

DOUGHERTY FAMILY COLLEGE

Newsletter



DEAN'S CORNER

Dear Dougherty Family College Friends,

As I reflect on what joys I want to share with all of you in this newsletter, I have mixed emotions about the unseasonably warm weather we are experiencing in Minnesota this winter.

Of course, I enjoy not slipping on ice when I am running for the bus, but I also know that the warm weather is a clear sign that our planet is hurting. Balancing life's joys and challenges is a daily responsibility for us all. I believe in the power of humanity. I continue to have hope that we will find a way to heal our planet and all its inhabitants.

It is easy to be hopeful about the future when you work with phenomenal scholars and highly talented educators who are committed to increasing the college attainment levels within under-resourced communities.

In this winter newsletter, we will highlight all the wonderful learning and career opportunities we provide our scholars and alumni. We are doing important mission work, and we are having fun making meaningful social impact. I am always mindful that Dougherty Family College would not exist without the generous support of each of our friends.

I am deeply appreciative of you for sharing your time, talents, and treasures to create and sustain Dougherty Family College. We are working together to create a more just and equitable world.

Much Gratitude and Love,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Buffy Smith".

Buffy Smith, Ph.D.
Dean and Frey Endowed Chair,
Dougherty Family College

STEM Club



The DFC STEM Club offers scholars a space to engage in meaningful discussions and explore the various STEM fields, going beyond simple projects for an enriching experience. This fall, club activities highlighted key STEM characteristics: resilience and teamwork. Scholars competed in a team coding challenge which introduced them to coding and its integral role in cybersecurity. Furthermore, an interactive evening at the Bakken Museum continued to highlight these skills as scholars worked in pairs to build and customize a small robot. Lastly, during the semester wrap-up scholars connected with DFC alumni pursuing STEM degrees helping expand their STEM community.

This semester the Club made the exciting transition to being completely student-led. Navigating the shift in leadership has been challenging given scholars' busy schedules. However, the strong new leadership is busy planning for spring by expanding access and engagement in STEM. It is now an official entity of the university, creating meaningful networking opportunities in the community, and collaborating with other STEM groups on the St. Paul campus as well as other institutions.

DFC scholars are not only immersing themselves in STEM exploration but are also continuing to prepare for the demanding mathematical challenges of STEM disciplines, which is evident by a 30% increase in enrollment in additional math courses during J-term.

Marielena Chacon-Pacheco

DFC Graduate, Co-Leader of DFC STEM Club

Major: Biology of Global Health, University of St. Thomas

Alumni Connections



The fall semester was an exciting whirlwind and we engaged with our alumni through time-management workshops, mid-term group check-ins (with donuts, of course), and an excellent Career Expo. Of all our events, the DFC community event in the bowling lounge at Anderson Student Center was a standout. This event was open to all current Dougherty Family College scholars and our alumni. This year's turnout was extraordinary, and we hosted more than seventy-five students, alumni, and staff/faculty. Although the bowling matches were heated, many of our alumni mentioned feeling warm and happy to be together as a family. It was a magnificent event for connecting alumni to current scholars. Most importantly, it was an

amazing chance for all of us to reconnect, support each other, and to remember what Ohana feels and looks like.

Katia Colón-LaCroix
College Persistence Counselor

Career Expo

The DFC Career Expo 2023 proved to be a resounding success, bringing together 13 employers, and attracting a substantial turnout of 132 participants. The event showcased a diverse range of opportunities for career development, creating a dynamic platform for scholars and alumni. Participants had the chance to engage in mock interviews, receive valuable feedback on their resumes, obtain professional headshots, and connect with employers. Feedback from participants and employers alike has been overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing their satisfaction and gratitude for the well-organized and impactful event. With aspirations for an even larger event next year, the DFC Career Expo is sure to become a staple event in fostering meaningful connections and ultimately contributing to the professional success of the DFC community.



Amy Kadrmas
Professional Internship Program Director

Transfer Events

One highlight of the DFC transfer events was the annual DFC College Fair. We hosted representatives from esteemed universities such as Augsburg University, Concordia University (St. Paul), Hamline University, Metropolitan State University, St. Cloud State University, St. Mary's University, University of Minnesota- Twin Cities, and University of St. Thomas. We provided scholars with a firsthand look into the countless opportunities that await them. From liberal arts colleges to specialized institutions, our scholars had the chance to explore a diverse range of academic paths, helping them make informed decisions about their future.

Understanding the importance of strategic major planning, this year we organized comprehensive workshops that provided students with the tools and insights needed to chart their academic course. Facilitated by experienced advisors, these workshops empowered students to align their interests with potential majors, ensuring a seamless transition as they move forward in their educational journey.

Scholars expressed gratitude for the comprehensive support they received at DFC transfer events. These events have made their higher education planning more manageable and enjoyable. The collaboration between DFC and our college partners has proven to be a winning formula, ensuring that our scholars are well-equipped to thrive in their future academic endeavors.

Amanda Yang
College Transfer Counselor



The Power of Internships



Supporting families and strengthening communities since 1996

The Immigrant Law Center of Minnesota (ILCM) is a leading organization of support for low-income immigrants and refugees in Minnesota and North Dakota, offering not only free legal representation but also a commitment to public education, human rights advocacy, and reliable referrals for diverse client needs.

In the summer of 2023, ILCM joined as a partner with the DFC internship program, employing two enthusiastic second-year scholars, Yadira Parra Delgado and Natasha Ovalle. Drawn to the legal industry as a potential career path, both scholars eagerly joined the ILCM team.

Lenore Millibergity, ILCM attorney, and Yadira's supervisor, emphasizes ILCM's proactive approach in providing "real-life" legal experiences to students. "A number of our best employees started as interns and realized they have a passion for the work whether as a paralegal or attorney. And even if students don't pursue a legal career, they have a better understanding of our legal experience and what it means to be an immigrant in Minnesota."

Yadira's and Natasha's impactful experiences at ILCM have left a lasting mark on both their professional and personal lives. From boosting confidence to exploring future careers, ILCM has offered an exceptional environment for the interns to flourish.

Yadira shares her transformative journey, stating, "Growing up, I had numerous career dreams, and one of them was to be an immigration lawyer. Interning at ILCM helped me decide if immigration law was the right fit. Over time, my love for the work grew, solidifying my dream. This newfound passion has motivated me to excel academically as I am now determined to fulfill my dream of becoming an immigration lawyer."

Yadira and Natasha are also leaving a positive impact on ILCM. Their hard work, dedication to learning, and commitment to the work have significantly increased productivity and workflow for the ILCM team.

Lenore, reflecting on her experience with Yadira, expressed, "I have enjoyed discussing immigration and our history of racism with Yadira. It's refreshing to see my task list empty because she has taken care of everything for me."

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Robyn Meyer-Thompson, ILCM Supervising Staff Attorney and Natasha's supervisor, acknowledges Natasha's invaluable contributions. "We've benefited from Natasha's administrative support, country conditions research, translation assistance, and unique perspectives based on her experiences. Her energy, enthusiasm, organizational skills, and insightful questions have enriched our discussions on immigration law."

Anticipating the future, ILCM has already committed to welcoming two more interns this upcoming summer, employing a model that involves full-time engagement during the summer and retaining interns throughout their sophomore year. Lenore describes this model as "pivotal" in preparing, training, and acclimating interns to the work and ethos of ILCM.

As DFC enters our second year with ILCM, we eagerly anticipate a prolonged and mutually beneficial partnership. Together, we aspire to pave the way for future scholars venturing into the field of immigration law, contributing to the growth and excellence of the legal profession.

In Fall 2023, DFC welcomed its largest incoming class; and with more students joining, our internship program is expanding rapidly. We anticipate a 60% rise in interns for the upcoming year and are actively seeking new partners to collaborate with us in creating an enriched professional experience for each scholar. Let's shape the future together.

If you're interested in being part of this impactful program, please contact our Professional Internship Program Director, Amy Kadrmas (amy.kadrmas@stthomas.edu).



DFC Professional Mentor Program

Many definitions and perspectives on mentorship exist. However, for the purposes of the DFC Professional Mentor Program, the focus is on the relationship between the mentor and mentee, especially involving individualized guidance and support to further a scholar's knowledge of workplace culture and professional skills.

The DFC Professional Mentor Program provides DFC scholars with a mentor who offers guidance, support, wisdom, connections and much more. Mentoring is important to DFC scholars not only for the relationship-building, knowledge, and skills gained, but also for the professional socialization and personal support that are needed to facilitate success in the marketplace and beyond.

However, the mentees in the program are not the only ones who benefit from these relationships. Serving as a professional mentor can also provide new perspectives, insights, and experiences from the next generation that can be informative for the mentor's professional practice, future mentoring relationships, and personal relationships as well.

“You can learn from anyone of any age and in any career stage and both can impact each other's lives, as you may be dealing with similar issues at times. It means mutual learning and growth, building friendship and servanthood, improving self-understanding, and hopefully leaving better and more prepared people in society. I see the mentorship program as an opportunity to share experiences, resources, past mistakes, and learn together. It's a way to give back part of the grace first given to me by others who have helped and mentored me throughout my own career.”

- DFC Professional Mentor Program Mentor (2022-23)

Willingness to reach out, connect, and take a chance on someone is not easy, but doing so through the DFC Professional Mentor Program can lead to fulfilling, lasting connections, valuable outcomes, and unexpected revelations for mentors and mentees alike.

If you are interested in signing up to be a mentor, please contact Brad Pulles, Associate Dean of Students (brad.pulles@stthomas.edu).

Brad Pulles
Associate Dean of Students

