

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

PROGRAM QUESTIONS

1. What is Emerging Leaders?

- a. Emerging Leaders (EL) is a long-standing CMU tradition for first-year students, that promotes the development of leadership skills through the lens of community engagement and social action. This program opens with an overnight retreat, the last weekend of January (Friday evening through Saturday), and continues with a two-month “impact project,” wherein students work to positively improve their local community.

2. Why should I participate in EL?

- a. There are many great reasons to participate in EL. There, you can meet and work together with other first-year students from across campus. You can develop your personal leadership, project management, and teamwork skills. You can positively impact your local community. You can develop a real-world project that demonstrates your qualifications, skills, and grit to employers—on your resume or in an interview.

3. How do I get involved with EL?

- a. Application to and participation in the EL program is free and first-come first-served. Simply fill out the application on TartanConnect, and you will be contacted in mid-December to confirm participation.

4. What does the time commitment look like?

- a. Students who participate in the Emerging Leaders program will begin with a one-night overnight retreat that runs from approximately 5:00pm on Friday until 6:00pm on Saturday. Over the following two months (February and March), participants can expect to spend about 3-5 hours a week working on their impact project.

5. Is this position paid or an internship?

- a. The Emerging Leaders program is not a paid position or a formal internship. But it may qualify for required volunteer hours within your college or program. If you have any questions about application to your specific program, please don't hesitate to contact us.

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6. What is an EL Mentor and how do I become one?

- b. EL Mentors are a small group of paid, upper-class students who undertake additional leadership training during the fall semester, and then help to lead and guide a group of first-year students (impact team). Recruitment for EL Mentors occurs early in the Fall semester, so if you are interested in participating, be sure to keep an eye out on Handshake in August and September. The best way to build a strong application to be an EL Mentor, is to participate in the EL program during your own first-year.

IMPACT TEAMS/PROJECTS

7. What is an impact team?

- a. Participants of EL will be broken into groups of approximately 7-10 first-year students, who share an interest in an “impact area.” Examples of impact areas include (but are not limited to) the environment, food insecurity, violence prevention, homelessness, animal welfare, and much more! Each Impact team is led by an EL mentor—an upper-class student who undertakes additional training during the fall semester preceding the program—and is paired with a nonprofit or departmental partner.

8. Do we get to choose the impact team we will be in?

- a. During the pre-retreat partner fair, participants will have the opportunity to rank impact areas based on their level of interest. While we cannot guarantee that every participant will be able to work with their top choice, the organizers work hard to sort students into an impact area that is as high in each participant’s ranking as possible.

9. Can my friend and I be in the same impact team?

- a. While participants are welcome to select impact areas that correspond to shared interests with friends, for logistical reasons, EL cannot guarantee any participants that they will be in an impact team together. For this reason, EL is a great opportunity to meet other first-year students from across the university and make new friends.

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10. Do we get assigned a nonprofit partner to work with?

- a. Each impact team will be assigned either a nonprofit or departmental partner who will serve as a guide and resource as they design and implement their project.

11. What will my impact project be?

- a. We don't know! And that's half the fun! Emerging Leaders is all about "community identified needs." That means, we can't tell you what your nonprofit or departmental partner will need. It is up to them to identify a genuine need, and up to you to design a project that can positively impact that need.

12. Can I continue the project beyond the 2 months?

- a. The aim of this program is to design, execute, and assess a program during the assigned two-month period (February-March), so projects should be completed during that time. But students are welcome to stay in contact with their nonprofit partner and pursue independent volunteer opportunities with them after the conclusion of the formal program.

THE JANUARY RETREAT

13. What if I am unable to attend the retreat but still want to participate?

- a. Unfortunately, due to the structure of the program, the retreat is a mandatory feature of participation. There, students meet their impact team, and undertake leadership development, and team-building exercises in preparation for their project.

14. How will I get to the retreat?

- a. Participants will travel to and from the retreat by bus and as a group. Exact details about meeting times will be included in a pre-retreat information packet that participants will receive in January.

15. What if I have allergies?

- a. Camp Guyasuta provides a variety of food options for the overnight retreat, which should provide options for most students. But, if you have particularly acute food concerns, you are welcome to reach out to us for assistance or bring allergy-safe alternatives to eat during the breakfast and lunch blocks.

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16. What if I miss the retreat or drop out of the program?

- a. CMU believes strongly in the personal and professional value of the Emerging Leaders program and the importance that this program be accessible to all students without charge. In light of this significant commitment of financial resources, students who register for the program, but fail to attend, will be assessed a \$25.00 no-show fee. Students who alert the program of their inability to attend at least 14 days prior to the start of the program (the January Retreat) or who provide notice of a significant personal, familial, or medical emergency, will not be charged a fee.