



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

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# Taking a Holistic Approach to Develop Diverse & Inclusive Student Leaders



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**What words come to  
mind when you think of  
diverse and inclusive  
student leaders?**



# How do we define diversity?

The variety of differences and similarities among people, which can be understood along the lines of:

Race/Ethnicity (measurable)	Gender (measurable)
Age	Culture
Generation	Nationality
Religious affiliation	Social economic status/class
Language	Education
Sexual orientation	Different abilities
Military service	Job role or function
Working or thinking style	Personality type



# How do we define inclusion?

- We foster an inclusive work environment by recognizing the inherent worth and dignity of all
- Inclusive communities promote a sense of belonging and practice respect for difference

*“Diversity is being invited to the party. Inclusion is being asked to dance.”*

*~ Verna Myers*



# At the end of this session participants will..

- Participants will gain knowledge to develop a peer-mentoring model that trains student leaders to become advocates for underserved populations
- Participants will gain knowledge to effective ways to holistically support and supervise student leaders
- Participants will evaluate and assess their peer mentoring program to implement new effective strategies at their institution



# Overview

- FYE Transition
- Peer Leader Recruitment and Selection
- Peer Leader Training and Supervision
- Implementation



# Who We Were...





# Who We Were...

- Measuring success through satisfaction and attendance
- Hoping the right students attend
- Interacting with students who are already responsive to help
- Not reaching students that could benefit the most from intrusive support
- “Stereotypical” student leaders



# Who We Are NOW...



**Peer Learning: an effective,  
engaging pedagogy for all students**

**“The student’s peer group is the single  
most potent source of influence on  
growth and development during the  
undergraduate years.”**

**(Astin, 1993)**



## NOW: Peer driven, data informed

- **Peer Leaders** at the center of all we do
- Focus: students who could most benefit from **proactive outreach**
- How: **data informed** outreach and relationship building



# Sense of Belonging

*A basic human need and motivation, sufficient to influence behavior.*

**In terms of college, sense of belonging refers to students' perceived social support on campus, a feeling or sensation of connectedness, the experience of mattering or feeling cared about, accepted, respected, valued by, and important to the group (e.g. campus community) or others on campus (e.g. faculty, peers).**



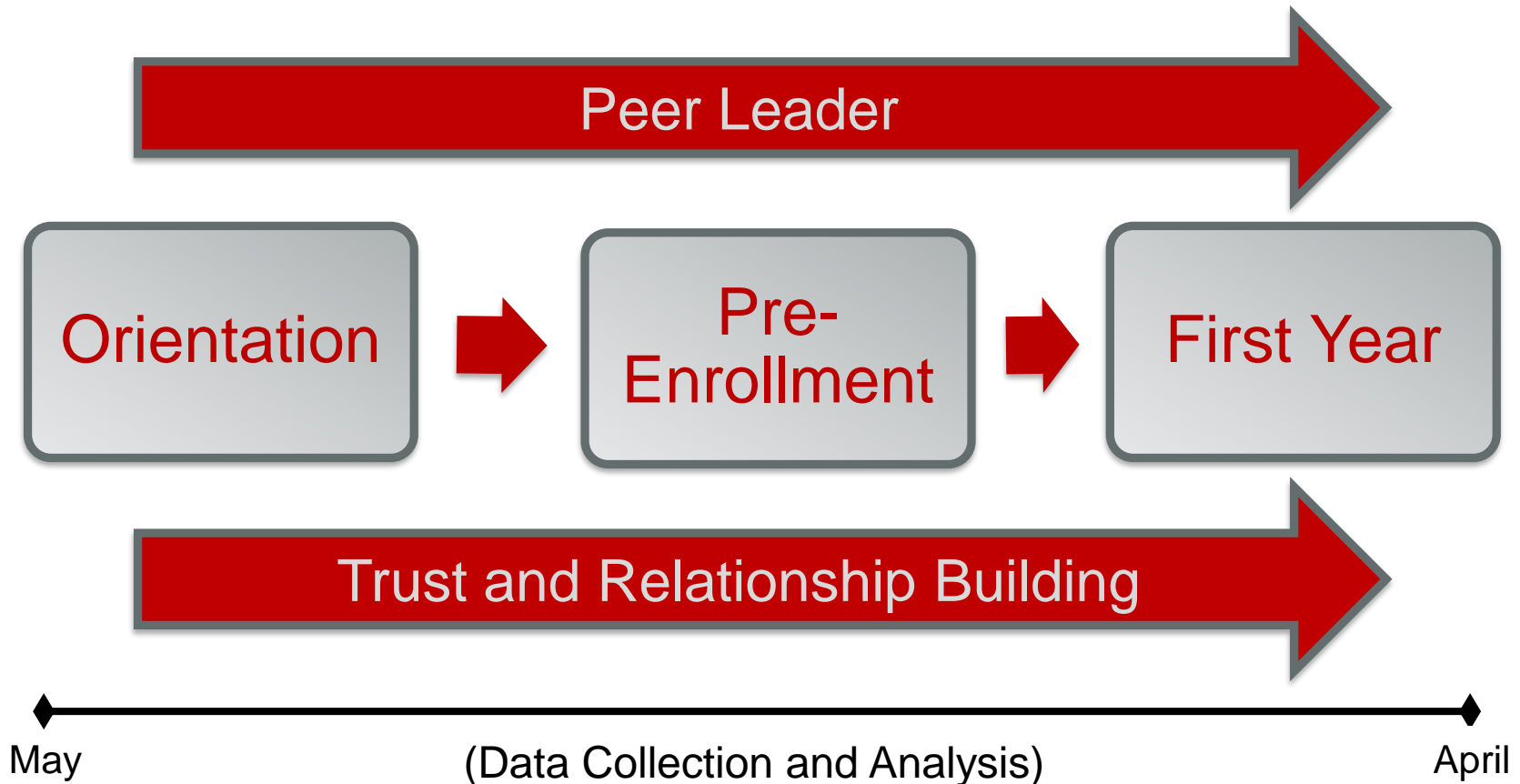
## NOW: Peer Leader Development

- **Intentional Recruitment** for diverse staff
- Focus: representation from OSU identified **priority populations**
- How: **ongoing training and supervision** through a diversity lens



# Peer Driven Approach

28 Peer Leaders at the center of our work







# Peer Leaders 2017-18

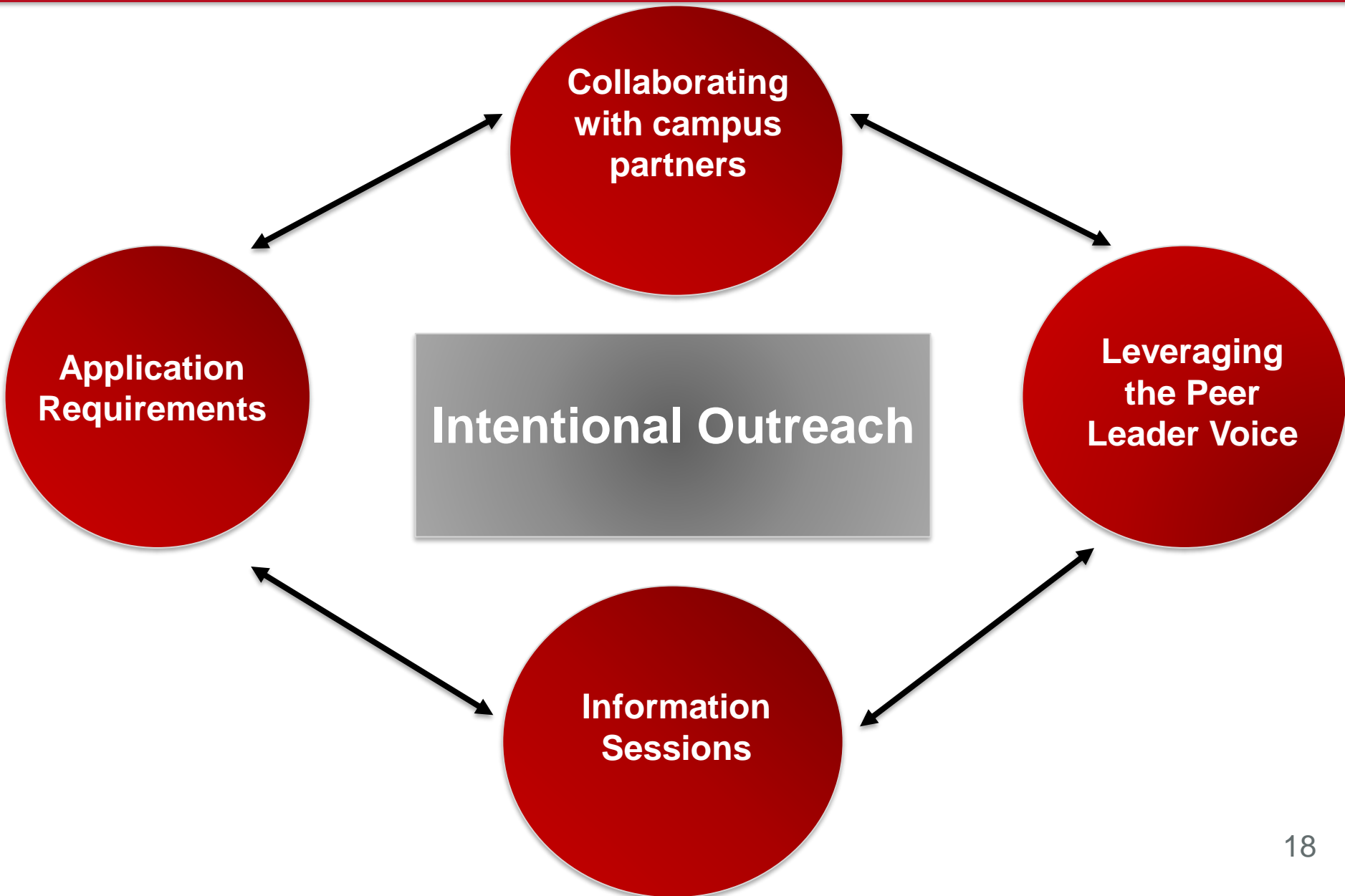






**What challenges may occur when developing diverse and inclusive student leaders?**

**What are some things to take into consideration while training students?**





# Outreach Letters

team with more diversity to make the environment for new students more inclusive. I would like to tell you that this is where we need you!

As a first generation student at The Ohio State University, I was both extremely overwhelmed and excited as I started school on such a large campus. I did not know what the fall would bring or what I should expect. I struggled for the first semester to understand and navigate campus, lecture halls, and the overall college life/experience. Something that was extremely important was having a mentor here on campus. During second semester, I finally turned to my peer leader and turned the school year around. I was finally adjusting to the transition into college. Many of you probably had a peer leader, and for some, like me, this role may have been the most impactful relationship your first year.

Last winter I applied to be a First Year Experience Peer Leader. I applied after receiving a letter similar to this and realizing I could make a difference in a first year students' experiences. Working as a Peer Leader, I was able to build connections with a variety of students, but especially first generation students. It has been a great experience and I would love to continue to grow and build connections with students around campus.

As a black woman at a predominately white institution, I am hard pressed to find a leadership position for me here. And, the truth is that it's because we have to go in and make those positions for ourselves. In having the Peer Leader position, I have been valued as a person, not a prop. My identities, though marginalized, were not marginal to my work, which are students who are statistically less likely to finish their four years here due to institutional barriers, amongst other things; one of those groups is people of color.

I believe that shared experiences can forge the deepest connections, and common identities aid in this process. In my role, I have been able to make those connections with other black students and be a resource for their continued growth. As we strive to make Ohio State a genuinely inclusive place for all people, we need someone like you to carry the torch and continue to make change. You have a unique voice integral to this university; give your voice a platform. If you are interested in the opportunity to impact the lives of first year students while experiencing personal growth, I encourage you to apply.



# Re-thinking Application Questions

- The world is a dynamic place, and students' social identities and experiences can significantly impact their perspective and management of the transition to college, as well as their interpretation of the university as a diverse environment. Do you believe Ohio State is a diverse institution? Please explain your answer, using examples. How would you support first-year students who don't share your view of diversity at Ohio State?
- As a Peer Leader, first-year students will look to you as a role model on campus. To be someone who first year students connect and share their experience with, you must also be authentic and genuine. Describe the complexities of maintaining this balance between role model and authentic peer. Provide examples to illustrate your reasoning.



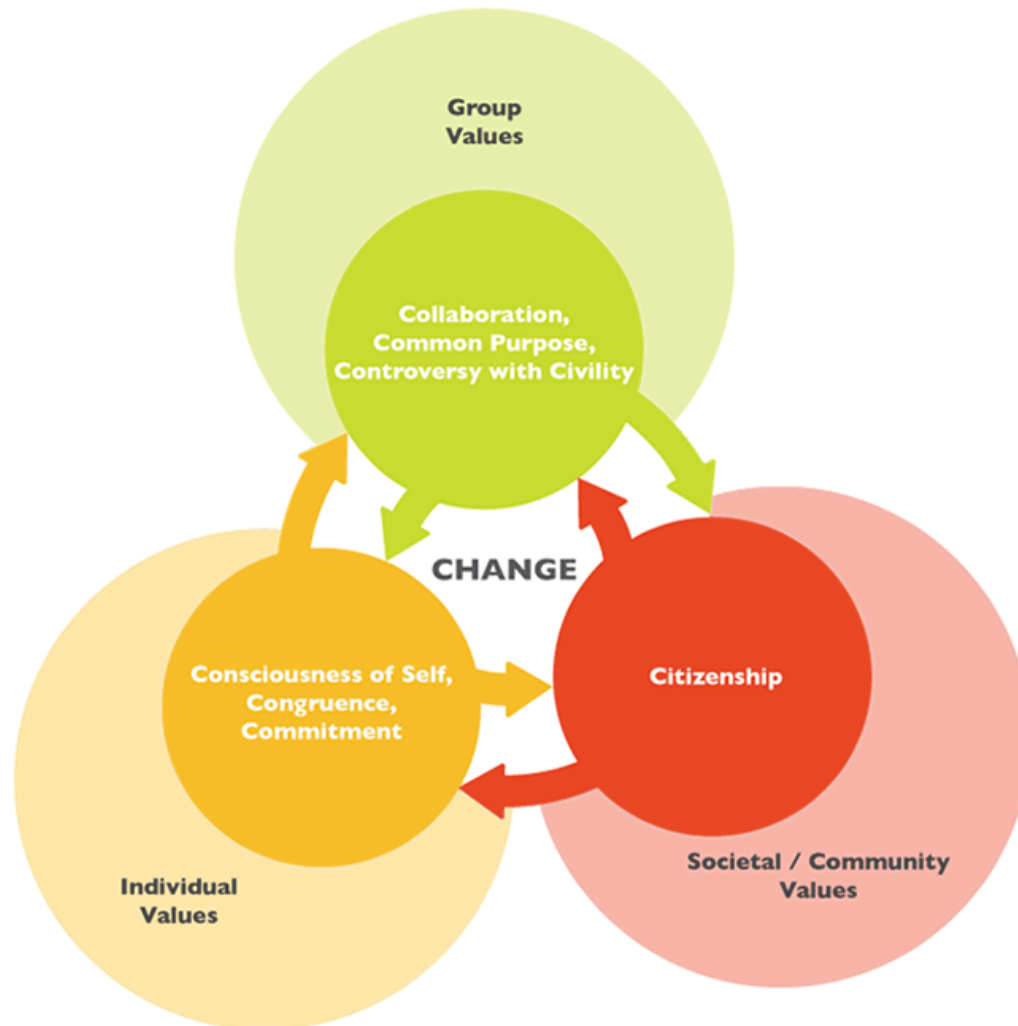
# Re-thinking Interview Questions

*In our job description, we mention that Peer Leaders will advocate for students who have traditionally not been adequately served by the university such as first generation college students, students of color, commuter students, and low income students. What barriers do you think exist for these populations in their journey to be successful at Ohio State?*

*Knowing you will be asked to serve all first year students, talk about how you will build relationships with individuals who hold different identities and life experiences than your own.*



# Social Change Model of Leadership





# May Training

## Individual

Model of  
Multiple  
dimensions of  
Identity

Identity Wheel  
Reflecting on  
their First Year

## Group

Privilege  
University  
Avoiding  
Deficit  
Language

Micro-  
aggressions  
Implicit Bias

## Community

First  
Generation  
Low-Income

Commuter  
Students of  
Color





# Ongoing Training



- Weekly 1:1s
- Challenging Biases
- Developing a Plan
- Peer-to-Peer Support
- PL Talks





# Supervising the Whole Student

## Relationship Building

- General Check-In
- Personal Life/Follow Up

## Job Responsibilities

- Interactions: Who, What, Where, When, Why
- Priority Populations
- Data Informed Outreach

## Feedback

- Provide positive/constructive feedback
- Solicit Feedback

## Review

- Reviewing Last Staff Meeting
- Team Dynamics
- Question and Answer



How could you apply this to your institution/office?

What Resources will you need?

Implementation

What are some barriers that exist? Barriers for resources?

What are your tangible next steps?



# Questions?



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