Staff Notes

As we turn the page from year six to seven for the Leadership Academy, it is humbling to see the maturity of our program and growth of our network of students, alumni, employers, and supporters. This year was marked with several milestones, as well as new challenges leveraged as opportunities for innovation. Read on in the subsequent pages for more insights on all of these pieces.

This was Kathryn Walters’ second year on the team, and she took on increasing ownership at an impressive pace. I had the rare opportunity to experience handing-off oversight for operational success, and see the program continue to build momentum! To me, this is the ultimate in leadership success, so it was a particularly gratifying year for yours truly.

Moving into the year ahead, the College of Engineering has continued to expand the areas of responsibility for my service as Assistant Dean of Experiential Learning & Employer Relations. As we go forward, Kathryn will officially manage the program—with my continued support, advisement, and engagement as an ever-invested member of our Leadership Academy community!

As always, thank you for your ongoing investment, support, and engagement in helping us grow engineering leaders!

Sincerely,
Scott Paja, Ph.D.

We – the entire Leadership Academy family – have a lot to be proud of. Each year, our program has continued to grow in scope and reach, and none of that would be possible without all of you who have been involved with us in some way – students, alumni, industry partners, and many other supporters and friends.

As I was putting together this newsletter, the most enjoyable part about it for me was the chance to share the voices of some of our most outstanding students, graduates, and program alumni. What I find most rewarding is seeing our students move on from our program, and incorporate what they learn or experience through the Leadership Academy, into their future lives. To be a small contributing factor of their future success is something that I find personally fulfilling, and I hope you do, too.

It seems these days, it is easy to get discouraged with the challenges of society, and indeed, the world. We live in uncertain, stressful, and confusing times. But, truthfully, when I see students engaging in our workshops, growing their skills, and aligning their purpose with their individual selves, I am always inspired by all of them. Here are the leaders who are going to create a brighter tomorrow, who are going to make a positive difference for the future of engineering, and beyond. How lucky are we to be even a small part of their journeys?!

Sincerely,
Kathryn Walters, M.S.
By the Numbers

Student Members
• Total: 526
• Average GPA: 3.6
• Honors College: 39%
• Members identifying as women: 43%
• First-Generation students: 12%

Program Activities
• Total events: 59
• Number offered in collaboration with other campuses or external orgs: 32
• Number of mentoring connections reported: 32
• Number of career experiences reported: 22

Key Insights
• 43% of our members identify as female. This is more than double the ratio (20%) in our general population in the College. Note that this only takes into account the gender binary of male and female; OSU reporting does not currently account for nonbinary and other gender identities.
• "Students of color" include students identifying as Asian, Black, Hispanic/Latinx, Multiracial, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and Native American. Our metric of 31% is a little higher than the College overall of 25%.
• Most popular majors in our program are mechanical engineering and computer science, which is consistent with the College's numbers as a whole.
• In order to scale our efforts to connect students with mentors, we established a "mentor connection" form where students can request help with identifying great possible mentor connections.
• Our volunteer engagement hours increased 22% from 2019 to 2020!

Alumni/Industry Participation
• Total number of alumni/industry participants: 148
  • Volunteered hours: 731

Majors

Race

Students of Color    White    International    Unknown

0 20 40 60 80 100 120 140
CBEE EECS MIME CCE NSE BioE General Other

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Updates & Highlights

Grand Challenges Scholars Program

In 2019, we fully launched our Grand Challenges Scholars Program (GCSP) at OSU, a program of the National Academy of Engineering (NAE), which has similar programs at top engineering colleges and schools across the country and world. Our program, set up as a second "tier" of the Leadership Academy, engages students in an engineering Grand Challenge of their choice, and they make progress toward it in five distinct areas: research, interdisciplinary curriculum, entrepreneurship, multicultural dimension, and service learning. By participating in the Grand Challenges Scholars Program, engineering students at OSU have the chance to consider the ways in which they, as engineers, can positively impact their communities, and the world, through their expertise. Last year, we engaged our initial student cohort, and laid the groundwork for future growth.

This being our second year of the program, we continued our growth. This year, we added to our team Priscila, our GCSP graduate assistant who works 20 hours per week in our office. Through her work, Priscila allowed us to continue the positive growth and expansion of our program. See below for some of this year’s GCSP highlights for 2019-2020!

2019-2020 Highlights

In June 2019, we sent two of our GCSP students to the Arizona State University GCSP Entrepreneurial Experience, a three-week session that allowed them to explore the GCSP theme of "sustainability," and make connections with GCSP students from across the country (above left).

In September 2019, two more of our GCSP students were supported by OSU and the NAE to attend and represent OSU at the the Global Grand Challenges Summit, a biennial international conference hosted by the US, UK and China's respective national academies of engineering. The event brings together engineers, scientists, policymakers, and industry leaders from across the globe for dialogue and iteration on the "global Grand Challenges." This year, the Summit was hosted in London, United Kingdom, and our students had the opportunity to attend a Student Collaboration Lab leading up to the Summit, where they teamed up with students from the UK and China to workshop engineering solutions to the Grand Challenges (above right).
2020 saw the graduation of our very first GCSP Graduate, Mikayla Farr (right). Mikayla is a 2020 mechanical engineering graduate who also minored in aerospace engineering. Her chosen Grand Challenge was Engineer the Tools of Scientific Discovery, and she amplified her understanding of this grand challenge through the various program components she completed, such as research conducted with the OSU Experimental Sounding Rocket Association (ESRA) team, as well as engaging in entrepreneurship coursework and serving local students in the Corvallis community. Congratulations Mikayla!

Additional important program highlights to note, include doubling our program enrollment to 55 students; hosting more community-building events for students to participate in, involving a volunteer graduate student mentor to engage our students; growing program component options to allow more students to benefit from our program, and offering limited “scholarships” for GCSP students to utilize for program activities that may require extra financial support.

Core Leadership Program Highlights

500 members strong! This spring, we officially exceeded 500 student members in our program, a big milestone for us. Our program is open to all engineering students who want to grow their professional and leadership skills, and it’s wonderful for us to see how many students are investing in themselves. Our total membership equates to over six percent of the total college enrollment. While this may appear to be a small metric, we have seen strong continued growth each year since our program’s beginning, and hope to continue to our goal of attaining 10 percent enrollment of the College of Engineering!

Going Virtual. This spring, with the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Leadership Academy quickly transitioned all programming to virtual delivery via Zoom. All of our planned events were able to continue, albeit in a modified fashion. We hosted virtual "industry treks" with Tesla, Carbon, Cadence Design Systems, Portland General Electric, and Genentech. In addition to these, we hosted four planned workshops via Zoom, and also engaged students in practice virtual mock interviews with our industry supporters. Thank you to everyone who engaged with us this spring, and your patience and understanding as we adjusted to unexpected circumstances. As the pandemic conditions continue for the foreseeable future, we seek to find new, creative ways to engage with our students, alumni, and industry partners in virtual and socially-distanced ways.

Alumni Engagement. As our program grows each year, so does our program alumni base! Each year, program alumni who engaged with us during their time as students at OSU, continue to stay connected with us by attending our events, hosting industry tours, and mentoring our current students. In 2019-2020, our annual alumni engagement nearly doubled from 14 individual alumni to 25 - a significant trajectory, and one we hope to continue moving forward!
Graduate Feature

"Each time I attended a LA event, I was always excited to see what discussions my peers and I would come into. Whether there were familiar faces, or a group of new students whom I hadn’t met before, I was always excited to see who would attend the event, and to learn more about what motivated others to attend!"

"I also appreciated the opportunity to hear from industry leaders and hear what advice they had for us. Each LA event left me with new insights about industry, the professional world, or simple ways to be a better person; all of which are things which I am always eager to learn more about!"

-Nikita Lal, 2020 Leadership Academy and civil engineering graduate. She will soon be starting her career at Turner Construction in Portland.

Alumni Feature

"Learning to take advantage of opportunities that are available to you, so you can continue growing holistically, is an underlying message from the Leadership Academy, and is something that I’ve continued to try to do in my professional life. I am fortunate to work somewhere that offers numerous engagement opportunities, be that through networking events, workshops (much like the ones in the LA), professional development classes and seminars, or volunteer opportunities."

"By engaging in things outside of my day to day job, I feel much more integrated in the workplace community and am continuing to grow my soft skills."

-Molly Carpenter, associate engineer at Genentech; 2019 bioengineering Leadership Academy graduate

We’ve begun highlighting some of our program alumni who are doing amazing things in their engineering careers. Click on Molly’s photo to be linked to the rest of her story, and to read our other alumni stories!
Stay Connected With Us!

We're also on Instagram! Follow us for social media updates:
@coeleadershipacademy

Started a job with a new company lately? Changed contact information? Exciting new life update you'd like to share with us? We'd love to know about it!

Email coeleadershipacademy@oregonstate.edu to make sure we have your information up-to-date. It only takes a few moments of your time, and it helps us keep you engaged with all the activities of the Leadership Academy!

Join our LinkedIn group below for more frequent updates and conversations throughout the year:

College of Engineering Leadership Academy - Oregon State University

College of Engineering Leadership Academy
219 Johnson Hall
Oregon State University
Corvallis, OR 97331
coeleadershipacademy@oregonstate.edu

SAVE THE DATE: SUMMIT 2020

October 17, 2020
10:00 am
Offered Virtually This Year
Formal invitation to follow