

Building Student Leaders by Connecting Student leaders

Mentorship program proposal by SBA President Ernesto Falcon to the 2014-2015 SBA Board

*“If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.”
-Sir Isaac Newton*

No one naturally becomes a leader. Leadership comes from an endless process of learning from leaders in your community. The act of going to law school on its own demonstrates a willingness as an individual to become a leader in the community as a practitioner of law.

This file represents a comprehensive approach to building a student to student mentorship program on McGeorge campus. The program’s goals are to help with the navigation of the law school process by connecting incoming students with senior students. The program focuses on building a system that ensures introduction between incoming students and leaders among the McGeorge community. The program draws its inspiration from several other law schools’ student mentor programs. The program will be built, implemented, funded, and maintained by the McGeorge SBA Board.

Objectives

- To build a McGeorge student community of support between the incoming class and senior students.
- To increase incoming students opportunities of a successful law school career by connecting them to senior students who can help show them the ropes in finding an internship, breaking the ice at networking events, and answering first year questions.
- To tap into the students who have demonstrated leadership so that they may share their knowledge and experiences with incoming students who will become McGeorge's future student leaders.

Summary of program

Students that come to law school are often confronted with a range of things that are intimidating and foreign. These things include but are not limited to case analysis, the Socratic method, the grade curve, the administrative infrastructure of McGeorge, and generally meeting new people. Compounding the challenge is the fear of making a bad first impression by asking a “stupid question,” which is an over prescribed label.

The program will focus on connecting designated Student Leaders (senior students who participate in the program) to incoming students (transfers and first years). The SBA will organize a launch event shortly after orientation after gathering opt-ins from incoming students and transfers. Prior to the launch event, Student Leaders will be assigned to incoming students who have opted into the program and an introduction email will be sent by the SBA President.

After the launch event, the incoming students will be free to choose to meet with other Student Leaders who will have their biographical information and student email posted on the McGeorge SBA website. Student Leaders will also be asked to check in with their assigned incoming student(s) before midterms and finals to ensure they are aware of student resources that are available to them.

The program's implementation and operation will be organized by the SBA President and a small coordination team (Student Leader Coordinator). The SBA will supply funding, build a contact list, and provide a timeframe to carry out the program. The program will take the place of the Mentorship Committee for this year with the plan to create a playbook for a Mentorship Committee should the next SBA decide to create one.

Funding sources

Predicted total funding needed for this program is in the range around \$1500. Funding for this year will primarily come from the SBA President's \$1500 stipend that is being returned to the student budget per a campaign promise.

Timeline of program implementation

July

The SBA President will also advertise the program in a Facebook message to the admitted students page. The SBA President will also work with Admissions to explore additional methods of advertisement. A webpage will be prepared in advance for incoming students to fill out with their interests in order to assist the SBA in pairing up incoming students with senior students.

August

SBA Board members will advertise the program to the incoming class during orientation week. The SBA President will also attempt to advertise the program in a personal email to the incoming students at the end of orientation week. The SBA blog will have the program and Student Leader biographies and contact information online prior to orientation.

August-September

The SBA President will be introducing Student Leaders and their designated incoming student groups by email to begin the process. The Student Leader will then be responsible for inviting their assigned incoming students to the launch event that will be shortly after the school year begins.

September-October

Incoming students will be free to request meetings with any other Student Leaders posted on the McGeorge SBA blog page. Student Leaders will be asked to advertise services the SBA is providing and check in on their incoming student group to see if they need help with anything and relay their requests to the SBA President and Student Leader Coordinators.

November

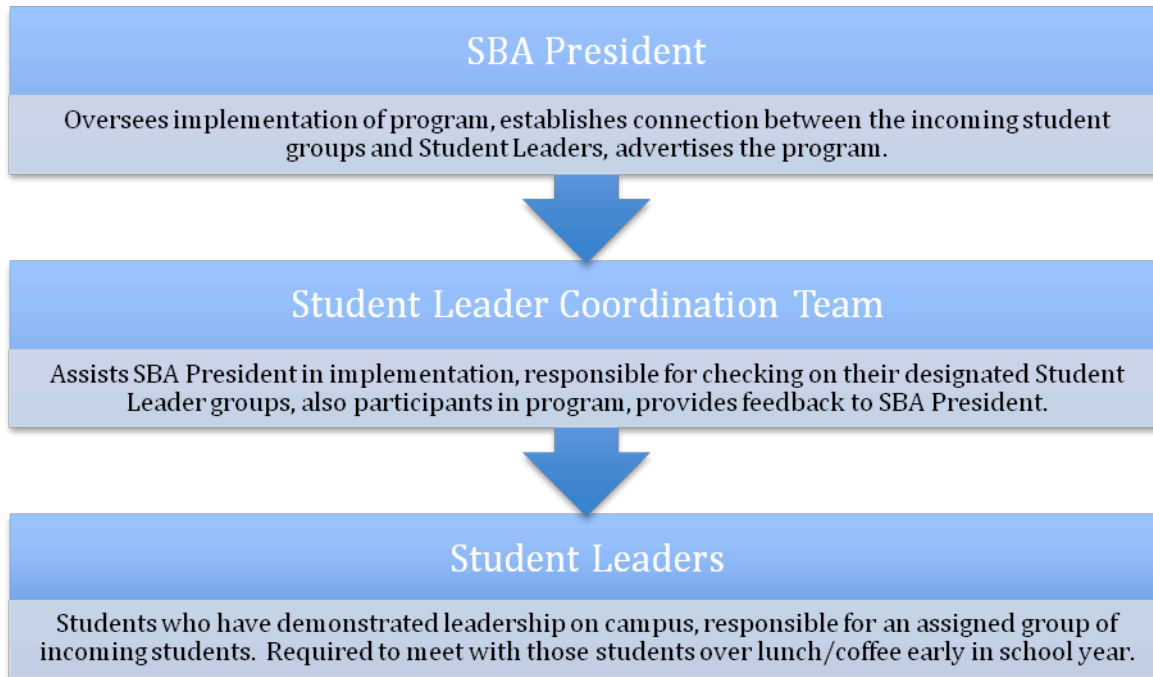
Student Leaders will check in with their designated incoming student groups before finals to see if they have any last minute needs and provide assistance or relay the needs to the Student Leader Coordinator team.

December

The SBA will assess the effectiveness of the program and make adjustments for the Spring semester. Student Leaders will be called on to remind incoming students to begin searching for Summer 2015 internships and offer advice on how they obtained their internships. Throughout the Fall, the Student Leader Coordination team will make adjustments to the program to address any issues that may arise. Issues encountered will be summarized in a report to the SBA Board for review.

Organizational structure

The SBA President will lead this pilot program. Based on initial admissions predictions, the program will need to be able to accommodate more than 100 students. Depending on the number of Student Leaders that join the program, it is possible that more incoming students will opt in than senior students. In order to manage such a potentially large population, a coordination team will need to be assembled to oversee the implementation of the program as well as participate in it.



Additional benefits

By not leaving connecting senior students to incoming students up to chance, access to the incoming class will allow for better communication of major student events. This will also assist the SBA in being responsive to the needs of the incoming class and better able to represent their interests before the administration and faculty.

Composition of Student Leaders group

- The SBA President will assemble the Student Leader Coordination team and volunteer as a Student Leader in this program
- SBA Board members will participate as Student Leaders.
- Additional Student Leaders will primarily come from students who have demonstrated leadership on campus.
- Becoming a Student Leader will be an open process to volunteers until a sufficient number of individuals are participating.

Challenges to implementation

The challenges to implementing this program will probably come from four areas:

- 1) Sustaining the program during the pressure points of law school such as GLS assignments, midterms, and finals.
- 2) Successfully advertising the program to potentially more than 100 incoming students and ensuring that its benefits are known while they are bombarded with several other required tasks for beginning law school.
- 3) Ensuring that Student Leaders are able to communicate issues with the program and that those issues are resolved expeditiously by the Student Leader Coordinator team.

Conclusion

Success in this program will change the McGeorge student body. However, it is critical that we are successful in order to begin the process of building a student body that is not composed of isolated groups who do not interact. McGeorge students can only be competitive in the legal field if we work together at more levels and build in a future alumni support structure. No one has ever been successful without the help of others. By creating this network, it can be leveraged from year to year will raise the chances of success for our incoming students who will eventually become future Student Leaders.