



About the Buckeye Leadership Fellows Program

The Buckeye Leadership Fellows Program (BLF) takes multidisciplinary cohorts of students through an intensive, two-year, personal, professional, and leadership development experience that is primarily funded and supported by alumni and community partners. We strive to create today's generation of leaders through ongoing developmental workshops to build their professional skills, leadership challenges that require students to engage in problem-based learning, and deep reflection to understand and articulate who they are and what they want to contribute to society.

This program is not possible without the financial and curricular support of our alumni and community partners. BLF began as an alumni initiative to better prepare Ohio State students for their post-graduate pursuits in September of 2010. Today, we are the premier leadership development experience in the Office of Student Life at the Ohio State University, impacting 500+ students across Ohio State's campus through our cohort-based program and additional programming opportunities through the support of 20+ corporate and community partners and 40+ private donors.

MISSION

The Buckeye Leadership Fellows Program provides access, offers tools, and creates experiences to empower students to realize their potential and make a positive impact on society.

VISION

We strive to build a community of talented, connected, and empowered leaders.

VALUES

- **Relationships** – investment in others not for selfish purposes, but for the sake of building community, sharing ideas, learning from others, and creating synergies - understanding that only through relationships and teams can innovations occur
- **Curiosity** – about the people, ideas, or contents of one's surroundings that fuels one to ask critical questions, add their individual perspective, and develop novel ideas
- **Engagement** – showing up, making contributions, and maintaining energy in all one does
- **Leadership** – working hard, making decisions, holding oneself and others accountable to commitments, and delivering results in an ethical manner
- **Diversity** – of backgrounds, experiences, thoughts, academic disciplines, ideas, and identities
- **Intentionality** – discovering, living, and refining one's purpose through pursuit of goals and meaningful involvements
- **Failure** – willingness to try and learn from the experience, regardless of the outcome

OUTCOMES

Students who participate in the Buckeye Leadership Fellows Program:

1. Cultivate and maintain meaningful relationships
2. Recognize the value of curiosity and approach their work with a curious attitude
3. Practice meaningful engagement
4. Define and live a personal leadership style
5. Appreciate diversity
6. Think critically and live intentional lives
7. Appreciate and learn from failure
8. Develop and hone myriad professional skills
9. Articulate who they are and how they want to uniquely impact society using their talents, academic training, and experiences
10. Understand and practice effective team and project management behaviors



The BLF Curriculum

The Buckeye Leadership Fellows Program provides an interdisciplinary approach to leadership development. With concepts derived from business, education, and psychology fields, students are provided a comprehensive exploration into the study and practice of leadership. By taking assessments, reading academic articles and books, engaging in personal reflection, and enacting theories through workshops and challenges, Fellows develop holistically. The following compose the core components of our curriculum:

- **Workshops:** one-time, 2-4 hour engagements hosted and facilitated by Ohio State alumni, faculty, or Columbus community partners. The focus of workshops is to offer “theory” on a particular topic and immediately connect it to “practice” through an application activity. Although the BLF curriculum includes a series of workshops on professional skills, personal growth, and leadership topics, we are always looking to create new experiences based on the expertise of our supporters.
- **Challenges:** Based on the “Problem-Based Learning”¹ (PBL) model with a partner organization – whether public or private, non-profit or corporate, and based in the local Columbus community, nationally, or globally. In each Buckeye Leadership Challenge, the partnering organization presents a cohort of Buckeye Leadership Fellows with a real, ambiguous, and ill-structured problem their organization currently faces. Then, Fellows work in their multidisciplinary cohort to understand and create tangible solutions to the problem. As they work, they engage in the PBL model – specifically, learning that:
 - Mimics situations students will “predictably” face as professionals
 - Is organized around topic (or problem) areas, rather than individual academic disciplines
 - Requires students to “work in small groups and take responsibility for their own learning” to:
 - Define the problem
 - Research the issue and examine it from their individual perspectives
 - Create and implement a solution
 - Removes traditional authority structures – i.e. does not rely on the expertise of a professor

This learning process is what grounds programs like the “D-School” at Stanford² or the “Dornsife Initiative” at the University of Southern California³. We observe that this learning strategy allows students to:

- Learn to navigate and master ambiguity
 - Value the perspectives of others – from other academic disciplines, personal backgrounds, etc.
 - Develop and hone their leadership style in team-oriented settings
 - Practice consultation and project management by: diagnosing problems, researching, creating viable solutions, and sharing them in concise ways
- **Immersive Experiences:** Provide students a new perspective on the working world, how business is conducted, and the norms and values of other cities by visiting to another city.
 - **Personal Development:** Allows Fellows to articulate who they are, what they have to offer, and the people they want to become through continual reflection. This reflection inspires a deep and awareness of one’s strengths, skills, areas for growth; creates the space for refining personal and career goals; and is engaged in an online blog platform and through in-person presentations.

¹ Bridges, E. M., & Hallinger, P. (1997). Using Problem-Based Learning to Prepare Educational Leaders. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 72, 2, 131-46.

² <http://dschool.stanford.edu/>

³ <https://dornsife.usc.edu/giving/>