

NCSL*

***National Conference on Student Life**



CONFERENCE PROGRAM

November 21-22, 2025 | Atlanta, Georgia

Welcome!

We eagerly look forward to our student life conference because of the inspiring, talented, and dedicated leaders we meet. We are especially excited to welcome you to the National Conference on Student Life and look forward to seeing your journey. We have confidence you will return to your campus with new ideas, new enthusiasm, and new professional skills. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to improve your experience.

Magna Staff

The Magna onsite team is here to assist you throughout the conference. Please see us if we can be of service.



Bill Haight
President



Bonny Wolter
Events Coordinator



Matt Nieman
Content Coordinator



Marcus Manning
Registration Staff

It's an honor to welcome you to this year's gathering. Please stop by the registration desk to say hello and let us know if there's anything we can do to enhance your experience. Thank you for being here, and I look forward to seeing you at many more events!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William H. Haight".

William H. Haight
President of Magna Publications,
Producer of the National Conference on Student Life

General Information

Wi-Fi

Enjoy complimentary Wi-Fi using:

Network: **Omni meeting**

Password: **NCSL25Magna**

Name Badges

Name badges are required for all sessions, meals, and keynote presentations. Please wear your name badge at all times. If you lose your name badge, please see a conference staff member at the registration desk for a replacement.

Meals

Your registration includes a plated lunch and a pizza reception on Friday, and a continental breakfast and plated lunch on Saturday. If you selected any dietary restrictions on your registration, you will be provided with special meal tickets. Present these tickets to the hotel banquets staff at lunch.

Sessions

Please keep in mind that sessions are available on a first-come basis and seating may be limited. Please be prompt; some sessions will fill early. Please have your second and third choices ready. If you attend a session and realize it's not for you, please feel free to leave and join another session.

Download the NCSL App

Download the conference app from your app store for many features including networking, scheduling sessions, speaker handouts, and alerts about changes or updates to the program schedule.

1. Scan the QR code to the right or search and download "Bizzabo" in your app store
2. Enter the email address you registered with
3. Click the NCSL Conference



Advisor Sessions

These sessions are designed solely for faculty, staff, and other professionals who support and mentor student leaders. These sessions focus on strategies and best practices for guiding students in their leadership journey, fostering inclusive environments, and promoting holistic student development.

Advisor & Presenter Lounge

Friday 10:45 am - 1:15 pm, 2:15 pm - 3:30 pm

Saturday 8:00 am - 2:45 pm

Advisors and presenters are invited to make use of the Advisor and Presenter Lounge — a comfortable space to check email, charge devices, get some work done, and connect with fellow advisors and presenters.

Dogwood A – M1 – North Tower

Evaluation

You will receive an electronic survey after the conference via email. Please take note of the sessions you attend and complete the survey for a chance to win a \$50 gift card to Amazon! Your feedback helps us improve future programs.

Networking Opportunities

- Attend the reception
- Attend as many sessions as possible
- Use the breaks between sessions to continue conversations
- Share a meal with someone you don't know
- Attend Karaoke Night
- Use the community portion of the conference app to plan social time or connect with other attendees beyond the conference

Stay Connected

Connect with other attendees using the conference hashtag #NCSL25, and stay connected with us all year by following us on social media.

Conference Hashtag: **#NCSL25**

 **@NCSLConference**

 **@NCSLConference**

 **@ncslconference_**

Friday, November 21

Registration Open 8:00 am – 4:00 pm
Pre-Function Lobby 2 – M2 – North Tower

9:00 –
9:30 am

Conference Welcome

International Ballroom EF – M2 –
North Tower



Velshay Stokes
Stokes Collaborative

9:30 –
10:30 am

Opening Keynote

International Ballroom EF – M2 –
North Tower



Not Another Lecture: Build Life Skills and
Mental Health Habits in Real Time
Julia Garcia, Top Youth Speakers

10:45 –
11:45 am

Student Workshops

Self-Care & Wellness

Advisor Session

Advisors: Exploring Our Persistence
Brent Turner, LeaderShape, Inc.

12:00 –
1:00 pm

Lunch

International Ballroom EF – M2 –
North Tower

1:15 –
2:15 pm

Student Workshops

Leadership

Advisor Lounge is closed for a student workshop

2:30 –
3:30 pm

Student Workshops

Networking

Advisor Session

Five Powerful Improv Exercises for Stronger Teams
Viet Hoang, LeaderShape, Inc.

3:45 –
4:30 pm

Keynote

International Ballroom EF – M2 –
North Tower



Living in Possibility
Kristen Young, LeaderShape, Inc.

4:30 –
6:00 pm

Networking Reception

Pre-Function Lobby 2 – M2 – North Tower

Join us at the reception for pizza & snacks,
headshots, and networking bingo with the Mentors.

7:30 –
8:30 pm

Karaoke Night

International Ballroom EF – M2 –
North Tower

It's time to unwind, relax, and let loose!
Get ready to hit the stage and show off your singing skills as emcee
Velshay Stokes hosts the highly anticipated Karaoke Night.

Friday
Nov 21

9:00 – 9:30 am

Conference Welcome

Velshay Stokes, *Stokes Collaborative*



Start your NCSL experience with energy and inspiration! Join Velshay Stokes as she kicks off the conference with tips to help you make the most of every session and opportunity. Stay engaged, motivated, and ready to grow as a student leader throughout the event.

International Ballroom EF – M2 – North Tower

9:30 – 10:30 am

Opening Keynote

Julia Garcia, *Top Youth Speakers*



Not Another Lecture: Build Life Skills and Mental Health Habits in Real Time

This isn't your typical lecture—it's a real conversation. Join Dr. Julia Garcia, a TEDx speaker, psychologist, and author of *The 5 Habits of Hope* for a powerful keynote that blends self-care and wellness with practical life skills. Students will also have the chance to sharpen their communication skills through interactive, real-time activities, discover ways to build relationships and act as catalysts for change.

International Ballroom EF – M2 – North Tower

3:45 – 4:30 pm

Keynote

Kristen Young, *LeaderShape, Inc.*



Living in Possibility

LeaderShape believes living in possibility is a skill. We all benefit from it, and it is vital to shaping the just, caring, and thriving world we want to experience. In the same way, all skills can be developed, so can possibility thinking and possibility living. Like a muscle, we can strengthen it through practice. Living in possibility is about honoring what's real, expanding what can be, and grounding into what's true. We invite you to join us on this journey. This keynote will encourage participants to embrace the belief that change is possible and that we each have the power to influence it. Together, we will explore how to create space so that different options can arise, be noticed, and be consciously chosen. Participants will also be invited to see beyond limitations and imagine a world unencumbered by rigid expectations or outdated assumptions about how things are supposed to be.

International Ballroom EF – M2 – North Tower

4:30 – 6:00 pm

Networking Reception

Ready to take the next step toward your future career? Join the networking reception, designed with your success in mind, this event offers essential resources and expert guidance to help you jumpstart your professional journey.

Meet Your Mentors

Take advantage of this unique opportunity to connect personally with conference presenters for informal, one-on-one discussions where you can ask questions, seek tailored advice, and gain insights from these amazing leaders. Play networking bingo while you enjoy pizza and snacks!

Pre-Function Lobby 2 – M2 – North Tower

Headshots

Sponsored by LeaderShape, Inc.

First impressions count! Stop by our Headshot Station to get a high-quality professional photo that will elevate your LinkedIn profile and job applications.

Pre-Function Lobby 1 – M2 – North Tower

Friday
Nov 21

10:45 – 11:45 am

Student Workshops

Self-Care & Wellness

Sessions in this track empower students to prioritize their wellbeing as they develop essential life and leadership skills. “Keeping your cup full” means you can lead others sustainably and compassionately.

Sound Your Battle Cry: From Self-Doubt to Self-Respect

Kate Garnes, *Kate Garnes, LLC*

Leadership starts with how we talk to ourselves. In this session, students will learn how to silence their inner critic, reframe negative self-talk, and tap into the inner strength that fuels confidence and authentic leadership. With rising mental health challenges and increased pressure on student leaders to “have it all together,” this session creates space for vulnerability, self-reflection, and mindset shifts. Participants will explore how self-worth impacts their ability to lead others, make decisions, build meaningful connections, and create inclusive communities on campus. Through real talk and relatable stories, students will walk away with practical tools to protect their mental health, choose supportive friendships, and lead from a place of compassion and courage—because before you lead anyone else, you have to believe in yourself first.

Cottonwood – M1 – North Tower

This Is Me: Building a Self-Care Plan That Actually Works

Sam Brown, *Faith and Effort, LLC*

This interactive and reflective workshop helps students connect identity to wellness in a way that’s personal, practical, and sustainable. We guide participants through a three-part model of Awareness, Action, and Accountability designed to help them understand what wellness actually looks like for them. Participants will first reflect on how their identity (including culture, responsibilities, lived experiences, and internal narratives) influences how they show up or shut down when it comes to self-care. From there, we shift to Action, designing a self-care and wellness plan that fits their current reality. Then, using the Accountability step, students will explore their barriers like perfectionism, overcommitment, or cultural pressure and map out the small, repeatable habits that can create real change. This isn’t a “fix your life in 60 minutes” workshop. It’s a moment to pause, reflect, and start a growth journey with the tools to sustain it after the conference ends.

International Ballroom D – M2 – North Tower

Learning to Thrive, Not Just Survive: Understanding Our Interconnected System

Marlanea Heaven,
Community Evolve and Thrive

In today’s high-pressure campus environments, student leaders often fall into survival mode and push through burnout while supporting others. This session empowers collegiate leaders to prioritize their own wellbeing by exploring the mind-body-environment connection through the lens of neuroscience and self-regulation. Participants will learn how the nervous system influences thoughts, behaviors, and energy—highlighting how stress impacts our leadership capacity. This session equips participants with a personalized wellness toolbox of practical strategies to regulate emotions and sustain energy. Through grounding techniques, interactive reflection, and a music-based activity that demonstrates how sensory input affects the nervous system, students will learn to tune into their internal states and cultivate greater self-awareness. Students will reinforce the idea that personal thriving is not separate from effective leadership; it is the foundation to be a compassionate and impactful leader.

International Ballroom A – M2 – North Tower

Leading Without Losing Yourself

Cybel Betancourt, *Buenas Cosas, LLC*

Burnout isn’t a badge of honor—and it’s time student leaders stop wearing it like one. In this interactive session, we’ll explore how real leadership starts with caring for yourself. You’ll learn how to recognize the early signs of burnout, set boundaries that protect your energy, and build daily habits that support your wellbeing. Together, we’ll challenge the campus culture that glorifies being busy and reframe self-care as a vital leadership strength, not a selfish act. Through guided reflection, group activities, and practical tools, you’ll create a personalized self-leadership care plan that helps you lead effectively without losing yourself in the process. Whether you’re managing a student organization, balancing academics and leadership, or simply trying to keep up with life, this session will help you lead from a place of purpose, not exhaustion.

International Ballroom B – M2 – North Tower

The Life Edit: Redefining Student Success Through Mindset, Boundaries, and Communication

Ivana Farrar,
Motivating Minds for Achievement

Today’s student leaders are navigating an evolving landscape where emotional intelligence, resilience, and effective communication are more critical than ever. This session addresses the essential life skills that directly influence leadership effectiveness and personal wellbeing. Students will learn how to develop a growth-oriented mindset, set and maintain healthy boundaries, and communicate with clarity and purpose. These skills are crucial for managing responsibilities, fostering inclusive environments, and leading with confidence. As leadership trends shift toward holistic development and sustainability, this session offers practical strategies that empower students to lead authentically while maintaining balance.

International Ballroom C – M2 – North Tower

Advisor Session

Advisors: Exploring Our Persistence

Brent Turner, *LeaderShape, Inc.*

In the wake of personal and professional re-evaluation, many educators, leaders, and student affairs practitioners are asking deeper questions about purpose, sustainability, and belonging in their work. This session offers a space to pause, reflect, and connect around what it means to persist—not just survive—in a shifting higher education landscape. Together, we will explore the internal and external forces shaping our decisions to stay, shift, or evolve within our roles. Participants will engage in storytelling, collective meaning-making, and reflective practices that surface core values, hidden tensions, and personal wisdom. Centering justice, authenticity, and holistic wellbeing, we will consider how persistence can look different for each of us—and how to support ourselves and others with empathy and clarity.

Redwood – M1 – North Tower

Friday
Nov 21

1:15 – 2:15 pm

Student Workshops

Leadership

Sessions in this track are dedicated to developing impactful and visionary student leaders while exploring various leadership styles and skills.

Thriving as an Outsider: Lead with Power, Not Permission

Naeemah Elias,
Elias Presence Ventures, LLC

Many student leaders know what it's like to stand out—and not always in a good way. Whether you're the first, the only, or simply different from the dominant culture on campus, leadership can feel isolating. This session offers strategies for turning that outsider status into an asset. We'll explore how identity shapes leadership, how to speak with authority even when your voice shakes, and how to create change without burning out. Through storytelling, discussion, and practical tools, students will walk away with new language for their experiences and the confidence to lead authentically, even in spaces that weren't built with them in mind. This session is especially relevant for BIPOC students, first-gen college students, LGBTQ+ leaders, and anyone navigating leadership from the margins.

International Ballroom A – M2 – North Tower

The Student Leadership Challenge Experience

Alix Cohler and Jason Scott Quinn,
Collegiate Empowerment

This session introduces student leaders to The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership® from The Student Leadership Challenge® by Jim Kouzes and Barry Posner. Through interactive activities and group discussions, participants will explore how to model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. This session focuses on helping students understand what effective leadership looks like, how to align actions with values, and how to engage others in working toward a common purpose.

International Ballroom B – M2 – North Tower

Lead, Follow, or Get Out of the Way

Drew Davis, *Quality Over Quantity, LLC*

What does it really mean to be a leader? In this session, we'll break down common ideas about leadership and explore how leadership qualities can look different from person to person. Together, we'll identify traits that great leaders share, discuss how we respond to leadership as followers, and consider how leadership happens in everyday situations—even when we don't realize it. Through reflection and group activities, students will gain insight into the leadership skills they already possess and discover the style of leadership that resonates most with them. This session helps students see that leadership isn't an all-or-nothing label—you don't have to hold a title to make a difference.

International Ballroom C – M2 – North Tower

Empowered Leadership: Breaking Barriers and Envisioning Impact

Pamela Gurley, *Clark and Hill Enterprise*

While there is a growing push to remove Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives in various sectors, this shift does not diminish the critical importance of fostering diversity and creating inclusive spaces—especially for leaders. True leadership thrives on the ability to bring people together, celebrate differences, and create environments where everyone feels valued and empowered to contribute. Diversity isn't just a goal to achieve—it's a powerful driver of creativity, innovation, and problem-solving. Together, we'll examine how leaders can embed inclusivity into their daily actions, decisions, and organizational culture, even without formal DEI programs in place.

Cottonwood – M1 – North Tower

Upgrade My Story: Learn to Leverage the Story Cycle and Rewrite Your Subconscious Beliefs

Kevin Mecchella, *Upgrade My Decisions*

Motivation fades but habits last. This session will explore exercises that strengthen your mindset and build confidence. Through breaking down the story cycle and learning to rewrite your own subconscious beliefs, you'll develop self-awareness and learn how to reshape your internal narrative. Most importantly, you'll walk away with a clear plan for implementation. Real change doesn't happen in a single moment but in the small, intentional choices made every day.

Redwood – M1 – North Tower

The A.R.T. of Leadership: Authenticity, Relationships, & Trust

Will Baggett, *Color Outside the Lines*

In today's fast-paced and ever-changing world, genuine connection is more than a soft skill—it's the foundation of lasting influence and impact. The A.R.T. of Leadership uncovers the three pillars that drive meaningful relationships: Authenticity, Relationships, and Trust. Through powerful storytelling, practical strategies, and real-world examples, this session equips leaders, professionals, and teams with the tools to build credibility, foster collaboration, and create environments where people feel valued and engaged.

Dogwood A – M1 – North Tower

Emotionally Confident Leadership

Ariassa Wilson, *You-Ish*

This session offers a powerful, practical bridge between emotional intelligence, self-esteem, confidence, and leadership development for college student leaders. At this life stage, students are learning to lead in high-pressure environments, both academically, socially, and organizationally, where emotions often drive decision-making more than strategy. By focusing on developing emotional confidence rather than emotional control, this session challenges outdated leadership models that overlook the human experience. Instead, it empowers students to understand, recognize, and coach their emotional responses.

International Ballroom D – M2 – North Tower

Friday
Nov 21

2:30 – 3:30 pm

Student Workshops

Networking

Learn to build meaningful connections to better navigate networking opportunities and foster relationships that support your leadership journey and career aspirations.

Be Your Prototype: Designing the Leader You Want to Become

Chisolu Isiadino, *CPI Enterprise*

Today's student leaders are navigating a new era of leadership, one that demands authenticity, self-awareness, and purpose over titles and popularity. In a world where comparison, imposter syndrome, and burnout are common, many student leaders struggle with defining what leadership looks like for them. This session is designed to help students build a personal leadership identity rooted in values, voice, and vision. Participants will address real student leadership challenges, including confidence-building, inclusive leadership, and sustainable growth, while giving students a space to define their own leadership blueprint. Whether students are new to leadership or redefining their impact, this session will help them walk away with clarity, confidence, and a prototype for who they are becoming.

International Ballroom C – M2 – North Tower

Build Your Net Worth Through Building Your Network

Joanna de Pena, *Top Notch Scholars*

In today's dynamic collegiate landscape, effective networking is a must. It stands as a cornerstone of student leadership development, offering invaluable opportunities for growth and advancement. This session explores the vital connection between building one's network and fostering successful leadership skills among college students. Amidst current struggles, evolving communication, and technological trends, cultivating meaningful connections has emerged as a strategic imperative, enabling students to navigate challenges and seize emerging opportunities with confidence daily! From leveraging social media platforms to cultivating personal relationships, attendees will gain insights into building authentic networks that yield long-term dividends in both academic and professional spheres.

International Ballroom D – M2 – North Tower

From Contact to Catalyst: Networking for Student Leaders

Jennifer Valtos, *Penns Grove-Carneys Point Regional School District*

This session is designed to help student leaders build meaningful relationships that support their leadership journey and career goals. We will explore how building meaningful relationships can enhance your campus leadership experiences and support your long-term career aspirations. Grounded in the idea that networking is about connection--not collection--this session challenges common myths and reframes networking as a skill rooted in curiosity and authenticity. The session will empower students to move beyond superficial interactions and develop authentic, intentional connections.

Cottonwood – M1 – North Tower

Link and Lead: Strategic Networking for Student Leaders

Diana Richardson Phillipus, *Empowered Women Empower*

In an increasingly competitive and digitally connected world, networking is no longer optional, it's essential. Today's student leaders are navigating more than academic success; they are expected to build personal brands, cultivate influence, and position themselves for future leadership opportunities. This session is designed to help emerging leaders develop one of the most valuable leadership competencies: the ability to build authentic, strategic, and lasting relationships. This session explores the connection between intentional networking and effective leadership. Students will learn how to confidently introduce themselves, initiate meaningful conversations, and follow up in ways that build trust and opportunity. Students will discover how to leverage their existing networks, identify key connections, and create a personalized action plan for long-term success.

International Ballroom B – M2 – North Tower

Advisor Session

Five Powerful Improv Exercises for Stronger Teams

Viet Hoang, *LeaderShape, Inc.*

Improv training is a powerful and fun method to strengthen communication, agility, collaboration, and creativity on campus and in the workplace. Simple behaviors learned through improv training support development of soft skills and promote psychological safety of teams. In this interactive session, you'll participate in five exercises, learn to facilitate them, and engage in powerful debriefing questions to make learning impactful for your teams.

Redwood – M1 – North Tower

Saturday, November 22

Registration Open 7:30 am – 3:00 pm
Pre-Function Lobby 2 – M2 – North Tower

7:30 –
8:30 am

Breakfast

International Ballroom EF – M2 –
North Tower

8:30 –
9:45 am

Leadership Lab

International Ballroom EF – M2 –
North Tower



Own the Room: The Art of Leadership Through Body Language and Connection

Will Baggett, *Color Outside the Lines*

10:00 –
11:00 am

Student Workshops

Life Skills

Advisor Session

We've Been Here Before:
Engaging in Conversations on Belonging and Community
During Our Current Political Climate and Beyond

Vernon A. Wall, *LeaderShape, Inc.*

11:15 am –
12:15 pm

Student Workshops

Changemakers

Advisor Session

LeaderShape: Committed to the Practice of Co-Creating
a More Just, Caring, and Thriving World

Vernon A. Wall and Kristen Young, *LeaderShape, Inc.*

12:30 –
1:30 pm

Lunch

International Ballroom EF – M2 –
North Tower

1:45 –
2:45 pm

Student Workshops

Communication

Advisor Session

Strategic Planning: Guiding Leadership, Inclusion,
and Holistic Development

Brent Turner, *LeaderShape, Inc.*

3:00 –
4:00 pm

Closing Keynote

International Ballroom EF – M2 –
North Tower



Upgrade My Decisions: Discover the Three Truths of Decision-Making to Rewrite Your Story and Make Positive Choices

Kevin Mecchella, *Upgrade My Decisions*

4:00 pm

Adjourn

Thank you for a wonderful conference! We hope you take the connections and tools from this weekend and continue to apply them to your leadership and life. Certificates are available at the registration desk.

Saturday
Nov 22

8:30 – 9:45 am

Leadership Lab

Will Baggett, *Color Outside the Lines*



Own the Room: The Art of Leadership Through Body Language and Connection

Great leaders don't just take up space—they own the room with confidence, presence, and genuine connection. Leadership isn't about having the loudest voice or the biggest title; it's about how well you engage, inspire, and empower those around you. In this leadership lab, you'll learn how to command presence with confidence by using body language, eye contact, and posture to create an engaging and authoritative presence. You'll discover how to lead through influence rather than authority by building trust, empowering others, and fostering collaboration. The leadership lab will also introduce the 4 A's of Leadership—Accountability, Adaptability, Availability, and Accessibility—which are essential for creating a positive, high-performing culture. Finally, you'll explore practical strategies to break down barriers, encourage teamwork, and ensure every person in the room feels valued and included.

International Ballroom EF – M2 – North Tower

3:00 – 4:00 pm

Closing Keynote

Kevin Mecchella, *Upgrade My Decisions*



Upgrade My Decisions: Discover the Three Truths of Decision-Making to Rewrite Your Story and Make Positive Choices

We all want to make great decisions—choices that set us up for success in school, relationships, and life. But decision-making isn't just about knowing right from wrong. The real challenge lies in how we perceive our choices. The stress we face doesn't just come from school, social pressures, or uncertainty about the future—it comes from the story we tell ourselves about our circumstances and our ability to navigate them. This high-energy, musically-infused keynote breaks down the three fundamental truths behind every decision we make. By the end of this experience, you'll walk away with practical tools to take ownership of your choices, no matter the circumstances, stay present and focused instead of feeling overwhelmed, and bounce back from setbacks with confidence and clarity. More than just a talk, this keynote provides real-life strategies you can use immediately—helping you feel more in control, more capable, and more prepared to make decisions that align with your goals as a student leader.

International Ballroom EF – M2 – North Tower

8:30 – 9:45 am

Advisor Session

Advisors' Roundtable: Networking & Best Practices

Vernon A Wall & Kristen Young, *LeaderShape, Inc.*

Join fellow student affairs professionals for an engaging roundtable designed to share insights, challenges, and strategies for advising student organizations. This session offers a space to connect with peers, exchange best practices, and discuss emerging trends in student leadership, engagement, and organizational development. Come ready to network, collaborate, and leave with new ideas to strengthen your advising practice and support student success.

Dogwood A – M1 – North Tower

Saturday
Nov 22

10:00 – 11:00 am

Student Workshops

Life Skills

The life skills track is tailored to equip college students with vital life skills to navigate adulthood successfully and balance their responsibilities, including time management, financial literacy, emotional intelligence, and critical thinking.

Goals are Dreams with Action

Khalyn J, *The Student Success Network*

Most students have set goals, made resolutions, or tried creating SMART goals—but staying committed is where the real challenge begins. Research shows that only 8% of people stick with their goals beyond 30 days. This interactive session helps student leaders break that cycle by learning how to set meaningful, achievable goals tied to a clear, intentional plan. Using the D.R.E.A.M. Framework (Desire, Rescue, Environment, Action, Mental Meeting), participants will explore how to define what they truly want, anticipate and overcome obstacles, and create a supportive environment that fuels their success. Leadership starts with knowing where you're going—and this session provides a practical, repeatable system students can use to set and achieve goals year after year.
International Ballroom A – M2 – North Tower

Campus to Career: Thriving in Your First 90 Days and Beyond

Kellye Franklin-Nelson, *Kellye Franklin, LLC*

The transition from student leader to early-career professional is one of the most defining—and often underestimated—phases in a young leader's journey. This session helps students bridge the gap between campus leadership and workplace success by exploring how to navigate the critical first 90 days on the job while continuing to lead with impact. Participants will explore real-world strategies for setting intentional goals, managing their time and energy, and showing their leadership potential—even when they're still learning the ropes. This workshop connects common student leadership traits like initiative, curiosity, and collaboration to essential workplace habits such as managing up, setting expectations, and owning your development. We'll dive into how to ask the right questions, build early credibility, and create a success plan that goes beyond just doing the job. Whether attendees are preparing for their first internship, entry-level role, or graduate opportunity, they'll leave with actionable strategies to thrive, not just survive, in the professional world.
International Ballroom D – M2 – North Tower

Unlocking Potential: Life Skills and Leadership for Future Success

Jeremiah Brown, *The Lead AAC*

Unlock your leadership potential with the 5 C Framework—a dynamic approach designed to help student leaders develop essential life skills and lead with purpose. In this session, participants will begin by identifying real challenges they face and reflecting on their unique sense of purpose, laying the foundation for clear career and leadership goals. From there, students will build competence in key skills such as communication, collaboration, and critical thinking—qualities that today's student leaders need to navigate complex situations with resilience. This session equips students not only to lead effectively on campus, but also to grow personally and professionally as they transition beyond college. Don't miss this opportunity to explore practical strategies that will help you overcome.
International Ballroom C – M2 – North Tower

From Confusion to Clarity: 3 Questions to Determine the Right Career Path

Stefan Thomas, *Success Waves*

Ever feel like everyone else has their future figured out except you? You're not alone. Choosing a career can feel like trying to solve a puzzle with half the pieces missing. This isn't your typical career workshop—it's a journey into discovering who you are, why you're here, and what you're meant to do. This session is for students who are tired of feeling confused about what career to choose or tired of following someone else's plan for their life. Through fun, high-energy activities and powerful reflection moments, you will build a clear picture of your identity, purpose, and path forward toward your dream career. You'll learn three practical steps on how to connect your passions with real opportunities and leave knowing how to pursue a career that feels right—not just looks good on paper. Whether you're undecided, changing your mind every semester, or just want to make sure you're on the right track, this session will help you move from confusion to clarity in your career.
Cottonwood – M1 – North Tower

Staying Ahead of Life: Leading from Within

Jeffrey Young, *Professional Training Academy*

In today's fast-moving campus culture, student leaders are often expected to juggle academics, organizations, and personal growth—yet many struggle to keep up with the growing demands. This session is designed to help students build the consistent, everyday practices that fuel long-term leadership success. Rooted in the idea that small actions create big results, this session explores how habits shape identity, influence behavior, and impact a leader's ability to stay grounded under pressure. Participants will directly tackle common issues like time management, inconsistency, accountability, and personal development. Participants will leave with a practical "1% Better" growth plan and a deeper understanding of how to build habits that align with who they want to become—not just what they want to achieve.
International Ballroom B – M2 – North Tower

Advisor Session

We've Been Here Before: Engaging in Conversations on Belonging and Community During Our Current Political Climate and Beyond

Vernon A. Wall, *LeaderShape, Inc.*

Legislation. Executive Orders. Dear Colleague Letters. Guidance for the Guidance. The pace is fast and unrelenting. How can conversations on inclusive communities continue in today's political climate? How can the commitment to supporting everyone remain strong during this pivotal time in history? This session explores practical learnings and concepts that help sustain engagement in the essential work of ensuring all members of our communities feel valued and respected.
Redwood – M1 – North Tower

Saturday
Nov 22

11:15 am – 12:15 pm

Student Workshops

Changemakers

Become agents of change who inspire and advocate for inclusivity, a better future, and are social justice champions—both with the groups you lead on campus and on your postgraduate path.

Lead Loud: Becoming the Changemaker Your Campus and the World Needs

Sam Brown, Faith and Effort, LLC

This session empowers students to harness their unique voice, values, and lived experiences to create meaningful change on campus and beyond. Students will be introduced to the nationally recognized GROWTH Strategy, a practical framework designed to support personal evolution as the foundation for leading with purpose. Together, we'll craft changemaker statements, map out advocacy goals, and identify immediate, actionable next steps that foster inclusivity and spark movement in their communities. Attendees will leave ready to shift from a "me" to "we" mindset, amplifying voices and building a culture of belonging wherever they lead.
International Ballroom C – M2 – North Tower

Local Leadership Lab: Equipping Changemakers to Run for Office

Krystal Marx, People's Community Empowerment Institute

This session empowers student leaders to translate their passion for social justice into tangible local impact and demystify the process of running for local office. Participants will learn essential campaign skills, from grassroots organizing and fundraising to effective communication and navigating local political landscapes. We'll explore how to build diverse coalitions, amplify marginalized voices, and advocate for policies that create inclusive and equitable communities. This session goes beyond theory, offering actionable strategies and real-world examples to equip you with the tools necessary to launch a successful campaign. Discover how your student leadership experience can be leveraged to drive meaningful change in your local community and learn how to become a powerful advocate for a better future, starting right where you are.
Cottonwood – M1 – North Tower

Our Hand the Bias Within

Peter Ferguson, Peter Ferguson BHS, LLC

Every student leader holds a unique hand of identity "cards"—aspects of who we are that shape how we lead, connect, and create change. In this session, participants will explore how their own identities, and those of others, influence their leadership journey, relationships, and impact. Using the metaphor of "cards in our life deck," we'll reflect on how strengths, challenges, opportunities, and blind spots emerge from our intersecting identities, from names and roles to lived experiences and values. Together, we'll discuss what's working in our efforts to foster meaningful connections, where we're falling short, and what new strategies can help us become more effective changemakers. Participants will leave with practical insights and action steps for building inclusive communities, navigating networks, and advancing social justice in their leadership roles and beyond.
International Ballroom D – M2 – North Tower

Who You Are, How You Lead: Embracing Your Identity

Velshay Stokes, Stokes Collaborative

This session explores the concept of positionality and how our identities shape our leadership style, decision-making, and interactions on campus. As student leaders, understanding your own positionality is essential for fostering inclusivity, navigating diverse perspectives, and addressing the challenges faced by various campus communities. By examining factors such as race, gender, class, ability, and culture, you'll gain insight into how privilege and marginalization affect both your leadership and the experiences of those you serve. In this session, you'll reflect on your personal identity and its impact on your role as a leader, learn strategies to address conflicts and biases, and explore how to cultivate empathy in your leadership practices.
International Ballroom A – M2 – North Tower

Defy the Rules: How to Shed Expectations and Pursue What Matters to You Most

Gabrielle Galon, Campus Speaker

College student leaders often carry the dual weight of personal expectations and the responsibility of representing their peers. With pressure from parents, professors, social media, and campus culture, it can be difficult to separate what they truly want from what they think they "should" do. This session introduces the SHED Framework—a powerful tool designed to help student leaders release the external expectations that cloud their judgment, reconnect with their authentic goals, and lead with clarity and conviction. Students will learn how to shed the pressure to perform and instead lead from a place of purpose.
International Ballroom B – M2 – North Tower

Advisor / Sponsor Session

LeaderShape: Committed to the Practice of Co-Creating a More Just, Caring, and Thriving World

Vernon A. Wall and Kristen Young, LeaderShape, Inc.

LeaderShape has been creating transformational leadership development experiences for over 30 years (since 1986). With a focus on creating a more just, caring, and thriving world, more than 78,000 persons have participated in our premier program, The LeaderShape Institute. Program alumni and their sponsors tell us that the participants develop a stronger sense of self as a leader, a passion for making a difference in the community, and a willingness to engage in the organization more intentionally. As a result, the impact of LeaderShape is not only on the individual but also within the communities to which they belong. Learn more about the programs that we offer!
Redwood – M1 – North Tower

Saturday
Nov 22

1:45 – 2:45 pm

Student Workshops

Communication

Explore foundational communication skills, including active listening, public speaking, conflict resolution, and persuasive storytelling. By enhancing verbal and non-verbal communication, students become equipped to lead more effectively.

AI-Enhanced Storytelling and Content Creation for Student Leaders

Hailey Evans, *Strategies That Stick™*

Student leaders are expected to do it all—communicate clearly, promote events, inspire their peers, and represent their organizations both online and in person. But with constant content demands and short attention spans, it's harder than ever to get your message across in a way that feels authentic, engaging, and effective. This session teaches student leaders how to combine two practical storytelling frameworks—the 5-Part Storytelling Blueprint and the EPIC Messaging Framework—with easy-to-use AI tools that boost creativity and save time. Participants will learn how to craft compelling messages for club promotions, speeches, volunteer recruitment, and social media that actually connect with their audience and inspire action. We'll also explore how AI tools like ChatGPT and Canva Magic Write can support student leaders in brainstorming ideas, writing content, and enhancing their impact—without losing their unique voice.

International Ballroom A – M2 – North Tower

SHAPES: An Unexpected Self-Audit for Authentic Relationships

Bianca Chandler, *Focusing Ahead*

Today's student leaders know that authentic connection is at the heart of effective leadership. This session introduces SHAPES, a self-reflection tool designed to help students explore their leadership styles, values, and interaction patterns. Through guided activities and discussions, participants will gain deeper self-awareness, improve communication, and learn strategies to navigate diverse perspectives, team dynamics, and conflict with empathy and confidence. SHAPES also emphasizes the importance of personal wellbeing—helping students recognize stressors, set healthy boundaries, and practice self-compassion as a foundation for resilience.

International Ballroom B – M2 – North Tower

Three Steps to Resilience: Navigating Difficult People

Kelly Lippenholz,

Lippenholz Leadership Consulting

Traditional education rarely prepares students for the realities of college life—dorm or apartment living, interacting with professors, participating in groups, and managing the inevitable challenges that come with these new relationships. By focusing on self-awareness, conflict resolution, and relationship-building, student leaders will leave with practical tools to create healthier, more supportive campus environments. Empower your students to turn everyday challenges into opportunities for growth, resilience, and stronger community connections—key ingredients for both personal wellbeing and student retention.

International Ballroom C – M2 – North Tower

Talk Like TED: Powerful Communication for Change Makers

Kristel Flynn, *University of Illinois Chicago*

Are you ready to take your voice to the next level and make an even bigger impact? This session is all about helping student leaders, like you, strengthen your communication game so you can inspire, motivate, and lead with confidence—whether that's on your campus, in the community, or out in the world. Using the standout strategies from Talk Like TED by Carmine Gallo, we will dive into what makes great speakers unforgettable: emotional connection, powerful storytelling, genuine enthusiasm, and keeping it simple and clear. Through hands-on activities, students will get a chance to craft and share their own TED-style moments, explore how body language shapes their message, and practice creating a strong elevator pitch that gets ideas across in 30 seconds or less. This isn't just about public speaking, it's about using your voice to spark change and connect with others in meaningful ways.

International Ballroom D – M2 – North Tower

The Power of Self-Awareness in Conflict: Leading with Emotional Intelligence

Jen Fry, *JenFryTalks*

Great leadership begins with self-awareness—especially when navigating conflict. In this session, students will examine how their emotional intelligence and personal conflict styles shape communication, decision-making, and team dynamics. Participants will identify emotional triggers, explore their default responses to tension, and learn to adapt their conflict approach based on context and relationship. By connecting their identities, lived experiences, and leadership roles, students will be encouraged to move beyond avoidance or escalation and instead see conflict as a catalyst for growth, trust-building, and values-driven leadership. This session empowers emerging leaders to lean into discomfort with clarity and intention.

Cottonwood – M1 – North Tower

Advisor Session

Strategic Planning: Guiding Leadership, Inclusion, and Holistic Development

Brent Turner, *LeaderShape, Inc.*

Mindful leaders are fully present to the realities of the world around us—its challenges, truths, and opportunities. This interactive session invites participants to explore how strategy can guide everyday decisions and actions, particularly in planning processes that shape student experiences and institutional culture. Together, we will examine how to embed student needs into setting annual goals, allocating resources, refining mission clarity, and guiding student leadership development. Participants will learn and practice the critical components of both an inclusive process and an equitable product, ensuring this work is boldly and consistently centered across all levels of student support and planning.

Redwood – M1 – North Tower