

LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

VISIONS

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY



VOLUME 19, ISSUE 3.

ONE LAST HURRAH: SENIORS SAY GOODBYE

by Stephen Bronskill '13

For one last hurrah, Leadership Program seniors reunited in their final semester with a capstone seminar that also affords a reflection over the past four years.

Seniors were invited again this year to create electronic portfolios that highlight their many accomplishments in the Leadership Program: implementing two social action projects, interning while studying organizational behavior, and, in many cases, studying abroad or working on a campaign, or serving as leaders of the program as teaching assistants or steering committee coordinators. All of this extraordinary

work is captured in a single visually appealing website that students may link on their resumes and LinkedIn pages. Senior Katie Hanson has found the process of creating her electronic Leadership portfolio to be enjoyable and helpful as she searches for jobs after graduation.

In the classroom, seniors again chose their own curriculum in consultation with Professor Marr. The Class of

2013 decided to focus on two topics: how leaders motivate and persuade; and how to lead through crisis and controversy. Each senior is making an hour-long

presentation on a topic of their choice within these two themes. compromise in politics and a case study of President Obama's health care reform. David Silberman explored Ronald Reagan's communication style and how it can help the seniors' communication efforts. And Sarah Robinson offered an engaging presentation on how practicing improvisational theater can add to a leader's skills in motivation and persuasion as well as navigating through crisis and controversy.

Following through on their commitment to service, the senior class also attended AU's Martin Luther King Day of Service to reconnect with classmates and engage with the Washington D.C. community.

While excited to enter the workforce in a variety of public service capacities aided by the lessons they have learned in Leadership, seniors feel bittersweet about leaving such a loving and supportive community with so many exciting opportunities opened by the program.



presentation on a topic of their choice within these two themes.

Seniors have approached this task with diverse tactics. For example, third-year senior Dan Raymer offered a negotiation simulation regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to study the role of mediation in conflict resolution. Sarah McBride and Jose Morales offered a dove-tailed presentation on the role of

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“We’re the generation
 We can’t afford to wait
 The future started yesterday
 And we’re already late.”
 —John Legend

PHOTO

“What has been your favorite part of this year in Leadership?”

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EVENTS IN LEADERSHIP



Alumni and current Leadership students meet for the first time.

Alumni Reception

by Edgar Ortega '16

More than 75 past and current Leadership students gathered at the Finemondo Restaurant in downtown D.C. to celebrate the Leadership community.

The event provided an opportunity for members of the program to practice their networking skills and see where alumni have found success. Freshman Lucas Wright noted that, "chatting with former Leadership students about the amazing jobs they get and opportunities they have after graduating made the whole experience worth it".

The reception allowed alumni to reconnect with friends and classmates. Two alumni, Emily Beyer '11 and David Levine '05, found themselves working together. When Levine told Professor Marr he had just started work at the White House, she connected him with Tommy Hunt ('12) who has worked at the White House continuously after

interning there in his junior year.

Alumni co-chairs Rachel Dockery and Jack Szeltner organized the event along with members of the freshman Alumni Relations committee. Szeltner was pleased to note a steady annual increase in attendance by both students and alumni. Szeltner says, "everyone was very eager to converse and share what personal or professional projects they are working on".

Freshman Leilani Harris appreciated the diversity of alumni interests with people working in "congress, women's advocacy, and even journalism," affording terrific networking opportunities.

The Program looks forward to replicating the event next year to continue actively bringing alums and current students into our vibrant community, providing still more opportunities for students in the future.



The winners of Leadership Buddy Olympics cheer in excitement.

Buddy Olympics

by Reiter Boldt '16

"Ready? Set. Go!" The 2013 Buddy Olympics had begun! The ultimate test of skills, and silly antics, and knowledge of Leadership trivia was upon the students. The stakes couldn't be higher in this spirited competition, as leadership buddy pairs were pitted against one another in the pursuit of the championship title.

At the beginning of each year, each first year student is paired with an older student in the program to mentor and support them throughout the year. Buddy Olympics provided an opportunity celebrate these treasured relationships and build community among students in all years in the program.

The event began with trivia, challenging each team's knowledge about the history and

people of the Leadership program, followed by a rousing game of pin the sweater vest on Professor Marr (a new version of Pin the Tail on the Donkey). Next, buddies completed a quiz of how well they knew each other in academics and beyond. Moving outdoors, the buddy pairs were tasked with a variety of physical challenges. The competition peaked as challengers moved from water balloon tosses and tug-of-war, to speed walking races.

In the end, victory was claimed by the buddy trio of Nate Seeskin ('14), David Shadburn ('15), and Reiter Boldt ('16). All who braved the obstacles of the Buddy Olympics were treated to a day of laughter, bonding, and celebration in the leadership program.

THE NEWEST LEADERS



The Gender and Sexuality Issue Group tables on the quad.



The Environmental Sustainability Issue Group works with kids.

Freshman Issue Groups

by Emma Wall '16

After a year of hard work researching pressing problems in the Washington DC community, consulting stakeholders, and designing solutions, first-year issue groups have again implemented some impressive their social action projects.

The **Gender and Sexuality** group's project ended with a bang as their social awareness campaign, "Stand Up AU" held a town hall that brought students, administrators, staff and faculty together to rekindle the conversation necessary to address sexual assault on American University's campus. The town hall offered several panel members including faculty, AU's Sexual Assault Counselor, a Director of student disciplinary matters, a representatives from the DC police LGBT liaison unit, Campus Public Safety, a student representative from the Stand Up AU campaign, as well as representatives from various other student activities on campus. This issue group also held a sexual assault resource fair and presented their research at the SPA undergraduate research symposium.

The **Environmental Sustainability** group worked with a class of middle school students at KIPP Academy in Washington DC. In a series of interactive lessons, the group taught students about pollution in the Anacostia River, environmental sustainability, and actions that could be taken to reduce pollution in their community. At the conclusion of their workshops, the issue group presented a quilt to their students at a KIPP award ceremony celebrating the work they

had accomplished in each of their lessons.

The **Youth Empowerment** issue group will host their Youth Advocacy Leadership Conference on April 20th. The conference will offer training in public policy advocacy and afford participants the opportunity to exercise their new-found skills addressing DC public officials about issues of concern to youth. Representatives from Global Kids, the DC Alliance of Youth Advocates, the Student Voice Project, as well as Leadership Program alumnus, David Simnick ('09), CEO and Founder of SoapBox Soapshave all been recruited to support the issue group in empowering Washington DC youth to become able advocates

The **Anti-Poverty** Group successfully held its "Irrigating DC Food Deserts" advocacy day on Saturday, April 6th. Speakers from DC Central Kitchen, Bread for the City, and So Others May Eat (S.O.M.E.) spoke about the root causes of food deserts, what the organizations are doing to combat the issue, and actions the AU community can take to support them.

The **Human Rights and Equality** issue group created an art exhibit on campus called "EmpowerARTment" to increase awareness of labor trafficking and its prevalence in the DC area. The group invited students to create art that represented their views of labor trafficking. Those artworks were displayed in multi-media, participative exhibition that included a video collage, a chance to vote for the favored artwork, and an engaging online quiz that allowed participants

to find out how many human slaves worldwide supported the quiz-taker's lifestyle. More than 100 people visited the exhibit.

The **Education** issue group will host their Future Focus Conference on April 20. It is designed to address the disparity between the numbers of African American and Caucasian students who apply to institutions of higher education. The conference will include a student panel featuring representatives from surrounding universities to discuss the college experience, a spokesperson from the Center of Diversity and Inclusion, speakers about financial aid and other college-related topics, as well as entertainment provided by a Howard University dance group. The featured keynote speaker is Thomas Epps, recipient of the 2009 George Mason University Vision Award.

The **Political Justice** issue group organized multiple visits to a DC Boys and Girls Club where they discussed college, careers, and resumes, and taught lessons about how the youths can protect their civil liberties. The group invited MPD officer Phillip McHugh to participate in a workshop and simulation to educate students about their rights and civil liberties.

The SPA leadership freshman class has made great strides towards making a difference through their issue group work. Thanks to the guidance of a dedicated team of freshman teaching assistants and their hard work, they have great accomplishments they never dreamed possible at the beginning of the year.

LEADERSHIP AT LARGE

The Mentorship Program: *Connecting Sophomores to the D.C. Community*

by Jasmine Jones '15

The Leadership Program offers sophomores the chance to be paired with professionals who share their interests in Washington D.C. This year's mentorship program was successful in forging invaluable bonds between current students and community leaders. Through this experience, mentees have had the opportunity to experience professional networking events, get career advice, and shadow the daily lives of lobbyists, entrepreneurs, and public servants. Sophomores have enjoyed meals and informational interviews discussing character development and personal growth. The mentorship program has not only allowed students to develop their careers, but it also has helped them to grow as future leaders.

For example, Madison Mullen ('15) worked with her mentor and AU alum Graham Vyse to develop her sophomore social action project. Vyse's experience in journalism and documentary film making helped Mullen execute strong interviews and presentation techniques for her work in The Privilege Project.



TaLynn Mitchell '15 meets with a potential mentor.

On behalf of all the students that participated in the program, I can say that our mentors have inspired us to continue to be leaders in our own fields, just as they have done with their passions.

Jasmine Jones is a sophomore in the program and serves as Mentorship Co-Chair with Cassandra Henry.

Literature Event of the Decade

by Eddie Shine '16

This spring, first-year students produced creative, entertaining and engaging presentations examining the leadership displayed in a wide array of chosen works of literature. Students applied the various theories of leadership that they studied in class to analyze books covering a wide spectrum of topics: female empowerment, science fiction, comedy, memoirs, classic American literature, and even plays.

Presentations included entertaining skits, informative PowerPoints, a poetry reading, even a movie they had filmed. One of the highlights was when the Female Empowerment group performed an 'award show' style skit in response to Nicholas Kristof's Half the Sky.

Emily Andre, a freshman in the Female Empowerment group, reflected upon her experiences after having presented on Tina Fey's Bossy Pants, "I was surprised to find that nearly all of the topics we have discussed in

leadership class were present throughout the book. Tina Fey taught me that there is definitely something to be said about a leader who can make you laugh."

At the end of fall semester Students broke into small groups based on their preferred literature genre. They exercised their consensus building skill to select a book and read it over winter break. Then, week by week, as the class explored a wide array of theories to explain admirable leadership - such as moral and ethical leadership, emotional intelligence, servant leadership, charisma - student tested those theories against the leadership they observed in their chosen book.

Through a creative study of literature, students learned key lessons of leadership and continued to build community in their first year experience. Overall, the evening was informative, engaging, and well received by all of the attendees.

A FINAL LINNER



Students across all years gather outdoors for a spring picnic.

A Send-off Dinner: *Internships Linner*

by Maggie Brennan '16

On a beautiful mid-April Tuesday evening, first-year and upper-class students alike gathered under the trees of Leonard Picnic area for sandwiches and advice on one of the most prominent questions of American University culture: what to do about internships?

After having constructed the most interesting collection of homemade sandwiches, upperclassmen in the program shared their past experiences and advice for applying to and working at various internships.

“Go to one of [the organization’s] events before you apply,” Emily Yu, AU’s Student Government President and a senior in the program, advised younger students. “Meet as much of the staff as possible, and then when you apply you can say ‘Oh, I went to this and I learned this and I met such-and-such.’ It will really impress them.”

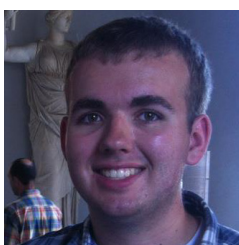
Other upperclassmen shared experiences ranging from Capitol Hill to organization think tanks, and

much in between. First-year students gathered advice and pointers about the application process and internship experience while enjoying the warm weather with football and frisbee. Students learned everything from appropriate interview attire to valuable resources on campus that can help with the internship process.

“I’ve learned a lot of really cool things tonight,” Monica Murthy, a freshman, said in response to the event. “Someone suggested collecting business cards and writing details of the person you met on the back so you won’t forget, and I would have never thought of that!”

With internship applications and finals on the mind, all Leadership students look to the future – this summer and beyond – aided by resources of the Leadership community.

What’s your favorite part about Linner?



Nolan Deming '16: I really did like the fact that we are forced to mix with the upperclassmen. It proved to be really good for getting new information on the program.



Caroline Ladzinski '15: I loved having the opportunity to hang out with the Leadership friends I don’t get to see that often. I have enjoyed the chance to get to know so many people.

LEADERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS



Student Directors from past years gather for dinner.



Freshman adventure to the Frederick Douglass House.

A Director's Farewell

by Stephen Bronskill '13

Thanks for another Great Year in the Leadership Program

An art exhibition of powerful pieces decrying injustice, an auditorium packed full of concerned community members committed to working together toward change, and countless meetings organized to make that change real and lasting. These are just some of the sights and sounds of social action in the leadership program this spring. They are the moments that make the whole year of hard work and dedication worthwhile.

Thanks to the diligent work of teaching assistants, steering committee members and faculty, we have built a strong sense of community in the program through leadership dinners, off campus service projects, and mentoring programs inside and outside of AU. We have also made important progress in creating a more inclusive leadership community and strides towards a time where everyone

feels supported throughout their time at AU.

I have had no greater privilege than to serve as Student Director this year and work with an incredible community of leaders that I am proud to call classmates, friends and team members. These individuals have built bonds of friendship to withstand the weight of the challenges facing our generation. They have learned to count on each other through collaborative social action and built trust that their own voices can send ripples of hope into the world.

I feel incredibly grateful that the program will be in such capable hands next year with David Shirbroun and Holly Hagerty and Professor Marr at the helm of two fantastic teaching teams and an outstanding Steering Committee. Together with all the fine members of our community current students and alumni, they are sure to make next year even more successful.

Leadership Adventures

by Jared Costanzo '16

During the course of this semester, each first-year student participated in a 'Leadership adventure' led by a sophomore Teaching Assistant. Adventures included tours of DC landmarks, such as Mount Vernon, the Frederick Douglass House, the Newseum, the National Portrait Gallery, and the Library of Congress. These trips provided an excellent opportunity to explore the Washington DC community and learn many leadership lessons uniquely available in the nation's capital.

Teaching Assistant Dani Nispel led a tour of the Holocaust Museum. The group went through every level of the Museum, learning about the horrific events that took place during the Holocaust. For several students, a highly emotional and depressing moment was witnessing the thousands

of shoes collected - shoes that were worn by those who had been transported to concentration camps and were forcefully stripped of all belongings.

At the end of the tour, as at the end of each adventure, the SPA Leaders regrouped to reflect and share their perspectives about the museum. They realized that despite the horrific and tragic events that took place, there were several leadership lessons to be learned from the experience. Some lessons included standing up for issues that you believe in, perhaps especially when it an unpopular, minority view. Other lessons included fighting genocide and helping victims of tragic events. The Holocaust museum serves as an important reminder of the past, and a reminder that each of us has the responsibility lead.

SOPHOMORE SOCIAL ACTION



Another Year of Social Change

by Kathryn Braisted '13 & Stephen Bronskill '13

After a year of extensive research, thoughtful consultation with stakeholders, thorough planning, and diligent execution, the sophomore Leadership class has begun to see the results of their individual social action projects. Students are engaging with critical social justice issues facing our communities including juvenile justice, fighting the stigma of homelessness, and striving for increased political representation of women. Throughout this intensive process, a team of five talented senior teaching assistants has mentored the sophomore cohort and helped their students overcome countless obstacles in designing and implementing their projects.

Sophomore social action projects have been a long time in the making. Beginning in the summer before the sophomore year, students are asked to start thinking about what they're passionate about or which causes or social issues they're truly invested in. These issues can be related to anything from environmental stewardship or mental health awareness, to vegetarianism or incarceration rates. Unlike the freshman year in which Leadership students work in groups on a social issue, the sophomore year is meant to reflect students' individuality and unique interests.

Once the year begins, sophomores dive into researching their project area, exploring the roots of the problem, potential solutions to the issue, and current and past efforts at finding those solutions. In mid-September, students spend a weekend retreat trading feedback and input with their peers, teaching assistants, and Professor Marr. This helps them to further flesh out their ideas and begin creating narrowing their focus. Shortly after, the sophomores draft a policy memo that introduces their issue of interest and demonstrates the comprehensive research they've done on it. Weeks of continued investigation and outreach later, they write a project proposal about the solution and initiative they plan to carry out for the rest of the year, including a detailed budget, timeline, and method of evaluation. To complement these skills in drafting memos and proposals, sophomores then write a grant proposal. Some students then use these proposal writing skills to apply for grant funding for their projects from organizations in DC or at AU.

The social action projects the Class of 2015 has crafted are as remarkable as they are unique. One example is the project Jasmine Jones has created in an innovative series

of campus workshops to combat negative body image and build self-esteem. Jasmine has worked to unite AU students through her workshops and create a dialogue on campus that challenges stigmas and encourages participants to feel empowered about who they are.

Another example is Cassandra "Cj" Murphy's project focused on the gap between the cost of a college education and students' ability to pay. First, Cj has created a webpage with important, frank, easy-to-understand financial aid information not available on the American University site, including how to fill out the FAFSA form, how to apply for a federal plus loan, and how to have a conversation with one's family about financial aid. She is also applying the concept of micro-finance to paying for college, creating a "micro-giving" website on which students can create profiles and donors can contribute directly to their college accounts.

The sophomore year -- sometimes marked by struggle and failure, but always by personal growth and achievement -- is a true reflection of what drives Leadership students to empower others and create change.