

NC STATE

Chester Brewer <ckbrewe2@ncsu.edu>

[Caldwell Fellows] Summer 2024 Alumni Newsletter

1 message

Janice Odom <jeodom@ncsu.edu>

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Reply-To: jeodom@ncsu.edu

To: ckbrewe2@ncsu.edu



Message from the Director

Life is full of abstractions. Big ideas are particularly abstract.

Try using words to explain the abstraction of Love. Despair. Peace. Justice. Community.

Try *teaching* the abstraction of *Leadership*.

Like all abstractions, leadership is 'caught, not taught.' We need salient examples to point to: "See there! There's a glimpse of leadership!" One needn't look further than the daily news for a hot mess of bad leadership examples. Like negative energy, bad leadership gets replicated and spreads like wildfire, dangerous and deadly.

What our students need, what we all need, are glimpses of leadership that embody our servant-leadership mission and values. Where better to find these than among the 'beautiful, lofty people' who are our alumni. In delving into the lives of our alumni, we glimpse sightings of leadership that inspire and replicate, that are life-expanding and uplifting. Capturing these stories is a gift we give our students and each other. Here we go...

Leadership Sightings: David Kemper '89



David Kemper '89

I began my conversations about leadership with a class of 1989 Fellow, David Kemper. Like many ambitious and capable young Fellows, David's early aspiration was to be a CEO. (After all, a leader is always at the top, right?) David credits his Fellows' program experiences - internships, the wilderness expedition, peer observation, the program's action/reflection model and the personal relationships with finding his life's vision and trajectory.

David's experiences led him to discover that his super-power and passion was for guiding and supporting others' development. This self-awareness led him to the unexpected aha! that it was not in the C-suite, but behind the scenes where he thrived. Like a good stage director, David works from the wings, providing connections, knowledge and skill to set his clients up for success in the realm of management, scientific and technical consulting through his business KemperStrategy Inc. David's full life also finds his roles as a father, Scout leader and community volunteer draw on his love for developing others. "What I've enjoyed most as a consultant and volunteer is that I get to do my two favorite things - learn and teach."

What is especially striking about a conversation with David Kemper are his keen skills of communication. David is an inviting listener. He is curious and growing.

He is a reader. (When David and I talked, he was in the middle of two books: one on additive manufacturing technologies and the other on mindfulness, reflecting his dual interest in technical and contemplative subjects.) “There’s a lot I try to do to be a servant leader and a lifelong learner. In my professional life though, I earn a place at the table to lead and connect because I perform my work exceptionally well. My work – and pay – are visible to all my clients and they watch closely to what really improves because of my work.”.

He is refreshingly honest. David feigns no pretense that he has it ‘all figured out.’ David shared his experiences of dealing with challenging situations at work, acknowledging that he has made mistakes and not always pleased his clients. “Sometimes the purpose of my life is to serve as a warning to others,” he laughed. David believes in accepting responsibility over the options of denying or deflecting criticism.

Like the majority of the humble folks who are Caldwell Fellows, David admits to his share of imposter syndrome, doubts and fears, and draws from practices in self-reflection, journaling, and seeking input of trusted others to enable his growth and accountability. David’s capacity to be vulnerable is another of his super-powers. “What I learned from experiences at State and beyond is that everybody has feelings of shame or ‘less-than.’ When I share the vulnerabilities and mistakes I have made – and transcended – it opens up a level of trust and credibility that hugely improves performance and joy.”

This is all quite an insufficient picture of the full and interesting life of David Kemper but perhaps it sparks your own reflection. How do you describe your leadership journey? What sightings of leadership inspire and guide your own practice?

David and I discovered a shared interest in capturing the elusive manifestation of good leadership. More stories of leadership sightings to come.

Yours,

Janice



Current Fellows enact a scene from Julius Caesar at the 2024 Student Showcase

Our 2023-2024 Year in Review

Take a peek at our annual Year in Review document. 2023-2024 was a dynamic year of creative exploration. We hope you enjoy.

[Look back](#)



Fall 2023 Alumni Survey Results

Many thanks to everyone who participated in our Caldwell Fellows Alumni Survey last fall.

We received responses from 156 of you across the generations, revealing that our understanding only begins to scratch the surface of the many ways our alumni influence their fields, communities, and families. A summary of the recurring themes from the responses is available in the document linked below, showcasing consistent themes across the program's many decades.

The staff is grateful to our Program Advisory Committee for helping us evaluate these results to improve our HOW: the design and implementation of our curriculum and the roles of staff, alumni, and community partners in delivering a transformative leadership development program. They are currently working on synthesizing these themes into programmatic recommendations, which we plan to publish by the end of the year.

[Survey Results](#)



Our 2023 class of Caldwell alumni coaches at their graduation, along with with Sackeena Gordon Jones, COO and President of Transformation Edge Consulting. After ten months of classes and supervised coach training, they are ICF certified coaches. The Caldwell Fellows subsidizes the training and our alumni, in turn, donate their time to serve our current Fellows. This is our third group to complete the work; our fourth cohort graduates shortly. Pictured left to right: Shreye Saxena, Sackeena Gordon-Jones, Anne Powers, and Rajan Singh.

Alumni Coaching Certification: Invitation to Apply

Added to our program offerings ten years ago, professional coaching has become a valued tool to accelerate the development of our Fellows. Initially coaching was provided by a cadre of Triangle area professional coach volunteers. Four years ago we began expanding our coaching program through supporting alumni on the path of coaching certification. In partnership with Transformation Edge Coaching, the Caldwell Fellows subsidizes up to half of the cost of training for alumni invested in adding coaching to their leadership tools and who will commit a minimum of three years of service to coaching Caldwell students. Coaching aligns with the values and practices of servant leadership and is readily adaptable to leadership across all settings. We believe this investment in coach certification serves not only our current Fellows but also the ongoing leadership development of our alumni.

Rajan Singh (2017) described the value of his alumni coach training in these words: *The methodology of professional coaching is something I turn on or off for my sessions, but the*

coaching skills have permeated my life, positively impacting my interactions with others on a daily basis. Many coaching skills are the basics we learn in life: showing empathy, actively listening, remaining attentive to emotions, or exploring assumptions. But the training program and subsequent practice of coaching has propelled me from good to great, subtly improving my relationships with those around me along the way.

The window is now open to express interest in being considered for the next Caldwell cohort of coach trainees. The training certification requirements are outlined at the link below. To register your potential interest in the course, please email Janice Odom by August 15 with a statement of your specific interest and personal goals for coaching and your willingness to commit to the work of training and serving the program. Please include what amount of the total training cost (\$10,500) you are capable of funding.

Nine alumni and one staff member (Janice Odom) have completed coach certification across the previous three years: Sonja Jones, Tyrek Shepard, Bhavana Kaki, Sandra Younger, Rajan Singh, Shreye Saxena, Anne Powers, Janay Braxton Purdie, Christine Schmidt. They join the ranks of other certified coach alumni, David Frink and Chris Nassivera.

Certification Requirements



BrightCrowd Alumni Connections Launch!

As we enter a new academic year, we are eager to help foster a renewed sense of connection and engagement among the Caldwell Fellows alumni. Your experiences since graduating from the program are a testament to the power of servant leadership and “thinking big”. To help us achieve this goal, NC State is offering a new tool, BrightCrowd, an interactive online community designed to connect you directly with classmates and friends, exclusively from the ranks of Caldwell Fellows. We have had a handful of early adopters, and we are ready to launch for everyone!

You may be saying to yourself, "But I already signed up for x,y,z alumni platform over the years." Yes, that is likely the case. And we apologize for changes. The powers that be have determined that this is the best platform moving forward. We do think that this is certainly the best looking, easiest to use platform we have been offered to date. With that in mind, we need a critical mass to buy in and use this platform to its full potential. If we all pitch in, it will enliven our Caldwell community and simplify communication across the generations.

Accessing BrightCrowd is both free and simple:

- Visit the BrightCrowd NC State portal: <https://ncsu.brightcrowd.com/caldwell-fellows>
- Complete your profile: Share a little bit about yourself, your interests, and your goals to help others get to know you better.
- Start connecting: Explore the platform, join relevant groups, and contact current students and alumni.

We hope this new tool reignites your unique connections to NC State, the Caldwell Fellows Program, your classmates, and our current Fellows. The more of us that pitch in, the more useful this tool will be moving forward. It should help facilitate communication and connection among the Caldwell Fellows alumni and current students as we move forward.

If you have any questions or need assistance with joining BrightCrowd, please don't hesitate to contact our dedicated support team at ncstatealumni@ncsu.edu or call 800-627-2586.

BrightCrowd



Megan Chesser ('07) shares a snake with campers at the NC Museum of Natural Science

SATELLITE Program Evaluation

Thanks to the vision and dedication of countless Caldwell Fellows, SATELLITE Camp has provided a residential STEM camp experience for rural NC high school sophomores for 28 years. Our Fellows have immersed in deep hand-on leadership training through the tremendous work of planning and leading camp for up to 60 students annually.

We are at a place where the increase of campus requirements for offering the camp and providing on site professional leadership exceeds the capacity of our small Caldwell Fellows staff team. We are in the midst of convening potential campus partners to determine the future possibilities for SATELLITE. We'll keep you posted on what emerges and welcome any who wish to be involved in the discussion. Let Janice know of your interest.



Alumni and friends dancing at the 2024 Caldwell Fellows Gala

Save The Date!

2025 Selection / Alumni Conference & Gala Weekend
February 14 - 15, 2025

Call for volunteers coming this fall along with event ticket sales.

Room block at StateView Hotel is open now. Room holds end in January. You can reserve your room now at <https://www.marriott.com/events/start.mi?id=1719255437398&key=GRP>.



Caldwell Fellows Program | NC State University | 1115 Pullen Hall | 919.515.3837
<https://caldwellfellows.ncsu.edu>

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NCSU 1115 Pullen Hall Campus Box 7121 | Raleigh, NC 27695 US

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