

## **NEW Leadership Pennsylvania** **May 18-23, 2025**



NEW Leadership Pennsylvania is a six-day residential program that gives college students the knowledge and skills to become effective leaders in politics, public policy, and public service. It is held annually at Chatham University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and this year took place from May 18-23<sup>rd</sup>.

This year's class consisted of 40 students representing 20 colleges and universities from across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics (PCWP) at Chatham University was honored to welcome former **State Senator Pam Iovino\*** as our Practitioner-in-Residence. Senator Iovino led panels, shared her expertise during the social action project, and mentored students throughout the week.



*NEW Leadership PA Class of 2025*

One important aspect of the NEW Leadership PA program is learning skills essential to public leadership. We started the week with a public speaking training from **Jennifer Tober** of Pittsburgh Shakespeare in the Parks. Each student practiced public speaking throughout the week by introducing one of our guest speakers. The students then learned about networking from **Kate Labriola-Gorentz**, Director of Alumni Engagement at Chatham University. **Marchaé Peters**, Director of Student Engagement and **Tiara Lucas**, Staff Counselor led our class through a workshop designed to help students identify their own leadership styles and learn how to work effectively with a group.



*Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Training*

Later in the week, **John Denny**, Co-Founder and Senior Advisor of ASSEMBLE, facilitated a training on advocacy for our class. To finish our training sessions, **Chaz Kellem** facilitated a training on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I). We know that to be an effective leader, one must understand the challenges and rewards of leading in a diverse society. The DE&I workshop is always the top-rated workshop of the week.

To start learning about career opportunities in government, our NEW Leadership PA class heard from **State Representative Valerie Gaydos\***, **State Representative Emily Kinhead\***, and **State Representative Stephenie Scialabba** during the "Making a Difference: Women in the General Assembly" panel. Former State Senator Pam Iovino moderated the panel.



*Making a Difference:  
Women in the General Assembly*

**\*Ready to Run Pittsburgh Alum**

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*NEW Leadership PA students in the PA State Capitol Building*

NEW Leadership participants next traveled to Harrisburg to spend the day at the State Capitol. At the Capitol, we received a lesson on the legislative process from **Nichole Duffy**, Vice President of Government Relations at the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Pennsylvania (AICUP).

The students also had the opportunity to hear from women working in the Executive Branch. We were joined by three staff members from the Office of the Governor: **Moriah Hathaway**, Deputy Director of the Office of External Affairs; **Danielle Okai**, Deputy Chief of Staff for Economic Development; and **Olga**

**Negrón**, Executive Director of the Governor's Advisory Commission on Latino Affairs. Later, we heard from **Stephanie Shell**, Deputy Secretary of the Office of Administration, Pennsylvania Department of Human Services. Each speaker shared insights from their career paths to the Executive Branch and gave an overview of their day-to-day work.

Afterward, the students learned about working in advocacy. We heard from **Ashleigh Deemer** of CeaseFire Pennsylvania, **Signe Espinoza** of Planned Parenthood Pennsylvania Advocates, **Gillian Kratzer** of Better PA, and **Elizabeth Rosentel** of Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney.

To finish the day, our class met with women working in local government. This panel included Harrisburg **City Councilmember Shamaine Daniels**, Commonwealth Court **Judge Patricia McCullough**, and former Court of Common Pleas **Judge Jeannine Turgeon**.

Back in Pittsburgh, our students had the opportunity to practice their networking skills at the Keynote reception and dinner, where we were joined by over 20 community members. Our Keynote was delivered by **Diana Irely Vaughan**, former Washington County Commissioner and President & CEO of City Mission. Ms. Irely Vaughan delivered a personal and motivating speech about her pathway into politics and her experiences in the public sphere.



*Diana Irely Vaughan delivering our keynote address*



*Social Action Project: Policy Panel of Experts*

As part of the NEW Leadership experience, students participate in a role-playing exercise where they become experts on a public policy issue and act as various stakeholders. This year, students researched the debate on enacting a state tax credit for hydrogen energy development. **Rob Bair**, President of PA State Building Trades; **Tracy L. Lawless**, Government Affairs Counselor at K&L Gates; **Courtney Loper**, Head of Government Relations and Public Affairs at EQT Corporation; and Senator Iovino spoke on our expert panel to help students prepare for their presentations.

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The students held a mock legislative hearing where they were tasked with representing government officials, business owners, community groups, and unions. Our students did a great job and learned firsthand about the importance of participating in the political process.

To wrap up NEW Leadership PA 2025, we held a graduation ceremony to celebrate the hard work and achievements of this cohort. In the words of a 2025 graduate, University of Pittsburgh student Ruby Scupp:

*“When we all arrived just six days ago, most of us didn’t know each other. We came from different campuses, different majors, and different life experiences-but we were all drawn here by something shared: the belief that leadership is about showing up, speaking up, and lifting others along the way. Over the course of the week, we didn’t just learn together. We laughed, we questioned, we shared, and we built friendships.”*

We couldn’t be prouder to welcome the NEW Leadership Pennsylvania 2025 class into our alumni network!

**Following the program, we asked students to complete an evaluation on their experience and the results were very strong.** Below are a few statistics on the impact of NEW Leadership Pennsylvania this year and some reflections on the program from our 2025 class.



*Social action project group  
representing union  
members*

### **NEW Leadership PA Impact**

**95%** of our 2025 class reported that the program increased their understanding of politics and public policy

**97%** of our 2025 class reported that the program increased their interest in politics and public policy

**100%** of our 2025 class reported that the program gave them greater confidence in their ability to create political change

### **NEW Leadership PA Impact: Social Action Project**

**95%** of our 2025 class reported that the social action project helped them learn how to work effectively in a group

**89%** of our 2025 class reported that the social action project taught them how to organize around an issue

**95%** of our 2025 class reported that the program showed them how to influence decision makers

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### What NEW Leadership PA students are saying:



"I was so shocked by how much I learned and how much I grew personally from this experience.

-NEW Leadership PA 2025 Student



"This program changed my life and I do not say this lightly."

-NEW Leadership PA 2025 Student



"I loved getting to hear from and interact with women who are doing work that I am passionate about."

-NEW Leadership PA 2025 Student

## Thank You

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