



AY 2025-2026

# ACCELERATE LEADERSHIP CENTER ANNUAL REPORT







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# EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW



This year marked a meaningful evolution for the Accelerate Leadership Center (ALC). While last year focused on building foundations and launching programs, this year was defined by deeper engagement, stronger community connection, and growing visibility across the Tepper School of Business and Carnegie Mellon University. The ALC continued to expand its role as a catalyst for leadership development by creating experiences that connected students, alumni, faculty, staff, and external partners in more intentional and practical ways.

Several shifts shaped the academic year. Programming became more responsive to emerging student and organizational needs, with increased focus on experiential learning, collaboration, and real-world leadership application. Internally, the team continued to develop its operational strengths while balancing growth and innovation.

Standout accomplishments included the growth of flagship leadership programs like the Golub Board Fellows program, and increased interdisciplinary collaboration through the creation of the Zenith program.

Looking ahead, the ALC will focus on scaling impact while maintaining personalized experiences, strengthening strategic and curricular partnerships, and expanding experiential opportunities for students to practice real-world leadership skills.

**Rebecca Joyce**

Executive Director  
Accelerate Leadership Center



**EMPATHY.  
INCLUSION.  
GROWTH.**

#### **OUR MISSION**

Equip students with the behaviors and skills necessary to be confident, self-aware leaders. Through personalized coaching, assessments, workshop experiences, and programs, we help students build the mindsets required to collaborate, create impact, and lead in an increasingly complex world.

#### **OUR VISION**

To empower Tepper School master's students to build their leadership capabilities to leverage their skills and strengths to add a human-driven approach to analytics and creative problem solving.

# DEGREE TYPE LEARNING JOURNEYS

## HOW THE ALC SUPPORTS TEPPER SCHOOL MASTER'S STUDENTS ACROSS PROGRAMS



While our methods are tailored to each master's program's population, all students benefit from a foundation of personalized leadership coaching and development opportunities.

While leadership coaching supports students' growth, decision-making, and key transitions during their Tepper School journey, peer communication coaching works to enhance presentation skills, executive presence, and feedback effectiveness. Across all

programs, students have access to both types of one-on-one coaching offered through the ALC.

The ALC further extends its impact through optional leadership and communication workshops delivered in partnership with student clubs. These offerings ensure every Tepper School student has meaningful opportunities to grow as a confident, capable, and self-aware leader.

## **MBA**

Leadership Requirements:

- EQ-i 2.0 Emotional Quotient Inventory Assessment
- Group debrief with an EQ-i 2.0 certified coach
- Participation in three sessions within the EQ Workshop Series

Goal: Develop self-awareness and interpersonal effectiveness through structured, required engagement.



## **MS IN BUSINESS ANALYTICS (MSBA) AND MS IN MANAGEMENT (MSM)**

Embedded in Experiential Course:

- CliftonStrengths Assessment
- Group CliftonStrengths Debrief debrief
- Workshops on Professional Communication, Strengths-based Collaboration, Articulating Strengths in Professional Settings, and Resilience

Goal: Develop self-awareness and gain skills and knowledge necessary for the development of professional identity.



## **MS IN PRODUCT MANAGEMENT (MSPM)**

Program-Integrated Offerings:

- Clifton Strengths Assessment
- Leadership Essentials content delivery

Goal: Develop in students deeper knowledge of leadership skills, effective behaviors, and strategies for improvement.



# INDIVIDUALIZED COACHING



## ANNUAL COACHING SNAPSHOT

The ALC's individualized coaching program supports Tepper School students in developing core leadership and communication competencies essential for personal and professional growth. Students work one-on-one with trained coaches in confidential sessions tailored to their goals, with the flexibility to explore both short-term tactics and long-term development.

**613**

LEADERSHIP  
COACHING  
SESSIONS

**489**

COMMUNICATION  
COACHING  
SESSIONS

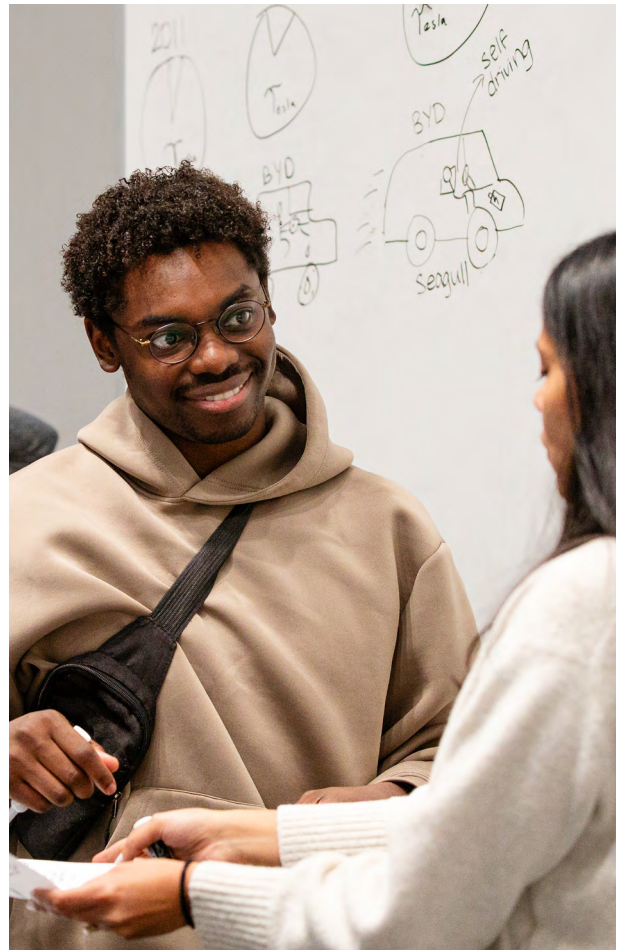
## KEY COACHING CATEGORIES

### LEADERSHIP COACHING

These one-on-one leadership coaching appointments help students build self-awareness and confidence while strengthening essential leadership capabilities. Our team of experienced full time coaches support development in areas including, but not limited to, decision making, emotional intelligence, conflict navigation, and organizational and team dynamics. Our coaches meet students where they are, tailoring their approach based on each student's unique needs.

### COMMUNICATION COACHING (LED BY SECOND-YEAR MBA STUDENTS)

Peer-to-peer Communication Coaching helps to extend in-class learning to out-of-class application. Coaches tailor each session to address topics such as development of presentations, practice for interviews and networking, suggestions for communication strategies, and more. Students consistently rate Communication Coaching as one of the top offerings of the Tepper School master's experience.



The coaching sessions with ALC coaches made me feel empowered, understood, and supported. They not only boosted my confidence and eased my self-doubt but also provided a safe space where I could express myself openly. Engaging in deep conversations with professionals who listened with genuine care, offered thoughtful advice, and shared alternative perspectives was an inspiring and transformative experience for my personal growth."

TATIANA DVORNIKOVA, MSBA '25

# INTERACTIVE WORKSHOPS



## ANNUAL WORKSHOP SNAPSHOT

Interactive workshops are a vital part of our mission to develop confident, inclusive, and emotionally intelligent leaders. Throughout the year, we offered a diverse portfolio of hands-on sessions facilitated primarily by our expert leadership coaches. These workshops are open to all Tepper School students and are designed to complement the academic experience with practical leadership skill development.

60

TOTAL  
WORKSHOPS

## EQ WORKSHOPS

- Imposter Syndrome
- Grit & Resilience
- Authenticity and Assertiveness in the Workplace
- Why Communication Skills Matter with Keishi Hotsuki (MSIA '89)

A graduation requirement for all MBA students, these sessions provide students with critical tools to enhance self-awareness, regulate emotions, strengthen interpersonal relationships, and lead with empathy and

- Stress Management
- Strengths, Values, and Purpose
- Situational Leadership
- Networking: Back to Basics

purpose. With consistently high feedback ratings, EQ Workshops continue to shape the way our students lead teams, navigate challenges, and foster inclusive environments in their careers.



# SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

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Our philosophy comes to life through our signature programs: the Golub Capital Board Fellows program, the Dean's Scholars program, the Leadership Development Certification, and the Zenith program. These programs help develop the critical thinking, self-awareness, and values-driven mindset essential for principled and effective leadership.



## GOLUB CAPITAL BOARD FELLOWS PROGRAM

### ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Golub Capital Board Fellows program is a selective application based program that connects first-year Tepper School MBA students with boards of nonprofit organizations. Students serve as non-voting members and lead strategic projects that address organizational needs. Through this hands-on governance experience and connection to the national Golub Board Fellows network, students strengthen their leadership skills while applying their business expertise in service of nonprofit missions.

### LEADERSHIP AND STRATEGIC IMPACT

Throughout the year, the fellows worked with nonprofit leaders on projects focused on strategic planning, marketing, donor engagement, operations, and board development. The experience concluded with the annual Board Fellows Project Symposium, where students presented their work and celebrated the impact of their partnerships with nonprofit organizations.

### PROGRAM GROWTH AND EXPANSION

Now in its second year, the Golub Capital Board Fellows program continued to grow its reach and impact across the Tepper School community and the local nonprofit sector.

- Expanded from 12 fellows in the inaugural cohort to 29 fellows across the Full-Time and Online Hybrid MBA programs in the second cohort
- Grew to 38 nonprofit partners across both class years
- Launched the Online Hybrid cohort, creating new experiential learning opportunities for online students and expanded partnerships beyond the Pittsburgh region, allowing students to work with a broader range of nonprofit organizations



Getting to know the team at Stop the Judgment Project has been one of the more grounding parts of this fellowship. Hearing directly about the impact they are having, not just on students but on the broader community around them, reminded me why this kind of work matters. Their openness and energy made me want to bring my best, because an organization that genuinely cares about what it is building deserves work that reflects that."

MANUEL CANO, CURRENT MBA  
STUDENT AND GOLUB BOARD FELLOW

## LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CERTIFICATION

### LOOKING BACK

This year, the Leadership Development Certification (LDC) students from the MBA class of 2026 explored various leadership topics through interactive workshops including “Leader as Coach,” “Change and Transition,” and “Working Across Difference,” utilizing the DiSC assessment. Students explored how their emotional intelligence has evolved over their time at the Tepper School and ended the program with the creation of their own leadership story, showcasing what they have learned about themselves and what it means to be a leader.

### EVOLUTION OF THE PROGRAM

In Spring 2026, we launched a revamped version of the LDC program in response to student feedback and a desire to best meet the needs of emerging business leaders.

This newly revised leadership development program remains open to all Tepper School MBA students, and is designed to unlock what makes them uniquely powerful, equipping participants with practical leadership tools that they can use immediately. Centered on strengths, presence, and influence, the program empowers students to understand their leadership capabilities, build confidence, and lead with authenticity.

Additionally, this year the MBA class of 2027 engaged in a Strengths-Based Leadership workshop designed to build self-awareness through identifying their CliftonStrengths, understanding how they influence leadership and team dynamics, and developing the ability to articulate their unique value. This framework will serve as a foundation for the rest of the program as they continue their MBA journey.



To tap into each student's power and edge,  
the LDC provides an opportunity to:

**KNOW YOUR POWER  
OWN YOUR POWER  
USE YOUR POWER**

**22**

**FULL-TIME MBA  
CERTIFICATIONS**

**19**

**ONLINE HYBRID MBA  
CERTIFICATIONS**

## ZENITH PROGRAM

### ABOUT THE PROGRAM

This year saw the launch of the ALC's newest program, Zenith. Created to leverage the interdisciplinary strengths of Carnegie Mellon to help develop students' leadership capabilities, Zenith is possible through the generous support of alumnus Keishi Hotsuki (MSIA '89).

A selective, application-based program, Zenith is offered to 20 second-year MBAs (Full-Time and Online Hybrid) who are seeking the agility necessary to lead at the highest level. Through an executive assessment, group coaching and reflection, exclusive access to high level executives, and full-day immersive experiences created in partnership with faculty from across the university, the program challenges students to embrace discomfort and explore what it means to lead in a complex world. It serves as an opportunity for MBA students to enhance their Tepper School education with additional human-centric skills that draw from the range of disciplines at CMU.

Zenith aims to develop each participant's capacity to:

- Communicate across differences
- Build trust
- Act with agility in complexity

### AY 2025-26 PARTNERSHIPS

- CMU's School of Design
- CMU's School of Drama
- CMU's Entertainment Technology Center
- Tepper School Business Communications faculty

### LOOKING AHEAD

After a successful pilot year, we intend to grow the program to its capacity of 30 MBA students next year. We will also refine the timing and frequency of some of the offerings, based on programmatic feedback.



WATCH  
THE ZENITH  
IMPACT VIDEO

## DEAN'S SCHOLARS PROGRAM

### ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Dean's Scholars program brings together a select group of full-time MBA students identified during the admissions process for their academic performance, interview evaluations, and indicated leadership interest. The program creates a cohort of student leaders who engage deeply in the Tepper School community, while gaining exposure to diverse leadership opportunities through the Accelerate Leadership Center.

### SCHOLAR ENGAGEMENT

- Executive exposure Lunch and Learns with alumni, sessions with the Tepper School Business Board of Advisors, and lunch with the dean.
- Immersive experiences through group coaching sessions, corporate visits, and interest-based workshops.
- Individualized development through personalized coaching, leadership assessments, and alumni mentorship.

### GROWING THE DEAN'S SCHOLARS COMMUNITY

This year, the Dean's Scholars program brought together 23 scholars across both MBA cohorts, strengthening a collaborative community centered on leadership development, mentorship, and engagement within the Tepper School community.



# 13

CLASS OF 2026  
SCHOLARS

# 10

CLASS OF 2027  
SCHOLARS



The Dean's Scholars program takes what is good and makes it great. Leadership comes in many forms and you were likely a leader before entering the program, but the skills you gain through the coaching, networking, and deep conversations here are to build the business leader you want to be."

ANGEL MONTELONGO, MBA '26

# OUR TEAM



**Rebecca Joyce**  
Executive Director



**Laura Maxwell**  
Leadership Coach



**Jarred Lazear**  
Leadership Coach



**Natalie Kindler**  
Leadership Coach



**Michelle Stoner**  
Senior Academic  
Program Manager



**Jack Karaffa**  
Academic Program Manager



**Ally Fisher**  
Academic Program Manager



## **Accelerate Leadership Center**

accelerate@andrew.cmu.edu



**ALC**  
Website



**ALC**  
LinkedIn

