

DREXEL LEBOW  
**BRIDGE**

---

**IMPACT  
REPORT**



DREXEL UNIVERSITY

**LeBow**

College of Business



## BRIDGE Student Success Pillars



### *Academic Excellence*

Students are provided one-on-one academic support and advising to ensure their retention, persistence and graduation.



### *Community Service*

Students participate in community service experiences to better themselves, their community and society.



### *Financial Literacy*

Students are equipped with the skills to understand personal financial management and planning for a strong future.



### *Social Engagement*

Students are provided space and activities to learn about themselves and others in a comfortable environment.

# DEAR LEBOW BRIDGE FAMILY AND FRIENDS

---

**As we embark on a new academic year, I once again find myself reflecting on the strides the Drexel LeBow BRIDGE Program has made since its inception.** The program has had a profound impact on our BRIDGE scholars, Drexel University and the neighboring communities. I truly believe we continue to set the benchmark for academic enrichment programs that empower underrepresented students — not just at Drexel, but nationally.

For the second consecutive year, BRIDGE was honored by *Insight Into Diversity* magazine, this time receiving the 2024 Inspiring Programs in Business Award, which recognizes colleges and universities that support underrepresented students in pursuing business careers. This recognition reaffirms our mission and commitment to student success.

Since its establishment in 2012, the program has supported the underrepresented student population at LeBow and positively impacted the college experience of more than 350 students from diverse backgrounds. Retention and graduation rates continue to exceed national and University standards, while student engagement and academic standing among BRIDGE scholars underscore the program's successes. Built on four pillars — academic excellence, community service, financial literacy and social engagement — BRIDGE serves not only as an exemplary student support model for underrepresented populations but also as a template for an effective learning community in higher education.

We deeply appreciate the generosity of our supporters, whose contributions enable us to continue serving our student scholars and the wider community. I encourage you to reflect on how you and your networks can [further support LeBow BRIDGE](#) as we nurture the future leaders of tomorrow.

Sincerely,



**BRIAN ELLIS, PHD**

Associate Dean, Academic Programs  
Administration, LeBow College of Business

Executive Director, Goodwin College of  
Professional Studies



<<  
Scan to support  
LeBow BRIDGE

# HIGHLIGHTS



## **Samantha Gedeon: 2024 LeBow Commencement Speaker**

As a first-generation Haitian American, Samantha Gedeon '24 worried about being “detached from her community” when moving from a large, diverse public high school in Brockton, Massachusetts, to a predominantly white institution like Drexel. She found her way to existing communities of support, particularly through LeBow BRIDGE, and assembled others for herself throughout her years on campus. Her experiences shaped her time at Drexel and provided material for her address to the LeBow Class of 2024 as their Commencement speaker.

“Above all, I have to single out BRIDGE, which became something I didn’t even know I needed. I love the community; we really are a family. There are no words I could say that could encompass my experience in BRIDGE, and I appreciate everything it’s given me.”

SAMANTHA GEDEON’S COMMENCEMENT SPEECH

## **Olympic Legend Jackie Joyner-Kersey**

Jackie Joyner-Kersey is widely considered to be one of the greatest women athletes of all time. But despite having won three gold, one silver and two bronze

Olympic medals, the proudest moment of her career was graduating from college, she shared during a visit to Drexel on Oct. 30. Joyner-Kersey joined a group of Drexel students from the BRIDGE programs in the College of Arts and Sciences, LeBow College of Business and Westphal College of Media Arts and Design for an intimate conversation about her inspiring life and career.

## **Cultural Immersion Spring Break Trip**

Students immersed themselves in the corporate world and connected with Drexel alumni during a spring break experience in Chicago. Beyond seeing the offices, these visits provided the opportunity for students to envision themselves as future leaders in these dynamic organizations and industries.

Highlights from the trip included insightful conversations with leaders at CFI Partners (Levoyd Robinson), a firsthand look at the company’s work culture at Deloitte (Derreck Robinson '93), insights into the strategies behind one of the world’s leading brands at PepsiCo and the opportunity to learn about consumer protection at the Federal Trade Commission (Roberto Menjivar '03).

Students had the chance to hear from Drexel alumni and learn more about their career paths during a networking reception at the Museum of Illusions, hosted by David

Stec '03, highlighting the enduring impact of the BRIDGE community.

Additionally, students engaged in civic service with the Greater Chicago Food Depository and visited Mindworks: The Science of Thinking Museum which sparked students' curiosity and passion for learning. The trip provided an amazing opportunity for intellectual growth and personal reflection.

### Annual Saturday Sit-In

Our Annual Saturday-Sit is a conference-style day where we provide our scholars and other Drexel undergraduate students the opportunity to participate in various workshops. This year we focused on financial literacy with "Money Talks: Pathways to Financial Literacy," where students unlocked the secrets to financial success. With more than 130 in attendance, workshops were presented by various BRIDGE scholars, BRIDGE alumni and LeBow alumni. Highlighted topics included: "Investing 101: Navigating Your Financial Future" presented by BRIDGE alumni Jay Daniel '23 and Alwyn Taylor '23, "Mindful Money" presented by BRIDGE alum Ariana Schofield '16, "Got the Offer ... Now What?" presented by LeBow alum Randy Holmes '70, and many more.

### Wellness in our Minds

#### DRAGONZEN: A WELLNESS JOURNEY

Last winter we piloted "DragonZen: A Wellness Journey," a course for first-year BRIDGE scholars focused on the wellness dimensions. This course had a significant impact, equipping students with critical skills for both personal and academic success. Through self-reflection, goal setting and self-care strategies, students learned to assess and improve their wellness habits, understand the impact of cultural, social and economic factors, and connect wellness to academic performance.

#### BUILDING BRIDGES MIDDLE SCHOOL CAMP

The Building BRIDGE(s) camp focused on wellness for the second year in a row. Focusing on the Wellness Wheel model, the program ran over a week, highlighting some

of the key components of the wellness wheel dimensions: physical, emotional, social and financial wellness. Camp participants had the opportunity to participate in a self-defense and social media safety workshop hosted by Drexel Police, visit the Franklin Institute and participate in civic engagement by visiting Urban Tree Connection, a community garden in West Philadelphia.

This year, LeBow BRIDGE made a meaningful impact on the West Philadelphia community, upholding our civic engagement pillar through various service initiatives. Participants engaged in civic engagement activities, contributed to the Dimplez 4 Dayz organization, supported the Philly Abundance Food Drive and helped revitalize the Norman Butch Ellis Playground. These efforts reflect LeBow BRIDGE's commitment to giving back and fostering a spirit of service among its members, positively impacting the local community and reinforcing the importance of civic responsibility.

### Levoyd Robinson Information Session CFI: Fireside Chat

Levoyd Robinson engaged with our LeBow Bridge students in an insightful fireside chat. During the session, Levoyd shared his journey to becoming CEO/CIO for CFI Partners and offered invaluable advice on navigating the world of finance. His discussion highlighted the vast opportunities available to students in the financial sector, inspiring them to explore diverse career paths and set ambitious goals. Levoyd expertise and personal experiences left a lasting impact, empowering our students to pursue their aspirations with confidence.



**BRIDGE students visit CFI Partners on their spring break trip.**

# EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

**BRIDGE scholars had the opportunity to connect with business leaders through off-campus site visits.**

These visits allow them to explore corporate environments and engage with company leadership. Site visits included:

Ballard Spahr	Federal Trade Commission, Chicago	PepsiCo
CFI Partners	Janney Montgomery Scott	Vynamic
Deloitte	Susquehanna Investment Group (SIG)	

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Students attended the following conferences with LeBow BRIDGE Sponsorship:**

- » Seventh Annual Women in Alternative Investments Career Forum
- » National Association for Business Economics (NABE) Membership for BRIDGE students purchased
- » The Brothers of Excellence Conference at West Chester University
- » 9th Annual Fashion Law Symposium
- » URBN BE U: Career Fair (Navy Yard, Urban Outfitters)
- » 2024 NBMBAA Philadelphia Professional Development Symposium (PDS)

# AWARDS



## **Johnson & Johnson Drexel Externship Winning Team**

Hilary Sackor '24,  
Jordan Belfield '23  
Samantha Gedeon '24



## **TQR Scholarship Recipient**

Jaaziel Cooper '24

## **LeBow Diversity Case Competition**

The winning team featured a LeBow  
BRIDGE Scholar, Chloe Mshana '28



## **2024 Inspiring Program in Business Award from *Insight Into Diversity* magazine**

The nomination recognizes  
programs and initiatives that  
promote diversity, equity and  
inclusion in business schools  
and beyond.

# BY THE NUMBERS

# 158

Total BRIDGE scholars



## AVERAGE GPA

First year: 3.35

Second year: 3.39

Third year: 3.21

Fourth year: 3.51

Fifth year: 3.52

Overall: 3.4

## TOP 5 MAJORS

Finance

Marketing

Management Information Systems

Economics

Business Law

# 37

2024 Graduates

# 200+

Total BRIDGE Alumni

# 28

Incoming First-year  
Students 2024

# 175

Middle school students in West Philadelphia area that have participated in Camp BRIDGEs since 2017

# 6

Years partnering with the Greater Philadelphia National Association for Industrial and Office Parks (NAIOP)

# STUDENT AND ALUMNI TESTIMONIALS



**VANESSA KOKU**  
FIRST-YEAR STUDENT

**“BRIDGE has given me a space where I can unapologetically be myself.** I am awarded with so many resources that have helped me to excel and reach my full potential at Drexel.”



**MUKTHAR YUSUF**  
SECOND-YEAR STUDENT

**“BRIDGE is a family away from home.** It is a program that provides a shoulder to lean on and helps me step out of my comfort zone. It has aided me in numerous ways; from helping me broaden my professional network to always providing the assistance I need with my academics. **My Drexel experience would not be the same without BRIDGE.**”



**WILLIAM WONJAH**  
THIRD-YEAR STUDENT

**“BRIDGE has been a pivotal part of my journey at Drexel, guiding me every step of the way.** It has helped me evolve into the person I always knew I could be but struggled to fully achieve on my own. **I am confident that the skills and experiences I’ve gained through BRIDGE have equipped me for the post-graduation stage of my life, as I prepare to enter the professional world.**”



**KEYLA GUACHICHULCA**  
FOURTH-YEAR STUDENT

**“BRIDGE has been more than just a program — it’s been a community that has supported me throughout my college journey. The connections I’ve made with fellow students, mentors and alumni have created a network of support, encouragement and collaboration.”**



**FRITZ LORACLE**  
FIFTH-YEAR STUDENT

**“Since freshman year, BRIDGE has been the family I have away from home. Between Sunday dinners and the spring break trip, I have not only experienced tremendous growth in my professional development but have also made powerful bonds with people whom I now consider my best friends.”**



# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



## JAAZIEL COOPER '24

**Marketing Major  
International Economics Minor**

*“From BRIDGE’s mentorship opportunities launching my post-grad career, to leading the BRIDGE room podcast fostering my creativity and community, **there are so many great memories I take away from BRIDGE.**”*

### **How did BRIDGE help you during your college career?**

From scheduling classes to reviewing resumes for co-op, BRIDGE advisors were pivotal to me making the most of college, getting to finish a year early and having space in my schedule to participate in activities like study abroad! Having the BRIDGE community and room also provided a lot of support and positivity to my overall experience.

### **How did BRIDGE help prepare you for your current role at URBN?**

During one of BRIDGE’s professional development trips, I was introduced to URBN’s early career team. From there, I got to network, learn about opportunities and was eventually accepted into URBN’s summer internship, now kickstarting a full-time career in marketing.

### **What are some of your best memories from your BRIDGE experience?**

My best BRIDGE memories were made during the Chicago spring break trip. Drexel’s schedule can be hectic, so it was really valuable not only to get a break, but to spend more time with peers, make new friends and get to know mentors better.

### **How are you involved in BRIDGE as an alum?**

One of the biggest ways I hope to stay involved in BRIDGE is by being a resource. Being there to answer student questions, support events (and the podcast!) and help connect BRIDGE students to opportunities will hopefully help give forward what BRIDGE has given me.

# ADVISORY BOARD

---

## **KESHEMA DAVIDSON**

Co-Director,  
Philadelphia Middle College Foundation

## **ANGELA DOWD-BURTON**

President and CEO,  
DowdBurton and Associates, LLC,  
Drexel University Board of Trustees,  
LeBow College of Business Advisory Board

## **BRIAN ELLIS, PHD**

Associate Dean, Academic Programs  
Administration, LeBow College of Business  
Executive Director,  
Goodwin College of Professional Studies

## **DASHIYAH GREEN**

LeBow BRIDGE Program Manager  
and Academic Advisor,  
LeBow College of Business

## **BETH HANSENS**

Founding Board Chair,  
Horizons Greater Philadelphia

## **SHAWN HENDRICKS**

Partner, Investment Management  
Stradley Ronon Stevens and Young, LLP

## **VANESSA HERRERA**

Associate Director, LeBow BRIDGE  
LeBow College of Business

## **PORSCHÉ JOHNSON**

Assistant Director, Diversity Initiatives,  
West Chester University

## **ASHLEY LATORRE**

Associate Director of Student Services,  
Undergraduate Programs,  
LeBow College of Business

## **SHERRI MANSON**

Executive Administrator, School of Education,  
Drexel University Chair,  
LeBow BRIDGE Advisory Council

## **JERRY MARTIN**

Boards, Philanthropist, Real Estate holdings and former Senior  
Bank Regulator with Treasury Department  
Drexel University Board of Trustees  
President, Drexel University Black Alumni Council

## **BRYAN PHAM**

Head of Institutional Sales, Percent

## **CALVIN SPEIGHT**

Accounting Advisory Consultant, CFGI

## **KIMBERLY WILLIAMS**

Associate Director, Research Administration  
LeBow College of Business

“The LeBow BRIDGE Program continues to foster growth in students throughout their college experience and as they embark on their career. **I’ve personally found it very rewarding and gratifying to work directly with the students to help them find success and be a resource for them.**”

## **BRYAN PHAM**

LEBOW BRIDGE ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER

# STUDENT MOMENTS





**[LEARN MORE!](#)**

---

**LEBOW COLLEGE OF BUSINESS**

Gerri C. LeBow Hall  
3220 Market Street, 3rd Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19104



DREXEL UNIVERSITY  
**LeBow**  
College of Business