The most difficult thing is the decision to act, the rest is merely tenacity. The fears are paper tigers. You can do anything you decide to do. You can act to change and control your life; and the procedure, the process, is its own reward.

- Amelia Earhart, aviation pioneer
1. Bruce Walter, Cayuga
2. Lisa Stewart, Potsdam
3. Travis Killian, Maritime
4. Luke Haumesser, Geneseo
5. Charles “Chip” Matthews, Geneseo
6. Josh Rogalski, Cayuga
7. Melissa Johnson, Cayuga
8. Amy Guiney, Potsdam
9. Jon Goldstein, Farmingdale
10. Eileen Lynd-Balta, St. John Fisher
11. Matthew Green, Ulster
12. Brian Hagenbuch, Schenectady
13. Marie Nellenback, Cayuga

The point is to become yourself, to use yourself completely - all your skills, gifts and energies - in order to make your vision manifest. You must withhold nothing.

- Warren Bennis, American scholar, organization consultant and author
The “challengers” convened at noon, at the Adirondack Ecological Center on SUNY-ESF’s Newcomb Campus in the Huntington Wildlife Forest. After settling into their accommodations and sharing a get-acquainted lunch, they received a briefing on the weekend’s agenda from their instructor, human potential developer and SUNYLI Associate Norm Pure.

Then, they dived right into the first of the weekend’s four workshops aimed at cultivating successful leadership behaviors. For reasons that would soon become clear, the workshops borrowed their theme from the classic Western film, “The Good, the Bad and the Ugly.”

Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.
- John F. Kennedy, 35th President of the United States
The initial session utilized discussion and interactivity, along with a simple illustration – a makeshift display of quadrants in the center of the circle – to raise the participants’ consciousness of how they feel at any particular moment, and how those feelings influence their performance as leaders. Norm made the point that leaders should seek to operate from their most favorable emotional state which, with awareness and practice, they can learn to optimize.

Know thyself.
- Socrates, (469- 399 BED), Greek philosopher
A second interactive session featured a room-sized set of quadrants to show how human emotions are triggered – often adversely – in the course of any given day.

The art of life is a constant readjustment to our surroundings.

- Kakuzo Okakura, Japanese author and art critic
And it demonstrated how we can use our awareness of these triggers to better control our emotional responses, improving our performance and our relationships as well as our health.

Forego your anger for a moment and save yourself a hundred days of trouble.
- Chinese proverb
The supreme accomplishment is to blur the line between work and play.
- Arnold Toynbee, British historian and philosopher

Burnout is one of leadership's greatest enemies. So, the Adirondack weekend featured not only challenges but chill-out time, too: afternoon recreational periods, mealtimes, evening social hours, and a good night's sleep.
With Friday's lessons fresh in mind, the participants awoke on Saturday ready to face the weekend's greatest challenge: scaling the rugged slopes of Mt. Adams — elevation 3,520 feet — made all the more challenging by lingering ice, heavy fog, and moisture-laden trails and foliage still in the process of emerging from a long, wet winter. The camera followed the team composed of Chip Matthews (kneeling) and (from left) Marie Nellenback, Eileen Lynd-Balta, Josh Rogalski, Matthew Green and Brian Hagenbuch.

The world can only be grasped by action, not by contemplation. The hand is the cutting edge of the mind.

- Diane Arbus, American photographer
The challenging climb offered ample opportunities to practice Friday’s lessons in leadership and emotional intelligence – from mock conflicts to real problem-solving and genuine teamwork.

Talent wins games but teamwork wins championships.
- Michael Jordan, American basketball player
Question: What do leaders do after miles and hours of clawing their way up a heavily forested mountainside?
Answer: First, they smile.

Then, they take a couple of deep breaths.

And then, they keep right on going – clambering up a 56 foot-high steel-frame fire tower just to enjoy the view.

And STILL smiling! Up in the tower, front: Travis Killian; left to right: Luke Haumesser, Chip Matthews, Marie Nellenback, Amy Guiney, Lisa Stewart, and Jon Goldstein.

Build for your team a feeling of oneness, of dependence on one another, and of strength through unity.

- Vince Lombardi, American football coach
The rendezvous at the fire tower provided a rare opportunity to catch a glimpse of Challenge co-leader and SUNYLI Associate Michael Pastore. A developmental leader in his own right, on this weekend Michael took a supporting role, quietly bringing up the rear, letting the participants work things out for themselves – but always prepared to lend a hand if needed.

A leader is best when people barely know that he exists...Of a good leader who talks little, when his work is done, his aim fulfilled, they will all say, “We did this ourselves.”

- Lao Tzu, The Tao Te Ching
Their return route brought the gang across the Hudson River. The bridge wasn’t quite up to the standards of the George Washington or the Verrazano-Narrows, but it got the job done.

*C'mon, get the lead out. Yer holdin' things up!*

- New York commuter
Back at base, in their cozy den, they got the next installments in their workshops from Norm. First, came “The Ugly: Facts and Stories” – about how leaders, in the heat of the moment, sometimes create their own struggles.

Then, “The Good to the Bad to the Ugly: Entailed Virtues” – about how even a leader’s greatest strengths can suddenly become weaknesses when uncontrolled emotions are allowed to gain the upper hand.

And how – in both cases – by exercising restraint and keeping their emotions in check, they can instead remain high performers.

_We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather have those because we have acted rightly._

- Aristotle (384- 322 BCE) Greek philosopher and scientist
On Sunday, the challengers trooped to a nearby picnic area for their final session: “The Leadership Wheel.”

In 2005, with the publication of his book of that title, Cornell University Professor and SUNYLI Associate Clint Sidle helped popularize use of the Medicine Wheel – an ancient icon depicting essential elements of wisdom – as a tool for leadership development. Clint described the Medicine Wheel’s modern descendant, the Leadership Wheel (developed by leadership experts Rod Napier, Julie Roberts and Pat Sanaghan) as “a vehicle through which people can become fully human and transform organizations into movements of the human spirit.”

Itself a work in progress, the Leadership Wheel’s prescriptions have taken various forms, the one depicted above perhaps the most popular. As the final exercise of their Adirondack Leadership Challenge, the participants echoed centuries-old Medicine Wheels dotting the American West by constructing their own Leadership Wheel in the park.

This kind of leadership is meant for everyone, not just the people at the top, and it develops from the inside out.

- Clint Sidle, The Leadership Wheel
Working individually and in small groups, they tidied up the area, paced off the dimensions of their design, then rearranged the picnic tables and a few bits of nature.

And, voila! A Leadership Wheel defined by tables representing the four cardinal points of the compass and graced by a central point of stones and firewood.
The only person who is educated is the one who has learned how to learn – and change.

- Carl Rogers, American psychologist

CHALLENGERS TO CHAMPIONS!

A moment to admire their handiwork…

…a brief farewell ceremony…

…then, they were homeward bound, to apply their newly honed skills in meeting the leadership challenges of their respective colleges.
Educational outreach coordinator Paul B. Hai, whose photographic talents made this presentation possible, used the website wordle.net to create a fantastic “word cloud” comprising terms often used in describing the SUNY Adirondack Leadership Challenge. It’s the ideal illustration to introduce the following “curtain call” featuring the participants’ comments on their Adirondack Challenge experience.
“I can’t believe how much I’ve learned about myself, as well as others. I have a focus and goal to become a better leader now.”

- Amy Guiney, Director of Field Experiences & Certification Officer, SUNY Potsdam

“A fabulous, insightful, challenging and introspective journey to becoming a better leader and understanding why we do what we do.”

- Bruce Walter, Manager of IT User Services, SUNY Cayuga Community College

“The Adirondack Leadership Trek helped me to identify my strengths and weaknesses as a leader. Through some exciting experiences, I was able to connect with fellow SUNY leaders, develop a vocabulary to handle my own needs and to address the needs of my coworkers as well as my family. I would recommend this program to every level of SUNY employees, regardless of whether they are in a management position.”

- Jon Goldstein, Creative Director, Office for Institutional Advancement, SUNY Farmingdale State University

“This was a tremendous professional development opportunity with outstanding facilitators. Thank you for the guided inquiry into leadership – I look forward to applying what I learned.”

- Eileen Lynd-Balta, Biology Department Chair, St. John Fisher College

“I was very worried that this emotional leadership workshop would have a touchy-feely, new-age, kumbaya 12-step program approach. I am so glad my assumptions were wrong. This was a very cerebral, physical, and personal examination of who we are as academic leaders, how we lead, and where we should go when confronted with both mundane issues and the critical, complex, controversial triggers we may deal with on a daily basis. Kudos to the workshop leaders for laying out the planned (and unplanned) challenges and allowing us the space to work through them as individuals, in small groups and as a larger community.”

- Brian Hagenbuch, Dean of Math, Science, Technology & Health, SUNY Schenectady Community College
“This experience has helped shape my understanding of myself and others. I wish everyone could get this knowledge as part of their public education.”
- Josh Rogalsky, Network Technician, SUNY Cayuga Community College

“I learned so much about myself both personally and professionally that I wasn’t aware of. I met some really wonderful people, and I will cherish this experience always.”
- Lisa Stewart, Teacher Education Advising Coordinator, SUNY Potsdam

“I must confess, before I checked my email for the first time since Thursday evening, I wondered what fresh hell awaits. I then remembered all that I learned and handled what needed to be handled! I also have a skip in my step and have noticed a change in my attitude already with how I have interacted with my coworkers.”
- Luke Haumesser, Area Coordinator in Residence Life, SUNY Geneseo

“The weekend was personally rewarding and also professionally relevant immediately. The challenge of climbing the mountain and the exercises gave me so much to think about. I will continue to carry the lessons learned into both my personal and professional life.”
- Marie Nellenback, Director of Business Services, SUNY Cayuga Community College

“Strongly recommend this experience for everyone. It pushed the boundaries physically, mentally, and spiritually. Something I can take away and apply personally to work, home and everyday life.”
- Matthew Green, Director of Admissions, SUNY Ulster Community College
REFLECTIONS

“This would be great for our RA staff in the future.”
- Travis Killian, Director of Housing & Residential Life, SUNY Maritime

“The Adirondack Leadership Challenge is one of the best leadership/personal development programs I have participated in. There was an outstanding mix of theory, engagement, interaction and challenge. The program leaders were great and made the experience memorable. I leave with new tools and a new mindset. Thank you SUNY Leadership Institute and SUNY ESF.”
- Charles “Chip” Matthews, Director of Student Life, SUNY Geneseo

“I gained so much from the SUNY Leadership Challenge. The whole experience was designed to allow the group to gel, for each of us to develop connections with others and gain new self awareness. First, we learned about and discussed very powerful tools that we could relate to, such as AIM and the Emotions Quadrant. Then, we saw ourselves living them out in the following days when we hiked a challenging peak and created a Leadership Wheel together as a group.

“The peak was challenging enough that we went through a whole range of emotions during our ascent. We were each able to play different leadership roles at various times. Early on, we saw a beautiful view and checked in with each other naming our feelings at that moment, each of us saying things such as, ‘optimistic,’ ‘strong,’ etc. Later in the hike, we thought we had gone off the trail and were concerned we would not be able to reach the top. One person rallied the group and kept us moving forward. There were times when we each needed to grab someone else’s hand, to pull us up or help prevent us from slipping.

“I took so much away from the experience that I use each day in my work life, as well as my personal life. I taught my children about the Emotions Quadrant, and even they have incorporated its language into their vocabulary. Sometimes, I hear them checking in with one another when they are playing and one becomes upset: “Where are you on the quadrant?...Take a deep breath.” It is powerful to see them developing their own self-awareness, identifying their emotions, and seeing that they can affect them in a positive way.

“I was fortunate to have gone through the Challenge with four colleagues, and we now use the language and tools with each other at work.”
- Melissa Johnson, Instructor of Art, SUNY Cayuga Community College
Leaders don’t create followers, they create more leaders.
- Tom Peters, In Search of Excellence
Paul B. Hai is Program Coordinator for the SUNY ESF Adirondack Ecological Center, where he uses natural history, inquiry-based activities and outdoor experiences to teach the process of science. Paul’s educational interests include a passion for making cross-disciplinary connections, infusing science and nature into all disciplinary studies; a deep interest in the environmental, ecological and cultural legacy of resource exploitation and management in the Adirondacks; and a strong commitment to reconnecting children and nature. His interests and commitment to environmental literacy are major themes of the new Northern Forest Institute for Conservation Education and Leadership Training he is currently working to develop.

LEE RIDDELL is director of the SUNY Leadership Institute. Lee’s office walls – festooned with photos, mementos and maps – testify to their tenant’s life on the go: from canoeing the waters of her native Minnesota to scaling the Andes. And, more often than not, carrying the cause of homegrown college leadership development to campuses throughout New York and across the US and Canada. As a public speaker, Lee’s roster of topics is equally diverse, ranging from expertise in sustainability leadership and local campus-based leadership development to commentaries on women’s leadership issues, the Leadership Wheel, and surprisingly relevant insights on indigenous cultures and how they lead.
Michael Pastore facilitates teams working together to overcome challenges they face every day. His interest in group dynamics and leadership emerged early on in his life while organizing pick-up baseball games or challenging groups to race through jungle gyms at 12th Street Park in Queens, New York. This led to a diverse educational background in psychology, student development, and management focusing on motivation, group and individual potential, and positive psychology. As registrar at Cayuga Community College, Michael manages the college greenhouse and is co-manager of the SUNY Wellness Challenge. Michael draws on the full range of his interests and experience as a SUNY Leadership Institute Associate.

Norm Pure, a SUNY Leadership Institute Associate, has been involved in the field of human potential development for over 20 years. During this time he has focused his energies on helping leaders, individuals and intact work teams become aware of current behaviors and habits, set new intentions toward growth and change, and develop rituals and processes to achieve their stated goals. Norm blends his experiences in the fields of private business, higher education, outdoor education, adventure programming, and juvenile justice to engage his clients and inspire them to create the changes they desire to become fully engaged, highly energized, and more productive and sustainable in their lives.
Develop Your Campus Leaders!

The Adirondack Leadership Challenge
You choose the date, you choose the challenge

The College of Environmental Science & Forestry (ESF) and the SUNY Leadership Institute (SUNYLI) have joined hands to co-create a unique, three-day program featuring group problem-solving tasks, interactive discussions and outdoor active learning to enhance your own campus leadership academy.

The Location: SUNY-ESF’s Newcomb Campus, in the central Adirondacks’ Huntington Wildlife Forest, home to the Northern Forest Institute and Adirondack Ecological Center.
The Trainers: Paul Hai, Program Coordinator, Northern Forest Institute for Conservation Education and Leadership Training; Leadership Development Specialists in human potential development, focused on helping leaders and work teams create processes to achieve their stated goals; Michael Pastore, Registrar, Cayuga Community College and co-manager of the SUNY Wellness Challenge; and Lee Riddell, Director, SUNY Leadership Institute, workshop presenter, public speaker, and lifelong outdoor adventurist.

The Program: Three days of hiking, climbing, group discussions, and team-building challenges. Also, recreation, good food – including a lakeside barbecue – and warm fellowship with your colleagues. You do not need to be in excellent physical condition, but you do need to be prepared for some level of exertion each day on the trail.

Customize the Challenge: Design your program to instill best leadership practices and confidence in your cohort’s potential to achieve successful outcomes on your campus. Choose topics that strengthen your leaders: Team Building, Dealing with Change, Managing Conflict, Diversity and Inclusion, or Emotional Intelligence.

To Learn More: Visit SUNYLI.suny.edu/siteindex

Or, better yet, call Lee Riddell at 315.214.2423, and let her know of your interest. Look to Lee for answers to any questions you may have about the program, the participants, the physical challenges – and the personal rewards – of The Adirondack Leadership Challenge.