



COLLEGE CONNECTIONS ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Meet the Moment

What makes a voice heard? What makes a problem solved? These are the questions that LSA's College Connections team are constantly asking, in tandem with most of society, as we navigate our ever-changing, post-pandemic world. The College of Literature, Science, and the Arts—including its faculty, staff, students, alumni, and parents—lead in solving tough problems by utilizing the liberal arts and choosing to [Meet the Moment](#), head-on. Through your feedback, we're able to hear which problems the college should prioritize, those it hasn't in the past, and how LSA can move society forward, together.



2022

A YEAR IN REVIEW

Over the past year, the College Connections Program has listened to:

410

ALUMNI AND PARENT VOICES
ACROSS THE COUNTRY

225 IN-PERSON

176 VIRTUAL

9 PHONE



- 32% West
- 26% Northeast
- 22% South
- 18% Midwest
- 2% International

ALUMS & PARENTS

299 Alums
111 Parents

GRADUATION YEARS

3	1960s	40	2000s
27	1970s	110	2010s
39	1980s	24	2020s
56	1990s		

OUR CORE IS OUR STRENGTH

Whether in a lecture hall or small discussion section, many alumni shared that their liberal arts courses shaped them into who they are today. LSA combines critical thinking with empathy to ensure that all who pass through it are **equipped to live a life full of meaning, service, and purpose.**

Our conversations covered the breadth of what LSA has to offer. We met with alums from over 40 majors, and these departments were represented the most:

Political Science
Economics
Psychology
History
English
Communication & Media
Sociology
Mathematics
Organizational Studies
Anthropology

How has your time at Michigan influenced your career path / life?

- Friendship network
- Exposure: ability to explore
- Well-rounded
- Analysis / Critical thinking / Problem solving
- Communications / Interpersonal skills
- Appreciation for diversity



“

As we move forward and evolve as a society, nothing can replace what we learn through the arts. Fields like philosophy, sociology, and anthropology cannot be done through artificial intelligence so, when it comes to understanding human frailties and needs, you need to have a liberal arts education.”

— Amin A. and Mehrnaz T.
(Parents) Washington, D.C.

“

Global awareness is pertinent to being a productive member of society, and that awareness is attributed to a broad liberal arts education. It makes you more aware of the world, and equips you with skills to learn and contribute to diversity of thought. If you're not aware of it, you won't recognize that it's a problem. LSA makes you aware and care about these problems.”

— Pamela S. (A.B. 1996)
Denver, CO

“

LSA provided me with the ability to think critically about not only our society, but LSA and the University of Michigan itself. As a scholarship recipient, I was surprised by the 'quick reality check' that was the economic and racial disparity between myself and my peers. This motivated me to take an intentional part in the community, and recognize patterns of social inequality within large systems.”

— Nina P. (A.B. '21)
Chicago, IL

“

Writing effectively is a skill that you only really learn in LSA. In my first-year and upper level writing requirements, I not only enjoyed the intellectual breadth they provided, but also how they prepared me for writing within any job.”

— Syed A. (B.S. '19)
Seattle, WA



TRANSFORMING UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION

We're at a time when LSA recognizes the need for undergraduate education to be accessible, supportive, and institutionally equitable. Many parents and alumni shared their stories of how LSA's support transformed their students' or their own college experience — stories which ensure the support of students for generations to come.

70%

OF STUDENTS WERE AWARDED
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

28 FORMER LSA SCHOLARSHIP
RECIPIENTS INTERVIEWED
WITH COLLEGE CONNECTIONS



“

The Residential College was a great way to transition into a big college experience. The intimacy and breadth of academic exploration helped me discover new areas of thought, and challenged my own ways of thinking. The RC helped me to see the world in a more engaged and critical way, to gain a deeper appreciation of what is happening and why.”

— Nicholas B. (A.B. 1998) Seattle, WA

“

Michigan in Washington (MIW) helped me know what to look for, and where to look. My internships were relevant to my career interests, and the program helped students get acclimated to working in D.C. The Opportunity Hub also helped professionally prepare me through mock interviews and resume workshops.”

— Clare M. (A.B. '20) Salt Lake City, UT

“

Being a parent of a transfer student has been different, but it feels nice to know that there's a community that makes her feel like she's at home. Without LSA, La Casa, and Alma's initiatives and support, Shannon's experience as a Latina and transfer student would not have been the same.”

— Kathy F. (Parent) Ann Arbor, MI

“

My study abroad in Granada for the advanced Spanish program was the best four months of my life! It was from the program director that I learned about different teaching programs available after graduation, and I knew through both my study abroad experience and teaching opportunities during undergrad that I wanted to come back to Spain to teach.”

— Leah W. (A.B. '19) Palma, Spain



RESEARCH

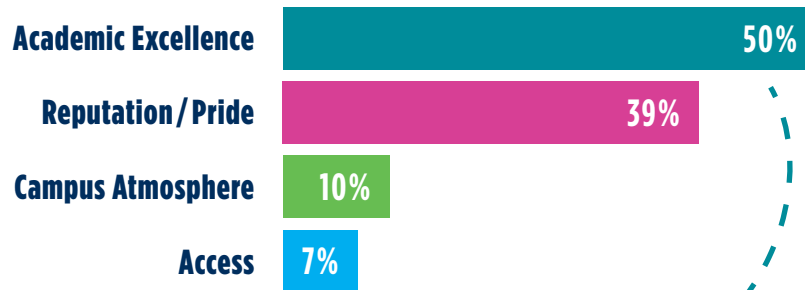
The College Connections program was established in 2008, and stands today as a tool to gain constant, current feedback for and from those who have the shared mission of making LSA an institution where students can thrive. **With your help, we are able to contribute to how LSA Meets the Moment.**



The College Connections program has been an integral part of LSA’s external relations for over a decade. Our coordinators help the college by sending feedback to departments and programs; connecting alumni and parents with relevant resources and ways to be involved; and partnering with the LSA Opportunity Hub to provide career and internship opportunities to current students. Through quarterly check-ins with the dean, and other college leaders, the team can keep them constantly connected and updated with what’s going on with our constituents.”

— Michael Reed
LSA Director of Annual Giving and External Relations

ALUMNI STRENGTHS



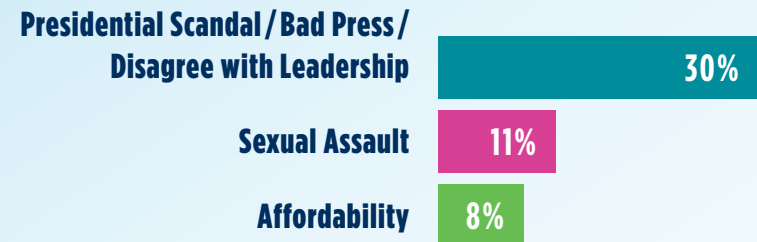
How Do You Define Academic Excellence?

• Ranking/Department • Liberal Arts • Innovation • Exploration

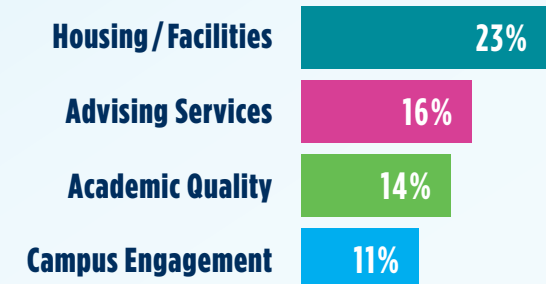
PARENT STRENGTHS



ALUMNI CONCERNS



PARENT CONCERNS



REAL AND RELEVANT RESEARCH

The research LSA students conduct as undergraduates often propels them into a lifetime of asking the important questions that help us **solve some of the world's toughest problems.**

- [Opportunity Hub](#)
- [Camp Davis](#)
- [New England Literature Program](#)
- [Michigan in Washington](#)
- [Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program](#)
- [Biological Station](#)
- [Center for Global and Intercultural Study](#)
- [Service Learning](#)
- [Center for Social Solutions](#)
- [National Center for Institutional Diversity](#)
- [LSA Research Museums Center](#)



My experience at LSA was nothing short of life changing and laid the foundation for my leadership role at the USEPA. The writing program in the Residential College led me to explore the New England Literature Program (NELP) for the summer, where literature we read and outdoor experiences we had cemented my love of nature. Currently, I am the Acting Director of the Resource Conservation and Sustainability Division at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency where I manage non-hazardous solid waste management policy both domestically and internationally. Michigan could not have prepared me better for such a significant role at such a pivotal moment.”

— Nena S. (A.B. 1992) Washington, D.C.



Noah really enjoyed getting to connect with and learn from his professor/mentor and meeting other students on his team. The UROP symposium provided Noah with the opportunity to learn about other interesting research topics being conducted in the program both in and out of his field of study that he would not otherwise have had the opportunity to explore.”

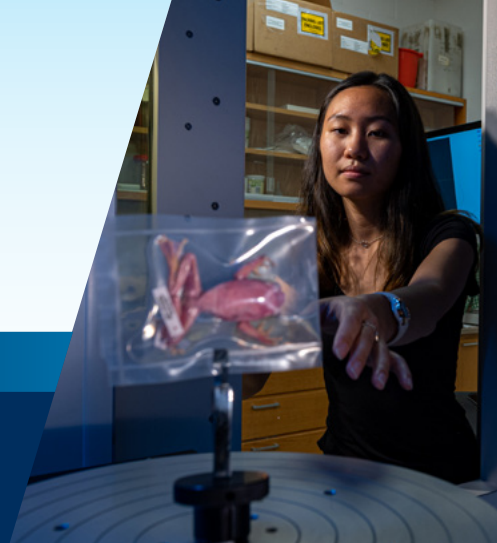
— Janice W. (Parent) Los Angeles, CA

MAKING SENSE OF OUR WORLD

“

The liberal arts have never been more relevant or foundational than they are right now. The challenges we face — racial injustice, economic inequality, climate change, voter suppression, digital privacy, gun violence — don't have simple fixes. The solutions will require rigorous research and innovation that understands the natural world and the human condition: our emotions, vulnerabilities, behavior, and beliefs. The education we need in this moment must pair rigor and empathy, inspire flexible and creative thought, and ask us to fully reimagine our world as it needs to be. This is the kind of education we provide at LSA, and one we're constantly striving to make more equitable and focused on the needs and well-being of our students so they, in turn, can focus more on why they're here: to learn and to create positive, purposeful change.”

— Anne Curzan, LSA Dean



SUPPORT & RESOURCES

ADVICE FROM ALUMS

I would encourage students to work with a career coach and a counselor, but keep in mind that they're not a psychiatrist. If you bring them together, you can discover a lot about who you are as a person."

— Frank V. (A.B. 1997) San Francisco, CA

"Spend your time at LSA figuring out what you want to do and what you don't want to do. Find your passions and follow them, and know that while making a lot of money is great, happiness is the most important. While you don't need to figure out your dream at 18, LSA gives you the space, resources, and freedom to start crossing things off the list."

— Jaime R. (A.B. '19) New York, New York

ADVICE FROM PARENTS

Encourage and support your student, but don't make yourself so accessible. Let them miss you!"

— Edana P. (Parent) Seattle, WA

"Read the stuff that LSA sends you! There is a ton of great information there that any parent or student could benefit from learning about."

— Michael C. (A.B. 1992, Parent) Austin, TX

FOR PARENTS

- [Science Learning Center](#)
- [Wolverine Support Network](#)
- [CAPS](#)
- [Maize & Blue Cupboard](#)
- [CGIS](#)
- [Scholarships](#)
- [SafeRide](#)
- [MaizePages](#)
- [Parents & Families](#)
- [Adventure Leadership](#)
- [Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center](#)

FOR ALUMNI

- [LSA Connect](#)
- [Michigan Alumni Travel](#)
- [Ways to Give](#)

FOR ALL!

- [LSA Opportunity Hub](#)
- [Prospective Student - Admissions](#)
- [Democracy & Debate](#)
- [LSA Young Alumni Council](#)

ABOUT THE COORDINATORS



(Left to Right) Xhulia Guri, Paige Apsey, and MaryRose Clark

Paige Apsey

Paige graduated from LSA in May 2021 with an A.B. in psychology. She grew up splitting her time between Belleville, Michigan, and Saginaw, Michigan, and her grandfather always said she “had maize and blue in her” from the time she was born. During her time at LSA, Paige ignited an interest in film and minored in global media studies. She joined the University of Michigan’s Panhellenic Association as external relations chair, which taught her the true value of connecting with others. During her first year at Michigan, Paige began fundraising for breast cancer research through both Relay for Life and Zeta Tau Alpha’s philanthropic cause: breast cancer education and awareness. A strong advocate for mental health, Paige was an active member of Wolverine Support Network, as well as a research assistant at the University of Michigan’s Department of Psychiatry, where she worked in the Youth Depression and Suicide Prevention Program. She was also involved in Project Outreach, where she volunteered with at-risk children at local preschools and daycares. Paige began working for LSA Advancement as a student in 2019, taking on the role of digital fundraising assistant. This opportunity allowed her to connect with thousands of donors, and sparked her interest in meeting and connecting with the LSA community, particularly alumni and parents. In her spare time, Paige loves watching the newest critically-acclaimed films (along with the occasional rom-com), reading, and spending time with her loved ones.

MaryRose Clark

MaryRose graduated from LSA in May 2020 with an A.B. in communication and media and dual minors in entrepreneurship and law, justice, and social change. She was raised in the small village of Dryden in the ‘thumb’ of Michigan, and was a HAIL Scholarship recipient. Being a part of the Comprehensive Studies Program assisted in her transition to U-M, and provided continuous support throughout her undergraduate career. MaryRose had the opportunity to travel abroad to France, Italy, and Vietnam with the Center for Global and Intercultural Study, as well as to Paris, Virginia with Alternative Spring Break. As a junior, she served as a Dobson intern at Eversight with the Development Summer Internship Program, which piqued her interest in development work. On campus, she frequently promoted philanthropy as the President of Pets Are Wonderful Support (PAWS) of Ann Arbor, and volunteered her time to local nonprofit animal organizations. MaryRose also spent nearly 3 years working at Bert’s Cafe on the first floor of the Shapiro Undergraduate Library as a student manager, during which she made meaningful connections with fellow student workers and shaped her leadership skills. Her spare time is filled with outdoor adventures, caring for her 40+ houseplants, and spending quality time with friends and family. She is ecstatic to begin engaging with parents and alumni, and to rediscover her love of exploring new places.

ABOUT THE COORDINATORS

Welcome to the newest College Connections Coordinator, Xhulia Guri!



Xhulia graduated from LSA in May 2022 with an A.B. in international studies and English. She was born and raised in Tirana, Albania and moved to Dearborn, Michigan, at the age of 11. During her time at LSA, Xhulia was fortunate enough to receive a number of scholarships, including the LSA Internship Scholarship, that allowed her to pursue a variety of interests including an internship abroad with the Municipality of Tirana. In this internship, she coordinated a special project regarding the social inclusion of the Roma minority. While at the University of Michigan, Xhulia worked as a research assistant for the Institute for Social Research and the UM School of Public Health, where she first learned about development and opportunity-building for students. On campus, Xhulia was also actively involved with Michigan Foreign Policy Council and Xylem Magazine, where she developed meaningful relationships with students. During the summer of 2021, Xhulia interned for a nonprofit organization called THINK Albania where she created content and interviewed potential donors which sparked her interest in philanthropy. During her spare time, Xhulia enjoys trying new coffee recipes and visiting coffee shops in the Ann Arbor area. She is excited to connect with the LSA community and to visit a multitude of places!



Farewell, Kai!

Although missed, we celebrate Kai (2019-2021) who transitioned off the College Connections program in April 2022 to join Fujitsu Research of America as a bilingual project manager.



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

- **Selena Joarder (2018-2020)**

works to integrate child welfare and behavioral health services as a cross-system trainer for the Allegheny County Department of Human Services in Pittsburgh, PA.

- **Anna Thompson (2017-2020)**

is part of the LSA Major Giving team meeting alumni and donors in the southeastern states.

- **Joe Murray (2016-2018)**

is a part of the LSA Major Giving team meeting alumni and donors in Arizona, Southern California, and Utah.

- **Amanda Piazzon (Harvey) (2016-2018)**

is living in Cardiff, Wales, working as a Project Support Associate at Deloitte.

- **Samantha Stears (Lemmen) (2016-2017)**

is a part of the LSA Major Giving team meeting alumni and donors in the central states.

- **Avery Gleason (2015-2016)**

works for the Office of University Development in Ann Arbor as a business intelligence analyst.

- **Patrick Pjesky (2015-2016)**

works for Google as a financial analyst in London, UK.

- **Christina Pechette (2014-2016)**

works as an associate director of clinical strategy at UnitedHealthcare.

- **Monica Phillipp (2014-2016)**

is the Associate Director of Development at North Star Reach in Ann Arbor.

- **Ellie Chessen (2012-2015)**

works for Deloitte as a manager of strategy & analytics in Washington, D.C.

- **Mark Chou (2013-2015)**

lives in San Francisco, CA, and works at Facebook as a project manager.

- **Kathleen Hinkley (2011-2014)**

is a grateful family philanthropy officer at the Children's Hospital of Wisconsin.

- **Jenny Howard (2009-2012)**

is pursuing a Masters of Divinity degree at the University of Chicago Divinity School.

- **Elizabeth Blouin (Williams) (2009-2012)**

works for the Office of University Development as a director of major gifts in Washtenaw County and Southeast Michigan.

- **Tina Sula (2009-2012)**

is Senior Director of Philanthropy at the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit. She also is a lecturer in U-M's Program in International and Comparative Studies (PICS).



HELP US MEET THE MOMENT

[Explore more stories](#) about how the LSA community is meeting the moment and [connect with us](#) to learn about how you can meet the moment, too.