

THE SAPPHIRE NEWSLETTER

Fall Issue - December 2023



OVERALL FOREWORD:

By Sarah Hunt, 2023 Sapphire Overall

Sacha and I are so grateful for an amazing Fall 2023 semester! This year, our leadership team committed countless hours over the summer to pre-plan a semester of great events aimed at pursuing the goals they laid out at the beginning of the year. Our Sapphriends brought energy to so many great events while balancing heavy leadership loads outside Sapphire. Unprecedented volume and quality of leadership opportunities marked this semester, so we hope you enjoy the read of just a few of many amazing events!

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A Letter from our Faculty Director...

Hello, Sapphire Family!

2023 was a great year for the Sapphire program, and I'm extremely proud of all you've accomplished. As you reflect upon the Sapphire activities you participated in over the past year, I hope you'll see them less as a series of events you signed up for and more as a progression in your professional and leadership development journey. And while you're all working toward completing your degree and receiving your Sapphire pin, there really is no graduation associated with improving your professional skills, refining your leadership philosophy, and contributing to and lifting up our community. These should be lifelong pursuits for all of us, and the Sapphire program serves as a way to set the course for your continued development. As we look back on 2023, I hope you'll join me in thanking the Sapphire students who stepped into leadership roles and kept our program moving forward. And for those of you who aren't in leadership positions, remember this: every situation needs a leader, and you don't need a title to be that leader. As we step into 2024, I challenge each of you to do the following three things: 1) make an effort to meet a Sapphire student you haven't met before, 2) be a leader when a leader is needed, and 3) do at least one extra thing to improve yourself—either from a professional, leadership, or well-being perspective. I'm looking forward to great things for the Sapphire program in 2024, and I can't wait to continue our development together.

See you soon!



Dr. Solo
2023 Sapphire Faculty Director

Leadership Development: Creating the Opportunity to Lead

By Mark Vighetti, 2023 Leadership Development Captain

This semester, we diversified our leadership development offerings to provide Sapphires access to many perspectives on leadership. With events such as Public Speaking on the Fly, Sapphires were able to further develop their leadership, adaptability, confidence and public speaking while having fun. With our guest speaker events including Johnson and Johnson's Rita Chernyshev, and PSU Student and entrepreneur Nick Chermol, we provided a diverse network of professional resources to help challenge and expand the minds of our members. Assigning randomized teams and team leaders has also proven to be a successful strategy to help Sapphires engage during our events, but more importantly expand their networks with members they have not interacted with before. We have found that the most successful LD events are those that are led by our members, and guided by the LD Team. Lastly, the LD Team focused on a "people-first" philosophy to leadership this semester by hosting events designed to provide Sapphire leaders with a toolkit of resources to help those they lead, and strategies to prevent burnout for themselves and those they lead. I am incredibly excited that I will be returning as the LD Captain next semester, and I am excited to leverage all that I have learned to help improve our program.

Community Service: Setting up New Partnerships at Penn State

By Holly Deemer, 2023 Community Service Captain

Our team had one goal when stepping into our roles: recognition with other Penn State organizations. This semester we were able to have a stronger focus on outreach and collaborated with Best Buddies Penn State. Best Buddies is an organization at Penn State focused on giving teenagers and adults with intellectual disabilities a one-on-one friend. We hosted a Best Buddies GBM and were able to host a craft, games, and an ice cream social with the members of the organization. This was an incredibly successful event and set us up for a fruitful relationship with the organization going forward. Expanding Sapphire's reach beyond Smeal is incredibly important and other Penn State organizations were the perfect starting ground. We are excited to continue hosting events for Best Buddies in the future.



Day in the Life of Kim Kainer, VP at Dell Technologies

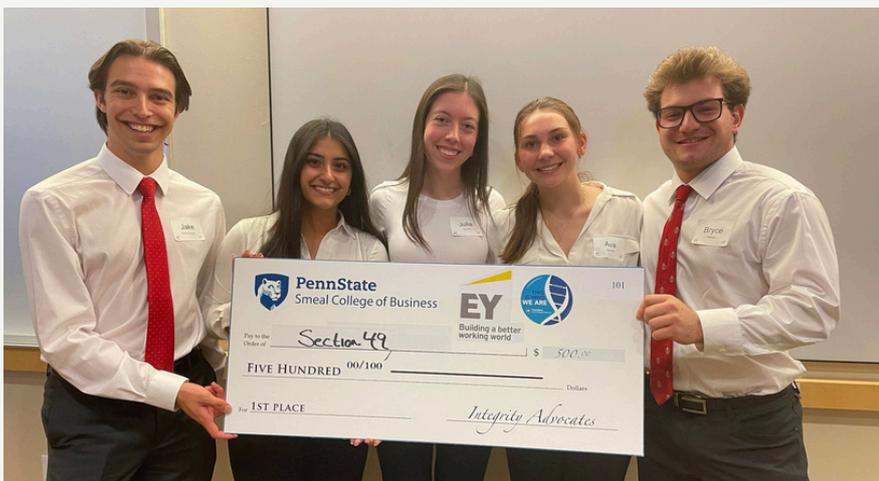
By Ben Petrulis, 2023 Professional Development Captain

This semester, one of the main goals of the PD Team was to bring in experienced professionals who could provide insights to students on professional development and leadership growth within their industry. To do this, we teamed up with Steve Tracey who is the Executive Director of the Center for Supply Chain Research at Penn State, in order to source exceptional business professionals for our events. At one of these events, we heard from Kim Kainer, who walked us through her career journey at Dell and what she learned professionally and as a leader during each phase of her career. Kim Kainer was an engaging speaker with a passion for preparing Penn State students for the workplace. We look forward to continuing to bring in stellar speakers for events in the future.

First-Year PSU 6 Case Competition

By Grace Hubbard, 2023 Communications Chair

This semester, our first-year students had the opportunity to compete in the Tarriff Center For Business Ethics and Social Responsibility's First Year Business Student Honor and Integrity Case Competition sponsored by Ernst & Young through their PSU 6 class. We are so proud to announce that one of our Sapphire teams placed first in the competition! Sapphires, Julia Goretti, Sachi Singh, Bryce Kipnes, and Ava Bartnik, represented their class well and were successful in effectively recommending and presenting their ideas for ethically integrating Artificial Intelligence technology into the undergraduate curriculum. We are so proud and are excited to see all that our students will accomplish!



1st Place

2023 First Year Business Student Honor & Integrity Case Competition

 PennState Smeal College of Business | Tarriff Center for Business Ethics and Social Responsibility

Sponsored by



DE&I: Gender Equity Center Event

By Maia Kubick, 2023 DE&I Consultant

As consultants this fall, we made it a priority for Sapphires to build an understanding of every individual's unique background. And, if applicable, have Sapphires feel comfortable reaching out for help regarding their personal identity or experiences. Our event in October with the Gender Equity Office here on campus completed that goal. It was so meaningful to host guest presenters Sophia Mills, program coordinator, and Mary Ohashi, survivor advocate. Knowing how to handle difficult and unprecedented situations that arise for yourself and/or your peers, as well as the resources available to help, are skills Sapphires learned during this event. We sincerely hope that the information provided helped at least one person in need!

Kids in Business: Money Matters

By Holly Deemer, 2023 Community Service Captain

This semester we were able to go to Mount Nittany Elementary School to teach a new group of first graders about how to count, spend, and save money—and in a fun way! We kicked off the semester by introducing the first graders to their new wallets and play money and on our second trip played “Money Bingo” where they had to count the correct amount of change to win! On our third trip is when the fun really began and we hosted an ice cream social for the students! They were given a \$5 budget they could spend on scoops of ice cream and delicious toppings. The students were able to count out the change to the cashier and receive their ice cream. On our final trip, they got to spend their remaining money to visit some shops set up by our Sapphire volunteers to buy candy, toys, and new school supplies.

This was a successful series and the students were much more confident with their cash after setting them up for success with their allowances at home. We are excited to return next semester and teach the students about entrepreneurship!



FYF Comm 101: Introduction to Professional Email & Social Media Communications

By Jake Musmanno, 2023 Communication Captain

This semester marked the inaugural event hosted by the Communications Team. As in previous semesters, the team's primary role centered on being the internal communicator for the Sapphire program. Their responsibilities included disseminating information about professional development, leadership opportunities, community service, and involvement, while also capturing program events and showcasing individual achievements on social media.

Eager to take on a more proactive role, the Communications Team identified an opportunity to leverage their communication and social media skills by organizing one of the seven bi-weekly FYFs. This particular session aimed to educate the new Sapphire First Year Class on effective professional communication through digital platforms.

The session covered various aspects, such as writing professional emails, creating polished email signatures, maintaining an appropriate online presence on social media, and crafting a standout LinkedIn profile. Specifically focusing on LinkedIn, the team guided first-year students on building compelling profiles, utilizing the platform's features effectively, and leveraging it as a networking tool.

Following a 30-minute lecture-style presentation, the team adopted a workshop-style approach, providing time for first-year students to ask questions, and more importantly, implement the knowledge gained by actively building their LinkedIn profiles and email signatures.

The event proved to be a success, and the Communications Team envisions it becoming an annual tradition passed on to each successive team. They also hope that this initiative lays the groundwork for future Sapphire Communications teams to host more events and contribute uniquely to the Sapphire Program. The team eagerly anticipates witnessing the creative ideas that the future Communications Team will bring to fruition.



Professional Development: Introduction to Tableau

By Sanjana Devarakonda, 2023 Professional Development Captain

In order to provide technical development for students, the PD team brought in Paulina Krys from Penn State Libraries to introduce this data visualization platform to Sapphires. Tableau is becoming an increasingly useful skill that recruiters want to see students having, so this provided students with a basic understanding of what Tableau does and play around with the software. Krys, teaching from Zoom, shared her screen into the classroom and students were live in class. This allowed for collaboration between students during an otherwise isolated event. Overall, students were excited to increase their technical knowledge and gain tangible Professional Development skills!

Sapphire Involvement:

Yoga Class

By Natalie Stuart, 2023 Sapphire Involvement Captain

This semester Sapphires had the opportunity to focus on their personal wellness at a group yoga class! The instructor led stretches and breathing exercises throughout the hour-long class to help students destress. This event was a great way for Sapphires to spend time together and unwind!



Lead & Leadle Paint Night

By Natalie Stuart, 2023 Sapphire Involvement Captain

The Lead & Leadle mentorship program is going strong! This semester Lead and Leadle pairs had the opportunity to attend up to six events - one of which was paint night. The theme of the event was "creativity and conversation". Pairs had the opportunity to tap into their artistic talent while chatting with their Lead or Leadle.



Cohort-Specific Events

By Sarah Hunt, 2023 Sapphire Overall

Using the feedback we collected at our cohort conversations in the Spring, this semester we launched cohort-specific events to build more progression into Sapphire’s leadership curriculum and offer opportunities for each cohort to regroup in their Sophomore, Junior, and Senior years. Cohort-specific events will be a continued modification of the points system. In past years, the Sapphire’s points requirements were 20 PD, 20 LD, 20 CS, and 60 general points. While we haven’t changed the overall quantity of points, we focused the scope so 10 PD and 10 LD points come from attending cohort-specific events (FYF participation included). Meaningful experiences that meet students where they are in their college careers as well as building cohort connections were a high priority, and we have been receiving energizing feedback from upperclassmen. As the incoming advising team continues to refine the 4-year strategic plan, we are excited to see how this added structure continues to support our members’ personal leadership journeys.

Sourcing Sapphire

By Sacha Smith, 2023 Sapphire Overall

This semester, as Overalls, we decided to take on the opportunity of bringing in recruiters to interact with our students for our first ever Sapphire networking night “Sourcing Sapphire”. This event hosted eight of the Smeal Corporate Partners (PWC, KPMG, EY, BNY Mellon, Clark Associates, First National Bank, Enterprise Holdings, and Cigna). It was an opportunity for all cohorts and students from all majors to interact with recruiters and representatives to help prepare them in their future pursuits of internships and jobs. The event was so successful, and we are proud to announce that we will be hosting Sourcing Sapphire every semester in collaboration with the Business Career Center.



Ethics in Sapphire

By Jason Hess, 2023 Ethics Consultant

As consultants this semester, we wanted to bring real-world examples and lessons into the events that we held. This culminated in an event titled Marketing Mishaps, where students from all four cohorts came together to analyze cases of unethical marketing and learn about ways to promote ethical marketing as a leader. The students worked in teams and watched advertisements that were questionable in some way, and then discussed how to make them better, what the issues were behind them, and what the organization should do moving forward. One example included Pepsi's famous "Harrier Jet commercial" where they promised a jet to whichever customer acquired enough Pepsi Points. We also looked at the Juul ad campaign and debated whether they targeted minors. Finally, we discussed the Volkswagen "Clean Diesel" campaign that resulted in fines and recalls world-wide. This event was well received by students for its interactive nature and we hope that it is brought back in the coming year!

Leadership Development: Leveraging Sapphire Leaders

By Riley Radosavich, 2023 Leadership Development Captain

Following through on our commitment to our vision, this semester the Leadership Development team thrived to recognize the success of our membership network. Instead of our events marrying the preconceived notion of being lecture-formatted and presentation focused, we organized our membership events by flipping the script and having Sapphire students host discussions and share their stories in the academic and professional world. Through this, Sapphire students felt valued in their experiences and more confident in hearing the hardships and success of those around them. Having this format promoted a strong community setting that Sapphires are proud to be a part of. As a team, we sincerely enjoyed seeing how passionate and excited the cohorts have been this semester. We look forward to the forthcoming Leadership Team, and we hope that they continue our present vision of forming and empowering strong, ethical, and successful leaders. We hope our initial mission continues to be followed by enhancing and evolving Sapphire leaders through application, simulation, and quality programming.



Sapphire THON

THON Bingo Night

By Hunter Allen, 2023 Sapphire THON Captain

On November 29, 2023, Sapphire THON hosted our annual bingo night event with former Sapphire faculty director, Dr. Novack, calling the numbers once again. We are thankful for The Hershey Company, Unilever, and Dell for donating amazing prizes for the winners. There was no shortage of excitement for this year's edition, as we quickly maximized the participant slots for the event. We may have to budget for an extra bag of bingo chips next year, as we had a little over 80 Sapphire students in attendance to play! Bingo night is an event that continues to grow in popularity, and that is a big reason why we make such an effort to get in on the Sapphire THON programming as soon as we can! This added popularity resulted in a tremendous increase in donations. The one hour event raised \$800 for THON, becoming our 4th largest fundraiser since THON 2017! We were overjoyed by the success this year, and we look forward to continuing the bingo night tradition next year!



Pie-A-Sapphire Fundraiser

By Hunter Allen, 2023 Sapphire THON Captain

This year, we revived a fundraising idea that has not been used by Sapphire THON since 2012. Sapphire students braved the elements on an extremely rainy, chill day and took whipped cream pies to the face in the heart of downtown State College to raise money for THON. Miska Jewelers was kind enough to allow our THON organization to use the sidewalk outside their store to host this fundraiser. We went through 6 bottles of whipped creams, 3 rolls of paper towels, and 1 package of face cleansing wipes in our 4 hour fundraiser that raised \$317 for THON! There were many highlights throughout the day, but perhaps none will top Sapphire first-year Palmer Moore brokering a deal with Sapphire Faculty Advisor, Evan Smith, to throw a pie in his face. Despite the weather, volunteers boasted positive spirits and made the event meaningful for all involved! We found success with this revival, and we are hopeful that we can take Pie-A-Sapphire to new heights in the coming years!



General Body Meetings

Each semester, the Sapphire Leadership Academic Program invites all 200 members to four General Body Meetings (GBMs) with guest speakers, games, and learning opportunities. These events have become especially exciting throughout the past year as it is one of the few times Sapphires across all cohorts are able to see each other! Below are the brief recaps of the four GBMs that were offered during the fall 2023 semester.

GBM #1: Sapph-Fair Pt. 2

In the spirit of community building, we brought back the Sapph-Fair for our first GBM! We had the great honor of welcoming the new cohort and giving strategic updates and expectations for success in the new semester. Our leadership team hosted fun booths to collect feedback, create a resume book, build membership databases, boost THON membership, and create deliverables to carry throughout the semester. Always a fun time at the Sapph-Fair!

GBM #3: Gus Colangelo Community & Culture

For this GBM, we collaborated with the man, the myth, and the Sapphire legend, Gus Colangelo. We asked Gus to come speak to Sapphires about community and culture and lead us through a workshop that looked introspectively at Sapphire's culture. This GBM reconnected the organization and provided the incoming Sapphire Leadership Team with some ideas for events and offerings for programming next year.

GBM #2: Alan Zemaitis Leadership Journey

This GBM was quite exciting. For this GBM we collaborated with one of our seniors who is a Player Personnel Intern for Penn State Football to bring in Alan Zemaitis. Alan Zemaitis was a former Penn State tri-captain and three-time All Big 10 cornerback. He came and spoke to our students about his leadership journey and overcoming setbacks as a leader and a team player.

GBM #4: Leadership Insights & Community Celebration

We had the pleasure of wrapping up the semester and year in Sapphire with leadership insights and community celebration. Our last GBM centered around the idea of lifelong learning in leadership with keynote insights from Angela Shakur, Director of Purchasing and Administration at ALDI USA. We sent off our Fall graduates in a mini-Pinning Ceremony and brought in a new leadership team. Happy new year!

Fall 2023 Graduating Seniors



Jaime Agip
Supply Chain
Management



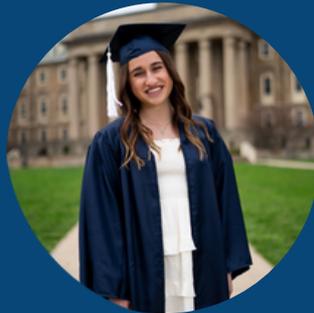
Sarah Hunt
Actuarial
Science



Will Lundy
Accounting
(MAcc)



Alexis Ramer
Accounting
(MAcc)



Anastasia Sparages
Supply Chain &
Information Systems



Karsyn Kehler
Management
Information Systems



Jesse Sumner
Finance



**Congratulations
Graduates!**

Sapphire Fall 2023 Leadership Team

Overalls



Sacha Smith



Sarah Hunt

Communications

Chair



Emma Care

Captain



Jake Musmanno

Chair



Grace Hubbard

Community Service

Captain

Chair



Matthew West

Chair



Holly Deemer



Colton Shiry

Leadership Development

Chair



Hunter Badamo

Captain



Riley Radosavich

Captain



Mark Vighetti

Chair



Caleb Shuman

Sapphire Involvement

Captain



Natalie Stuart

Chair



Sarah Lessig

Professional Development

Chair



Jack McCormack

Captain



Sanjana Devarakonda

Captain



Ben Petrusis

Chair



Palmer Moore

Consultants

DE&I



Maia Kubick

Ethics



Jason Hess

Sapphire THON

Captain

Chair



Madi Hunter



Hunter Allen

Chair



Matt Miller

LOOKING AHEAD TO SPRING 2024

By Sacha Smith, 2023 Sapphire Overall

For Sarah and me, this goodbye is bittersweet. Reflecting on this year, we have learned so much from this organization and its people. It has been a privilege and an honor to be able to say we led Sapphire. We hope in our term we have continued to grow this organization positively and made all its former leaders proud. So, for now, it's goodbye from us, the 2023 overalls.

Looking ahead, we are so excited to welcome in the 2024 Leadership Team. The incoming Overalls, Holly Deemer and Palmer Moore, and their new team are looking to continue to innovate and grow the organization to its full potential and reach new heights. So be on the lookout for the spring newsletter to hear about all the amazing things that are to come.



We thank you for your continued engagement as an alumnus and would like to remind you to stay connected! If you have career updates, want to share insight with current Sapphires, or participate in our alumni pairing program, please reach out to us via email at sapphire@smeal.psu.edu. Have a safe and amazing summer!



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@sapphireleadershippsu



Sapphire Leadership
Academic Program