As student leaders, we have the incredible opportunity to positively influence our peers and our institution. Through our individual organizations and as one interconnected body, we serve as the guiding hand of Ohio State—able to initiate change, organize success, and protect tradition. Yet, as student leaders we also have an important responsibility to ourselves to learn something new each day and strive to be the best that we can possibly be.

The mission of this publication is to help each of us to understand the potential we possess to make great things happen and provide the tools necessary to enable us to achieve the extraordinary. By providing advice from university leadership, insight from past and present student leaders, and a variety of educational resources, the office of Student Affairs and the Center for Student Leadership and Service hope this newsletter will be a continuous supplier of practical information. We hope you take advantage of this new resource and use it as a tool in your development and the development of those you serve.

The Monthly Muse solicits leadership advice, anecdotes, and inspiration from key university administrators.

Name: Tracy Stuck
Title: Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs and Director of the Ohio Union

Each summer as a staff, the Ohio Union selects a book to read and discuss. One of our favorite books has been Now, Discover Your Strengths by Marcus Buckingham and Donald Clifton. I realize that as college students, the idea of reading a book that is not required for class is not all that appealing. This book is worth your time; it has made a great impact within our organization, in my life, and in the lives of those who have read it and discovered things about themselves they never could quite articulate.

The main philosophy of the book is this: Talent (a natural way of thinking and behaving) multiplied by Investment (time spent practicing, developing your skills, and building your knowledge base) equals a Strength (the ability to consistently perform a certain way).

My five strengths are achiever, individualization, futuristic, learner, and maximizer. Futuristic is a strength I’ve called upon most recently. Someone with the strength of futuristic is described as “seeing the world in terms of what it could be, looking forward into tomorrow.” Someone who is futuristic has vision. As I think about my experience working with students to design a new Ohio Union, I’ve had to call upon this strength often. In designing the new Union, we’ve needed to think about the needs of our campus and its student body beyond today, well into the future. From technology to furniture, planning the building has not been about us, but about a generation of others that will come after our time on campus.

I have come to realize that one important quality of a leader is self-awareness. Knowing what you are good at and seeking opportunities to use your talents is a skill that will set you apart from your peers. Not only will this allow you to become the best member and officer in your student organization, but it will provide you with a competitive advantage as you enter your search for an internship, job, or graduate/professional school.

I encourage you to read the book and take the on-line assessment of your strengths. What you will learn about yourself will enable you to build the symbolic Union of your dreams, and be the best you can at what you do each day.
Group Development

Most groups go through growing pains. Dr. Bruce Tuckman identified 4 primary stages of group development that may be useful for your organization.

**Forming** - the initial stage of coming together. This process includes recruitment, protocol, purpose and mission, group decisions on communication and meeting, and getting to know everyone.

Forming tips: Be inclusive, seek out diverse members. Team builders and ice breakers, both at surface level and deeper, help build trust.

Questions: What information do people need? When will our group meet? What will this type of commitment mean?

**Storming** - the stage where differences of opinion emerge. This is where group trust is built, and group expectations and direction are clarified.

Storming tips: Be patient, handle conflict openly and directly. Try a brainstorming session on your organization’s purpose or mission.

Questions: Does everyone’s opinion get heard? What is the best method of operating?

**Norming** - the stage where patterns of work are established. This is where procedures are set up and a group culture or personality develops.

Norming tips: Be fair, practice collaboration. Clarify an individual’s responsibility to and expectations of the group and vice versa.

Questions: If someone new visited our group, what are the characteristics or little idiosyncrasies about or organization?

**Performing** - the final stage built upon the previous three stages. This involves getting the group’s work done, celebrating accomplishments, empowering members, and revisiting purposes and commitment.

Performing tips: Be encouraging, look for accomplishments and closure. Set deadlines and make a timetable or plan of action. Questions: How do we say thank you and recognize a job well done? How do we revisit these stages when new members join, a new issue arises, or a process no longer works?

If your organization is struggling or needs a shot in the arm, try intentionally visiting one new issue arises, or a process no longer works?

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For more information, check out: Exploring Leadership, 2nd ed. (2007) by Komives, Lucas, & McMahon

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**Katie Krajny**

**Name:** Katie Krajny  
**Year:** Graduating Senior  
**Major:** Sociology  
**Hometown:** Avon Lake

As a graduating senior in my final quarter of undergrad at Ohio State, I now have the opportunity to reflect on my experiences over the last four years, and how, since arriving here as a first year, I have grown as an individual, as a leader, and as Buckeye. The three most significant things I have come to understand in my time at OSU are the importance of empowerment, the importance of challenging yourself and the norm, and the importance of developing and maintaining relationships.

I never forget how nervous I felt in my first meeting for Ohio Staters, Inc., but since becoming a member as a first year student, I have chaired 6 different service projects, served on the Executive Team and in several capacities as a committee co-chair. I owe my initial motivation to jump into the organization head-first to the upperclassmen and faculty/staff members that, from the beginning, truly believed in me (little me!) and in what I could bring to Staters. Now as a senior in the organization, I know my role is to help empower the less-experienced Staters and push them to grow and succeed just as my peers and staff mentors did for me.

Time-honored traditions are what make the largest university in the country still feel like a tight-knit family; these experiences and customs unite all Buckeyes. Nevertheless, while it is important to celebrate these traditions, it is also important to question them and work towards making them better. As the co-founder of the Ohio State Sportmanship Council, along with other members of the council, we had to challenge the misconception that “all Buckeyes were bad fans,” showing that the “bad ones” were only a small minority of all Buckeye fans.

My experience with this campus-wide initiative helped me come to understand the importance of seeing the bigger picture and the larger context of the world beyond myself, beyond Buckeye football, and beyond the university.

Finally, the most significant lesson I have learned in my time at Ohio State is how important the relationships are that we foster through our experiences here. As the president of the 101st Class of Sphinx Senior Class Honorary, I have had the privileged opportunity of getting to know the twenty-three other members of my class who are strong, driven, and very unique individuals with different majors and ambitions— all coming from varying student organizations across campus. Although everyone has a diverse background, we all share a passion for service to the university and beyond. It is both enlightening and humbling to learn of their amazing accomplishments and experiences. I have learned and grown so much just from those twenty-three individuals, and I shall never forget the memories we have shared as a class.

My undergraduate experiences have truly defined the goals I have set for my life, mainly due to the individuals at the Ohio Union and other areas of Student Affairs—and on the university-wide level with whom I have had the great pleasure of interacting professionally and personally over the past four years. After graduation, I plan to pursue a Master’s Degree in Higher Education Administration and Student Affairs at Ohio State.

As I look to future change, I know it will be both a challenge and a blessing to create a new experience for myself as a graduate student. Yet, I feel extremely fortunate to be able to stay at OSU not just because of how much I love this university but because of the opportunities at hand; to play a role in the opening of the new Ohio Union, to work in a student-focused field under a very personable, student-friendly university president, and to maintain relationships with unbelievably supportive mentors.

I know I could not find anywhere else.

Finally, I have realized that life is very much about our experiences, who we share them with, and how we learn from them. And even though I may not necessarily know what lies in the near future, I look forward to a new beginning and another chance to experience what life has to offer.

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Connecting the Dots

Connecting the Dots relates the leadership experiences of recent Ohio State graduates and their post-collegiate involvement.

**Name:** Chad A. Endsley  
**Current location:** Columbus, OH  
**Current employment:** Chester, Willcox & Saxbe, LLP  
**Current community involvement:** Columbus, Ohio, and American Bar Associations, Kiwanis Club of Columbus, Athletic Club of Columbus, Ohio Agricultural Council  
**OSU Graduation:** Spring 2003  
**Undergraduate major:** Agribusiness and Applied Economics  
**OSU Undergraduate involvement:** Edward S. "Beanie" Drake Student Leadership Endowment Fund Board of Directors, Sphinx Senior Class Honorary, College of FAES Class Gift Committee, Alpha Gamma Sigma Professional Agricultural Fraternity, Agribusiness Club, and many others

1. **How did your OSU leadership experiences prepare you for the ‘real world?’**

   Student involvement, and particularly taking on leadership positions in student organizations, was a great primer in dealing with “real world” situations post-college. Running a meeting, counseling clients, negotiating deals, presenting a compelling argument to the court - the basis for all of these skills was enhanced through my student involvement at Ohio State.

2. **What advice do you have for current student leaders?**

   Get involved. Challenge yourself. Do something outside your normal comfort zone. Make the most of your experiences. Build on your experiences.

3. **If you could go back and change one thing about your leadership experience at Ohio State, what would it be and why?**

   I would have joined more student organizations with a focus on community service and I would have joined more student organization with members outside my already existing circle of friends.

**Did You Know?**

Did You Know? highlights different development, programming, and general resources for student leaders.

**SOURCE Balloon Center!**

Need a way to draw attention to your event or some decorations for your end of the year banquet? Stop by the SOURCE for 10 different colored balloons (2 pts. each) and fill them up for free with our helium tank!

**Good Reads**

By Helen Rotnem

Good Reads features monthly reviews of leadership, service, or personal development literature that is applicable to the collegiate student-leader experience.

College is a time of discovery. You spend four (or more) years planning out your life’s path. You start to ask yourself the big questions: What am I going to be when I grow up? What do I need to do during college to make sure I can get there? Who am I? With questions such as these, it’s no wonder a twenty-something feels pressured and overwhelmed.

Christine Hassler’s *20 Something Manifesto: Quarter-Lifers Speak Out about Who They Are, What They Want, and How to Get It* is a witty and real commentary on the journey of self discovery. Personal anecdotes address topics ranging from romantic relationships to establishing a career. She discusses ways to overcome “expectation hangovers” and offers sound advice on how to create change in your life to get you to where you truly want to be.

This inspirational book is a must read for every college student looking to establish a direction in life. I strongly recommend you pick up a copy so you can begin to pave the way to accomplishing your goals.
The New Ohio Union

A Sneak Peak

Student organization lounge on the second and third floors

Lounge on main floor

Performance hall on the main floor

... Coming in 2010!

For More information or submissions, please contact student editor, Mark Torrez: mtorrez@studentaffairs.osu.edu