
STOCKTON UNIVERSITY
ANNUAL REPORT FOR
FY23 COMPASS FUND PROJECT

PROJECT LEADER(S):	Ana Edmondson
PROJECT TITLE:	Cultural Engagement Operations (CEO) Project
DATE:	Jun 12, 2023

- *The boxes below expand as needed to accommodate your notes. You may also include/submit appendices or attachments, if needed.*
- *Email a copy of this completed form to the Compass Fund Review Board: CompassFund@stockton.edu.*
- *This form must be completed and submitted to be considered for a second year of funding, if applicable, or any future Compass Fund support.*

Please provide a summary of the project and your experience.

The Cultural Engagement Operations (CEO) Project transformed into something greater than I had imagined. The project created job opportunities for Cultural Engagement Osprey (CEO) interns which sharpened their career readiness skills to prepare them for their next professional development opportunity. They underwent a competitive interview process, competing against 30 candidates. The interview process was facilitated by a committee of volunteer staff in different units including Career Education & Development, Educational Opportunity Fund Program, Admissions, and Academic Advising. Eleven CEO Interns committed their time for two academic semesters. They participated in weekly professional development workshops including topics on assessment, marketing, social capital, leadership, and professionalism. External partners including Atlanticare and Ocean First Bank sponsored meals and gift cards respectively to the CEO interns during staff networking sessions where the CEO interns learned about different fields within each respective agency. The different workshops were facilitated by Stockton's Faculty and Staff across different divisions, and external partners as the CEO Interns prepared and planned for the Inclusive Leadership Conference, a culminating project where they were able to publicly display the fruits of their labor. The CEO Interns created an exhilarating, immersive, and influential conference experience which included keynote speeches and entertainment from EOF students and alum, campus resources, and professional clothing which was donated by faculty and staff across campus. The duration of the CEO project was from September 26, 2022 to April 26, 2023.

The CEO Project is a High Impact Practice given the internship experience, the ongoing feedback they received throughout the internship, and the culminating project which also was social justice related. Lastly, the CEO project aligns with two key areas of focus within Stockton University's Strategic Plan, which are: Inclusive Student Success, and 2) Diversity and Inclusion. The CEO project provided high-level thinking, co-curricular experiences to equip students for the workplace, and professional success. According to the assessment results, the Inclusive Leadership Conference accomplished its intended outcomes which were to increase students' sense of belonging, engagement, and development, and foster post-graduate success for the interns and the attendees.

We had 118 students and staff, and 38 external guests (students from Hudson, Ocean County, and Atlantic Cape community colleges) who checked into the conference at some point, although not everyone who attended may have been checked in. Some major highlights from the project include:

- Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) alumni were widely represented among stage speakers, entertainment, and CEO interns to showcase the challenges, strengths, and testimonies of first generation college students from limited income backgrounds.
- Board of Trustees (BOT) Fellows showcased their social justice projects to inspire others to apply to the BOT fellowship opportunity.
- Community colleges were represented (i.e. Ocean County, Atlantic Cape, Hudson County)
- Stockton University Alumni attended
- External partners including Ocean First bank supported by sponsoring CEO Interns with a \$150 gift card to purchase professional attire.
- Atlanticare sponsored lunch and provided networking opportunities with staff in different fields within the larger umbrella of the organization.
- Various stakeholders facilitated professional development workshops in the fall semester in preparation of the spring semester.
- Professional attire donated to students for future leadership opportunities.

See program booklet attached for photos of the CEO Interns.

Please describe the results of your project and compare them to your original expectations. Elaborate on how well your objectives were met and how they might have changed. Note any particular obstacles that may have prevented your achieving full satisfaction on desired outcomes.

When assessing the Cultural Engagement Operations (CEO) Project, I chose to administer survey instruments to learn about the overall experiences of the Cultural Engagement Osprey (CEO) Interns and the overall experience of the participants who attended the Inclusive Leadership Conference (ILC) which was implemented by the CEO Interns. **The assessment that was administered at the end of the Inclusive Leadership Conference captured the following results among the attendees, which demonstrate the impact of the event:**

- Of the 76 respondents, 94% stated that after attending the conference, they have a more clear understanding of their role in promoting social justice.
- Of the 76 respondents, 100% indicated, after attending the conference, they gained a sense that Stockton University is a community where diversity is appreciated and valued. Additionally, 100%, agreed to some level that the conference increased their overall sense of belonging while at Stockton University.

The CEO interns were expected to develop skills in eight career readiness competencies, endorsed by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, given their engagement in a high impact practice. My intentions were that the CEO interns would have been impacted at greater lengths than participants of the conference given their level of commitment to the initiative and ongoing opportunities to receive and implement feedback. Across their eight month internship experience beginning with their interview in September to the implementation of the Inclusive Leadership Conference in April, CEO Interns should have developed skills in 1) Career & Self-Development, 2) Communication, 3) Critical Thinking, 4) Equity & Inclusion, 5) Leadership, 6) Professionalism, 7) Teamwork, & 8) Technology. **The following skills are defined below and supported by comments directly from the CEO interns to demonstrate the success of the initiative.**

1. **Career and self development** was defined as continual personal and professional learning, awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and without one's organization. The comments noted below capture two perspectives on this respective competency developed as a result of the internship,

“The CEO project has enhanced my career and self development skills immensely to the point where I have applied the skills I’ve obtained to prepare me for my numerous graduate skill interviews that allowed me to discuss how this specific project would impact a higher education institution.”

“Through professional development sessions and frequent communication with other CEOs my self development as a leader has highly increased. Through certain sessions, my public speaking, organizational, and time management skills have increased extremely.”

2. **Communication** was defined as clearly and effectively exchanging information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with persons inside and outside of an organization. Again, two perspectives are captured below from the CEO interns regarding this respective competency,

“I have been able to better understand the way in which everyone interacts differently especially in high stress situations and being able to do that has allowed me to tailor reactions to what these people may need in the moment by still being genuine”

“Through the assignments of sending frequent communications to both members of the organization as well as volunteers and other organizations within Stockton; interacting with professional staff such as Executive Vice President Susan Davenport in order to facilitate donations for the Dress to Impress workshop; as well as communicating effectively with Tierra Houston to facilitate the “Dismantling Ableism” workshop, I have made significant strides towards bettering my communications skills. While I feel that there is room for improvement, I do feel that I have made significant improvements since the beginning of this project.”

3. **Critical thinking** was defined as Identifying and responding to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information. The two following comments strongly illustrate this respective competency being exercised during the internship,

“Being a part of the CEO project has shown me the importance of critical thinking skills. I have learned to think quick on my feet for problems or concerns that my peers had. The most important lesson in critical thinking that I learned is that it’s ok to get back to someone with an answer and critically think of how each solution benefits the greater good.”

“I have demonstrated the development of my critical thinking through a variety of ways throughout the CEO project. Through figuring out how to best handle situations within the group using combined information from both myself as well as other LEADS staff within the organization, helping to solve conflict while putting my own emotions aside for the sake of the overall health of the organization, as well as multitasking as a leader within a fast-paced environment, I feel that this competency has developed during my time within the organization. Though I need to improve in this field regarding sudden tasks that may be of high priority or magnitude, I do feel that this competency has developed overall.”

4. **Equity and inclusion** was defined as demonstrating the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from different local and global cultures as well as engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism. Some notable comments that demonstrates interns acquiring the aforementioned competency are included below,

“The preparation and the Inclusive Leadership Conference itself both grew my inclusive, thinking skills by being more conscious and aware of others, and outside of myself.”

This conference and the planning allowed me to learn the way in which I do differ from others and see that perspective a little more clearly than I did before this conference. I see much clearer now and I am able to better demonstrate understanding towards other cultures and races”

“Through frequent interactions with a diverse group of student leaders, as well as the ability to participate in the course “Inclusive Student Transitions”, I feel that I was able to increase my cultural awareness, competency, and humility during my time within the CEO project. Though I will never be able to truly understand the struggles of the identities that are not my own, I recognize that any form of privilege from my identities is not my fault, but it is my responsibility to utilize that privilege to empower others, regardless of the source of said privilege.”

“I feel like I nearly scratched the surface with obtaining knowledge of equity and inclusion. The best way that I have adopted a mindset that unconsciously considers equity and inclusion is by considering the various backgrounds, cultures, and identities of the CEOs. They have truly shown me how they as individuals would like to represent their various identities and even had transparent conversations on how to become aware of unconscious bias and stereotypes.”

5. **Leadership** was defined as recognizing and capitalizing on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals, notable comments by the CEO interns are included below,

“I believe the CEO internship has been the most important aspect of my life in terms of developing me as a leader. I have become more aware of the rewards and downfalls of leading. It’s a very humbling experience to set a good example, remain humble, be encouraging, and always stay rooted and grounded in terms of knowing your why.”

“Through guiding fellow LEAD staff through conflict and confusion prior to and after weekly meetings, guiding and developing staff through individual interactions, as well as maintaining a frequent and consistent professional demeanor throughout the duration of the project, my leadership skills have significantly developed, as the CEO project gave me the opportunity to properly utilize my leadership skills on a frequent basis rather than during a brief period of time such as a group project for a course.”

6. **Professionalism** was defined as knowing work environments differ greatly, understanding and demonstrating effective work habits, and acting in the interest of the larger community and workplace, some notable comments among the CEOs included the following,

“Each Thursday all CEOs were required to wear professional clothing which started off professionalism for me. When I dress professionally I act professionally and likewise my peers. We all were out in a very real career readiness training in the meetings weekly and I was able to learn skills through not only the basic requirements but also the many guest speakers we have that discussed social capital, assessment, etc.”

"I feel as though I have grown my professionalism skills, visually, and mentally. Usually, every week during our meetings, interns had to dress professionally. I really enjoyed this, because it put us in the mindset to be professional, which is the mental aspect of it. When I felt "physically professional", I also became mentally professional, meaning my mannerisms, and my verbiage improved and displayed my professionalism."

"The CEO internship has helped me increase my professionalism skills. I have held a standard of being on time is late and always trying to reflect this internship in a positive way. Even as a student, I had to remain conscious that I hold the title of a CEO which stands for something bigger than myself and I had to not only embrace the title but the standard of the title as well. I definitely could have improved upon my preparedness in each meeting!"

"Through helping to solve conflict while putting my own emotions aside for the sake of the overall health of the organization; bringing necessary concerns to higher up staff; demonstrating dependability through consistent tabling, showing up early and staying after meetings to set up and clean up after meetings, and helping to network both within and outside Stockton's campus; in addition to bringing personal expertise and supplies for the organization, I believe that I have thoroughly exhibited this behavior, whilst also developing it further."

7. **Teamwork** was defined as building and maintaining collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals, while appreciating diverse viewpoints and shared responsibilities, some CEOs stated the following,

"I have worked on many sports teams as captains etc however this type of team engagement looked alot different. Things were more verbal and work together in a way where communication was key and as I stated before, learning each person and understanding their needs under certain levels of pressure definitely allowed me to work better with the variety of individuals who planned this conference with"

"My teamwork skills have grown substantially. For me, I am very shy sometimes, but this internship has pushed me out of my comfort zone, and forced me to collaboratively and efficiently communicate with my teammates to achieve our common goal."

"Teamwork has been my greatest learned skill from the CEO internship. It really taught me that I actually can depend on others and trust that their joy, passion, and excitement may be different than mine but it will show up in the amazing work and tasks that they complete."

"Through effectively assisting to manage conflict and assisting with problem solving throughout the project, employing personal knowledge and talents in collaboration with fellow colleagues talents and knowledge, as well as frequently collaborating with colleagues both during and after the school semesters, I have both shown and developed this skill."

8. **Technology** was defined as understanding and leveraging technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals, some notable comments are stated below,

"I am not great with technology, but I learned so much about what I can do through this internship. I took up part of the branding and marketing team, and I had to learn so much and I'm so happy I did."

"I have never used many of the sites that me and my other communications and administration partner used and thi alone taught me a lot about technological sites at my fingertips"

“The various platforms and apps used during the CEO Internship was very amazing. The way that I had adapted to learning this new technology was very crucial in order to continue communication and the completion of tasks.”

When asked to write about their overall feedback on the CEO Internship experience, the interns stated the following,

“I thoroughly enjoyed this conference and I truly felt that I was able to become part of a family and a social issue bigger than myself. Inclusivity and diversion definitely has reached a different level of meaning in my life and I attribute this to the CEO internship Experience.

It was a wonderful experience. I felt like my input was important throughout the entire process and it prepared me for working in a professional setting in the future.”

“Overall, I’m so appreciative, and I loved my experience on the cultural engagement ospreys internship. I feel very blessed that I was able to have this experience to grow my academic and professional career. This was a great foot in the door to connecting with my inner boss business woman. Dr. E is an excellent role model and I’m so happy I had someone like her to look up to drink this entire experience. This is definitely one of the top most memorable experiences in my college career. I genuinely feel like every student should go through something like this!”

“The CEO project was amazing! To see students that had no reference point of knowing one another come together to pull off this conference was amazing. The diverse makeup of the group really allowed almost all identities to be represented which truly helped in orchestrating a conference that is built around inclusion. We brought unity, joy, and understanding to the campus. Although there were rough points at times, it didn’t matter at the conference. We had fun, enjoyed one another, and took pride in what we orchestrated.”

“This project has been a life changing experience for me both personally and professionally. By partaking in this project, not only have I been able to obtain jobs and connections that would be otherwise impossible to have occurred, but I was able to make friends that I wouldn’t have made before, and I am honored to be able to call Dr. E a mentor figure that has guided me beyond this project. Thanks to this project, I was able to truly develop confidence in myself with both my skills and my work, and I was able to unlock potential within myself that I wouldn’t have otherwise realized. Dr. E and the CEO project allowed me to develop skills that, though they are in constant development as I learn and grow, I was able to make significant progress toward said skill development. However, most notably of all, the CEO project made me realize that I am capable of making change and be a positive influence within my community. Though I had consistently volunteered prior to this project and had volunteered for the Ospreys Excellence Experience, a Board of Trustees fellowship project, something felt missing. I felt like I needed something that lasted more than just one semester that made me feel like I was making a consistent difference in my community; and the CEO project was that missing piece. Every time I don anything with the CEO branding, especially my metal name tag that states that I am a CEO intern, I wear it with pride knowing that there are students both within and outside the Stockton community that have been positively impacted by this project. I have also seen a significant impact on other members within the organization as well. Even though we have only been together for two semesters, I have seen my colleagues develop and grow into wiser, stronger, and more mature versions of the people that I had met on that fateful day in early October. I’ve seen them develop their confidence, professionalism, self love, as well as being on their way to develop other skills, such as self-advocacy and finding their voice in a room of strong-willed individuals. Being able to see not just my progress, but the progress of my colleagues is nothing short of awe-inspiring, and an utter joy to see. Even seeing how people have changed after

attending the CEO project has been nothing short of heartwarming. Seeing how the community responded to the conference, regarding anything from the sessions, to the music, to even the little giveaways; that feeling of togetherness toward a common goal of increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion within our community was something that I will never forget. I look forward to my continued participation in this organization in the years to come. Even after I walk across the stage, I hope to see this organization grow and evolve; and rest assured that I will be there both supporting and cheering on the following generations of CEOs.”

“Through CEO, I honestly feel as though I can ace any interview, job event, or future employment area. It has prepared me in so many ways to operate as a professional. Furthermore, now I know my strengths and weaknesses as a leader and have a more expanded idea of what DEI is and what it means to me. This was my first opportunity on Stockton's campus and I didn't regret it. I would certainly recommend it to the others and do it again. I am truly grateful.”

Please explain and provide any University Relations & Marketing (URM) coverage of your project (social media posts, press releases, photos, videos, etc.) You may include these items as attachments or paste them at the bottom of this document.

First, University Relations & Marketing (URM) supported the development of the webpage, and the branding/marketing materials on the University’s website to recruit CEO Interns, and educate the community on the compass fund project and the Inclusive Leadership Conference.

- Website - Inclusive Leadership Conference [link here](#)

Next, URM was supportive in capturing the testimonies of the CEO Interns who described their experience with feeling a sense of belonging during their time as a CEO Intern. The testimonies can be used to recruit a new group of CEO interns in September 2023 if the initiative receives a second year of funding.

- Video - Compass Fund Project – Cultural Engagement Osprey (CEO) Intern Testimonies [link here](#)

Thirdly, URM featured major highlights from the conference through a video and article which will be used to promote future conferences. The content could be used for additional marketing initiatives for the university.

- Video - Inclusive Leadership Conference Highlights [link here](#)
- Article - Inaugural Conference Demonstrates Strength of Student Leaders [link here](#)

Please list any follow-up actions (publications, presentation venues, etc.)

I have and will continue to highlight my experience with the CEO Project in various spaces and platforms while acknowledging the compass fund initiative as a sponsor to increase awareness and interest among others to pursue the opportunity and leave room for others to ask questions. Many of the meetings where I have shared my experience with the CEO project are centered around conversations related to

increasing career readiness among students at Stockton University. Most recently I was able to share highlights from the CEO project at the Board of Trustees Student Success Committee and the larger University Student Success Advisory Committee formally known as the University Retention Working Group. My goal is to also present the CEO project at a future conference such as NASPA National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, and/or NCORE National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in American Higher Education to share best practices and challenges for integrating career readiness competencies in high impact practices.

Are you recommending the continuation of this project? If so:

- What are the next action steps you foresee or recommend?
- What are the expected budget requirements going forward?
- Please identify the program, department, or division you should be working with to secure continuation of funding for your project.

[Note: continuation proposals must be approved and incorporated into the appropriate budget process. This report will not constitute a request for permanent funding.]

I do recommend the continuation of this project and will utilize the \$21,580 for the project again through the compass fund initiative if given the opportunity. The next action steps I foresee or recommend is the initiative to receive monetary commitments from internal units to sponsor the initiative annually, and/or partner with the foundation office to create an account to raise funds for the initiative to grow and secure funding to compensate the CEO interns who organize the Inclusive Leadership Conference as a public display of their dedication to planning the event. I would continue working with the division of Student Affairs to secure continuation of funding for the project.

FINANCES: Based on your proposal, please outline below how the award has been spent.

	Amount	Notes/Comments
Beginning Budget Balance as of:	\$	
Salary Expenditures		
• TES salaries (613340)	\$	
• Student worker (613345)	\$ 12,237.33	
• Grad student worker (613350)	\$	
Total Salary Expenditures	\$ 12,237.33	
Non-Salary Expenditures (<i>supplies, travel, etc.</i>)		
• Honorarium and Speaker	\$ 5,000	
• Official Reception & Entertainment	\$ 6,609.30	

•	\$	
•	\$	
•	\$	
•	\$	
•	\$	
•	\$	
Total Non-Salary Expenditures	\$	
Total Salary + Non-Salary Expenditures	\$	23,846.63
Ending Budget Balance as of 6/14/23:	\$	0

If your project was approved for multiple fiscal years, please itemize future expenditures.
IMPORTANT: *Unused funds revert to the general Compass Fund at the end of the fiscal year (June 30th).
Compass funds DO NOT rollover to the next FY.*

Item Description	Expected Amount	Expected Timing for Payment
• Student worker (613345)	12,237.33	
• Honorarium and Speaker	5,000	
• Official Reception & Entertainment	6,609.30	
Total	23,846.63	