

A DECADE

of COLLEGE CONNECTIONS

Since 2008, the College Connections Program has enlisted recent liberal arts graduates to travel around the country — and world — to interview alumni and parents about their experiences with the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts (LSA). Ten years later, 15 coordinators have conducted nearly 7,500 alumni and parent interviews, gathering stories and feedback—and connecting interviewees to information and engagement opportunities at the university.

The 2018 College Connections Annual Report celebrates the impact *your voice* has had on the college. Thank you for ensuring the ongoing excellence of LSA.

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COLLEGE CONNECTIONS
ANNUAL REPORT 2018



PROGRAM HISTORY

Take a look at the **history of the College Connections Program** and everything we've accomplished since 2008.

2008

The College Connections Program was launched by the Director of External Relations and Annual Giving Programs, Nini Poore, and College Connections Coordinator, Klementina Sula, and endorsed by former LSA Dean Terrence McDonald—beginning the largest documented oral history project in U-M history. Initial feedback from interviews was used to enhance curriculum and improve advising.

2009

Elizabeth Williams and Jenny Howard joined the team.

2011

The LSA Young Alumni Council (YAC) was established in four regions by coordinators Jenny and Elizabeth. This same year, YAC members began mentoring current LSA students across the U.S. during the summer, leading to the creation of the LSA Summer Mentorship Program. YAC members also began raising money to sponsor student internships.

Kathleen Hinkley joined the team.

The College Connections team began interviewing parents of current LSA students.

2013

The Young Alumni Tumblr was created as a space where students and alumni could share personal stories and news related to U-M. The LSA Young Alumni Newsletter was also created this year. College Connections Abroad—a program connecting international alumni to students traveling abroad—was launched.

Mark Chou and Christina Pechette joined the team.

2015

The LSA Young Alumni website was created by Monica and Christina.

Avery Gleason and Patrick Pjesky joined the team.

College Connections surpassed 5,000 alumni interviews.

2017

The University of Michigan celebrated its bicentennial.

The [LSA Internship Scholarship](#) awarded more than \$1 million in scholarships to students. The YAC expanded to eight regions.

Anna Thompson joined the team.

Since the program's inception, College Connections interviewed more than 1,000 alumni.

2010

The College Connections team partnered with LSA Professor Julie Ellison on Citizen Alum—a national initiative that focused on alumni as doers, not just donors, studying how LSA prepares graduates to be civically engaged.

Ellie Chessen joined the team this year.

2012

LSA welcomed a new dean, Andrew D. Martin, to the college and launched the LSA Internship Network, now known as the LSA Opportunity Hub, creating a tool to post internships and hire LSA students.

Monica Philipp joined the team.

2014

Amanda Harvey, Samantha Lemmen, and Joe Murray joined the team.

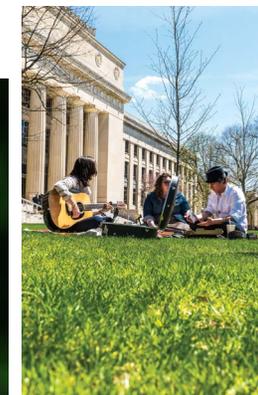
The LSA Opportunity Hub was launched.

2016

The College Connections team celebrates its 10th anniversary!

Selena Joarder joins the team.

2018



Over the past decade, College Connections coordinators have interviewed

7,446

alumni & parents

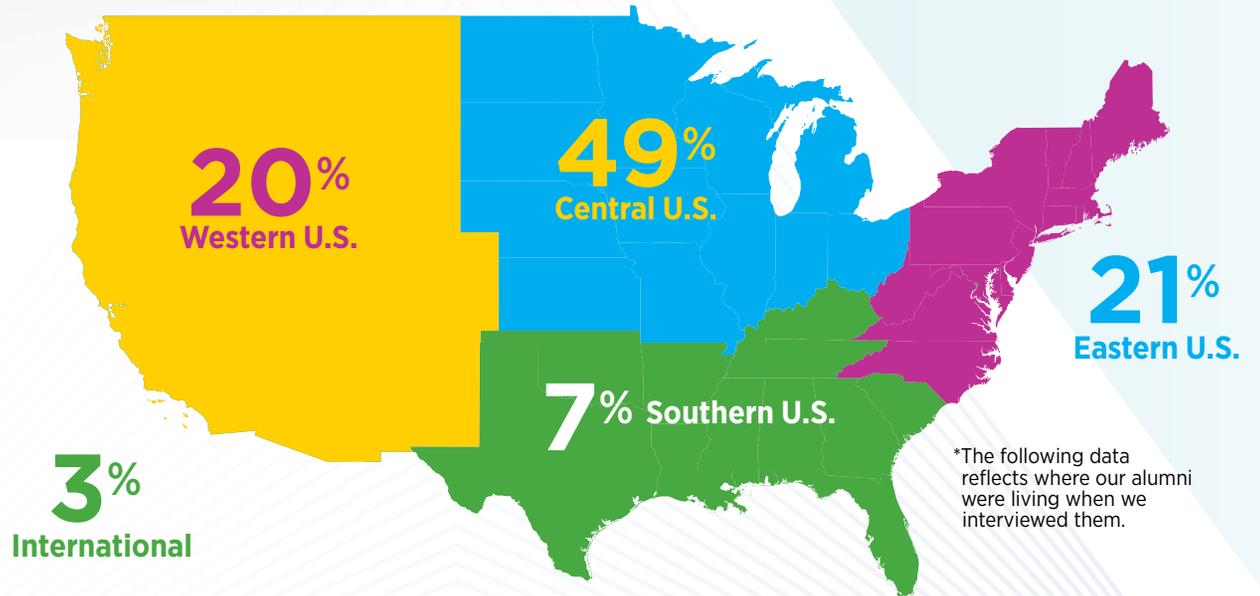
..... 10 YEARS IN REVIEW

TOP TEN MAJORS

- Biology
- Communication
- Economics
- English
- General Studies
- History
- Mathematics
- Political Science
- Psychology
- Sociology



Where Have We Been?

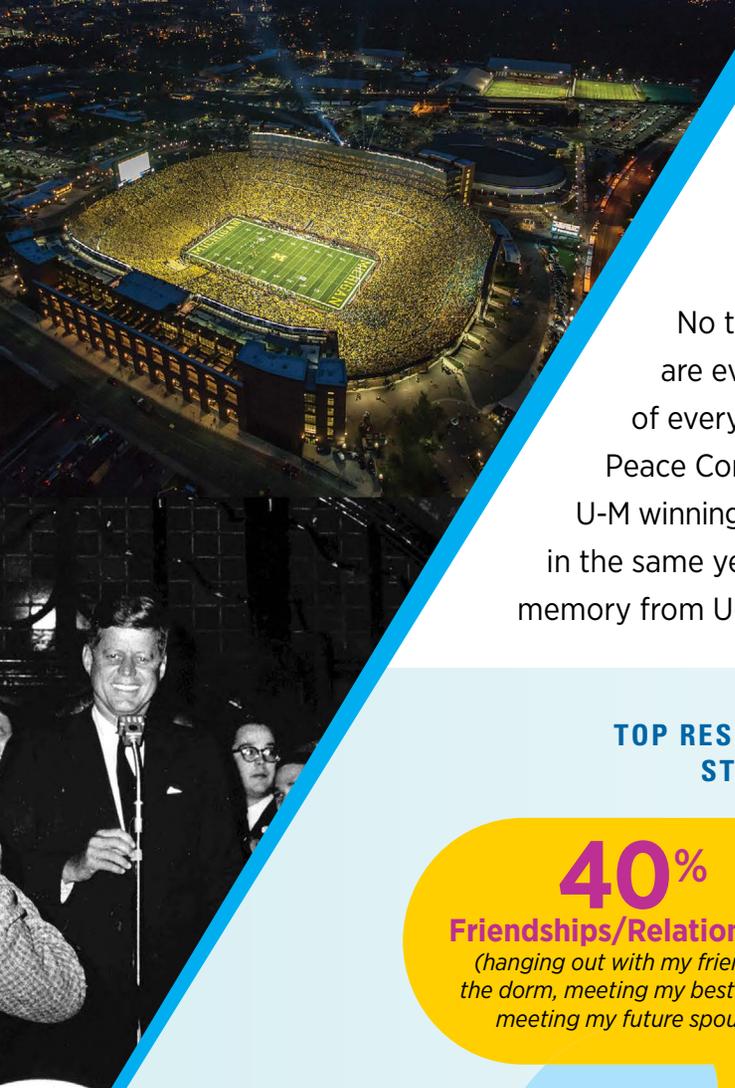


*The following data reflects where our alumni were living when we interviewed them.

GRADUATION YEARS

- .5% 1940s
- 1% 1950s
- 10% 1960s
- 17% 1970s
- 19% 1980s
- 20% 1990s
- 22% 2000s
- 10% 2010s





YOUR MEMORIES

No two College Connections interviews are ever the same. Alumni share memories of everything from John F. Kennedy giving his Peace Corps speech on the steps of the Union to U-M winning the Rose Bowl and the NCAA Championship in the same year. When asked what your most stand-out memory from U-M was, most of you couldn't pick just one.

TOP RESPONSES — WHAT'S YOUR MOST STAND-OUT U-M MEMORY?*

40%

Friendships/Relationships

(hanging out with my friends in the dorm, meeting my best friend, meeting my future spouse)

26% Atmosphere

(walking on the Diag, studying in the UgLi, exploring Ann Arbor, hanging out in the Union, Drake's Sandwich Shop)

30% Classroom

(class with Ralph Williams, history course with Sidney Fine, research opportunities through the medical school, the Biological Station, lecture series)

17%

Organization/Club

(Greek Life, Dance Marathon, the Michigan Daily, IM sports, Marching Band)

32%

Sports/School Spirit

(being in the Big House for the first time, winning the Rose Bowl, walking down Hoover on game day)

18% Other

(marching in a protest, graduation ceremony)

*More than one response could be selected

“

My graduation, and the pride I felt while listening to the wise words of Mike Wallace, was my most stand-out U-M memory.

—Renee Harvey (A.B. '87), Associate Broker, eXp Realty, Saginaw, MI

“

David Smith and Matt Lassiter both played important roles in my undergraduate education and my career as a high school history teacher. Both have been gracious enough to answer my many questions long after I started my own teaching career and for that I am always grateful.”

—Nate Tornow (A.B. '03), Honors World Studies Teacher, Jones College Prep High School, Chicago, IL

LIFE AFTER MICHIGAN

As the largest college at the university, LSA provides its students extensive opportunities to customize their educations and gain experiences inside and outside the classroom. **The nearly 7,500 alumni we've interviewed represent 79 majors** and have gone on to work in a variety of industries. Their unique post-graduate paths demonstrate the adaptable skill sets, creativity, and well-roundedness that define our liberal arts graduates.

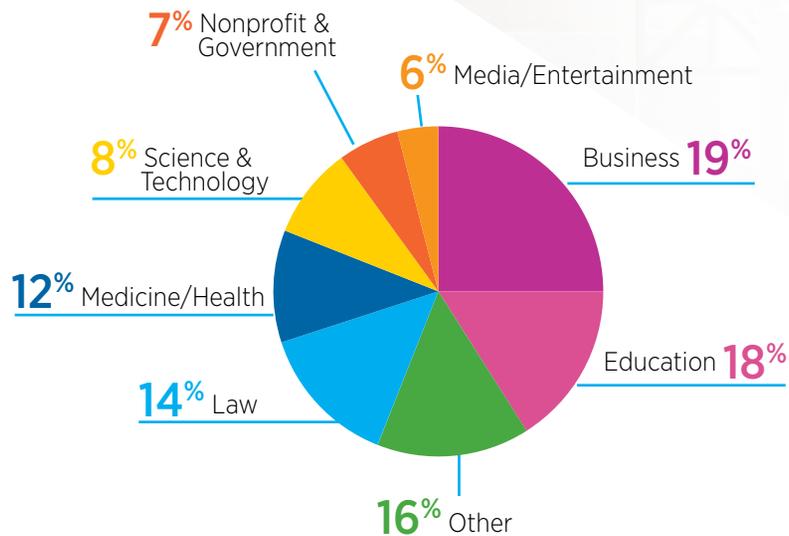


How did LSA influence your life or career?

- 54%** Solid foundation for graduate school and/or career
- 43%** Exposure: ability to explore
- 34%** Developed ability to analyze, think critically, and problem solve
- 32%** Developed communications/interpersonal skills
- 19%** Open mindedness
- 17%** Taught me how to work hard
- 11%** Social network

*More than one response could be selected.

INDUSTRIES



70% of LSA alumni worked and/or were involved in student organizations as students.

29% of LSA alumni have been involved in volunteer organizations since graduation.



PROMOTING LSA

Our team has heard countless testimonials verifying that most career paths aren't linear, and that a liberal arts education prepares students for a rapidly changing job market. Data collected from these interviews [help students visualize](#) what their paths may look like after Michigan. Interviewing LSA graduates about the [connection between their educations and professions](#) has also helped us share the power of LSA with young alumni.

“



The liberal arts allow graduates to both define and pursue success by developing a set of core competencies: clear and compelling communication skills, critical thinking, creative problem solving, and the ability to look at an issue from multiple angles. These skills are not confined to a single industry, such as medicine, engineering, technology, politics, entertainment, or law. These are skills that are vital to success in all of those sectors—and in life.”

—Andrew D. Martin, Professor of Political Science and Statistics, Dean, College of LSA

[READ MORE...](#)

about LSA's advocacy for the liberal arts in a piece written by Dean Martin for the *Economic Times of India*.





ENHANCING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

College Connections identified the need for more career services tailored to liberal arts students after listening to your feedback. Your recommendations supported the creation of the **LSA Opportunity Hub**—**a center that prepares LSA students for their future careers and endeavors.** After identifying this need, coordinators leveraged interviews to discover and recruit alumni mentors and internship sponsors, and spread the word about our growing internship program.



..... THE HUB OFFERS THE FOLLOWING STUDENT SERVICES:

THE HUB

located in the LSA Building on State Street, is still undergoing renovations and is expected to be complete in early 2020. You can take a **virtual tour of the addition** and view live progress on our **construction cam.**

INTERNSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Students can access the LSA Opportunity Network to view hundreds of domestic and international internship opportunities. They can glimpse various career paths through **flash internships**—brief, on-site experiences that provide opportunities to work and network with professionals in a given field. And if students can't travel to an internship, they can participate in **global virtual internships** and work on projects remotely for companies around the world.

COACHING AND PREP

The Hub offers **drop-in hours** every week, where students can meet with coaches and internship coordinators to discuss career goals, internship preparation, and professional development.

CONNECTIONS

LSA has alumni all over the globe. In partnership with the College Connections team, the Hub connects alumni and current LSA students through mentorship and networking opportunities.

FUNDING

The **LSA Internship Scholarship** awards up to \$5,000 per student to support LSA students pursuing internships over the summer. Other programs, like the **Applebaum Internship Program**, offer experiences, funding, and professional development to students interning at non-profits and arts organizations in and around Detroit.

In addition to providing us with ideas to improve the student experience, you've also given us great insight into how you want to engage or re-engage with the college.

Your suggestions have helped us create engagement opportunities **to keep you connected.**

CONNECTING WITH OUR ALUMNI



“

[My mentor] was an incredible resource and friend to me over the course of the summer. He gave me a tour around the city, took me to all the different agencies in Hollywood, introduced me to all his friends who work at entertainment companies, and even got me into Fox Studios one weekend because he works part-time for their Sports department! Not only did I have a mentor to guide me through the crazy Hollywood mess up that LA is, I also gained a great network of people who I can reach out to when I make the move back to LA after I graduate!”

—Nikita Mungarwadi (A.B. '18), Agent Trainee, United Talent Agency, Los Angeles, CA

1

YOUNG ALUMNI COUNCIL

The LSA **Young Alumni Council (YAC)** was founded in 2011 to provide a meaningful way for recent grads to stay connected to the college through networking, mentorship, storytelling, volunteering, and fundraising for the college. Since the council's inception, it has grown to eight chapters across the U.S., totaling 411 members.

2

MENTORSHIP

YAC volunteer efforts include mentoring current LSA students across the U.S. over the summer. Since 2011, the College Connections team has **facilitated mentor/mentee relationships** between 405 pairs of students and alumni.

“

Our goal is to really develop members by giving back to the community, connecting with one another, and being able to celebrate that common connection back to Michigan. I would love for recent grads coming to D.C. after graduation to be excited moving here and have a home away from Ann Arbor.”

—Meredith Westerlund (A.B. '13), Co-leader of the Washington D.C. YAC, Washington D.C.

3

YOUNG ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

Young alumni wanted an easy way to stay in touch with LSA after graduation, so in 2013, College Connections created the **Young Alumni Newsletter**. This newsletter is a weekly publication that delivers updates from campus, liberal arts stories, and professional advice to our young alumni audience.

INFORMING OUR PROGRAMS

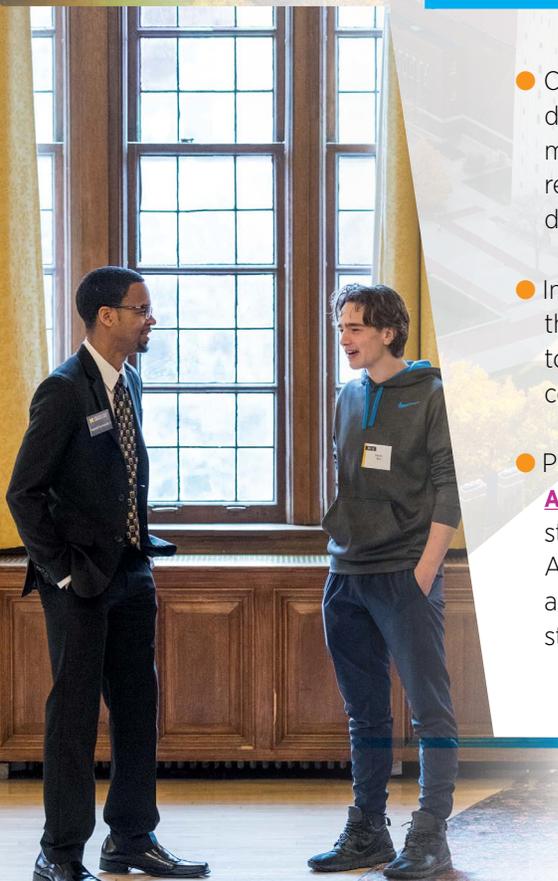
College Connections strategically uses the information we collect by sharing alumni feedback with campus partners to enhance career services, advising, student health services, scholarship programs, and academic departments. Some examples of the consulting projects we've worked on include:

- Collaborating with academic departments and sharing comments from their alumni about the relevance of their curriculum and degrees, and how to improve them.
- Interviewing past recipients of the **Kessler Presidential Scholarship** to gather feedback on creating a community among recipients.
- Providing guidance to **Newnan Advising Center** on ways to strengthen academic advising. Alumni feedback helped lead to the addition of academic advisors and staff training.
- Sharing data with the LSA Opportunity Hub regarding career services, internships, and mentorships.
- Presenting alumni feedback to the college that has led to the creation of **Applied Liberal Arts** courses. Some of these current courses include, "Positioning Yourself for a Successful Internship," "Undergraduate Internship Course," and "Putting your Education to Work."
- Communicating alumni feedback to U-M's Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), validating the need for increased staffing. This staffing need has since been addressed.



Through CC interviews with Kessler Scholars alumni, we often hear that there is a continued commitment to give back in any way that they can, as the Wilpons have given to them. This year, that statement has held true, as Kessler Scholars alumni have come back to campus to share their experiences, journeys, and expertise with the Kessler Scholars community during events throughout the year."

—Reginald Hammond (B.S. '14), Kessler Scholarship Program Assistant Director



The university has many attributes to be proud of, but with all great things, there's still always room for improvement. Alumni have expressed concerns over the affordability of higher education, a need for more diversity, the political discourse on campus, and the vast size of the university. **Here are some ways these concerns are being addressed:**

THINKING AHEAD

● AFFORDABILITY

The rising cost of higher education and accumulation of student debt are concerns at universities across the country. The [Go Blue Guarantee](#) provides free tuition to in-state undergraduate students whose families make \$65,000 or less each year. LSA offers a [laptop loan program](#) to assist low-income students, as well as [internship scholarships](#) for students hoping to pursue experiences outside of the classroom. Starting in fall 2018, the [LSA Passport Scholarship Program](#) will help all first-year, Pell Grant-eligible LSA students obtain passports so they can pursue international experiences.

● CAMPUS DIVERSITY

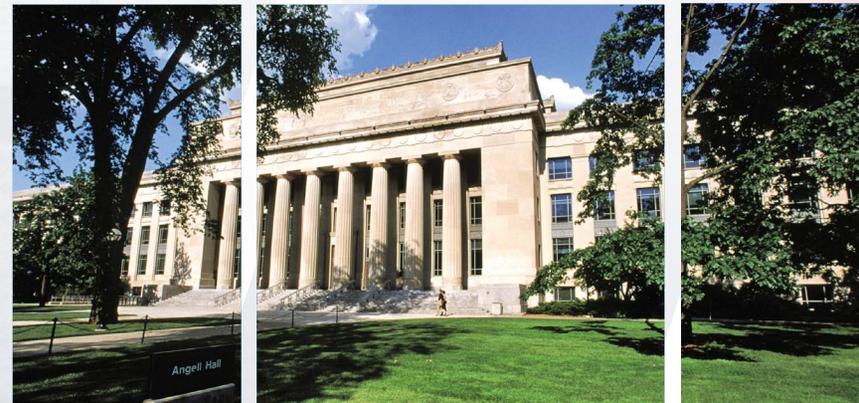
One of LSA's top priorities is promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion on campus. This past year, LSA hired Fiona Lee, its first [Associate Dean of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Professional Development](#). Lee's role is to carry out [LSA's DEI Plan](#) and ensure that it is thoughtfully executed and regularly evaluated.

● POLITICAL DISCOURSE ON CAMPUS

LSA strives to be a place where new ideas are generated, existing ideas are challenged, and where students can engage in respectful discourse. Classes like Professor Arthur Lupia's ["Beyond Partisanship"](#) this past year brought in speakers from both sides of the political aisle to discuss solutions to problems we all care about.

● THE SIZE OF LSA

Many of us know how overwhelming it can be to attend a huge university like Michigan, especially when you're part of the largest college on campus. As a part of a five-year plan to improve the first-year student experience, U-M Student Life, in partnership with other academic units, will be [expanding Michigan Living Learning Communities](#) and offering smaller communities to students who need them.



OUR TEAM



JOE

joined College Connections in November 2016 after graduating from LSA with an A.B. in program in the environment in May 2016. From Traverse City, MI, he grew up volunteering for the Traverse City Film Festival, which led to an internship and eventually a job with the organization. At U-M, Joe was a member of the Graham Sustainability Scholars and served as the education assistant for the Graham Institute. The program led to a month-long experience in Australia and New Zealand studying the region's sustainable business and policy initiatives. In addition, Joe served on the leadership team of Circle K, the university's largest community service organization, where he facilitated a wide variety of volunteer opportunities for students. In 2013, he co-founded U-M's chapter of FeelGood, a nationwide nonprofit that fundraises for international NGOs working to end hunger. He loves Michigan football, bar trivia at Ashley's, and helping alumni tell their stories.



AMANDA

joined College Connections in October 2016 after graduating from LSA with an A.B. in political science. Amanda hails from Saginaw, MI and comes from a big Wolverine family, with her mother and three uncles having attended the university. As an undergrad, Amanda worked in many areas of the university including Telefund, LSA Advancement, and the LSA International Internship Program. She also devoted her time to various student organizations including Student Food Co., Dance Marathon, and Zeta Tau Alpha. In the summer of 2015, Amanda participated in two international internships that led her to an FTSE 100 insurance company in Cardiff, Wales, and the National Coastal Agency of Tirana, Albania. Amanda's passion and appreciation for the liberal arts and her love of meeting new people inspired her to work for College Connections. This fall, Amanda will be returning to Wales to be with her fiancé and pursue an M.B.A. at Cardiff University.



ANNA

joined College Connections in October 2017 after graduating from LSA in May 2016 with an A.B. in communication studies. Born and raised in Jackson, MI, her dream was to attend U-M as her sister and grandfather had before her. As an undergrad, Anna was an executive board member for Appreciate+Reciprocate, a philanthropic student organization that volunteers in the community and fundraises for the LSA Appreciate+Reciprocate Scholarship. She held internships with the Ella Sharp Museum and the Development Summer Internship Program (D-SIP), where she worked in alumni relations at the School of Information. Anna was inspired to build a career in alumni relations after meeting the alumni who funded her undergraduate scholarship, realizing the powerful impact relationship building can have on the future of the college. In her spare time, Anna enjoys volunteering with Ozone House's Millennial Board, taking her dog to the dog park, and planning her next travel adventure.



SELENA

joined College Connections in July 2018 after graduating from LSA with an A.B. in organizational studies in May 2018. She was raised in a family of Wolverine fans in Allen Park, MI. Selena began as a resident of the social-justice based learning community Michigan Community Scholars Program (MCSP), and as a student, she promoted student philanthropy, working with the Gifts of Kindness Fund and LSA Advancement. Her time with FeelGood, a nonprofit that works to sustainably end extreme world poverty by 2030 (and a chapter that was co-founded by our Joe Murray!), similarly allowed her to work with leaders to develop a culture of empowerment. Learning from the Center for Positive Organizations as a +LAB Fellow, she studied research-based strategies to build authentic relationships. Her love of meeting new people, combined with a genuine belief that a liberal arts education can allow people to be their very best, compelled her to join the team.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

● Ellie Chessen (2012–2015)

works for Deloitte as a consultant in Washington D.C.

● Mark Chou (2013–2015)

now lives in San Francisco and works at Facebook as a product data operations specialist, focusing on Messenger and artificial intelligence products. He's fully enjoying his new life out west and taking advantage of all that the Bay Area has to offer!

● Avery Gleason (2015–2016)

works for the Office of University Development in Ann Arbor as a business intelligence analyst. This fall, he will be entering the Masters of Science in Information program at the University of Michigan School of Information focusing on data analysis.

● Kathleen Hinkley (2011–2014)

is the Director of Development at Children's Hospital of Wisconsin.

● Jenny Howard (2009–2012)

continues to lead LSA's Planned Giving program and work with major gift donors in west and mid-Michigan, Indiana, Missouri, and Tennessee. She is celebrating three years of marriage with her husband Mike this fall.

● Samantha Lemmen (2016–2017)

has continued to spread her love for the liberal arts in her new position as LSA's Regional Director of Development in the Southeastern States.

● Christina Pechette (2014–2016)

returns to the Harvard School of Public Health this fall for the final semester of her Master's in Public Health program after her internship in Minneapolis with UnitedHealthcare this summer. She also recently got engaged!

● Monica Philipp (2014–2016)

continues to work as a development officer for LSA on the Western Region team. This year, she is excited to extend her philanthropic passions by working with Ozone House's Millennial Board as well as North Star Reach's Young Professional Board.

● Patrick Pjesky (2015–2016)

works for Google as an account manager in San Francisco.

● Tina Sula (2008–2012)

is the Chief Development Officer at Henry Ford Health System. She also is a lecturer in U-M's Program in International and Comparative Studies. Tina and her husband Elvis recently celebrated their daughter Zara's first birthday.

● Elizabeth Williams (2009–2012)

and her husband Alex Blouin (A.B. '09) (they met at Michigan!) recently became official Ann Arborites and bought a house on the West Side. Elizabeth has enjoyed continuing to work as a U-M fundraiser covering Washtenaw County, and they both are excited to take their dog on walks to the Kerrytown Farmer's Market this summer.

GET CONNECTED

Looking to get more involved in LSA?
Here are some ways you can engage
or re-engage with LSA:

- [Provide an internship](#)
- [Provide a flash internship](#)
- [Host an information session at the Hub](#)
- [Visit campus and share your expertise](#)
- [Join the LSA Young Alumni Council](#)
- [Sign up for the Young Alumni Newsletter](#)
- [Mentor a student](#)
- [Hire an LSA student](#)
- [Give to the LSA Annual Fund](#) or
[your favorite department](#)
- [Serve as class guest speaker](#)
- [Serve as an online ambassador](#)

To get involved, contact us at
collegeconnectionsprogram@umich.edu.

Thank you again for participating
in the College Connections Program,
and as always, **Go Blue!**

–COLLEGE CONNECTIONS