



BROWN POLO UPDATE

Lehigh University
Orientation Leader &
Camp Hawk Counselor
Alumni Newsletter



SPRING 2023-2024

A NOTE FROM THE OFYE

It's been an exciting year! We've noticed an increase in engagement across campus, and we've had an incredible staff as we assist all students in their transition. bLUeprint re-launched this year with 5 new foundations and our staff embraced this to help first-year students explore creative curiosity, self concept, healthy connections, critical consciousness, and strategic adaptability.

We continue our theme of Crafting our Communities with Care, and was inspired by how students bought in and made it their own. One student described it as, "...we are each other's safety net...we should and will have to take care of each other." If that's not Lehigh Strong, I don't know what is!

We started a new tradition this year with an OFYE Alumni Reunion, and we can't wait to continue it for years to come! It was so exciting to have some folks visit us and get to reconnect. We hope you'll save the date and join us next year the Friday before Le-Laf from 4:00 - 5:00pm.

We are so grateful to have you all as alumni as a part of our community. We say it every year, but you are what make the OFYE special. We're excited to show you what we've been up to this year and hope to connect with you again soon.

Stay Lehigh STRONG!

Stefanie DiDomenico Burke & Nicole Burke



In this Update:

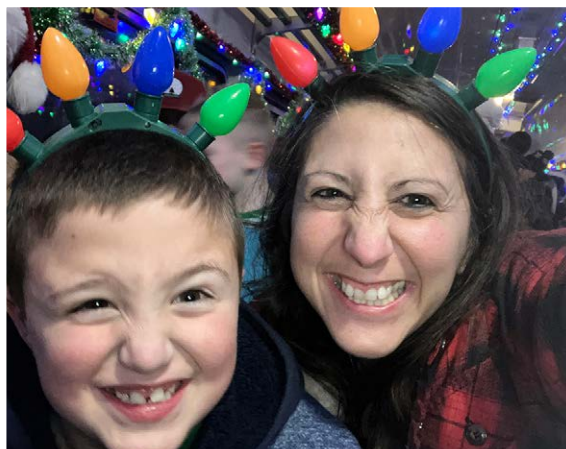
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1st Annual OFYE Alumni Reunion
Friday, November 17, 2023



MEET THE OFYE STAFF:



Stefanie DiDomenico Burke

Assistant Dean, Director of First-Year Experience

Stefanie's been at Lehigh for over 11 years and blessed to be in the OFYE since 2015. Stefanie bought a new home in North Bethlehem and is excited to be just a short walk to campus for the upcoming spring and summer days. With her son, John (7), in first grade in the Bethlehem school district – Bethlehem really is home. John loves wearing his Lehigh gear, and Stefanie is grateful he's got so many amazing mentors in the OFYE student staff. She's hoping all that lego building will lead to a Lehigh degree one day. The OFYE is an amazing place because of all the people who have been a part of it over the years, and Stefanie is humbled and honored to continue to be on the team.



Nicole Burke

Associate Director, First-Year Experience

Nicole Burke started working as the Associate Director in the Office of First-Year Experience in June 2018. She earned her B.A. in English and Political Science at Hofstra University, and her Ed.M. in College Student Affairs at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. Prior to coming to Lehigh, she worked in various roles in residence life at The University of Texas at Austin. Nicole loves working with the OFYE staff in helping them prepare to support new students and their families in their transition to Lehigh. In her free time, Nicole enjoys spending time with family, friends and her dog, Fitz.



Erin Ketz

Coordinator, First-Year Experience

Erin will soon celebrate her 10th year at Lehigh! She loves working in the OFYE helping new students and their families. Erin also loves getting to work with OFYE staff and work study students on projects like social media, the OFYE Draft Book, the Brown Polo Update and more! She feels so lucky to work in the OFYE with such amazing people! In her free time Erin enjoys spending time with her fiancé, Dan, friends and family. She loves going to concerts, finding new vegan spots and attempting to cook new things!

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LAST YEAR



♡ 👁 🚩 Congratulations 2022 OCs!



♡ 👁 🚩 This Discover Lehigh Team!!!



♡ 👁 🚩 CHCs ready for move-in week!



♡ 👁 🚩 Ready for Orientation!



♡ 👁 🚩 Welcome to Lehigh, Class of 2027!



♡ 👁 🚩 10 Years of Faux Friday!



♡ 👁 🚩 Best Hawk's Fest Ever!



♡ 👁 🚩 Recruiting new staff with Fitz



♡ 👁 🚩 Team building at the Staff Retreat

2024 ORIENTATION COORDINATORS

The Orientation Coordinators dedicate themselves year-round to ensuring that first-year students at Lehigh have an exceptional experience. We invest extensive time in training our exceptional team of over 100 leaders, ensuring they feel fully equipped to guide their groups of first-years through either Camp Hawk or the Orientation program. Our aim is to cultivate a culture where inclusivity, positivity, friendship, and empowerment are woven into every activity, with the intention that these values resonate deeply with incoming students. As Orientation Coordinators, we are committed to making a positive impact on the community and inspiring others to maximize their Lehigh experience.

Back Row:

Ethan Riester
Emerson Lederman
Isaac Curley

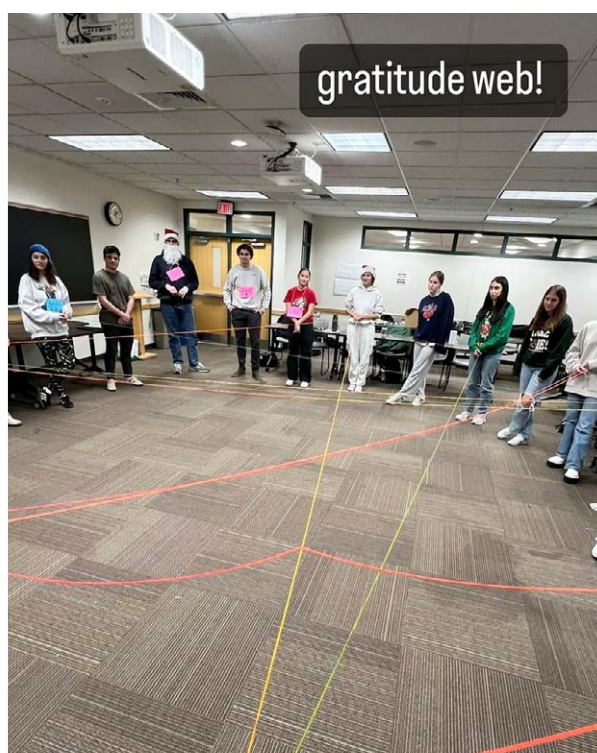
Front Row:

Erika Ramirez
Paige Rhinehart
Sonia Trinkle



The OCs ended their spring break attending the NODA Conference at Montclair State University. They had the opportunity to present at the conference with Nicole and Stefanie, learned about other universities' orientation experience and bond as a group.

2024 RETURNING ORIENTATION LEADERS



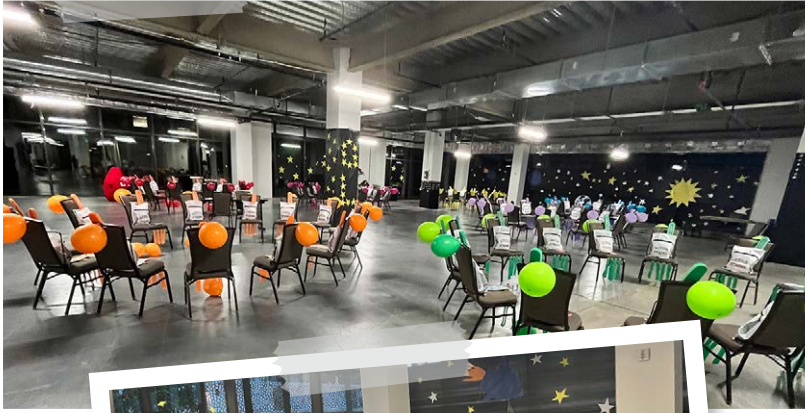
**Ariana Arken
Nina Berkowitz
Rachelle Bianciella
Allie Callahan
Michael Ciliberti
Alli Courtenay
Julia Dzurenko
Marina Falzone
Walter Fried
Maggie Johnson
Luke Kaiser**

**Lucas Koranda
Olivia Lundquist
Zoe Metzger
Daniel Novick
Eli Smith
Isaiah Sohn
Makena Spiotta
Sophia Taskov
Clare Walicki
Catherine Wilbur**



TRAINING THROUGH TIME!

Orientation Training is not complete without that wonderful theme! Take a journey with us to look at some of the past OL themes!!! Each theme that is chosen has a message that makes the Orientation program stronger! **The theme for 2023 was Space!**



PAST THEMES

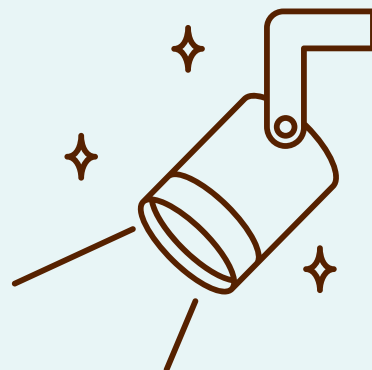
2005: LUau (Hawaiian)
2006: First-Year Round Up (Western)
2007: Hollywood
2008: Army: Boot Camp
2009: Survivor
2010: Clue
2011: Harry Potter
2012: Lion King
2013: The Hunger Games
2014: Up
2015: Pirates of the Caribbean
2016: Legos
2017: Hollywood
2018: Spy
2019: Olympics
2020: Safari Expedition
2021: Star Wars
2022: Mount Olympus



What will the theme be for 2024...?

OL SPOTLIGHT

Past & Present



Sto Mahoney '16

Since graduating Lehigh my career has taken me to all kinds of new places! At the moment I live in the beautiful city of Austin, TX. The food and culture don't miss and there are always new events to keep my schedule busy. Professionally, I'm enjoying my work in sales and executive leadership for Ingersoll Rand, a worldwide leader in industrial equipment for the manufacturing sector. I lead a large team of Account Executives to design, quote and implement industrial compressed air solutions for our manufacturing customer base across Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida, and Alabama. I love my job because there are always new challenges in front of me to solve and no one day is the same as another. One day I may be touring a large food and beverage facility that produces all the egg bites for Starbucks stores across the country and the next I'm at the Tesla Giga factory helping facility managers ramp up for Cybertruck production. Personally, I've taken an interest in growing my real estate portfolio, particularly in the tiny home market. I own a few acres of land in Asheville, NC and operate two Airbnb shipping container homes that I recycled out of a shipyard with my business partner. People love the novelty and sustainability of staying in a converted shipping container home so we're typically booked several months out!

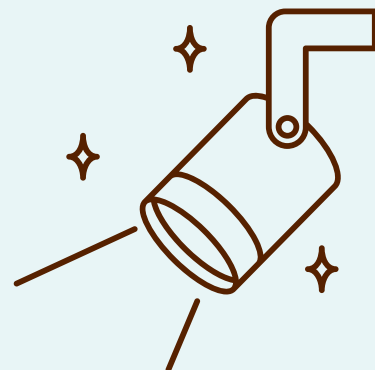


There are lots of areas in my life where I still use what I learned during my own OFYE experience as an OL and OC. First, the facilitation skills I learned during Orientation in a group discussion are highly useful to lead and coordinate a team full of professional salespeople. I attribute the success I've had with my own team directly to my OFYE experience! I also tend to throw myself fully into every project or challenge that I undertake because of how immersive the OFYE experience was for me. The OFYE program forced me to bring my A-game through every day we showed up for training, facilitations, and of course the first year class during orientation. I dropped my cool baggage during Orientation and haven't picked it up since!

My advice for anyone in the OFYE staff is to tap into the network of OFYE alumni! I have lots of friends and professional connections I keep up with today that came from the OFYE program.

OL SPOTLIGHT

Past & Present



Lucas Koranda '26

When I underwent the orientation experience as a first-year student, I was deeply impressed by the orientation leaders' boundless enthusiasm, outgoing leadership, and genuine compassion. It was evident that the sense of community among the Office of First-Year Experience staff was robust and inclusive, exemplified by the way orientation leaders interacted with each other and with their respective first-year groups. In hindsight, I am astonished by the extent of personal growth I've experienced through my involvement with the OFYE.

Serving as an orientation leader has equipped me with invaluable interpersonal and facilitation skills that I now apply in strengthening my present friendships, skills that undeniably transcend into both professional and social settings. I've come to recognize the significant impact I can have on campus through my regular interactions with first-year students, whether it's in Rathbone or Linderman. The privilege of representing this organization year-round fills me with immense pride.

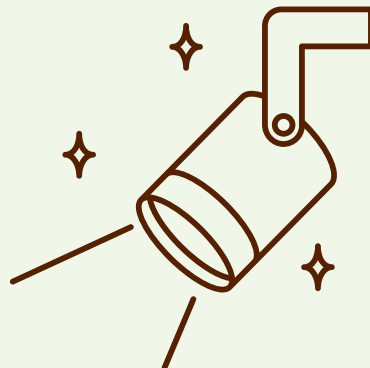
The most rewarding aspect of being an orientation leader is the enduring connections I have forged within our staff, a staff that is wonderfully diverse yet united in purpose. The OFYE brings together students from various majors, passions, involvements, personalities, and backgrounds, all dedicated to assisting first-year students with their academic and social transition to Lehigh. This shared commitment fosters a "one team, one dream" mindset that binds our staff together; I now see our team not just as a community, but as a cohesive family. This spring, in my role as a Returning Orientation Leader, this familial mindset has become even more apparent as we welcome new Orientation Leaders and Camp Hawk counselors. It has been exciting to help prepare our new staff for welcoming Lehigh's incoming Class of 2028.

As orientation leaders, we must practice what we preach in order to serve as effective resources and mentors for our first-year students. In my experience with the OFYE staff, I've come to realize that we aren't merely a campus community—we are truly a family.



CHC SPOTLIGHT

Past & Present



Michael Lopinto '17

My name is Michael Lopinto and I currently work as a bartender in the Goldminer's Daughter Lodge in Alta, Utah. I have worked this lodge every winter to ski since graduating Lehigh University. They include housing and a ski pass with employment, we are situated at the base of Collins lift, and it has changed the way I live my life and travel with my free time. For example I have made a few multi-month long surf trips with my summers as well as a couple road trips.

Through the camp hawk program the power of having a common goal with enthusiastic people reinforced my confidence in being able to join new communities and allow myself to be who I am while encouraging others to act with their full potential. It is always important to understand what people are saying and to notice when stoking a little confidence boost will help them be creative contributors for the community and ignite a feeling of belonging in the individual.

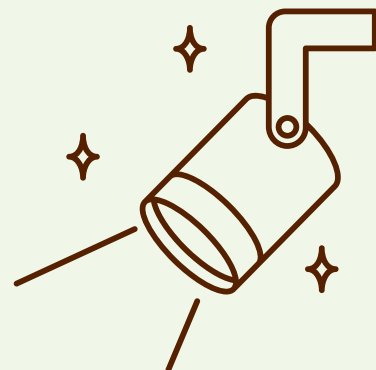
I encourage everyone to follow their interests, especially those which stem from a place of genuine curiosity. Allow life to surprise you and let the world impress rather than have the focus be making a mark.

I believe the work and life experience of working at the Goldminer's Daughter Lodge has helped me live more fully because of the access it grants me to the outdoors, breathing fresh air with excitement daily. Please contact me on Instagram @watercolorbrain if you wish to ask questions about skiing or surfing or just generally trying to get yourself into a way of life that feels most suited to someone who knows they desire activity and excitement in their lives. The lodge has an Instagram page as well and it is as easy to get in into skiing as anywhere in the world here, gear is almost as accessible as the snow storms.



CHC SPOTLIGHT

Past & Present



Bella Clark '26

During my first year at Lehigh, I looked for many opportunities to meet and connect with new people. On a whim, I decided to sign up for a weekend retreat in the Poconos organized by the Office of First Year Experience (OFYE) called Camp Hawk. With no idea what I had signed I boarded the bus and immediately had a feeling that it would be a memorable weekend.

As soon as we got to Camp Canadensis, the physical location of Camp Hawk, I felt right at home. Highlights included the nightly campfires, post-dinner bonding with counselors over games and hot cocoa, and cool dips in the pool. Being immersed in nature allowed me to open up, and I left feeling excited for the rest of my time at Lehigh and comforted by the new connections I had made.

The incredible experience at Camp Hawk inspired me to apply to become a counselor myself this year. Serving as a counselor was so enjoyable and fulfilling. I cherished the opportunity to connect with first-years in a relaxed atmosphere, knowing firsthand the value of Camp Hawk and the connections made as well as how nice it is to have so many friendly faces around campus, especially during those initial months at Lehigh. Guiding first-year students to resources, clubs, and events that I thought they might enjoy just reminded me of how much I valued that during my own Camp Hawk experience. Most of all, fostering connections between the first years was deeply rewarding and one of the absolute highlights of my time at Lehigh. I still maintain strong relationships with many of the campers I met and I am always thrilled to find campers hanging out together on the front lawn or grabbing poke at Global Cafe. So many friendships came out of my experience as a camper and as a counselor and I am grateful to the OFYE staff for creating such a welcoming environment for all of us to connect.

This year I look forward to joining staff again because of the community and warmth that the OFYE fosters. I have already loved my time at our trainings spent meeting new people and learning more about what Lehigh has to offer as well as what I can do to support our amazing community.



CAMP HAWK

Camp Hawk Counselors were busy at work helping Move-In Week be a success! They were not only training for Camp Hawk, but they were assisting in the office, running our preLUtion socials, hanging out with Discover Lehigh participants, and even doing things like hanging up Orientation signage and flags across campus. We can't thank them enough for their dedication and the week couldn't have happened without them!

Unfortunately, Covid-19 struck campus hard at the onset of the academic year and we were unable to host our traditional Camp Hawk weekend in the Poconos. The counselors were incredible and embodied one of the most important OFYE expectations, flexibility, and adapted with us to still create a memorable and valuable experience for first-year students. They hosted Camp Hawk Night in the OFYE, creating a few hours of fun, meaningful connections and reflections, and s'mores without the bonfire....it is possible (although maybe not quite as tasty!).

A special thanks to our 2023 Camp Hawk Counselors who might not have gotten the Camp Hawk they expected, but they were role models in adapting and making the most of the opportunity.



CAMP HAWK: SNOWED IN

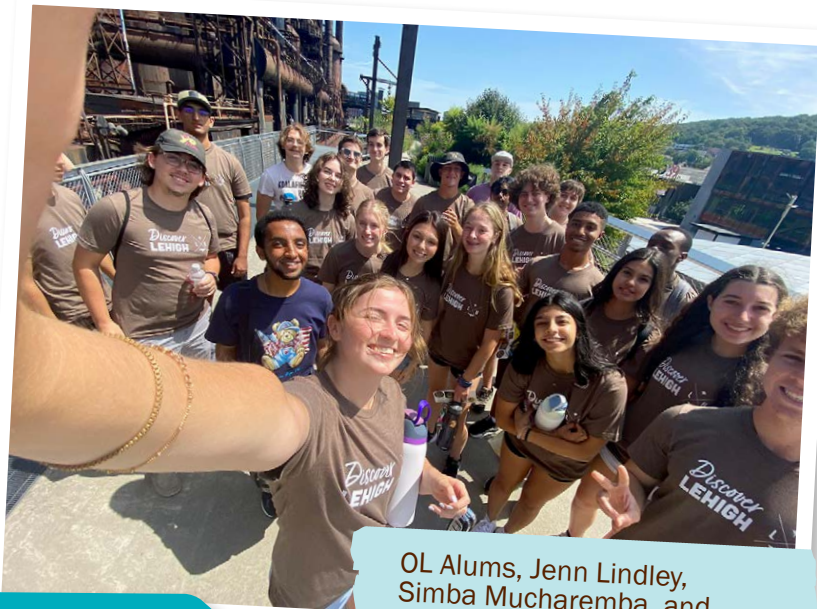


We were excited to host Camp Hawk: Snowed In for its fifth year to build meaningful connections among students in the spring semester. The program was adapted into a 5-week series where students participate in fun challenges and community excursions for students to get to know each other and have fun. This year, we went to the CapturedLV Escape room in North Bethlehem, ate dinner at a new restaurant Couch Pota.Doh!, and even had student leaders join us for a panel discussion.

PRELUSION

8 PROGRAMS

- Discover Lehigh
- Fabricate:LU
- GlobalLehigh
- Leadership Adventures
- Lehigh 360
- LehighMED
- Lehigh Women Engineers
- Volunteer Experience



OL Alums, Jenn Lindley, Simba Mucharemba, and Rish Kumar did an amazing job leading Discover Lehigh!

175 STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

95% plan to stay involved with their program's office



97%

made a connection with their peers



97%

would recommend the program to their peers



78%

said evening socials were helpful in meeting students

\$339
AVERAGE COST
TO ATTEND

17%
RECEIVED A
SCHOLARSHIP

YEAR2@LU



We provide a ton of structured support to our first-year students, but then what!? The intent behind Year2@LU is to provide some more structure to deepen their learning in the 5 Foundations, continue to encourage the use of timely and relevant resources, and to encourage an active process of connecting and applying experiences to encourage individual growth and leadership development.

Year2@LU Kickoff

The Kickoff is a collaborative effort to introduce students to Year2@LU programming, encourage participation and engagement in resources and opportunities specific to sophomore needs, and to think about the 5 Foundations in a deeper way. It is a table fair with offices like CCPD, Housing, Student Involvement and Academic Advising represented. Students also got to enjoy some food, decorate Year2 totes and participate in lawn games.

Sophomore Series

Sophomores can attend a variety of events that are relevant to their second year at Lehigh and engage in opportunities on campus. One event includes a workshop with Housing Services, LUPD, and Financial Aid to talk about Navigating the Off-Campus Housing environment, leases, landlords and more.

Open Houses

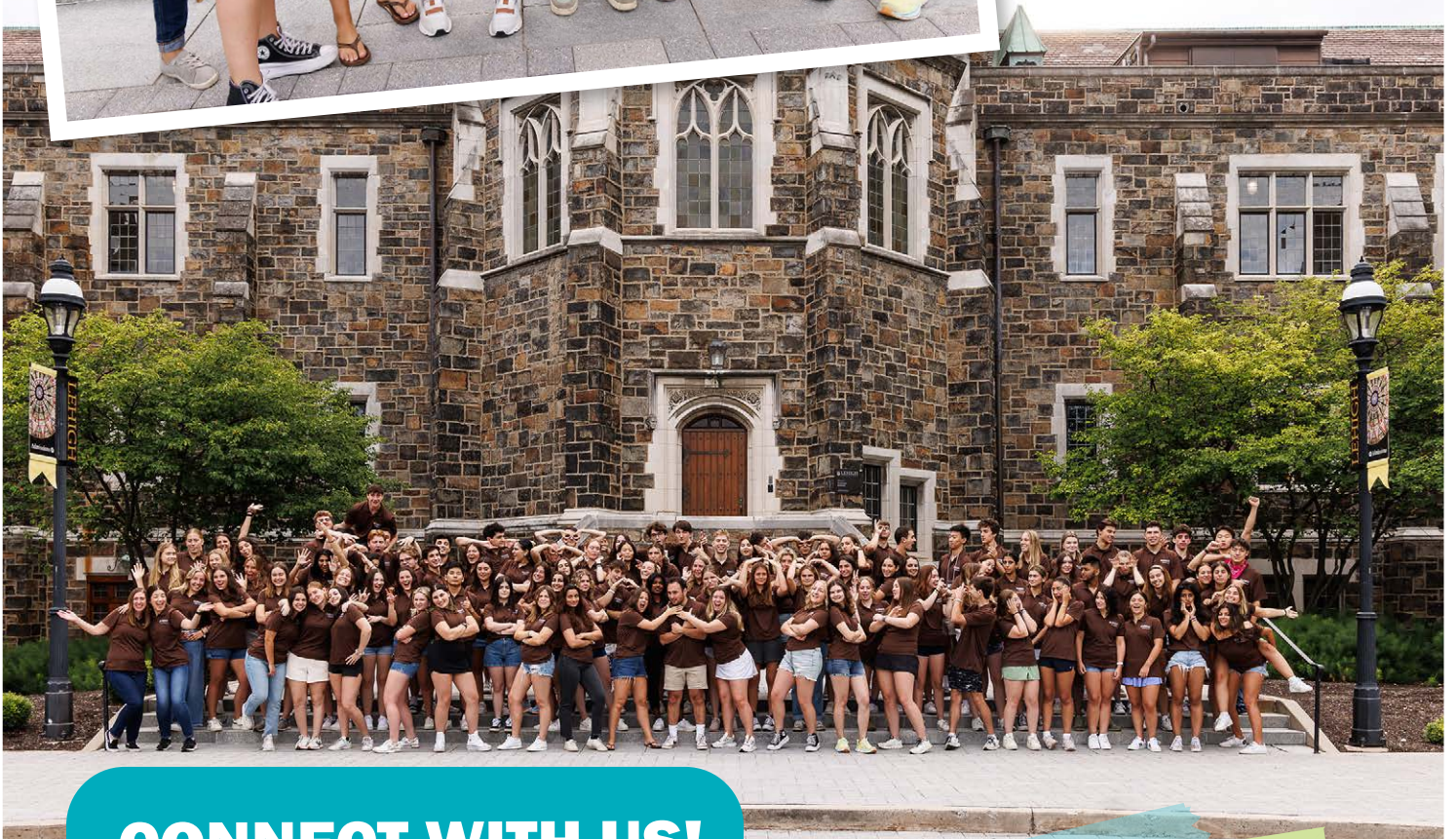
The open houses were a fun way to encourage students to take care of themselves as we provided a bunch of ways to destress, have fun, and make new friends. From fun crafts, snacks and reflective activities – it was fun to get to hang out with sophomores in this space!

SOPHisticated Networking

This program ran in October to engage second year students with upperclass peers to practice their networking skills. Students got helpful tips from the Center for Career and Professional Development, created and practiced their elevator pitch, and received a free headshot.



Many thanks goes
to Sto Mahoney,
Lucas Koranda,
Michael Lopinto &
Bella Clark,
for their contributions!



CONNECT WITH US!

Keep the Orientation and Camp Hawk magic with you year-round by following us on Instagram and Twitter, liking us on Facebook and joining our LinkedIn Group!



@LehighOFYE



facebook.com/OFYELU



Lehigh OFYE Staff

If you would like to be
featured in the next OL,
or CHC spotlight, please
email Nicole Burke at
nmb518@lehigh.edu!