



THE NEXT GENERATION
OF LEADERS

TODAY'S
STUDENTS,
**TOMORROW'S
LEADERS**



IN CAREER AND TECHNICAL STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS, STUDENTS ARE NOT JUST ACQUIRING TECHNICAL SKILLS; THEY ARE DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP SKILLS AS WELL.

By Susan Reese

“Becoming a leader is synonymous with becoming yourself. It is precisely that simple, and it is also that difficult,” says Warren Bennis, professor at the University of Southern California’s Marshall School of Business and a recognized authority on organizational development, leadership and change.

In career and technical student organizations (CTSOs), students are taking on that difficult challenge. These young people are still growing—“becoming themselves” as Bennis says—but they are learning how to become leaders as well. Leadership is such an important component of CTSOs that they all include it as part of their mission statements.

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agement, extemporaneous and prepared speaking, human resource management, presentation management, parliamentary procedure, and management/marketing/human resources concepts. At the National Leadership Academy, the students have the opportunity to develop their leadership skills as they work with one another on leadership training, communication and team-building activities. In their chapters' activities, they are learning business administration and management as well as participating in work and community service projects.

When asked to describe what BPA does for its members, Stephen Dziura, BPA director of communications, stated, "BPA provides a hands-on learning environment where students are encouraged to apply the knowledge and skills learned in the classroom. As they apply and test their occupational and leadership skills through co-curricular work projects, competition, running for office on the local, regional, state and national levels, and participating in community service, they get development, experience and confidence building affirmation not attainable through academics alone."

DECA/Delta Epsilon Chi

"The mission of DECA, Inc. is to enhance the co-curricular education of students with interest in marketing, management and entrepreneurship. DECA helps students to develop skills and competence for marketing careers, to build self-esteem, to experience leadership and to practice community service."

DECA supports the development of marketing and management skills in career areas such as hospitality, finance, sales and service, business administration and entrepreneurship. According to DECA, every member has the scope to acquire leadership ability: the motivational, communication, organizational and teamwork skills required for business success. This development takes place both in the classroom and in complementary DECA activities outside class. A bridge of leadership skills helps members advance from technical, cognitive classroom learning to operational abilities that put these narrow skills to broader use. DECA Executive Director Ed Davis says, "Leadership traits learned in the classroom, in DECA chapter functions, in DECA competition, and in a wide array of committee-focused activities enable members to develop into the complete employees businesses depend on to complete projects and cooperate with their colleagues at all levels."

The organization sponsors regional and state leadership conferences. However, the highlight of the year is the International Career Development Conference (ICDC)—which includes the Leadership Development Academy, an intensive, two-day leadership training program. The program is open to DECA members who are not participating in ICDC competitive events and is recommended for freshmen, sophomores and juniors. At the Leadership Development Academy, trainers share their own DECA experiences, and the students learn about teamwork, effective communication, vision development, professionalism and chapter management skills.

DECA Leadership Education and Development Series (LEADS) is another program that begins at the ICDC. The two-day "Officer-Ship" training brings the role of officer together with leadership.

Business Professionals of America

"The mission of Business Professionals of America is to contribute to the preparation of a world-class workforce through the advancement of leadership, citizenship, academic and technological skills."

Business Professionals of America (BPA) is a CTSO for students pursuing careers in business management, office administration, information technology and other related career fields. BPA's National Leadership Conference (NLC) includes the National Leadership Academy and the Expo and Career Fair. The NLC is attended by more than 4,000 student leaders who are top competitors in the Workplace Skills Assessment Program. Through the competitive events at the NLC and state and regional conferences, the best of "Today's students. Tomorrow's business professionals." are identified and rewarded.

Some of the events in which BPA students compete and display their leadership abilities are entrepreneurship, small business man-

DECA LEADS provides high school state officers with an opportunity to learn advanced team and leadership building skills with the help of leadership training professionals.

DECA's Collegiate Leadership Academy includes programs intended to help DECA post-secondary members develop high-level leadership skills. It includes the Peak Performance professional development program, which focuses on four core leadership skills: vision, communication, teamwork and professionalism. The academy brings together students and leaders from diverse backgrounds, not only to learn leadership and career skills, but to "break down leadership barriers and adopt leadership as a way of life."

The innovative Executive Mentor Program at DECA's Senior Management Institute is a roundtable format in which attendees interact with business leaders from the highest levels of top corporations. As they circulate from table to table, students gain an intimate, multidimensional understanding of the lives and careers of business executives, and invaluable insight into career possibilities and realities.

When you visit DECA's Web site, it is clear just how important leadership is to the organization's mission, because on the home page, you immediately see this line: "Developing Future Leaders in Marketing, Management & Entrepreneurship."

Family, Career and Community Leaders of America

"To promote personal growth and leadership development through family and consumer sciences education. Focusing on the multiple roles of family member, wage earner and community leader, members develop skills for life through: character development, creative and critical thinking, interpersonal communication, practical knowledge, and career preparation."

Through the FCCLA Ultimate Leadership Experience, "all members have leadership potential, whether or not they hold formal chapter leadership positions." This is the mission of Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA). Anyone can be a leader by taking responsibility for planning, implementing and evaluating chapter projects and activities.

"Through its programming over the last 62 years, FCCLA has developed more than 10 million family and consumer sciences student leaders throughout the U.S., Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands and the District of Columbia," says FCCLA Executive Director Michael L. Benjamin. "We continue to offer our students programs that are integrated in today's demanding classrooms."

The organization sponsors regional meetings, National Cluster



Pictured above are the members of the 2007-2008 FCCLA National Executive Council.

Meetings and a National Leadership Meeting; however, FCCLA offers a USA leadership training, which is conducted in four phases centering on the family of chapter and state officers, community leaders, specific career skills needed to succeed, and mentorship of future generations of FCCLA student leaders. Phase II is composed of four days of intensive training, meetings, planning and exercises designed to launch the ultimate leadership experience for chapter and state officers. Chapter and state officers will have the opportunity to participate in public policy development and advocacy training as well as touring our nation's capital.

Chapter projects focus on a variety of youth concerns, including teen pregnancy, parenting, family relationships, substance abuse, peer pressure, environment, nutrition and fitness, teen violence and career exploration. Involvement in FCCLA offers members the opportunity

to expand their leadership potential and develop skills for life—planning, goal setting, problem solving, decision making and interpersonal communication—necessary in the home and workplace.

Dynamic Leadership is a national FCCLA program that helps young people build leadership skills. It provides information, activities and project ideas to help young people recognize the lifelong benefits of leadership skills, practice leadership skills through FCCLA involvement, and become strong leaders for families, careers and communities.

The National FFA Organization

“The National FFA Organization is dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education.”

Founded in 1928 as the Future Farmers of America, the National FFA Organization has a long, proud history of building leaders. Among them are Congressmen, state governors, college presidents, corporate CEOs and a president of the United States—Jimmy Carter. FFA offers a series of leadership and personal growth conferences for its members. The Experiencing Discovery, Growth and Excellence (EDGE) conference is the first and is designed to help middle school students “better understand who they are and where they are headed.”

Made for Excellence (MFE) is the second in the series, and this two-day personal development conference is intended for high school freshmen and sophomores. At MFE, the students build confidence and competence that will set them up for a transition into the discovery of premier leadership.

The Advanced Leadership Development (ALD) conference is the final component and offers an experience specifically for high school juniors and seniors. Building upon what they learned in EDGE and MFE, the students polish their leadership and communications skills and generate ideas on how to utilize those skills in community service and volunteerism efforts. FFA also continues the leadership training for its state officers with its Blast Off program and the three-and-a-half-day training at the National Leadership Conference for State Officers. The State Presidents Conference is a weeklong leadership training held each year in Washington, D.C. This past summer, more than 2,300 FFA members attended the organization’s Washington Leadership Conference—an adventure that was shared by a number of FFA advisers as well. FFA notes that students focused on “taking their leadership skills to the highest level by learning to solve local problems, learning to build relationships, developing their character, and living to serve.”

With the FFA’s rich legacy, perhaps some of them will be returning to Washington, D.C., to serve as leaders in the U.S. Capitol or perhaps even the White House.

Future Business Leaders of America-Phi Beta Lambda

“FBLA-PBL’s mission is to bring business and education together in a positive working relationship through innovative leadership and career development programs.”

It is clear from its name what Future Business Leaders of America-Phi Beta Lambda (FBLA-PBL) sees in its members. The organization for students preparing for leadership careers in business has four divisions: FBLA (high school), FBLA-Middle Level (middle school), Phi Beta Lambda (postsecondary), and the Professional Division (alumni, parents, educators and businesspeople). FBLA-PBL holds several national meetings that promote leadership development.

At the National Leadership Conference, FBLA-PBL members compete in leadership events and attend workshops to help build their knowledge and skills. The Institute for Leaders is held in conjunction with the National Leadership Conference. Described as a high-energy, intensive, two-day seminar, this event focuses on leadership for state and local chapter officers as well as members and advisers. It is intended to help prepare student leaders to assume their elected responsibilities.

The National Fall Leadership Conferences are held at four locations around the country so students can experience professional development opportunities such as those offered at the national summer conference. When FBLA-PBL announced the 2007-08 national conference theme, Leadership in Action, it noted that the theme embodies the core essence of a future business leader.

“In the past 65 years, FBLA-PBL has prepared literally millions of today’s leaders in American business,” says Jean M. Buckley, FBLA-PBL Inc. president and CEO. “Our association remains on the forefront of business and career and technical education as we provide a co-curricular leadership experience for our student members.”

Health Occupations Students of America

“To enhance the delivery of compassionate, quality health care by providing opportunities for knowledge, skill and leadership development of all health science technology education students, therefore, helping students to meet the needs of the health care community.”

Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) provides a unique program of leadership development, motivation and recognition exclusively for the more than 100,000 secondary, postsecondary, adult and collegiate students enrolled in health science technology education (HSTE) programs.

The annual HOSA National Leadership Conference includes four dynamic general sessions for 5,500 delegates, 55 health-specific, skills-based competitive events, an Educational Symposium offering 35 health care industry-delivered workshops, and specialized Leadership Academies. The academies focus on leadership and chapter management skills and include: State Officer Academy, HOSA Member Academy, and New Adviser Academy to help advisers effectively manage HOSA opportunities for their health science students.

HOSA launched its First Annual Washington Leadership Academy in conjunction with the Annual State Advisers Management Conference in Washington, D.C., last September. The national leadership program is to equip state officers with the skills necessary to better lead and advocate for HOSA in their home states. HOSA state officers and HOSA state advisers practiced their advocacy skills by meeting with as many congressional representatives

as time permitted.

Jim Koeninger, HOSA executive director and founder of the Leadership Development Institute (LDI), offers this description of HOSA's approach to leadership: "Health care industry leaders value the opportunities for HSTE students to develop, practice and refine their leadership skills when they exhibit high-quality technical knowledge, leadership and teaming skills in health care-delivery settings."

SkillsUSA

"SkillsUSA is an applied method of instruction for preparing America's high-performance workers in public career and technical programs. It provides quality education experiences for students in leadership, teamwork, citizenship and character development."

SkillsUSA's programs include local, state and national competitions in which students demonstrate occupational as well as leadership skills. The organization considers its student leaders to be "SkillsUSA Ambassadors," and its state officer training teaches students:

- roles and responsibilities;
- organizational knowledge and tools;
- parliamentary procedure;
- essentials of effective presentations;
- how to process thoughts and feelings effectively;
- exploring teamwork;
- the social savvy of leaders; and the
- use of a decision-making model.

The students who participate in SkillsUSA are learning about more than just basic occupational skills, as the SkillsUSA motto expresses quite clearly. That motto is, "Preparing for leadership in the world of work."

Technology Student Association

"The Technology Student Association fosters personal growth, leadership, and opportunities in technology, innovation, design and engineering. Members apply and integrate science, technology, engineering and mathematics concepts through co-curricular activities, competitive events and related programs."

Essential leadership skills are taught through a student's participation in the competitive events program of the Technology Student Association (TSA). For example, at the TSA National Conference, middle school students may participate in a "Leadership Challenge" event, in which the students work as a team to develop a plan of action that addresses a specific challenging situation provided on site. The finalists then develop a second plan—under time constraints—and make a team presentation.

The National TSA Conference also offers all students the opportunity to learn leadership through the DuPont Leadership Academy, where essential leadership skills such as vision, professionalism, teamwork and communication are experientially taught to members. The members then take their knowledge back to their states and schools to enhance their chapters.

"The DuPont Leadership Academy is a very popular program," says K.C. Cushman, National TSA president 2007-2008. "The training is first class and specifically designed for our members."

The Leadership of Advisers

Any discussion of CTSOs would not be complete without an acknowledgement of the teachers who devote so much of their time to enriching the knowledge and skills of their students by serving as CTSO advisers. Although they are already spending many hours in classrooms and labs at school, and many more at home with planning and grading, these teachers still manage to find the time and energy required to be a CTSO adviser.

It has been said that a good leader inspires others with confidence in him, but a great leader inspires them with confidence in themselves. That is what CTSO advisers are doing every day for their students. Through their own example, they are inspiring confidence and helping to create the leaders of tomorrow in the students of today.



Career and Technical Student Organizations

For more information about CTSOs and their leadership building activities, visit the following Web sites.

Business Professionals of America
www.bpa.org

DECA/Delta Epsilon Chi
www.deca.org

Family, Career and Community Leaders of America
www.fclainc.org

The National FFA Organization
www.ffa.org

Future Business Leaders of America-Phi Beta Lambda
www.fbla-pbl.org

Health Occupations Students of America
www.hosa.org

SkillsUSA
www.skillsusa.org

Technology Student Association
www.tsaweb.org