BNSF NEELEY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Fall 2021
The BNSF Neeley Leadership Program is a three-year, cohort-based program designed to develop leaders who look at challenges and solutions from a variety of viewpoints, value collaboration, and develop ideas that drive the world forward. Cohorts of approximately 30 students participate in classroom and experiential learning, centered around the BNSF Neeley Leadership Competency Model. The unrivaled curriculum of the program includes five leadership courses across the sophomore, junior, and senior years.

While the planning and preparation for this program began in the fall of 2005, the BNSF Neeley Leadership Program (formerly called the Next Generation Leadership Program) officially began in April 2006 with the selection of the inaugural class of students. The first cohort graduated in the spring of 2008.

The BNSF Neeley Leadership Program was initially funded through a Vision In Action grant from TCU. BNSF Railway later funded the leadership program through an endowment. BNSF Railway is involved not only as a donor, but also is involved through the time BNSF employees give to the program by participating as speakers, assessors, candidate interviewers, and alumni board members.
WHAT IS A BNSF NEELEY LEADER?

NLP students Step Up to leadership roles. They Step In to support their peers and organizations. They develop along the Neeley Leader Competency Model to become Neeley Leaders.

Neeley Leaders have a Learner and Growth Mindset. They embrace opportunities to develop themselves. They welcome challenging conversations and are open to the idea that they may not always be right.

Neeley Leaders demonstrate High Integrity. They hold themselves and peers accountable. They measure success based on a higher standard.

Neeley Leaders are Strong Organizational Citizens. They value their relationships within NLP and are quick to help. They speak up in the face of wrongdoing and make NLP an environment where everyone can thrive.

EXPERIENTIAL PROGRAMS

- Assessment Center
- Cohort Retreats
- Chicago Trip
- Impact Projects
- International Trip
- Company Visits
- Etiquette Dinners

INTERNSHIPS AND JOBS

Neeley Leaders complete internships across a variety of enterprises. Students frequently turn internships into full-time offers. Recent placements include:

- Dell
- KPMG
- IBM
- Frito Lay
- Bank of America
- Amazon Web Services
- BNSF Railway
- Microsoft
- American Airlines
- JP Morgan Chase
- AlphaSights
- Cisco
**Assessment Center**

Assessment Center is a staple of the Sophomore year experience. Sophomores utilize their training in Crucial Conversations, as well as their developing practice of giving and receiving feedback, to solve case studies as individuals and within groups. Our alumni serve as Assessor, ensuring students receive detailed and impactful feedback on their presentations.

**NLP Retreat**

All members of the BNSF Neeley Leadership Program attend this retreat. Time is spent focusing on individual, cohort, and program development. The retreat is a unique opportunity for cross-cohort mentoring and personal development. Students are challenged through outdoor, experiential learning where they will test their own limitation and find support in fellow program members.

**Recruiting Experiences**

Corporations frequently contact the BNSF Neeley Leadership Program directly in search of qualified applicants for internships and jobs. Whether virtual or in-person, NLP continues to provide opportunities to our members. Previous events included the following corporations: Dell, KPMG, BNSF Railway, AlphaSights, Toyota, Hajoca, Goldman Sachs, and Cisco.
Cohort Connections

The Cohort Connections experience focuses on creating long lasting relationships between members of the various cohorts. Members develop friendships across cohorts and experience peer to peer mentoring. Sophomores and Juniors mix and mingle throughout activities in the fall before receiving their final partner. Paired mentors and mentees to meet regularly along with a member of the senior cohort.

Site Visits

One benefit of membership in the BNSF Neeley Leadership Program is the opportunity to visit corporations and hear directly from their leadership. Previous site visits include American Airlines, BNSF Railway, and Facebook Chicago. Upcoming visits include SimpliFi and Alcon.

Impact Projects

The Junior Year Impact Project is an opportunity for students to work to make an impact on the TCU, Fort Worth, or even global community. Student select their own and team members and Impact Project topics. Previous projects focused on access to clean drinking water, college access, career readiness, mental health, diversity, equity and inclusion, addiction recovery, and food insecurity, to name a few!
COHORT HIGHLIGHTS

2024 Cohort (Sophomores)

Sophomores are learning strategies for holding challenging, productive conversations through the Crucial Conversations certification program. The 2024 cohort worked hard in September to update their resumes and LinkedIn profiles. In November, Sophomores will be paired with a Cohort Connections mentor from the junior class. Sophomores will experience exposure to a variety of corporations and industries later this year through travel* to Chicago.

2023 Cohort (Juniors)

The junior year is all about working in groups and teams. Juniors begin their Impact Project later this year. Impact Projects challenge students to provide critical, productive feedback to their peers while working together towards a common goal. Juniors will also serve in the role of mentor to a sophomore member beginning in November. Junior travel* is still being solidified but is intended to reinforce the team leadership skills introduced through their Impact Projects.

2022 Cohort (Seniors)

Senior Neeley Leaders are getting ready to enter the corporate world. Members of the 2022 cohort learn about the challenges of an ever-changing workplace in the classroom. The upcoming NLP retreat in November will challenges seniors to consider the legacy they plan to leave at TCU and in the BNSF Neeley Leadership Program. While this cohort was not able to experience our traditional travel programs, we hope to provide a travel* experience over the winter holiday. This experience, like the Junior trip, is intended to reinforce the team leadership skills introduced through their Impact Projects.

*All travel is subject to TCU protocol regarding Covid-19. Details and costs will be shared as soon as they become available.
Interpersonal Leadership Skills
Dr. Lance Bettencourt

I will be teaching the sophomore Interpersonal Leadership course. From a content perspective, the focus will be how to direct, influence, and enable those around you, professionally and personally, to achieve positive outcomes (for them, you, the organization). The course will have a strong behavioral focus on skills or practices that can be learned no matter your personality and applied in any role (i.e., no need to be a formal leader). From an experience perspective, the course will rely heavily on discussion and application (role-playing, games, activities) to enhance learning and engagement.
Team Leadership Skills
Dr. Brad Harris

During the junior year, students are charged with working together in small teams to create and fulfill “impact projects” aimed at making a positive impact on the community and society as a whole. This past Fall and Spring were incredibly challenging, as you might expect, but the students rallied together to do some amazing things. I am incredibly proud of their output, of course, but more so of the way they handled adversity. I’ll note also that due to some faculty re-shuffling, I had the opportunity to teach our junior students in both the Fall and Spring semester (I typically only teach one semester), which allowed me to develop a deep connection with the class that I will not soon (ever?) forget. You learn a lot about people when you seem for so long under such stressful conditions, and what I saw was very, very promising. I appreciate the grace and mercy they extended to me as well!

The Leadership Challenge
Dr. Michael Sherrod

The NLP Impact Project should be one that reaches beyond the university to identify and impact the audiences that will benefit most from the project(s). The final form the project takes is as significant of a choice as the topic itself. While the project can take many forms, all projects will share these objectives (subject to change as I learn more about the students and projects). Through Impact Projects students will...

- Demonstrate creativity in the conceptualization and design of the project;
- Evaluate and integrate evidence and approaches from multiple disciplines;
- Demonstrate the leadership, initiative and dedication required to conceive and see a project through to completion;
- Develop greater self-awareness and agency through critical reflection;
- Achieve and demonstrate competence in the necessary skills to complete the project;
- Disseminate the results of their project.

Leading in a Complex World
Dr. Mary Uhl-Bien

If there is anything we learned from Covid-19 it is that the world is complex—and in a complex world you need to lead differently. Our students have demonstrated this and stepped up to the challenge, and we are excited to see where they take it this coming year. While the senior course has always been about teaching our students adaptability and helping them transition to the business world, we now know that the world they are entering is more unique than ever: remote work, collaboration, adaptability, and constant change. In the next year we will double down on this by bringing on Michael Sherrod to partner with me in helping students understand what it means to be an entrepreneurial leader and how you can do that in the context of an existing organization to enable innovation and adaptability. For the seniors this fall, we will take a step back and catch our breaths to reflect on what they have been through and what it means, and then build on this experience to capitalize on the amazing skills they have developed to make them the best prepared NLP leaders for complexity yet.
MEET OUR TEAM!

Lance Bettencourt
Associate Professor of Professional Practice, Marketing

Annie Cowden
Program Director, BNSF Neeley Leadership Program

Brad Harris
Incoming Academic Director, BNSF Neeley Leadership Program
Associate Professor, Management and Leadership

Sallye McDowell
Program Specialist, BNSF Neeley Leadership Program

Lynn Muller
Assistant Dean, Undergraduate Programs (Academic Advisor to NLP Members)

Hettie Richardson
Associate Dean, Undergraduate Programs

Michael Sherrod
William M. Dickey Entrepreneur in Residence Instructor, Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Greg Stephens
Outgoing Academic Director, BNSF Neeley Leadership Program
Associate Professor, Management and Leadership

Mary Uhl-Bien
BNSF Railway Endowed Professor of Leadership Professor, Management and Leadership
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