

Leadership Program

Visions Newsletter Volume XXI Issue III



Leadership Students Explore the Legal Field at the Department of Justice

By: Thomas Lynch ('18), Dominick Mortarotti ('18), Monique Tinglin ('18)

Interning allows students to connect the theories learned in the classroom to the real world, identify careers of interest to them and develop skills valuable to pursuing those careers. The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) is a popular place for Leadership Program students to intern in recent years.

Joelle Appenrodt, a senior in the Program, has interned in the Civil Appellate Division of the DOJ for the last 18 months. Appenrodt's experience is giving her "invaluable opportunities to explore the legal field." She "went from studying a current Supreme Court case on campus to then collecting evidence at the National Archives for the very same case."



Tyrees Smith ('15) meets Attorney General Eric Holder while interning at the Department of Justice.

since Welcome Week and now they are wonderful colleagues as we further our legal knowledge, take the LSAT and gain professional skills."

Dorian Kershaw, a sophomore in the program, works in another branch of the DOJ: the Office of the Inspector General's Management and Planning Division. Her division is responsible for writing an overview report to Congress every six months.

After just three months as an intern, Kershaw was promoted to a student employee. Her new position called for a swearing-in ceremony conducted by the Inspector General Michael Horowitz. "I felt very honored to be sworn in by someone appointed by President Obama and confirmed by the Senate," she reflected.



Leadership student Dorian Kershaw ('17) being sworn into her position with the Office of the Inspector General.

In the Civil Appellate Division, Appenrodt feels a strong sense of camaraderie with the four other Leadership students who have interned in the same office in the last two years. "They have been wonderful classmates and friends

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“Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality.”
— Warren Bennis



Elise Francis ('17) and Winston Pigeon ('16) take a break from studying in London, England.



Bob Siegel ('17), Megan Crowley ('17) and Lulu Chaker ('16) using their teamwork skills during a night of laser tag with fellow Leadership students.

Making One Last Meaningful Mark

By: Madison Mullen ('15)

Each year, Leadership Program seniors decide what they want their capstone experience to bring. The class of 2015 chose to create a magazine for younger students in the program about leadership lessons learned both in the classroom and through experience.

With the assistance of Program Director Margaret Marr, seniors divided themselves into groups based on the leadership theory that resonates most with their experiences. Each of these groups will present to the senior class on their leadership theory and its impact on each individual group member's leadership. In these groups, seniors also help each other craft meaningful contributions to the magazine.

These anticipated contributions are as vast and varied as the students themselves. Senior Ben Derby, inspired by the work of Susan Cain, plans to use poetry to shed light on the role of an introverted leader in a world that won't stop talking. Nicole Fisher, a third-year senior, intends to write about the power of humor in her experience working with hospice patients.



Harry Weiss ('15) explains his understanding of crisis leadership at Senior Retreat.

To help them design and develop their creation, seniors spent much of their two-night retreat in Germantown, Maryland working in their committees. Senior Tripp Frank said, "This retreat was a great way for us to come together as a class and really hone in on how we can have a lasting impact on younger and future Leadership students."

In order to bring students' experiences to life in magazine form, seniors split themselves into four committees: Content, Creative, Fundraising & Production and Marketing & Events. While the Content Committee will compile and edit students' written narratives, the Creative Committee will collaborate with each student to produce artwork that illuminates his or her story.



Caroline Ladzinski ('15) and Gabe Menchaca ('15) plan for the coming semester.

The Fundraising & Production Committee is tasked with finding a publisher for the magazine and raising the funds necessary to get the magazine printed. In order to release the students' magazine, the Marketing & Events Committee is introducing a public relations campaign culminating in an end-of-the-year magazine launch party.

When seniors weren't busy working on their magazine, they enjoyed hearing about their peers' growth since the last time they were all in the classroom together during their sophomore year. Through extensive personal and group reflection, students thought critically about their evolution as leaders over the course of their college careers.

Owing much to the Leadership community for their personal and professional development, seniors shared both laughter and tears as they enjoyed their last retreat with the program. Senior Gabe Menchaca said, "[This retreat] was an opportunity to really reflect on the diversity of experiences in the program and to remember how much experience matters to leadership."

Crafting those experiences and all they have taught into a magazine from start to finish in 14 weeks is no easy feat, especially with 32 editors-in-chief, but the Class of 2015 is committed to making one last meaningful mark on the Leadership Program. The seniors look forward to sharing their magazine with the Leadership and American University communities in April 2015.



The Leadership Class of 2015.

Alumnus David Simnick: Social Entrepreneur

By: Austin Edens ('18), Natalie Hedden ('18)

For many Leadership students, their passion for social action does not subside once they graduate from American University. They go on to continue their social justice work in a large variety of professional fields.

Leadership Program Alumnus David Simnick ('09), CEO and Co-Founder of Soapbox Soaps, is one such leader. Simnick started a "one-for-one" program, which pledges benefits to impoverished or undernourished individuals for every purchase of a Soapbox Soaps product.

In his final year at AU, his passion for bringing about change surfaced in the basement of his apartment complex with a few bars of soap. Although manufacturing bar soap was the first step, Simnick soon developed a national, and eventually international, reputation for his organization.



Simnick is dedicated to clean hands across the world.

After realizing how much potential his "one-for-one" program garnered, Simnick partnered with Rain Catcher, an organization dedicated to donating a month of clean drinking water for every liquid soap product purchased from Soapbox Soaps. Soon after, he partnered with Vitamin Angels, a nonprofit that now donates one month of vitamins for every body wash purchased.

This social entrepreneurial work attracts many members from the Leadership Program, including sophomore Aileen Day, who interned with him during her first year. Day experienced Simnick's leadership style first-hand, which she describes as hands-on and employee-oriented. "I always felt very comfortable around him because of his home-turned-office atmosphere and charismatic personality. I knew he genuinely cared," Day remarked.

Simnick himself agrees he is employee-oriented and strives to provide his co-workers with a satisfying work



Simnick's colleagues proudly displaying final product.

atmosphere. Simnick does away with the traditional organizational hierarchy, while still requiring excellence of himself and his team.

Simnick strongly values the concept of being self-aware, which includes comprehending and defeating one's own weaknesses. "A humble person recognizes that they do not know everything, which allows for a lot of room to grow and growth is, in it of itself, an admission of weakness," he explained.

In recognizing his own weaknesses as a leader and manager, Simnick asks himself every day, "How can I be a better leader?" He capitalizes on his experience in the Leadership Program and the skills of reflection and self-awareness to answer this question.

Today, Simnick still remains an active alumnus of the Leadership Program. For several years, he has served as a mentor for sophomores in the program. His mentee this year, Belen Flores ('17), describes Simnick as a "go-getter" who has provided invaluable professional advice about her hopes to join Teach For America.

Simnick is living proof that the lessons learned in the Leadership Program extend beyond graduation day.



Simnick receives AU's 2013 Young Alumni Award.

United States Naval Academy Leadership Conference: Leading in an Interconnected World

By: Daria Dudzinski ('18), Alexandra Mosenson ('18), Henry Watson ('18)

Every January, the United States Naval Academy invites two Leadership students and two student athletes from American University to Annapolis to closely examine leadership during a three-day conference. Nationally-recognized speakers inspire 250 undergraduates studying leadership from military academies and civilian colleges around the world.

Conference sponsors understand that bringing students from military academies together with those from civilian colleges helps to prepare all these future leaders to “work together on some of the world’s toughest decisions around war and peace, security and liberty,” Program Director Margaret Marr explained.

Leadership Program seniors, Cj Murphy and Joelle Appenrodt, were selected to join Professor Marr in attending the conference this year themed around “Leading in an Interconnected World.” The conference was designed to explore the benefits and obstacles of technology-based communication for leaders.



Leadership students deepened their commitment to public service at the United States Naval Academy.

Leadership theories such as authentic, transformational and resilient leadership were incorporated into the discussion. The advice of Pat Finn, Senior Vice President of Cisco’s U.S. Public Sector Organization, particularly stood out to both Appenrodt and Murphy: “Don’t be afraid to fail, but never lose alone.” Murphy understood this as encouragement to look to your many resources and networks for support and love in times of hardship.



Cj Murphy ('15) and Joelle Appenrodt ('15) discuss leadership practices with military members.

Former Navy SEAL Harry Wingo furthered Murphy’s understanding of risk-taking when explaining that inaction can be far more dangerous than action. Murphy connected this with the social action projects in the Leadership Program, saying, “we should not hold back in our efforts to make the world a better place, for it is far more dangerous to not take action towards social justice.”

Murphy hopes to bring back the “strong sense of unity and purpose” commonly found in military programs to the organizations she leads on campus. She highlighted the “Commander’s Mission” statement shared by the superintendent of the Naval Academy: “Be excellent to yourself. Be excellent to others. Be excellent to this place.”

Professor Marr noted that when she attends the conference each year, she is reminded, “leadership is leadership – whether it is in the military, in civilian life, in business, or athletics. No matter where it is found, at its best, leadership is premised on love.”

Red is in the Rainbow

By: Stuart Algood ('18), Bridget Anshus ('18), Benjamin Zook ('18)

Every day, thousands of people across the country participate in a simple but life-saving act: giving blood. Yet for some, the possibility of saving another is not an option.

Beginning in 1983, the United States Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) blood donation policy prohibited men who have had sex with men (MSM) since 1977 from donating blood. The policy was designed to reduce the spread of HIV through blood transfusions. However, technological advances today permit blood to be accurately screened for the presence of HIV.



The most recent blood drive at St. Lawrence University in N.Y.

In 2011, the Gender and Sexuality issue group created the social action campaign, Red is in the Rainbow, to advocate for policy reform. The social action project was executed in three parts: education, awareness and political action. They launched a social media campaign, started a petition and hosted various blood drives to spark conversation about the policy.

Exploring the Legal Field (continued from cover)

Another sophomore in the program, Natalie Giron, is currently interning as a Student Trainee Paralegal Specialist in the Consumer Protection Branch of the DOJ. Giron enjoys the opportunity to learn more about herself, gain new experiences and further her leadership development.

As a Student Trainee Paralegal Specialist, Giron helps attorneys prepare cases for trials by printing, stapling and labeling documents. She learned that diligence and accuracy at even these small tasks is important to the

Senior Lori Interlicchio, President and Co-Founder of Red is in the Rainbow, explained, "It is wrong that gay and bisexual men are prohibited from participating in this altruistic activity basically because of a stereotype. The men of Red is in the Rainbow perfectly exemplify responsible, healthy, generous individuals who want to save lives but are not allowed to. I think it is important that we all advocate on their behalves."

In December 2014, the FDA announced it would eliminate the lifetime ban that forbids blood donations by MSM. The policy now allows these individuals to give blood as long as they were celibate for a year before donating.

Some advocacy groups such as Gay Men's Health Crisis, while disappointed in the change, have accepted it to be a form of progress and see it as a sign of the FDA's acceptance of blood donations from gay and bisexual men.

Red is in the Rainbow joins numerous other gay rights groups decrying this as a non-solution. The student organization argues that a gay or bisexual man's one-year deferral is discriminatory and continues to advocate for complete acceptance of blood donations by MSM donors.

Red is in the Rainbow now focuses on promoting a risk-based questionnaire as well as expanding their outreach to other college campuses. Along with hosting various blood drives in the D.C. area, the group has reached out to two other campuses in New York (State University of New York at Brockport and St. Lawrence University) to expand its network and strengthen its impact.

Information for this article was gathered from The New York Times and the FDA. For more information about Red is in the Rainbow and its upcoming events, please visit redisintherainbow.org.

overall mission of the organization: winning cases and developing important legal precedent.

She attributes securing the internship to advice she received from other Leadership students. "Being in the Leadership Program provided me a strong base for my resume, cover letter and interview. My first-year social action project gave me great teamwork and research experience that the DOJ valued."

The director of the Civil Appellate Division values the way in which Leadership students consistently "excel in our high-achieving environment"

Putting Words Into Action

Leadership students were asked:

What is a social justice issue that most concerns you?

They answered...

GOVERNMENT REGULATION **ECONOMIC INEQUALITY**
SEXUAL ASSAULT **LGBTQ+ RIGHTS**
RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE **CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM**
EDUCATION REFORM **IMMIGRATION REFORM**
FRAKEN-FOODS **CHRONIC ILLNESSES**
MARGINALIZATION OF CONSERVATIVES
STRENGTHENING APPALACHIA **HUNGER**
GUN VIOLENCE **POVERTY** **OBESITY**
ISLAMIC-AMERICAN RELATIONS **HUMAN TRAFFICKING**
VETERANS AFFAIRS **EQUITABLE HEALTHCARE**
MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS **CLIMATE JUSTICE**
BODY IMAGE **HOMELESSNESS**
TITLE IX PROTECTIONS **ABORTION** **FOOD DESERTS**
VOTER TURNOUT **AMPLIFYING UNTOLD STORIES**
BODY IMAGE **ANIMAL RIGHTS** **LABOR RIGHTS**
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE **INCARCERATED YOUTH**
SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE **WOMEN'S HEALTH**
POLICE BRUTALITY **CIVIC EDUCATION**
BULLYING **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**
POWER & PRIVILEGE EDUCATION **SEX TRAFFICKING**

Over 40 different social issues were identified, representing the diverse perspectives of the Leadership Program. Their connections to the issues formed through their personal experiences, their work on the two social action projects they design and execute while in the program or their many internships and extra-curriculars.

Leadership students are deeply committed to addressing social issues in an effort to leave the world a better place than they found it.

LEADERSHIP IN PHOTOS



Monica Gilsanz ('17) enjoys hot tea during the Leadership Game Night.



Alumna Emily Beyer ('11) returns to the Leadership classroom to share her experience working with United States Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell.



Conchita Garcia ('18) and Ray Uyeda ('18) packaged supplies to distribute to homeless veterans during the MLK Day of Service.



Anthony Torres ('16) showing off his creativity and Leadership apparel in Orlando, Florida.



D.C. Professional Jason Boxt offers internship advice during Leadership's third program-wide dinner.



Alain Xiong-Calmes ('18) learns about an inspirational leader on a Leadership Live outing to the Mary McLeod Bethune Council House.