A Note from the OFYE
Greetings from Lehigh!

We hope you are doing well, enjoying happiness and success wherever life has led you since your days at Lehigh. In this edition of the Brown Polo Update, you will learn about the changes to the OFYE staff as well as the evolution of Orientation, Camp Hawk, Summer Reading, Prelusion, and more! The OFYE is not the only place that has experienced significant staffing changes. This year, Lehigh has welcomed Kevin Clayton as our Interim President and we look forward to meeting our new president in July, John Simon.

Amidst the changes, what has remained constant is the OFYE’s dedication to the academic and social success of our first-year and transfer students. With each training and meeting, we are working towards creating a strong staff and orientation program to help foster a memorable and fun experience for our incoming students.

We hope the memories of Lehigh and being an Orientation Leader come back to you as you read this newsletter!

Lehigh STRONG!
Allison Ragon & Kara Gensamer
MEET THE OFYE STAFF:

ALLISON RAGON – Assistant Dean of Students & Director of the Office of the First-Year Experience
Allison K. Ragon is Assistant Dean of Students and Director of First-Year Experience and has been at Lehigh since 2004. Prior to her move to Pennsylvania, Allison was the Assistant Director of Residence Life at Elon University in North Carolina. Allison’s passion for higher education and transition blossomed during her undergraduate days where she spent three years as an Orientation Leader at her alma mater, the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. Post-graduation, Allison attended graduate school at Indiana University – Bloomington where she served as a hall director while earning her Master’s degree. Outside of work, Allison enjoys cycling, running, landscaping and refinishing furniture as well as spending quality time with her dog, Bailey and husband, Tim.

KARA GENSAMER – Assistant Director for the First-Year Experience and Orientation
Kara began working at Lehigh on August 7th – just in time to see the excitement of OL Training and Orientation 2014! She is enjoying learning about Lehigh and overseeing the direction of Orientation and the Orientation Leaders. Kara hails from New Jersey where she earned her undergraduate degrees in English and Secondary Education at Rowan University and her MEd in College Student Affairs from Rutgers University. Before coming to Lehigh, Kara worked as the Residence Life Educator for a first-year hall. This is Kara’s first time living outside of NJ and though she adores the scenic area, she is still getting used to working on a mountain! Kara lives with her fiancé in Easton. They will be married on October 3, 2015!

KATE OLIVER – Graduate Assistant
Kate completed her undergrad at Lehigh this past May earning degrees in biology and psychology. While at Lehigh one more year to obtain a Master’s degree in molecular biology, Kate is excited to have the opportunity to work as a GA in the OFYE, an office she fell in love with during her time as an OL. As the GA, Kate designs Camp Hawk and trains the Camp Hawk Counselors, coordinates Prelusion programs, runs Discover Lehigh, and organizes Orientation’s 5x10 Symposiums. In addition to her love of biology and first-year students, Kate is an avid Mets fan and enjoys reading, traveling, sparring with Emily Shreve, and spending time with her family.

EMILY SHREVE – Graduate Assistant
Emily Shreve is a Graduate Assistant in the Office of First-Year Experience and a Doctoral Candidate in the English Department. She received her B.A. in English from Bowling Green State University and her M.A. in English from Lehigh. In the OFYE, Emily’s main responsibilities include the Summer Reading program and the weekly email to all first-year students. When not in the office, Emily is working on her dissertation, which explores literary depictions of wrath in late-medieval England. She is a Green Bay Packers fan and loves the TV show Bob’s Burgers.

ERIN KETZ – Coordinator
Erin Ketz is the Coordinator for First-Year Experience. She earned her B.F.A. in Graphic Design from Marywood University and A.A.S. in Marketing from Northampton Community College. Her responsibilities include overseeing the day to day operations in the office as well as the graphic design for, flyers, posters, T-shirts and office publications. Erin is very passionate about being vegan and is an avid Third Eye Blind fan. She loves spending time with her two black cats, Marley and Zoey, and her fiancé, Dan.
If we had to name one position on campus that we have most cherished during our time at Lehigh, working as an Orientation leader is the unmistakable winner. The program has helped us to gain valuable insights, powerful knowledge, unquestionable friendships, and most important a perfect reminder of what our values and beliefs are in life. Now we want to encourage similar growth in future Orientation Leaders and help even more people realize their potential. Orientation Coordinators must create in others the people who they themselves want to become. We are looking forward to meeting a fresh set of faces and personalities. With our new position we would like to create an environment for change: facilitate in a manner in which people lead others to new and possibly unintended answers, share the ideals of Orientation with the rest of the Lehigh community to help guide the entire University in a positive direction, help each new Orientation Leader find their true voice. We are about to embark on a wonderful journey and look forward to seeing where this adventure will take the Orientation program and us.

Elif Anda, Sto Mahoney, Amanda Grossjung, Brittany Cutrona, Spencer Freund, Celeen Hefele, Amanda Walter
In 2013, the Orientation program began choosing returning Orientation Leaders separately from new Orientation Leaders. The role of a returner is slightly different from that of new Orientation Leader. Returning Orientation Leaders have the opportunity to use their past experiences from Orientation to help shape the new staff through the interview and selection process of new OLs. Furthermore, they act as mentors for the new OLs and are there to assist the Orientation Coordinators to create a memorable Orientation experience for the staff and first-year students! The returning orientation leaders are all excellent examples of what Lehigh has to offer and the OFYE is excited to work with them to welcome the Class of 2019. The returning Orientation Leaders for 2015 are listed below:

2015 Returning Orientation Leaders

Sydney Bagley
Michaela Berla-Shulock
Trishna Dave
Rachel Davidson
Sarah Fittro

Corina Fitzgerald
Cristina Fuertes
Devon Gallagher
Sydney Glenn
Ceara Hogan

Kayla Jang
Nathaniel Jenkins
Minni Kim
Benjamin Mandelbaum
Linda Nguyen

Julia Patterson
Henry Perez
Zachary Port
Jeremy Sordan
Anjela Yates

This year, Lehigh and the Orientation Staff welcomed the Class of 2018. The annual Kick-Off for the First-Years was a great success! The event was held in Grace Hall and the room was filled with an amazing energy! We are lucky to have nearly 1300 students join our Lehigh home!
Orientation Training is not complete without that wonderful theme! Take a journey with us to look at some of the past OL themes!!!

#memories

Each theme that is chosen has a message that makes the Orientation program stronger!

2010 Clue
2011 Harry Potter
2012 Lion King
2013 The Hunger Games
2014 This year, the theme was UP. As OLs, we are reminded that adventure is always out there!

bLUeprint

The Lehigh bLUeprint was first introduced to the Orientation program in 2013 by Taran Carone, the Director of Student Curriculum & Residential Staff Development

bLUeprint 5 Foundations for Student Success

- Creative Curiosity
- Identity Development
- Collaborative Connections
- Inclusive Leadership
- Professional Growth & Success

The Lehigh bLUeprint is a chance for students to map out their time at Lehigh. How will the students design their Lehigh life? How can the students make a difference at Lehigh?

Photos from the 2014 bLUeprint Symposium

Bring your design to life.
Prelusion, Lehigh’s set of pre-orientation programs, has been at Lehigh since 2004. With about 20% of the incoming class attending, Prelusion provides first-year students the opportunity to move in early, make connections prior to Orientation, and immerse themselves in a topic of their choosing. With the OFYE’s goal of providing programs that cater to the interests of first-year students, we are continually searching for programs that will do just that. This past August we offered 11 Prelusion programs, more than we’ve ever had before! More than 200 students participated in one of the following programs:

- aLLUsions: Literary Lehigh
- ArtsAlive
- Compass: Lead Lehigh
- Discover Lehigh
- GloBaLehigh
- I AM Lehigh
- Outdoor Adventure Program
- Quest
- SustainabLEHIGH
- Urban Ops
- Volunteer Experience

Camp Hawk is a mid-September weekend retreat that seeks to continue allowing first-year students an opportunity to connect with each other in a fun, positive environment. During Camp Hawk, Camp Hawk Counselors (CHCs) lead students in team-building exercises, thoughtful conversations, and the famous Iron Hawk Relay. Two major changes took place this year: First, we were extremely excited for Camp Hawk to be FREE for all campers! Second, due to an active shooter hiding in the Canadensis area (where Camp Hawk is normally held), the OFYE had 24 hours to plan an alternative Camp Hawk, which the CHCs lovingly dubbed “Hotel Hawk.” Instead of staying at a Camp Canadensis, Camp Hawk spent an evening at a nearby hotel, followed by a beautiful day at a state park. Although quite different from the original vision, some great planning by the OFYE staff, extreme flexibility from the CHCs, and support from the Orientation Coordinators left us with a wonderful and unforgettable Camp Hawk experience!

Last year we made an exciting change to our Summer Reading program: first-year students could choose between two books, one fiction and one non-fiction. Now You See It . . . Stories from Cokesville, PA, and Class Matters both explored the topic of social class and socioeconomic justice. While some facilitators missed having one shared reading, most students and facilitators enjoyed having the ability to choose between the books. The juxtaposition between two different ways of looking at social class led to interesting and engaging discussions.

We also had a successful campus visit from Bathsheba Monk, the author of Cokesville, PA, and a Lehigh Valley resident!
OL SPOTLIGHT: ERIC GOLDSTEIN

“Fake it ‘til you make it” – that’s one of my favorite Orientation mottos (along with “Don’t get your honey where you get your money free t-shirts”). During my four years of being involved with the OFYE, I have experienced so many obstacles- from being unable to get into my classroom because all the academic buildings were locked, to dealing with an earthquake and a hurricane in the same week, to mourning the loss of one of Lehigh’s own students, and nearly everything else in between. Despite all of these challenges, we had to still find a way to carry on.

These experiences taught me how to think on my feet and helped me develop the ability to adapt quickly. This adaptability is a skill that I’ve been able to apply to many other areas of my life: in the classroom, in my other clubs and organizations, while presenting information sessions to prospective students as the Graduate Assistant in Lehigh’s Office of Admissions, and now ultimately in my job at PwC.

I believe that Orientation has taught me the recipe for success: be confident in your own skin and don’t be afraid to be yourself; have amazing friends who can be a support system for you when you need their help; and, when all else fails, just fake it ‘til you make it.

If you would like to be featured in the next OL spotlight, please email Kara Gensamer at kag914@lehigh.edu!

CONNECT WITH US!

Keep the Orientation magic with you year-round by following us on Instagram and twitter, and liking us on Facebook!

We Need Your Pictures!

Do you have pictures from your time as an OL that you would like to share with us? We would love to fill our Instagram with #throwbackthursday and #flashbackfriday pictures! Send your pictures to Erin (erk314@lehigh.edu) or Emily (ess207@lehigh.edu), along the approximate date and any information you want included in the caption.

Many thanks goes to Spencer Freund, Eric Goldstein, Amanda Grossjung, Celeen Hefele, Kate Oliver, and Emily Shreve for contributing to this edition of the Brown Polo Update!