

The SAPPHIRE Newsletter

Spring Issue - May 2021



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OVERALL FOREWORD:

By Vivian Ward, 2021 Sapphire Overall

During the Spring 2021 semester, the Sapphire Leadership Academic Program welcomed a new leadership team of 18 students who were eager to push the boundaries and create new opportunities. Our goal as a team was to implement unique experiences for all Sapphire students while continuing to enhance our internal efficiency and marketing strategy. As Overalls, Sydney Asencio and I are so proud of everything that this Leadership Team has accomplished in just five months, all in a virtual environment, and we cannot wait for what is in store for Fall 2021!

Adopt-a-Classroom Read Aloud

By Vianna Shiry, 2021 Community Service Captain

This semester, the Sapphire Community Service Team had a new opportunity to “adopt” a classroom at the local Mount Nittany Elementary School. We had the pleasure of interacting with Mrs. Dreibelbis’ first grade students in two virtual read aloud events. Sapphire students got to engage with the first graders by reading two books with a theme centered around the importance of leadership. After reading each book, the elementary students shared their takeaways from the story and participated in an activity that illustrated its main idea. This was a great way for the students to show their creativity and relate the message of the story with something that was important to them in their own life. Sapphire students also participated in the activity, which was a great way for students to bond with the first graders and put a smile on everyone’s faces. At the end of the school year, we gave each first grader a literacy kit which included a book, journal and fun writing stuff to encourage them to continue to read and write over the summer. We are very grateful for the experience we had with Mrs. Dreibelbis’ first grade students and cannot wait to continue the relationship in the coming semesters!

Internship Panel

By Alice Li, 2021 Professional Development & Leadership Development Captain

While internships are an important step for success for college students, many first years and sophomores are anticipating their first internship with both anxiety and excitement. The Professional Development and Leadership Development team held an Internship Panel which provided a chance for upperclassmen Sapphires to share their experiences and takeaways with younger students. There were a variety of internships across several majors represented, including supply chain, management, and finance.

During the event, each panelist shared about how they applied and prepared for the internships. The students learned the differing ways to apply for an internship, like career fairs, LinkedIn, case competitions, and networking. The panelists also talked about their favorite and least favorite parts of their internships, as well as how to combat problems and mistakes. This event was also unique because it allowed for Sapphire upperclassmen to help Sapphire underclassmen. With a constant effort on building this positive and “give back” relationship within Sapphire, we are looking forward to the many more events presented by outstanding Sapphires soon.



Saxby's Study Session

By Caitlin Murphy, 2021 Sapphire Involvement Captain

With most things being virtual this past semester, it was refreshing to host this event outside on the Smeal lawn. It was a beautiful day at University Park, and the Sapphire members enjoyed getting a head start on studying for finals with each other in a safe and socially distanced manner. With the event being two hours long, it gave plenty of time for studying and making friends. It was a wonderful bonding opportunity for the new members, and the fresh air was a great form of stress relief. Members were setting up blankets to sit on and were either studying on their laptops, reading a new book, or simply taking a break to relax. Everyone seemed to enjoy the change in scenery. To top things off, the event provided snacks and refreshments from the popular coffee stop for Smeal students - Saxby's! The event was certainly a successful way to end the semester.



"It was the best way to break up the stressful week before finals being with everyone and enjoying the nice weather. It was great getting to see people in person, even if it was a limited group. It felt very comfortable."

- First year Amanda Garcia

Everybody Pulls the Tarp Speaker

By Kristen Chomos, 2021 Professional Development & Leadership Development Captain

The Professional Development & Leadership Development programming for Spring 2021 featured several Penn State alumni. Notably, the semester wrapped up with an energetic, motivating alumni discussion with Andrew Moses: VP at MorganFranklin and creator and host of the podcast series "Everybody Pulls the Tarp."

In the podcast, Andrew interviews highly successful people, including Olympians, pro athletes, CEOs, best-selling authors, and beyond. In each episode, guests share their journey to success and highlight the leadership lessons learned along the way. On their own time, students had the opportunity to listen to a podcast episode and complete a form to share their key takeaways and feedback with Andrew.

During the event with Andrew, he explained the meaning behind the title "Everybody Pulls the Tarp." He developed the motto during his time working for a baseball team. In the event of rain, everybody pulled the tarp over the field, not just the field crew. Employees from all seniority levels helped with this task. It showed Andrew that no task falls beneath anybody and that small opportunities exist to impact the people and organization around him. He encouraged the Sapphire students to seek out these opportunities. During the discussion, Andrew highlighted some of his favorite "tarp-pulling moments" from various podcast guests.

Sapphires engaged in discussion with Andrew and had the opportunity to connect with Andrew on LinkedIn for future contact.

Sapphire THON raised

\$18,144.67

2nd most in program history!



Sapphire THON 2021

By Cameron Vinson, 2021 Sapphire THON Captain

Most would agree that the theme for the last year has been *change*. Whether it was the shift to online learning and the remote environment of activities or the noticeable absence of fans in Beaver stadium, so much in Happy Valley has been different. The one thing that has remained constant through it all is everyone's commitment to THON. THON 2021, which will forever be remembered as #THONline, was a banner year for our efforts within Sapphire THON. Our hard work and determination despite challenges culminated in a total of **\$18,144.67** — all For The Kids! THON was also able to collectively raise **\$10,638,078.62** in the fight against childhood cancer.



We would also like to recognize our incredible dancers for their efforts throughout the year, and their remarkable energy and commitment throughout the entire weekend of THON. Matthew Junker (junior) and Emily Irvin (junior) made the weekend memorable and everyone in the organization was blown away by their passion for THON. They both were amazing! Heading into THON 2022, we are looking forward to (hopefully) returning to in-person fundraisers, events, and improving upon plans we had for this year. We are looking forward to seeing our family, the Grabs, and Hailee in person again once it is safe to do so. We could not be more excited for what lies ahead. FTK!

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 spring semester.

GBM #1: Lt. Morina Foster

In January, Lt. Morina Foster highlighted the importance of tackling challenges in leadership. Morina spoke to her countless experiences in different military roles and geographic locations that taught her the value in understanding how to adapt to change.

GBM #3: Cohort Competition

For the third GBM of the semester, Sapphires were broken into their respective cohorts to compete in a friendly game of *Family Feud*. Until next time, it appears that the first year and senior cohorts will reign supreme.

GBM #2: Entrepreneur Panel

Sapphire's February GBM featured a panel of three State College female entrepreneurs who own local businesses: TasteBuds Kitchen, PYP Studio, and Spaces Design. These entrepreneurs provided great insight as to what business ownership looks like and how to persevere through obstacles.

GBM #4: Theresa Piazza

Our final GBM of the semester focused on managing professional risks. Guest speaker Theresa Piazza, a senior director at Blue Apron and Sapphire alumnus, shared personal anecdotes and advice for tackling movement within your career.

Ethics & Social Responsibility Team

By Michelle Liang, 2021 E&SR Captain

This semester, Sapphire has unveiled a new Captain position! The Ethics and Social Responsibility (E&SR) Captain, alongside two Chairs, are responsible for integrating aspects of ethical leadership and corporate social responsibility into Sapphire events. In addition to hosting individual Sapphire events, the E&SR team has teamed up with Michelle Darnell, the Director of the Tarriff Center for Business Ethics and Social Responsibility, and various guest speakers for collaboration events.

This semester, the E&SR team worked with the the PD/LD team to host our first ever “Contemporary Conversations” series for Sapphire members. While PD/LD tackled topics like diversity and inclusion, the E&SR team moderated discussions with fellow Sapphires about current events. In our conversation about sustainable supply chain, we looked at the case of a large tech company and its questionable sourcing of precious metals. Students joined breakout rooms to discuss various ethical implications of the issue while also connecting these ideas to consumer action and the purchasing power we have as individuals.

The Contemporary Conversations series this semester was a great way to have Sapphires engage with each other in thoughtful discussions that may not be introduced in our business curriculum. The E&SR team cannot wait to continue this series in the Fall!

A Mobile Solution for Tracking Points

By Chrisly Li, 2021 Communications Captain

Sapphire hit another milestone this Spring as the Leadership Team transitioned the point system to an online platform through the partnership with the Suitable app to leverage members' experience under the virtual environment.

Compared to the previous point submission system, Suitable offers a flexible performance tracking system with mobile and desktop versions. By simply scanning a QR code, members can submit their attendance at Sapphire events, check their point status, and upload involvement outside Sapphire anywhere, anytime. Suitable also provides features for other Sapphire engagements such as viewing upcoming events and academic requirements.

Other than the flexibility and convenience within the new point system, Suitable also allows for the Leadership Team to analyze event data more than ever before. The Leadership Team is now able to leverage this large database and make more informed decisions based on the correlation between members' majors and their engagement with Sapphire events, attendance trends across cohorts, and more.

During this unique time, the Sapphire Leadership Team plans to continuously explore potential opportunities that would enrich members' learning experience and take Sapphire engagement to the next level.

Diversity & Inclusion Initiative

By Sydney Asencio, 2021 Sapphire Overall

When Vivian and I were creating our vision for the upcoming year, we determined there was an imminent need to establish a strong, meaningful Diversity & Inclusion initiative. With the help of our Leadership Team, the Office of Diversity Enhancement Programs in Smeal, and Multicultural Resource Center connections, we were able to make fundamental strides toward this vision. The PD/LD team implemented an entirely new D&I section of the first year biweekly program focusing on implicit biases, the E&SR team hosted an “Inclusive Party Planning” event, and other teams brainstormed how to foster a welcoming environment for all within Sapphire. We look forward to incorporating feedback from our members and building upon this foundation in future semesters!

Sapphire Senior Award Recipients

Allie Mollo, Finance - 2021 Smeal Student Marshal

Awarded to a graduating senior representing outstanding academic achievement for the Smeal College of Business

Noah Donten, Actuarial Science - 2021 Risk Management Student Marshal

Awarded to a graduating senior demonstrating excellent academic achievement and involvement within Risk Management

Jacqueline Tucker, Marketing – Ralph H. Wherry Student Service Award

Eden Jacoby, Supply Chain & Information Systems – Ralph H. Wherry Student Service Award

The award honors graduating seniors who excelled in service to the college, have exhibited academic achievement, and manifest the promise of a successful professional career

Emalee Landis, Finance – George Leland Leffler Award

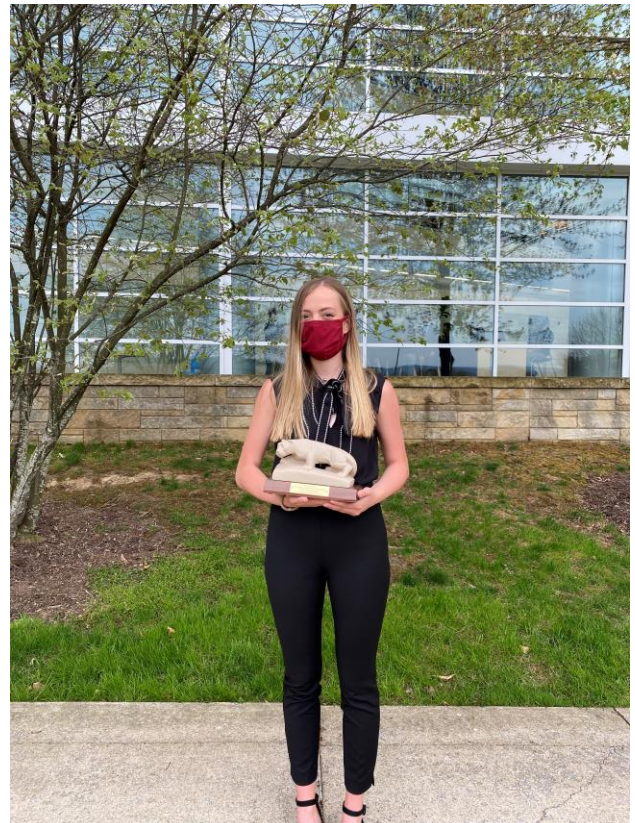
Awarded to an outstanding Finance major

Alexandria Lauser, Finance – Helen Eakin Eisenhower Award

Awarded to graduating seniors who have demonstrated scholarship, leadership, character, and service to the Smeal College of Business

Toya Gordon, Management - Smeal Diversity Leadership Award

Awarded to graduating seniors who have demonstrated leadership activities which promote the college's efforts to build a culture that welcomes, celebrates, and promotes diversity



Emalee Landis, 2021 George Leland Leffler Award Recipient

Looking Ahead to Fall 2021...

By Sydney Asencio, 2021 Sapphire Overall

Our Spring semester packed full of events, opportunities, and leadership growth may have just ended, but our planning stages for the fall are just beginning! The Leadership Team meets consistently over the summer to ensure we continue to provide the best programming for our Sapphires. In the Fall, we look forward to developing visionary ideas to bolster the success of Sapphire in addition to strengthening our efforts within our newly implemented E&SR team, Diversity & Inclusion, and Suitable technology initiatives. We are excited at the prospect of returning to an in-person environment but feel we are also ready to tackle the virtual space again if need be.



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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Sapphire Leadership
Academic Program