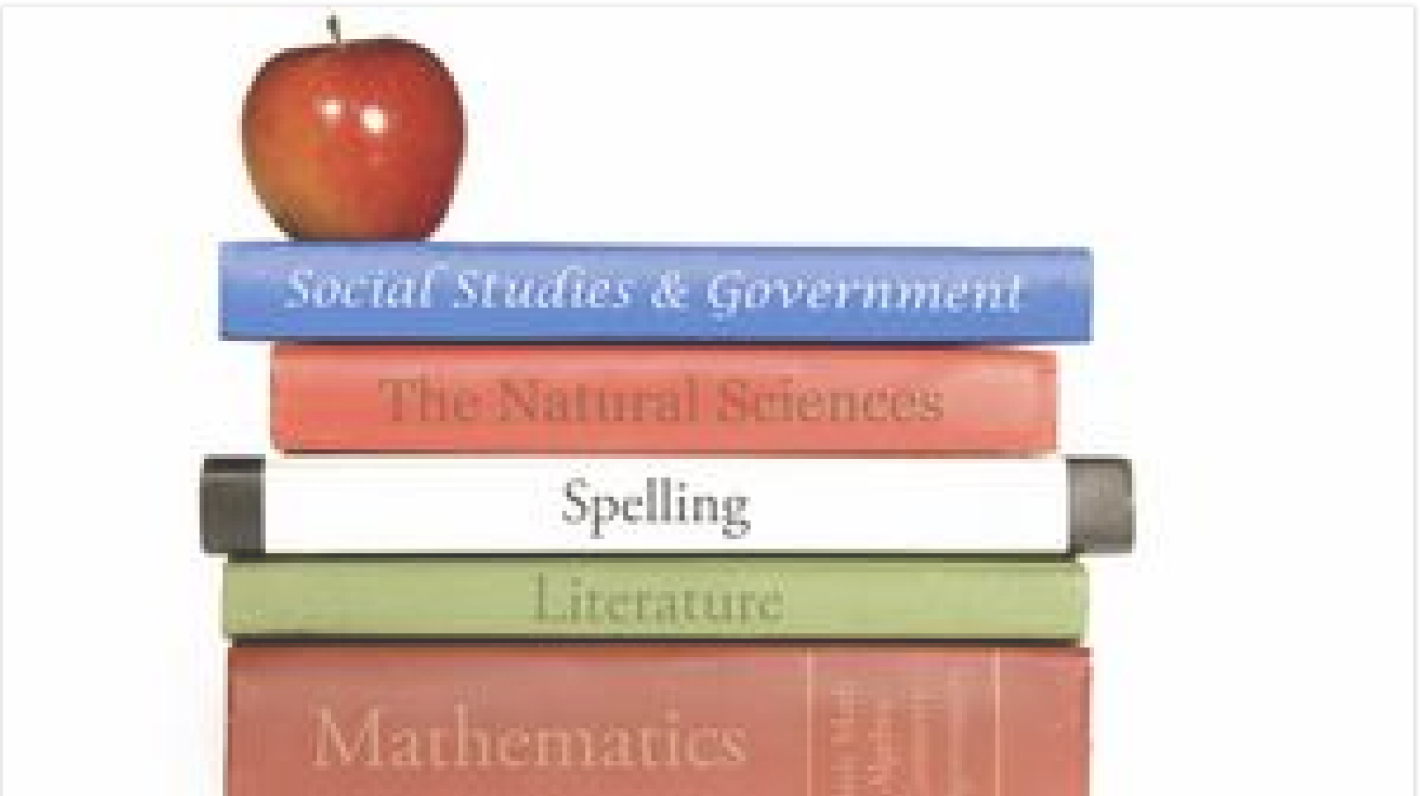


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