



BROWN POLO UPDATE

Lehigh University
Orientation Leader &
Camp Hawk Counselor
Alumni Newsletter



SPRING
2024-2025

A NOTE FROM THE OFYE

Another year has flown by! We've had an incredible year full of all the emotions – from the excitement of Move-In, the joy of seeing the OFYE staff in action, to the tears and anxiety that comes with starting something new for the incoming class and their families.

There is a lot of uncertainty in the world as we enter 2025, and it is in these times that we lean on our values and what is important to us. We will not change the way we do our work and our goal in creating an inclusive community for everyone and an environment where everyone can thrive. The world is not always an equitable place, but we will continue to strive to ensure equity for first-year students and a place where everyone can be their authentic self and can be successful. Our theme of Crafting our Communities with Care for first-year students remains prevalent. Let's always take care of ourselves and of each other – and let's leave the world better than when we came into it. Ruth Bader Ginsburg said "Fight for the things that you care about. But do it in a way that will lead others to join you." We encourage you to do that with whatever you are passionate about and we hope to model the way as we lead the OFYE.

We are more grateful than ever to work with everyone on the OFYE staff and to have you all as alumni and a part of our OFYE family. It brings us joy and energy to connect with you. Please reach out and share your stories, your memories, and your successes. We love you all and appreciate you.

Stay Lehigh **STRONG!**

Stefanie DiDomenico Burke & Nicole Burke

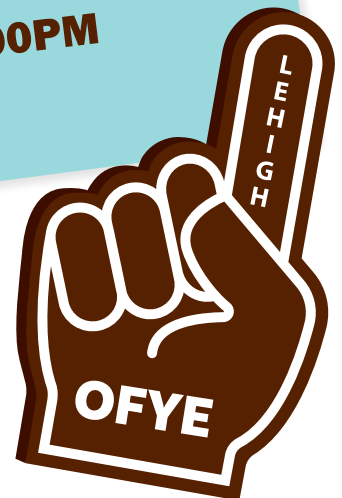


In this Update:

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- 2024-2025 OFYE Highlights
- Orientation Coordinators
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- OL Spotlight
- CHC Spotlight
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SAVE THE DATE!
OFYE ALUMNI REUNION
FRIDAY BEFORE LE-LAF
NOVEMBER 21, 2025
4:00PM-5:00PM



WE'VE MOVED!

This January we said goodbye to Christmas Saucon and moved back to Clayton University Center! You can find the OFYE in **Suite 128** on the first floor near the information desk.

We love being back in the CUC, although we do miss our Suite in Christmas Saucon. On our final walk through we made sure to get one last photo of the OC Office chalk wall.

We're still getting organized in our new offices, so stay tuned for photos of the new OC Office, which is right next door to Suite 128.

We can't wait for you to visit in November!



Last time in the XS Suite...



Hello, CUC Suite 128!



Nicole, Erin and Stefanie in the new OFYE Suite

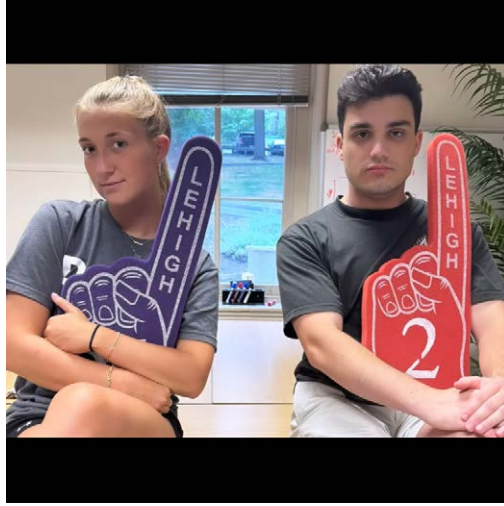


Recruitment Event with the OCs in the Living Room

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LAST YEAR



♡ 👁 📍 Congratulations OLs & 2023 OCs!



♡ 👁 📍 Summer Orientation Prep with this team



♡ 👁 📍 Exploring Bethlehem with Discover Lehigh



♡ 👁 📍 Welcome to Lehigh, Class of 2028!



♡ 👁 📍 2024 Orientation Kick-Off



♡ 👁 📍 Camp Hawk 2024 happening as planned



♡ 👁 📍 First Ever Returner Staff Retreat



♡ 👁 📍 The Cruisin' Coordinators Bed Race Team



♡ 👁 📍 Team building at the Staff Retreat

2025 ORIENTATION COORDINATORS

Throughout the year, Orientation Coordinators train and manage the Orientation and Camp Hawk staff, inspiring students to be the best leaders they can be. We support a staff of over 100 students all dedicated to supporting first year students in their transition to Lehigh. Through intentional skill building and team building activities, our goal is to cultivate an inclusive community where student leaders feel empowered to guide a group of First Year students through their respective programs. As Orientation Coordinators we are committed to making a positive impact on the Lehigh community and help others make the most of their Lehigh Experience.

Back Row:

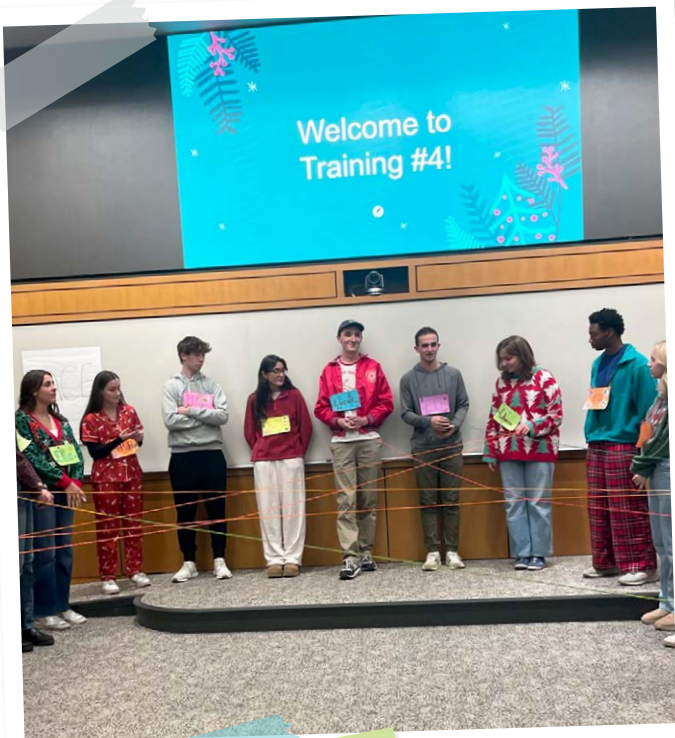
Eli Smith
Lucas Koranda
Marina Falzone
Catherine Wilbur
Michael Ciliberti

Front Row:

Alli Courtenay
Mak Spiotta
Julia Dzurenko



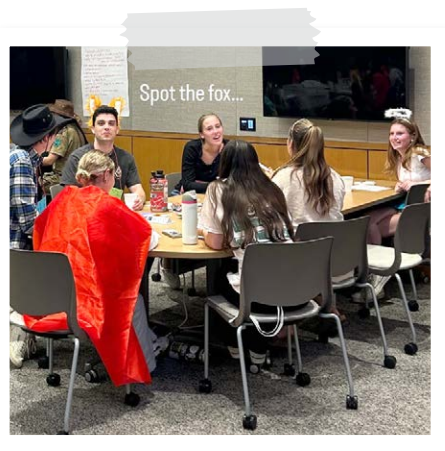
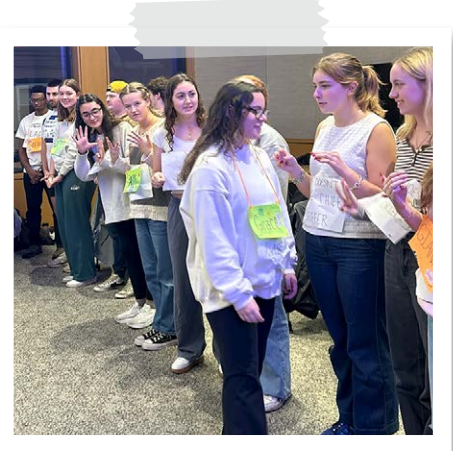
2025 RETURNING ORIENTATION LEADERS



**Ella Billman
Steven Carr
Leela Deshpande
Ruby Doolan
Jack Filius
Roisin Gaffney
Kristen Gallagher
Riley Hillen
Addison Hobbs
Sophia Kaupp
Ian Kenyon**

**Gianna Lombardi
Mason Marchese
Gwenn Peckham
Colin Riley
Grace Rizzuto
Matt Schafer
Emilie Sodora
Anna Suter
Kerry Tuccinardi
Shara VanPraagh**

**Returner
Training
Fall 2024**



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 2024 was Mario Kart!**

LEHIGH ORIENTATION



★ ASA PACKER COURSE ★



PAST THEMES

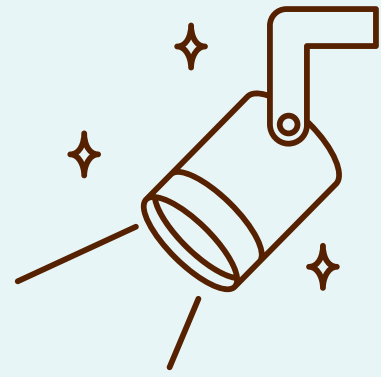
- 2005: LUau (Hawaiian)
- 2006: First-Year Round Up (Western)
- 2007: Hollywood
- 2008: Army: Boot Camp
- 2009: Survivor
- 2010: Clue
- 2011: Harry Potter
- 2012: Lion King
- 2013: The Hunger Games
- 2014: Up

- 2015: Pirates of the Caribbean
- 2016: Legos
- 2017: Hollywood
- 2018: Spy
- 2019: Olympics
- 2020: Safari Expedition
- 2021: Star Wars
- 2022: Mount Olympus
- 2023: Space



OL SPOTLIGHT

Past & Present



Akeive Burrows '21

What are you up to/doing now?

(This could be personal and/or professional)
I am a second-year medical student at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. In addition to my studies, I work part-time as a Resident Assistant for UCLA's graduate housing community. In my free time, I enjoy cooking, mentoring pre-med students, and going on hiking and camping trips with friends. I am also involved in a neurosurgery research team studying the impact of traumatic brain injuries and health inequities in Los Angeles.

How have you used the skills/knowledge you gained from being on the OFYE team in your life since graduating from Lehigh?

Being an Orientation Leader allowed me to grow significantly in emotional intelligence, relationship building, conflict resolution, and proactive community engagement. Now as a medical student, these skills have been invaluable in building rapport with my patients, advocating for their well-being, and helping families navigate the complexities of the healthcare system.

Last year, my classmates and I organized and led a community health fair to improve healthcare literacy and access for a small community in South LA. It was one of the most fulfilling experiences I've had—meeting people where they are and providing care without judgment.

Even in the hospital, I recognize that not all issues can be quickly resolved, so I focus on being present. I worked with patients facing difficult diagnoses and prognoses, some of whom felt frustrated or discouraged. However, by actively listening to their concerns and providing a space for them to be heard, I reassured them that I would work closely with my team to offer any support possible. While I couldn't always provide immediate solutions, patients often expressed gratitude for my care and presence, reinforcing the importance of empathy and showing up for others, even when answers aren't immediate.

What's one piece of advice you have for current OFYE staff?

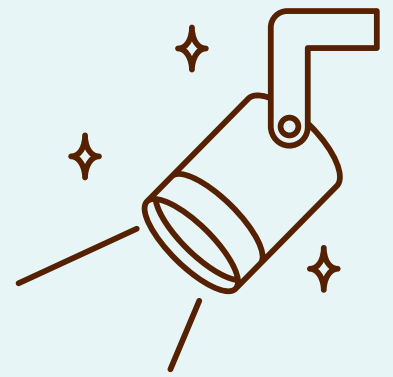
Having lived in different places and experienced various communities, I've come to deeply appreciate the people who make others feel seen and included. This has inspired me to actively foster that same sense of belonging wherever I go. My time on the OFYE team at Lehigh was an invaluable experience that allowed me to do just that. My advice for current OFYE staff is to be a servant leader and show up for others as you would for yourself—with kindness and patience.



OL SPOTLIGHT

Past & Present

Matt Schafer '27



Arriving on campus as a nervous first-year student in the fall of 2023, I found comfort and familiarity through my orientation leader. Though I had never met her, she made the transition to Lehigh seamless and helped me and my peers navigate the first couple of weeks of college. When the application opened up to be an Orientation Leader later that semester, I jumped at the opportunity. I noticed, from day one, that the OFYE was a truly good group of people doing truly good things. The OFYE, for me, was a mutually beneficial relationship: I would gain an inclusive, energetic, and giving community, and in return I could give back to my campus and help usher in a new group of first years just as my OL did for me.

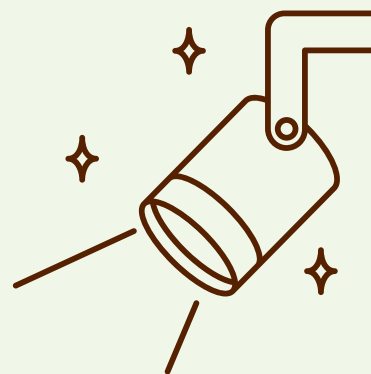
Community is what initially brought me to the OFYE, and it's what brought me back for more. As a Returning Orientation Leader, I look forward to fostering meaningful conversations and connections with the new OFYE staff through training, outreach events, and Orientation/Camp Hawk. It is not often that you have the opportunity to make 75 new friends through a club or organization on campus. Moreover, it is rare to find yourself assembling with 100 of Lehigh's most genuine people.

In little of a year in the OFYE I have learned so much but the one lesson that has stuck with me is the platinum rule: treat others how THEY want to be treated. As Orientation Leaders, Transfer Orientation Leaders and Camp Hawk Counselors, it is our responsibility to ensure that first year students are being treated how they want to be treated in order to make their transition to Lehigh as seamless as possible. I have been able to implement this into my connections with fellow staff members and even into my personal life. I am excited and encouraged to continue to learn about campus resources, building healthy relationships, but most importantly, what makes Lehigh home.



CHC SPOTLIGHT

Past & Present



Shaelyn Heft '20

What are you up to/doing now?

Life has been an exciting journey since my time in the OFYE! My career has been both fun and rewarding – from gaining incredible consulting experience to additional life perspective living in Kansas City after graduation. Ultimately, my path led me back to the Lehigh Valley, where I now serve as a Product Manager for the Automated Infusion Systems portfolio at B. Braun Medical—an international leader in infusion therapy devices, IV solutions, and pharmaceuticals. In this role, I have the opportunity to make a meaningful impact on healthcare – helping to elevate patient care standards across the U.S. and Canada.

How have you used the skills/knowledge you gained from being on the OFYE team in your life since graduating from Lehigh?

As a Camp Hawk counselor and later a Camp Hawk coordinator, I gained invaluable insight into the power of building and nurturing meaningful connections—both with new students and fellow OFYE staff members. It was during Camp Hawk that I met my best friend at Lehigh, and that experience reinforced the importance of fostering relationships that grow over time. I made it a priority to bring new people into our circle, ensuring that everyone felt welcome and valued. That same commitment to meaningful connections has carried into my professional life. I strive to create an inclusive and supportive environment for my colleagues, serve as a trusted partner to my customers, and contribute to a workplace culture that prioritizes collaboration and respect. Whether in personal or professional settings, I believe that strong relationships are the foundation for making a lasting impact—one connection at a time.

What's one piece of advice you have for current OFYE staff?

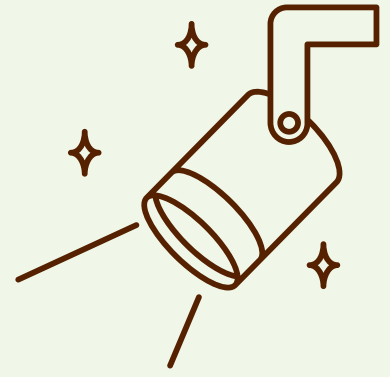
My biggest piece of advice for any current OFYE staff member is simple: do it for the plot! Your OFYE experience will be filled with learning moments, challenges, and countless opportunities to make a meaningful impact on those around you. Even on the longest orientation days or during exhausting hours at Camp Hawk, keep showing up as your authentic, vibrant self. Do it for the new students who are looking for guidance, for your fellow OFYE staff members who rely on your energy and support, for your personal growth, and (of course) for the plot of your life. The moments you'll reminisce about won't be the ones where you simply did the job and went home – they'll be the times when you went the extra mile to create inclusive, unforgettable experiences, and had fun doing it.



CHC SPOTLIGHT

Past & Present

Ava Iovino '27



"Why OFYE?" As Camp Hawk Counselors, part of the Office of First Year Experience (OFYE) team, we often reflect on this question and share our purpose for being on OFYE staff. My answer is simple: the invaluable experience I gain as a Returning Camp Hawk Counselor and the incredible people I continue to meet.

Camp Hawk was not offered to me as a first-year student due to a rise in COVID-19 cases. However, I decided to apply when I saw the counselor position at the OFYE's table at the Spring Club Fair last year. Having spent my summers as a camp counselor, I knew I would thrive in this role and the camp environment in the Poconos.

Training with all the orientation leaders in the spring was a Monday activity I looked forward to. Every session brought new connections and leadership skills, which I applied to my Camp Hawk counselor position. After training, I always stepped out with a new perspective, excited to bring it to Camp Hawk.

With summer preparations during training, bonding with counselors at the Iron Pig baseball game, and organizing preLUtion fun nights, we were eager to take on Camp Canadensis three weeks into the fall semester. Uncertain of what to expect, Camp Hawk was a weekend filled with self-reflection, bonfires, and the Lehigh community, hosted by the Greater Pocono Escape (GPE), which was made up of various clubs and organizations.

My favorite memory of Camp Hawk with GPE was performing our Camp roll call in the amphitheater. Our camp crew perfected Disney's "Camp Rock" chant and routine, which we continued to do throughout the weekend. I also enjoyed unleashing my competitive side during Iron Hawk competitions and spirited events where all color groups participated in activities from solving riddles to relay races. My color was green, and I was proud of my group's outstanding collaboration. I also enjoyed exploring Camp Canadensis rock climbing and soaking up the sunny weather kayaking out on the lake. That night, we ate s'mores around the bonfire, sang karaoke, and gazed at the clear sky filled with bright stars.

Leaving Camp Canadensis on Sunday was not easy, but the final activities we did were heartwarming. We wrote letters to ourselves, sat in a circle, and tapped people we connected with who made our weekend more meaningful and memorable. The bus ride back was sad, but it made me know I wanted to come back. As a Returning Camp Hawk Counselor, I am ecstatic to be heading back to Camp Canadensis next fall and training with all of our new Camp Hawk Counselors to mentor them through another fantastic weekend in the Poconos!



CAMP HAWK

We are excited to share that Camp Hawk happened as planned in 2024, unlike past years that were spoiled by Covid. We had 45 campers who got to explore Camp Canadensis with our 5 stellar Camp Hawk Counselors. Iron Hawk saw its 14th year with 5 color teams competing for the honorable title of Iron Hawk Champions. This year, we also did a new activity where students set goals and had the help of others to come up with people and resources they could take advantage of to accomplish them. We got rave reviews about how helpful this activity was.

We asked campers to describe their experience in one sentence, and one said "Camp Hawk really helped me to make new friends and feel more confident in myself!" You know we couldn't be happier to hear that along with messages of gratitude for getting off campus and the incredible atmosphere in the poconos and with good people. We'll note that 100% of campers said they could express themselves authentically at Camp Hawk, and we couldn't have done that without the modeling from our Camp Hawk Counselors. This team of 5 worked hard for months to be prepared to facilitate great discussion, create a comfortable environment, and share resources that would help first-year students.



2024 Camp Hawk Counselors: Ava Iovino, Sydney Stevenon, Megan Stratton, Lily Paschke, Christopher Blake



CAMP HAWK: SNOWED IN



We continue to adapt this program to ensure we are meeting the needs of students. In the spirit of inclusion, we opened up the program to sophomore students as well this year. For their first meet-up, students got to know each other through minute to win it games and speed friending. Our next outing is for bowling and dinner in the month of March and we're excited to see if this crew creates strong connections like our group from last year did. More to come!

PRELUSION

9 PROGRAMS

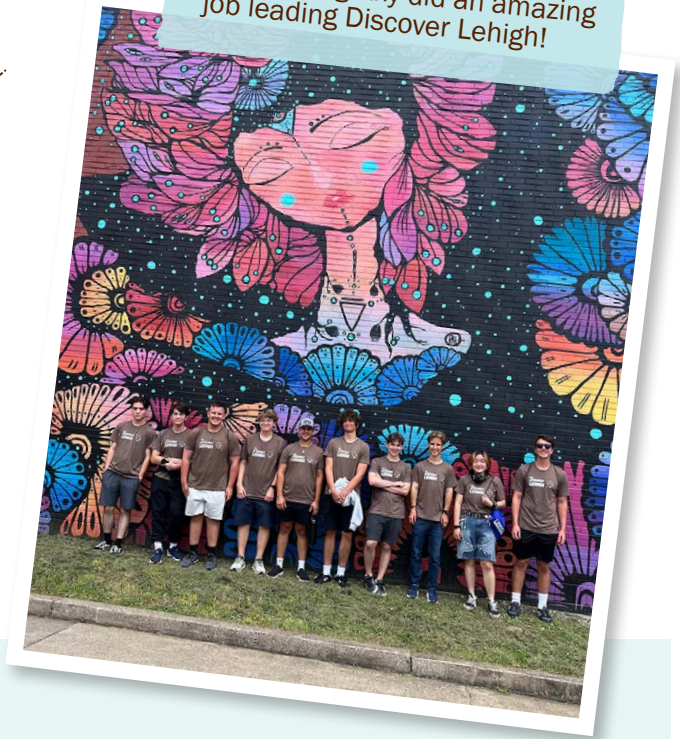
- CSB Connect
- C.L.I.M.B.
- Discover Lehigh
- Fabricate:LU
- GlobaLehigh
- Leadership Adventures
- Lehigh 360
- LehighMED
- Lehigh Women Engineers
- Volunteer Experience



200
STUDENT
PARTICIPANTS

92%
PLAN TO STAY
INVOLVED WITH
THEIR PROGRAM'S
OFFICE

OL Alums, Maya Zucker and Delfina Szigethy did an amazing job leading Discover Lehigh!



94% made a connection with their peers

98% would recommend the program to their peers

65% said evening socials were helpful in meeting students

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 time connecting with new and old friends.

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.

Spring Series

This year, sophomore students are being offered a variety of spring programs. Sophomores were invited to join us in Camp Hawk: Snowed In if they were looking to make new, meaningful connections with others. In March, we have some great partnerships in the works! We are hosting a workshop with PSECU and Financial Aid called "Money Management Meets Life Living Off-Campus" to help students create budgets and transition to life off campus and be prepared for what that means financially. We are also hosting a session in collaboration with the Center for Career & Professional Development to help students explore their passion and goals and make a plan for taking advantage of opportunities in their next two years. We'll end the year with our annual "Halfway There Celebration" to mark the milestone to commencement. We're proud of how we've expanded our offerings to support students through their first couple of years on campus intentionally.

\$325
AVERAGE
COST
TO ATTEND

25 students received funding

\$ 9,652
total support was provided

30%
increase from 2023



Many thanks goes to Akeive Burrows, Matt Schafer, Shaelyn Heft, & Ava Iovino 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!