Where leadership is a process, not a position.
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A Message from Director Sarah Franciscus

Change is hard at first, messy in the middle and gorgeous at the end.

– Robin Sharma

I cannot think of a quote that better explains the 2017-18 academic year for Student Leadership at the College of Charleston because there truly has been a great deal of change and will hopefully, in the near future, arrive at the gorgeous state. The change for the Higdon Center began with the hiring of a new full-time Coordinator for Student Leadership in July 2017 to intentionally work with some of the large-scale programs and organizations housed within Student Leadership. Then, the even larger change came with the announcement in August 2017 that the Higdon Student Leadership Center and the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Life would merge into one unit, now known as the Higdon Center for Student Leadership and Fraternity and Sorority Life. This meant a new staffing structure and a new director. My name is Sarah Franciscus and I stepped into the role of Director for Student Leadership and Fraternity and Sorority Life after serving as the Director of Fraternity and Sorority Life at the College since August 2013. I am thrilled to be able to serve students at CofC in this new role and I am so excited to see the growth and new possibility that exists for everyone. I, as well as everyone in this newly merged unit, have spent the last year learning about one another and the important roles we play for students at the College. This summer we are continuing the “messy middle” of change while working on filling some vacant positions and working to form one identity for the Higdon Center for Student Leadership and Fraternity and Sorority Life. I think the most important item to note, as we are still in the middle of finding our identity, is that the students have remained the focal point for everyone in the work being done.

You will see in this Annual Report the key programs for Student Leadership have not only been maintained, but many of them have continued to be enhanced and developed in new and exciting ways. There has been a renewed engagement in the Leadership Certificate Program, and continually additions of new and positive community relationships for our Leadership CofC Students.

In addition, you will see the astounding achievements of our newly rebranded Charleston Miracle (formerly Dance Marathon) students with their ability to raise of $115,000, which is more than ever before. Also, Omicron Delta Kappa Leadership Honor Society has grown exponentially and taken on the partnership with the South Carolina chapter of the Jefferson Awards Foundation. Overall, I hope you are able to glean from this year’s report a glimpse into the way students are continuing to benefit from a culture of intentionally learning the process of leadership created in the programs and organizations offered through Student Leadership. Thank you all for your continued support and I hope you enjoy reading this year’s Annual Report.
Incoming freshmen are given the opportunity each August to attend Cougar Excursion (CE). Participants enjoy three days of leadership development, training, and good fun and are able to form friendships with new peers and connect with 30 upper-class students who serve as staff facilitators for the program. These student leaders are some of the most involved students on our campus and serve in capacities throughout the campus community. Selected by an application and interview process, these leaders volunteer their time solely to help teach participants what they need to know in order to succeed at the College.

As one of the core components of the Leadership Center’s programming, this interactive experience is specifically designed for participants to gain knowledge and develop a sense of community that is pertinent to a successful first year at the College. Based on model programs from colleges across the nation, this program has proven to enhance the student experience, better a student’s chance at finding a home here and ensure academic success along with a higher GPA.

Also, participants tend to be more satisfied overall with their college experience than those who have not attended such programs. Through their participation in Cougar Excursion, the students’ natural leadership talents begin to transform into skill sets that are pivotal to mastering their freshman year and beyond.
Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have the necessary knowledge to begin my freshman year at the College of Charleston.</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am aware of the diversity that exists in today’s multicultural society.</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am aware of relational and transformational leadership.</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am aware of my strengths and areas of development.</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can identify, commit to, and act consistently with my core values.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Perspectives

“Cougar Excursion is one of the best decisions I made for myself as an incoming freshman. I felt connected to the campus and everything going on, and that has only increased through my continued involvement with the program.”

“Cougar Excursion empowered me to step outside of my comfort zone and become a leader within the College of Charleston community.”

“My favorite part was being able to connect with incoming freshman because they are the future leaders of the program.”
The Higdon Student Leadership Programs have had direct and indirect impact on over 1,300 students this past year through our programs and community outreach workshops and presentations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Goals Expression for Signature Programs</th>
<th>Cougar Excursion</th>
<th>Leadership CofC</th>
<th>The Institute</th>
<th>Fall Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Realize Strengths and areas of Development</td>
<td>-1%</td>
<td>+22.4%</td>
<td>+54%</td>
<td>+5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Also expressed through personal knowledge gained before and after; tools/skills gained to empower others and self</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the development and application of relational and transformational leadership through experiential learning.</td>
<td>+16%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarify, internalize, and live congruently one's own values.</td>
<td>-4%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>+36%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build meaningful interpersonal relationships</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>+22.1%</td>
<td>+59%</td>
<td>+5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Also expressed through knowledge of and comfort level with interpersonal interactions</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realize their personal leadership style.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>+23.5%</td>
<td>+36</td>
<td>+20.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Also expressed through best practices exposure; belief in incorporating leadership behavior into everyday interactions.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The growth percentage for select Student Leadership Programs learning goals is illustrated in the chart below.

Program Attendance/Interest
- **Cougar Excursion** - 130
- **Fall Leadership Conference** -85
- **Leadership CofC** - 52/89
- **Institute by LeaderShape** - 25
- **SALA Awards** – 60/+ 
- **Leadership Certificate Program** - 40
- **Dance Marathon** - 450 /+
- **Omicron Delta Kappa** - 29

Campus/Community Outreach Workshops and Presentations
- Resident Assistants and RHDs - 50 (*scheduled large program cancelled due to weather*)
- **High School Conference (Jefferson Awards Foundation Students in Action)** - 200
- **High School Students (Junior Project)** - 32
- **Academic classes (True Colors Assessment)** - 40+
- **Greek Leadership Institute** - 60
Omicron Delta Kappa

Omicron Delta Kappa (ODK) is a national collegiate honor society that recognizes and encourages leadership and service achievement in extracurricular activities. In 2011, the staff of the Higdon Student Leadership Center, along with several student leaders, re-built the chapter on campus to house it in the Leadership Center.

Since that time, ODK has initiated over 160 new members with a gain of 24 students this year. For the first time this year, ODK took on the coordination and facilitation of the Jefferson Awards Foundation- Students In Action Conference for high school students. They will also continue their work assisting with the annual student Fall Leadership Conference sponsored by the Center.

After a gap of several years, the organization sent a student to the ODK 50th Anniversary National Convention held this year in Nashville, Tennessee and is also considering plans to discuss potential philanthropic activities for the ODK National Day of Service. The group hopes to grow in select, meaningful new ways in the coming years.

Leadership Certificate Program

This 1:1 advisor to student program provides students a personal opportunity to successfully set and accomplish leadership goals, increase skill development and personal awareness, as well as effectively articulate and apply their abilities to leadership areas in their lives.

Requirements of the program include: attendance at two Leadership Conferences and multiple workshops, holding an organization leadership position, and the completion of a personal leadership reflection artifact. The reflection artifact is presented in a new public presentation format before the SALA Awards and is displayed at that event and at the Center for the following year.

Nine seniors completed the process for spring 2018. New reflection options include select academic pursuits and the potential inclusion of meaningful part-time employment.
Leadership CofC

Leadership CofC is a prestigious cohort of juniors and seniors selected to learn about leadership through a commitment to monthly on-campus or off-campus programs. Most students are nominated for the program by faculty and staff. Nominees then complete a rigorous application and interview process. This year, over 60 students interviewed for a spot in the cohort of 50 students.

The cohort members expand their personal development through exposure to leadership topics presented by professionals from various areas of expertise. Expert hosts for 2017-18 included a visit with Boeing which provided a panel discussion and viewing of an upgrade and repair line; panelists from the Charleston County Government offices; an Alumni panel during Alumni Weekend with leaders from the Centers for Disease Control, Southern Glazers Wine and Spirits, an attorney, ophthalmologist, CEO, non-profit Director and technology consultant; as well as evenings with Tech company Booz Allen Hamilton, MUSC and the Charleston Young Professionals group through the Chamber of Commerce.

An etiquette dinner at the beginning of the year prepares students for these evenings which include dinner with casual discussion, a facilitated guest panel discussion and cohort group Q & A. At times, a post-panel discussion reception is held to allow for personal conversation and one-on-one questions. The year ends with a Final Banquet where hosts for the year are invited to attend and hear the keynote speaker as well as take-away points from select students who share what they have learned from the experience.
Aly Murphy, of Murphy’s Manners, facilitated The Art of the Business Meal and kicked off the year to set a foundation of professional etiquette used at all events. She provided dinner etiquette tips and standing reception etiquette coaching as well as networking tips at the incomparable Peninsula Grill in downtown Charleston.

The Charleston Young Professionals group through the Chamber of Commerce provided unique discussion perspective from young professionals under 10 years in their respective fields.

At the Final Night Banquet, keynote Jason Torres, shared his insights about resilience and perseverance along with students who shared their take away lessons from the various events. Four guest panel members from the year were able to attend the event held at Rue de Jean Upstairs.

### Cohort Pre and Post Test Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>66%</td>
<td>88.1%</td>
<td>Reported comfort level when networking with seasoned, respected leaders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76.4%</td>
<td>99.9%</td>
<td>Reported understanding of leadership best practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84.3%</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>Reported level of confidence in professionalism skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74.5%</td>
<td>96.9%</td>
<td>Reported level of knowledge about professionalism held before and after the events completed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Student Perspectives

“...with all of the incredible advice that was given, I am truly thankful I was given the opportunity to be a part of Leadership CofC this year. I know this experience is something that I will hold onto forever.”

*LaTosha Andrade – cohort member speaker at Final Night Banquet*
The Institute

Students participated in the **2018 Institute**, held May 4-9 at Camp Bob Cooper on Lake Marion in Summerton, SC. The program is developed and promoted by LeaderShape, Inc. based out of Champaign, IL. The Leadership Center hosts one campus based session of the Institute for the College. This was our eleventh year hosting the Institute!

Framed by a nationally used curriculum, the Institute states it’s for individuals who are committed to taking their leadership to the next level and who want to make a significant impact on campus, in their communities, and in the world.

As well as being an opportunity to develop skills to improve their organizations, participants praise the Institute as a time of great introspection. The week is structured so that participants first gain a deeper understanding of themselves and then how to effectively work with others.

The program includes a half-day facilitated outdoor team building experience; a Guest Leader Forum in which participants are exposed to role models in business, industry, education, and other professions; quality facilitators from a variety of backgrounds; and learning and sharing in small groups or Family Clusters.

This year’s Guest Leader Forum featured College of Charleston’s Chief Diversity Officer Dr. Renard Harris and Executive Director of the Career Center, Mr. Jim Allison. Dr. Harris and Mr. Allison shared their visioning for success and leadership insights with participants.

The week culminates with a “Breakthrough Blueprint”, a guided and well-conceived vision and plan of action for participants to consider implementing in their organization or community.

Thank you to these invested members of our CofC family who dedicated their week to facilitate and coordinate this incredible program.

**On-Site Coordinator**
Sarah Franciscus, *Director of Higdon Center*

**Family Cluster Facilitators**
Pam Grant, *Counseling and Substance Abuse Services, Student Affairs*
Alex Drose, *Residence Life, Student Affairs*
Increased learning and growth of knowledge happens through the introduction and discussion of the following core Institute curriculum topics: identifying core ethical and personal values, congruence of behavior to values, developing relationships with others, respect and dignity of others, working successfully in groups, crafting a vision, and articulating action steps to accomplish that vision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have tools/skills to empower others and myself.</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can easily inspire others to work towards a common goal.</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to accomplish goals.</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership behavior can be incorporated into everyday life by anyone.</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can define my values.</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to incorporate my values into my leadership style.</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to incorporate integrity into my daily life.</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand how to take constructive criticism and make positive changes.</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership is about meaningful interpersonal relationships.</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership is about possibility, vision, and action.</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“The most important lesson I took from LeaderShape was understanding my own personal core values and being able to incorporate them into a plan of action. I recognized what I am passionate about and how I can transform this experience to enhance this upcoming school year. It also enabled me to understand my own identity and the positive effect I want to have in the future.”

Lienne Barrise – 2017 Institute Participant
The 14th Annual Student Activism and Leadership Achievement Awards program was held at the Student Stern Center on Wednesday, April 18, 2018.

SALA recognizes and honors exceptional student leaders who, because of hard work, involvement, activism, and achievements have made a positive impact within student organizations and in the campus community. Student organizations also have the opportunity to honor advisors who dedicate time and energy to facilitate and direct student leaders towards their learning and growth through the Advisor of the Year award.

The SALA Awards also provide a venue for prestigious Division of Student Affairs awards and new for this year, Office of Student Life campus organizations awards. Also new for this year, our program showcased the artifacts and presentations of the nine Leadership Certificate recipients in a special hour of presentations to a live audience. This new aspect serves to provide greater understanding of the Leadership Certificate Program and to aide the students in deeper reflections about the learning and growth that occurs through their invested experiences inside and outside the classroom. In the future, there may be other awards that are developed to facilitate the attention of student to peer nominations.
Advisor of the Year

A faculty or staff advisor is recognized who consistently demonstrates a commitment to student development and leadership practice while fostering such growth in students.

Rachael McNamera—Cougar Counseling Team

Cistern Award

Senior students who have been motivated and engaged contributors to an organization are celebrated.

Jennifer Asouzu—National Panhellenic Council
Annie Simpson—Charleston Miracle
Kathleen Perry—Charleston Miracle
Erin Day—Charleston Miracle
Sydney Jaicks—Best Buddies CofC

Mary Welch—Human Rights Alliance
Alexandra Helfgott—Student Government
Bradley Harrison—Cistern Yard News
Leanna Conti—Student Government Assn

New Student Leader

First-year students who invest themselves towards personal leadership development to better contribute to their organizations are recognized.

Landon Bridges—Student Government Association
Kelly Lifchez—Student Government Association
Jacob Glass—Cistern Yard Media
Michelle Brazeau—Best Buddies

Hall of Leaders

Selectees are members of particular student organizations with specific governing responsibilities. These leaders have made a continuous contribution to their organizations.

Student Government Assn—Alexandra Helfgott
Cougar Counseling Team—John McFaddin
National Panhellenic Council—Jennifer Asouzu
Panhellenic Council—Leighton Pugh
Interfraternity Council—Garrett Hill
Cougar Activities Board—Chris Bailey
Alternative Break—Louisa Brunson
Bonner Leaders Program—Maggie Cardaropoli
Volunteer Corps—Makayla Cook
Miscellany Literary Journal—Tim Housand

Cistern Yard Media—Kallie Golicher
Cistern Yard News—Bradley Harrison
Cistern Yard Radio—Alex Peeples
Cistern Yard Video—Jaquan Leonard
Black Student Union—Lanasa Clarkson
Charleston 40—Kacey Hirshfeld
Residence Hall Assn—Kamille Meadows
Charleston Miracle—Annie Simpson
Her Campus CofC—Anna Trojanowska
Prism—Mikayla Drost
Held annually since 2007, the Fall Leadership Conference provides students an opportunity to learn valuable lessons through discussions with professionals from campus and the community. On Saturday, November 15th, at College of Charleston’s Stern Student Center, over 80 College of Charleston students as well as guest students from Columbia College in Columbia, SC, attended the tenth annual Fall Leadership Conference. The half-day event included two rotations of educational sessions followed by lunch and the student committee selected keynote speaker, Hilary Corna.

### Break-out Session Presentations

- **Global Goals. Local Leaders.** with Anna Mahalak, Youth Engagement Manager at the United Nations Association, USA
- **Talk Like Ted: The Secrets to a TED-Worthy Talk** with Sebastian Steadman, Associate, Booz Alen Hamilton and speaker coach with TedxCharleston
- **Where’s YOUR Leadership Voice** with Jason Torres, CofC Alum and professional speaker
- **Maintaining Your Momentum to Achieve Your Goals** with Michele Brant, Executive Career Coach, CPC, ICF Accredited, ELI-MP (presented two sessions)
- **The Only Thing You Have is Now** with Christopher Covert, Project Manager, EnvisionSC; Achievement Consulting LLC

### Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am aware of my personal strengths and areas that need development.</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>99.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am aware of my personal leadership style.</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>87.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to build interpersonal relationships with others.</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>99.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal relationships are built through effective communication and teamwork.</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>99.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
About the Keynote

Hilary Corna is the former Senior Executive Officer for Toyota in Asia where she managed a team across fourteen different countries as a Change Leader for all of the Asia dealerships. Since returning to America, Hilary has written and published her book, One White Face, a memoir of her time abroad. Since it’s release, One White Face has been featured in such media as The New York Times, NBC, and ForbesWoman, and was reviewed as the “GenY version of “Eat, Pray, Love”. The book is now being adapted into a screenplay.

Hilary has spoken at TED, her organization is partnered with the Holstee Manifesto, and her book tour is sponsored in part by Toyota Motors USA. Hilary studied at Kansai Gaidai University in Osaka, Japan and graduated from Elon University in North Carolina. She has been featured in Pearson’s Business Communication college textbook. Follow Hilary Corna on twitter at @HilaryCorna and find hilarycorama.com for more insights.

Students and guests enjoyed a great interactive session that challenged attendees to #dareyourself to become the leaders they are meant to be. Hilary took calculated risks and dared herself. As a result, she learned great lessons and lived beyond her dreams. This inspiring discussion prompted the audience to be brave enough to do the same.

Student Perspectives

“Very informative. Gave me insight on some things I need to work on.”

“Super informative and great to see these issues (Global Goals. Local Leaders.) incorporated into leadership.”

“Lots of fun. Knew how to reach us.”
2018 was a record breaking year for the students involved with the Dance Marathon program at the College of Charleston. After much consideration, the organization rebranded at the start of the Fall 2017 semester and became known as Charleston Miracle. The 13-hour signature event was also renamed, and Charleston Miracle hosted CougarThon on Saturday, March 10th in TD Arena at the College of Charleston.

The 2018 campaign was also the concluding year for the three-year commitment with MUSC for a naming opportunity in the brand new Shawn Jenkins Children’s Hospital. With this years’ proceeds, a room will be named after the group in that new facility.

After a successful re-introduction to the campus and local community, Charleston Miracle hosted CougarThon and were able to break program records in both monetary and recruitment efforts. The first-ever Mini Dance Marathon program was facilitated at nearby Wando High School, to much success, so a new annual association between the groups has begun. CougarThon 2018 raised $115,678.54 for the new Children’s hospital campaign, and had over 490 CofC students attend. Students raised a total of $20,372.11 during the event, while standing on their feet for 13 straight hours.

Wando High School’s first annual WandoThon, on February 3rd, 2018, raised $24,685.39, with 144 students attending. WandoThon has committed to a second Dance Marathon event, scheduled to take place Saturday, February 2nd, 2019 at Wando High School. This program allows for the CofC Executive Board to provide direct oversight of the program, and to provide guidance for a successful second year for this program. The 2019 goal at Wando is $50,000.

College of Charleston’s first Dance Marathon was held on February 9th, 2007 when 100 participants raised $21,000. The program remains the single largest student-run philanthropic event at the College. In total, over 3,700 students have participated and over $750,000 has been raised for the Medical University of South Carolina’s Children’s Hospital since it’s inception.
Student Spotlight - Lienne Barrise

One of the most dependable and invested members of the Student Leadership Programs in recent years, Lienne Barrise began her involvement as a Cougar Excursion (CE) Freshman participant in 2015 and then shifted to the volunteer student staff roles which began for her as a facilitator in 2016. Through showing her leadership skills and ability to take charge and energize groups during training sessions, she was selected to step in and take over the unexpectedly vacant Executive Director role in fall of 2017 after being on the student Executive Board for the year. Lienne looks back on the positive benefits of this challenging experience. “I grew so much because of the people I was able to be alongside. I gained a true understanding of the meaning of leadership and how variable it is for every single person. I personally loved watching participants at CE return as facilitators and even board members. I now hope that I inspired other students to take advantage of this opportunity the way I was inspired to when I was a freshman!”, she said.

Lienne likes to say she was “absorbed” into the leadership programs. “I loved CE so much, so I continued to pursue being part of the center in any way I could. I was asked to help with other events. That’s really how I got involved, by constantly saying, "Yes, I can do that." She was an asset to the newly formed student committee for the Fall Leadership Conference and a cohort member of Leadership CofC. She also attended the Leadershape Institute and completed the Leadership Certificate Program with a reflection artifact entitled, “The Rule of Three”, based on Einstein’s Three Rules of Work which includes, out of clutter find simplicity, from discord find harmony, and in the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.

“Every experience I had at the Center changed me. I learned so much about myself and others through participation and discussions with advisors. I was told to “trust the process” during uncertainty. I am so happy I did because this all has had a lasting impression on me. I won't forget the many lessons and experiences I had”, she shared.

Adopted from China, Lienne grew up in River Edge, New Jersey. Her family relocated to South Carolina in summer 2015. She graduated in 2018 after only three years with a B.S. in Business Administration and concentration in Leadership, Change and Social Responsibility. Lienne anticipates her current part time job in the finance industry to expand to full time now that she has graduated.
Student Spotlight - Annie Simpson

Having lived and grown up in seven different states which include Maryland, New York, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Ohio and South Carolina, Annie Simpson developed the steady presence of a leader with a strong and confident demeanor. When asked if she felt she grew personally from her involvement through the center, she emphatically states, “Yes! I have grown as a leader and mentor of fellow peers through my roles. I have grown personally in organization and communication skills, and have grown through opportunities to network with community members. Working with Dance Marathon, now known as Charleston Miracle, and seeing that program grow to a six figure program has also been truly incredible.” Annie’s involvement with the philanthropic organization began in 2015 as Recruitment & Special Events Chair. She then continued in 2016 as the Assistant Director and Treasurer and was selected her senior year as Executive Director with many exciting changes to include a new annual fundraiser through Wando High School and the rebranding of the organization under a new logo and name.

Although her focus was mostly on the Dance Marathon/Charleston Miracle program, her interests also extended to the Leadership Certificate Program, the Leadershape Institute, the Leadership CofC cohort, as well as involvement with the Fall Leadership Conferences in 2016 and 2017.

Annie realized how important her investment was to the success of the Center’s leadership programs and knew how much participants gained from the many experiences. She could be counted on to table frequently at the summer orientation programs where she helped build interest in Charleston Miracle by representing the center’s programs to students and their families.

Annie graduated in 2018 with a degree in Business Administration and a concentration in Leadership, Change and Social Responsibility. She is currently in a Manager Trainee Program with a large national retailer and plans to continue her connection to the Charleston Miracle program as a donor.
High School Conference

Students in Action Program

The Higdon Student Leadership Center is involved annually with the SC Fall and Winter Leadership Conferences of the Jefferson Awards Foundation Students in Action program. This program honors community service and educates students how to successfully implement initiatives. Empowering over 200 lowcountry high school students to support a social cause they are passionate about, these conferences provide interactive presentations and facilitated discussions. On October 13th, leadership center students Maria Carrillo-Marquina, Lienne Barrise, Adriana Velasquez, Allie Hoover, Annie Simpson, and Ebony Venson served as presenters at the main campus Stern Center. On February 23rd, students Marissa Nunes, Ebony Venson, LaTosha Andrade, Presley Leopard, and Adriana Velasquez served as presenters at the North Campus. This was the third year the Center worked with the Jefferson Awards Foundation.

We are excited to continue building on the strong relationship with this program in order to work with high school students committed to social good for their communities. The Students In Action conferences have been officially assigned to and will be facilitated and coordinated by members of the Omicron Delta Kappa Leadership Honor Society to provide consistent assistance from the College of Charleston towards these annual efforts.

Thanks to the Center’s staff for another great year!

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