



Student Leadership Academy **PhotoVoice Project** **2024-2025**

Student Leadership Academy

PhotoVoice Project

PhotoVoice is a pedagogical tool, aimed at empowering students to delve deeply into relevant issues while considering the implications for social justice and change. In this project, students engage with a focal topic, expressing their perspectives through photos and narratives. The aim is to foster critical thinking, enhance advocacy skills, and promote civic engagement. Through this process, students develop writing and communication abilities, apply concepts to real-world scenarios, and collaborate effectively (Brecher, Day, Ezekiel, Litonjua, Shaffer & Tandon, 2021).

For their Capstone Project, participants were asked to reflect on their leadership journey through PhotoVoice, and were given the prompt “I engage in Transformational Leadership when...”. Participants shared personal anecdotes reflecting on moments of engagement, or observations on leadership. Emotions associated with transformational leadership were discussed, and participants used photographs to visually depict their reflections on transformational leadership.





“Feedback isn’t just complaints or frustrations; it’s a tool for identifying what works, what doesn’t, and where solutions are needed.”

–Katelyn Libbus

I practice transformational leadership when I collaborate with and empower the voices of others.

The quality of the change you create is determined by how well you construct it.

Creating meaningful, lasting change requires an understanding of what truly matters to the people you serve. It is essential to accept feedback, both positive and negative, from those affected.

Feedback isn’t just complaints or frustrations; it’s a tool for identifying what works, what doesn’t, and where solutions are needed.

Engaging your teammates and community members allows new ideas and perspectives to be shared. By considering these contexts, the true issues are revealed – not just what you assumed was important – allowing you to focus on solutions that will genuinely make an impact.



**Leadership
Academy**





“Leadership is not about dominance or rivalry. Leadership is about respect, humility, and lifting others up.”

–Karim Hatem Ahmed Kazamel

I engage in transformational leadership when I extend my hand to those who need support, regardless of our differences.

Leadership is not about dominance or rivalry. Leadership is about respect, humility, and lifting others up. In the image, one player extends his hand to another, not as an opponent, but as a fellow athlete. This act of sportsmanship illustrates that true leadership is measured not by personal victories, but by how we support those around us. The moment reminds us that success is not an individual pursuit; it is a collective effort. A leader does not stand above others but stands with them, recognizing that strength is found in unity. By extending a hand, we demonstrate that leadership is not about status but about taking action to help others move forward.



**Leadership
Academy**





“Transformational leadership isn’t just about leading — it’s about listening, about standing with others in difficult moments, and about using my position to push for systemic change.”

–Bianca Morelli

I engage in transformational leadership when I amplify voices and challenge silence. This image captures a defining moment in my leadership journey — standing in solidarity at Take Back the Night, the first march of its kind in Halifax in years. Organizing this event was not just about logistics or planning; it was about breaking the silence that has lingered too long on our campus. In my role at the Dalhousie Student Union, I worked alongside the Sexual Health Resource Centre, Dalhousie departments, and community partners to create a space where survivors could be heard, where the weight of unspoken stories could be lifted, even if only for a night.

Walking through the streets that evening, surrounded by voices demanding change, I felt the power of collective action in a way I never had before. I felt the urgency of this issue, the burden of what had been ignored for too long, and the responsibility of ensuring this conversation doesn’t end when the march does. Transformational leadership isn’t just about leading — it’s about listening, about standing with others in difficult moments, and about using my position to push for systemic change. Advocacy is not a single event but a continuous commitment. Leadership is about more than just action; it’s about ensuring that when the chants fade, the momentum does not. I left the march not just as an organizer, but as someone even more committed to reshaping the culture of our campus — so that one day, this conversation is no longer one we have to fight to have.



**Leadership
Academy**





“Leadership can hopefully create a ripple effect, where empowered individuals uplift others, contributing to a stronger, more collaborative environment.”

–Elizabeth McGraw

I engage in transformational leadership by providing experiences and tools that help individuals gain confidence, recognize their potential, and feel empowered to succeed.

Striving to provide others with opportunities and the tools to learn and grow, I aim to create an environment where individuals feel supported, valued, and encouraged. By offering resources and knowledge to help individuals succeed, I enable them to tackle new challenges. Through mentorship and guidance, I hope others will recognize their potential and capabilities. While acquiring new skills and experiences, they grow in self-assurance, becoming more motivated and confident. Leadership can hopefully create a ripple effect, where empowered individuals uplift others, contributing to a stronger, more collaborative environment.

Ultimately, my goal is to inspire purpose, self-confidence, and a sense of ownership in others, helping them realize their ability to shape success and make meaningful contributions.



**Leadership
Academy**





“By taking the time to understand each perspective, we collectively spark new ideas, challenge assumptions, and open doors to meaningful change.”

–Ana Patton

I engage in transformational leadership when I listen deeply — truly hearing the stories, fears, and hopes of those I lead. By taking the time to understand each perspective, we collectively spark new ideas, challenge assumptions, and open doors to meaningful change. In that moment of connection, we aren't just sharing thoughts, we are transforming ourselves and our shared vision.

Transformational leadership pushes us to champion every voice and work together toward shared visions. It is never about commanding change, but rather collectively creating it.

This photograph captures a moment right after a long conversation about the deeper purpose behind an initiative I was creating with a loved one. It reminds me of the powerful shift that happens when people feel heard and valued. When leaders pause to understand each individual's experiences, they help cultivate a culture of trust, care, and inclusivity. This process isn't just about giving guidance — it's about co-authoring a path forward, where every voice is empowered to shape the outcome. Ultimately, listening with empathy is a spark that ignites growth, fuels collective transformation, and fosters genuine change within a community.



**Leadership
Academy**





“Through this project, I have seen the power of community, education, and advocacy come together in a meaningful way.”

–Fariha Zerín Rabita

I participate in transformational leadership when I lead leaders and create something that future leaders can carry forward.

Growing up, I never fully understood what anxiety was. I only knew it as a strange, overwhelming feeling I couldn't put into words. Mental health was rarely discussed back home, and I didn't realize that experiences like stress, anxiety, and depression were not just isolated emotions but real, valid challenges that could be addressed and supported. It was only later that I began to understand the significance of mental health awareness and how crucial it is to have conversations about it, no matter how small it may seem from the outside.

With this realization, I knew I wanted to create a space where students could engage in these conversations in a way that felt natural, supportive, and even fun. This led me to develop Wellness Day in Residence, an interactive initiative designed to bring mental health awareness directly to the students at Dalhousie. As the Community Assistant Team Leader (CATL) for Risley Hall, I lead a team of 12 Community Assistants (CATs), and with the help of four other CATs, I organized a day where students could learn about mental health, coping strategies, and self-care while participating in engaging activities like trivia, interactive discussions, and wellness booths.

The process started with focused groups among residents and student leaders about what kind of mental health support they wanted to see in residence. This event wasn't just about raising awareness. It was about taking an initiative that could continue beyond my time at Dalhousie. I wanted to ensure that future Community Assistant Team Leaders (CATLs) could carry this forward, keeping the conversation around mental health alive in residence halls year after year. I participate in transformational leadership when I lead leaders, when I pass down knowledge and initiatives, and when I empower students to take charge of their well-being. Through this project, I have seen the power of community, education, and advocacy come together in a meaningful way.



**Leadership
Academy**





“My leadership practice has always been centred on community, connection, capacity building, and service to others.”

–Nnamdi Chiekwe

Transformational leadership is just that, transforming those you have been fortunate to serve and lead. My leadership practice has always been centred on community, connection, capacity building, and service to others. Leading from behind, I find joy in facilitating connections and creating opportunities for meaningful engagement. The High-Performance Leadership program has given me the chance to explore a variety of leadership skills and concepts that have truly complemented my experiences in leadership. I strongly believe that in leadership you have an opportunity to influence and support growth of an individual and make a lasting impact.

The joy and vibrancy of this photo captures the essence of building relationships, connection, and confidence in one another, and ultimately in one’s own ability to achieve success. This photo showcases individuals at different points in their medical journey – ones that have created a path and ones who are following in their footsteps. An important piece in my leadership journey has been mentorship and representation, and I look to recreate those experiences for others. Creating connections does not have to happen in “formal” settings and understanding that growth can be facilitated with guidance and mentorship, this photo encompasses just that. Bringing people to and fostering spaces that are familiar and provide comfort – with a little bit of competition – can allow for intimate and genuine connection. Fostering these spaces allows for confidence to be strengthened, joy to be had, and to demonstrate that this too is possible.



**Leadership
Academy**





“Sitting in these conversations, hearing my peers speak on their experiences, I saw firsthand what so many African Nova Scotian students face. Dalhousie needs to be more than a university they attend, it needs to be a place where all belong.”

–Nathan Cromwell Tesfazion

“A lot of us are the first to step foot in these halls. Our sense of belonging isn’t just personal – it’s tied to over 200 years of family lineage who were denied entrance when these doors first opened.”

I practice transformational leadership when I recognize that my greatest asset as a leader is not myself, but the people around me – listening to them, engaging with them, and learning from their experiences.

The photo above captures a powerful moment when African Nova Scotian students and community members returned to the Last Bath in Cape Coast, Ghana, standing at the shores of their ancestral home before their people were taken into captivity. Above, the arch reads: “We Are Back Home” which is a declaration that their belonging is undeniable.

After returning from Ghana, I couldn’t help but ask how this sense of belonging could be recreated in Halifax, more specifically in university and campus life. University is supposed to be some of the most formative and vibrant years, yet African Nova Scotian (ANS) students are met with a different experience. We know ANS students report lower feelings of belonging, a weaker sense of acceptance, and a diminished value in feeling respected. These barriers not only affect student experiences, but they also impact retention rates and pursuit of graduate degrees.

Through focus groups and open discussions, we sought answers. By using qualitative research, we examined the gaps between ANS students and the institution – listening directly to the voices that have been historically ignored. Sitting in these conversations, hearing my peers speak on their experiences, I saw firsthand what so many ANS students face. Dalhousie needs to be more than a university they attend, it needs to be a place where all belong.



**Leadership
Academy**





“X-rays are a tool that allows us to see patients from a different perspective, revealing details that might otherwise go unnoticed. Similarly, having Indigenous representation in medicine gives Indigenous students the opportunity to view healthcare through a different perspective.”

–Wilfred Prosper

I participate in transformational leadership when I can use my education and experience to engage with the next generation through programs like Doctor for a Day. X-rays are a tool that allows us to see patients from a different perspective, revealing details that might otherwise go unnoticed. Similarly, having Indigenous representation in medicine gives Indigenous students the opportunity to view healthcare through a different perspective.

Healthcare has had a strained relationship with Indigenous communities due to the impacts of colonization and systemic racism. Indigenous people also remain significantly underrepresented in the healthcare industry. These workshops provide students with early exposure, meaningful engagement, and opportunities to explore or ask questions about medicine and healthcare. Students are taught how to suture, how to take patient histories, and how to read X-rays at these workshops. These programs are important as they provide the opportunity for Indigenous youth to see someone who looks like them taking up space.



**Leadership
Academy**





“By fostering critical thinking, decision-making, and a deeper understanding of governance and financial management, they help empower individuals to become informed and proactive citizens.”

–Laura Saad Hossne

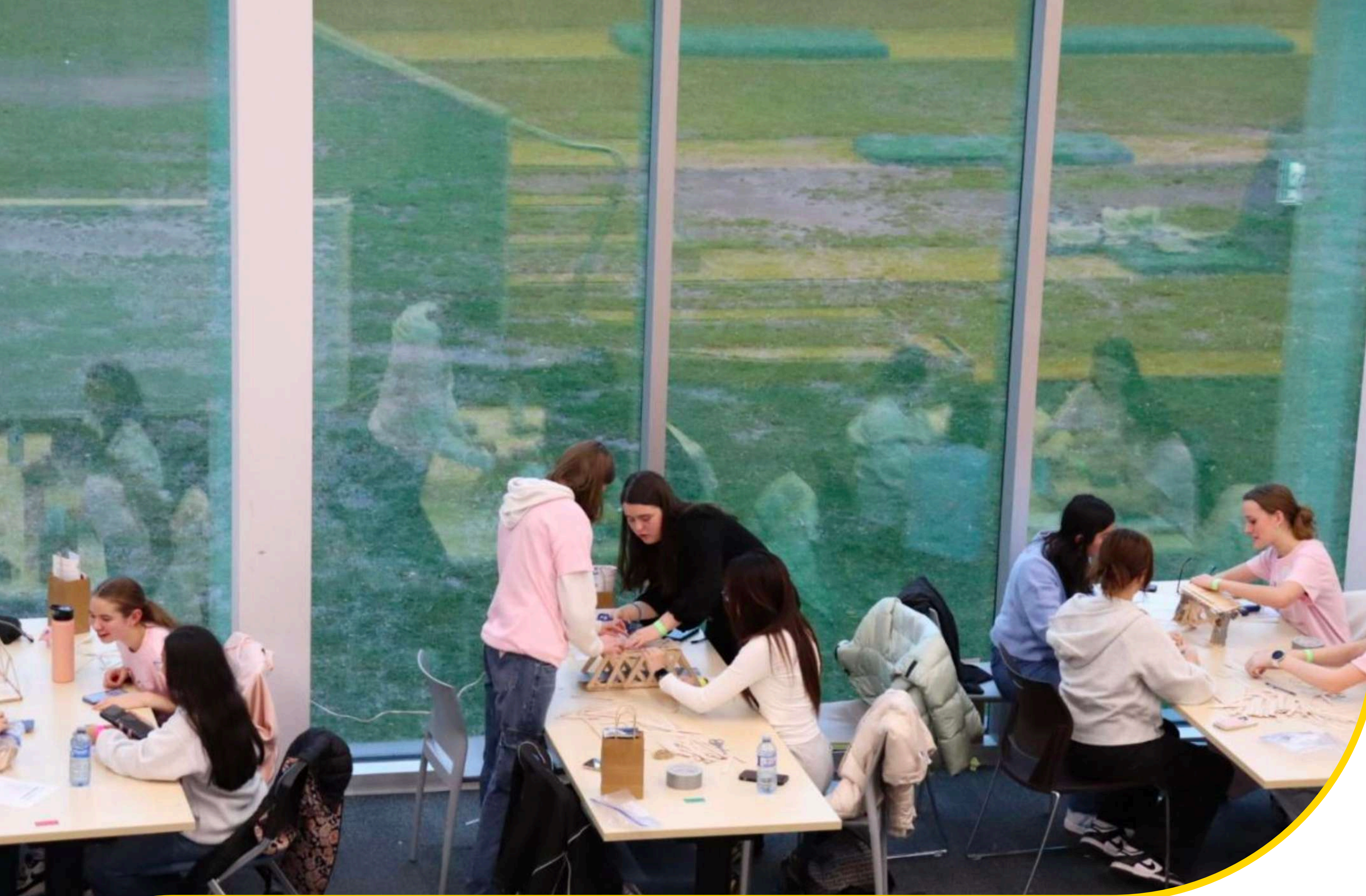
I engage in transformational leadership when I organize and host peer-coordinated political and financial literacy workshops. They can produce transformational leadership by equipping participants with essential skills to navigate complex societal and economic systems. By fostering critical thinking, decision-making, and a deeper understanding of governance and financial management, they help empower individuals to become informed and proactive citizens.

By enhancing their ability to understand policies, manage resources, and engage in civic discourse, participants become better prepared to assume leadership roles and drive positive change in their communities. They also help participants’ financial independence and responsibility, helping participants make informed decisions about budgeting, saving, and investing. This reduces economic vulnerabilities and enables them to contribute more effectively to their personal and community growth.



Leadership Academy





“Their excitement and curiosity reinforce the importance of inclusive outreach, demonstrating how exposure to STEM at an early age can shape aspirations and spark a passion for innovation.”

–Emma Deveau

I engage in transformational leadership by empowering the next generation of student leaders to challenge industry norms and expectations. Through initiatives like Go Eng Girl, I strive to create an inclusive and welcoming environment where young girls can explore their interests in STEM. This outreach introduces them to career opportunities and academic pathways, helping to break down barriers and reshape traditional perceptions of the engineering profession.

Beyond education, Go Eng Girl fosters a sense of belonging and community, establishing a peer support network where participants connect with female university students and professionals who share a common interest in STEM. By creating opportunities for young girls to engage with STEM in meaningful and tangible ways, we help them discover passions they may not have originally considered. This photo from Go Eng Girl 2024 captures the creativity, problem-solving, and teamwork that are foundational in successful engineering. Their excitement and curiosity reinforce the importance of inclusive outreach, demonstrating how exposure to STEM at an early age can shape aspirations and spark a passion for innovation. When young girls feel represented in successful role models, they can envision a future where they belong and thrive in those roles.



**Leadership
Academy**





“It is a space where women and gender-diverse individuals are not just acknowledged but truly seen. It’s about uplifting each other and building a community that thrives on encouragement and recognition.”

–Shreya Sharma

I practice transformational leadership when I empower those around me, celebrate their wins, and create a supportive space for growth.

The room erupts into applause as her name is called. She waves with both hands, smiling through tears of appreciation, overwhelmed by the moment. The crowd cheers, a sea of support and admiration, as she makes her way to the stage. This is more than just an award — this is recognition, a celebration of years of dedication and impact. The energy in the room is electric, filled with shared pride and joy.

This moment captures the essence of the First Ever Women’s Excellence Gala, hosted by the Dalhousie Women in Technology Society (WiTS). It is a space where women and gender-diverse individuals are not just acknowledged but truly seen. It’s about uplifting each other and building a community that thrives on encouragement and recognition.

As the organizer of this event, my goal was to create a space where everyone felt valued and celebrated for their contributions. The gala embodies the power of community, where success is shared and no effort goes unnoticed.

This event is a reminder that we belong, that we matter, and that together, we rise.



**Leadership
Academy**





“I have also realized the importance of self-recognition in transformational leadership and the value of transferring this skill to others whom I lead.”

–Emma Sundloev

Throughout the Student Leadership Academy, I have reflected upon my own leadership style and what transformational leadership means to me. I practice transformational leadership most when I not only stay authentic to myself but empower others to do the same. However, during the past few months of this project, I have also realized the importance of self-recognition in transformational leadership and the value of transferring this skill to others whom I lead.

This photo is of the team that has empowered me to practice transformational leadership as president of the Dalhousie Women in Business Association. Leading this group throughout the 2024/2025 academic year has been one of the most rewarding learning experiences in my leadership journey. Seeing individuals grow in confidence as leaders is what fuels my passion as a transformational leader. The photo was taken during our 10th annual Women in Business Conference on March 8th — an event that embodied the hard work, dedication, and vision of our team. This photo captures a moment of powerful reflection of our collective achievements and the empowering, uplifting space we’ve created together. In that moment, I felt immense pride, not only in them but also in myself. As a part of this capstone project, I interviewed women leaders in my life, and they have all emphasized the importance of self-recognition of accomplishment. This further validates the importance of self-recognition to me, and I, in turn, need to pass this on to other future leaders.



**Leadership
Academy**





“Leadership comes when people are so passionate about their communities that they’re willing to put themselves in a position to provide meaningful changes for those around them.”

– Emilie Reid

By fostering a welcoming environment where students are willing to have open conversations, I can provide an opportunity for increased student engagement, increased support, and better response to the needs of the student body.

This year, I had the privilege and honour of serving as the President of the Dalhousie Undergraduate Engineering Society. I’ve grown a lot over the year and have reflected deeply on what it means to be an effective leader and how my actions can impact those around me. As I write this, I’ve come to a personal understanding that, at its core, being a leader means being a caring member of your respective community. Leadership comes when people are so passionate about their communities that they’re willing to put themselves in a position to provide meaningful changes for those around them.

Transformational leadership can only happen when leaders are actively engaged in their communities and take genuine action to make changes. This year, my executive and I put together a student feedback survey and provided an improved structure to our annual general meeting. By fostering a welcoming environment where students are willing to have open conversations, I can provide an opportunity for increased student engagement, increased support, and better response to the needs of the student body. Meaningful transformation takes place when leaders listen to their communities and take action. Transformational leaders are what continues to make the Dalhousie Engineering community so vibrant, inclusive, and successful.



**Leadership
Academy**





“As I reflect on this journey, I am reminded that true leadership is not just about implementing new initiatives but about empowering those around me to engage in meaningful change.”

– Sarah Rondeaux

I practice transformational leadership when I motivate a team to achieve a goal. My friend on the team helped take this photo during the meeting when I first presented the patient feedback form for the Dalhousie Medical Campus Response Team. The image reflects a critical step in my efforts to enhance our team to be responsive to the patient experience.

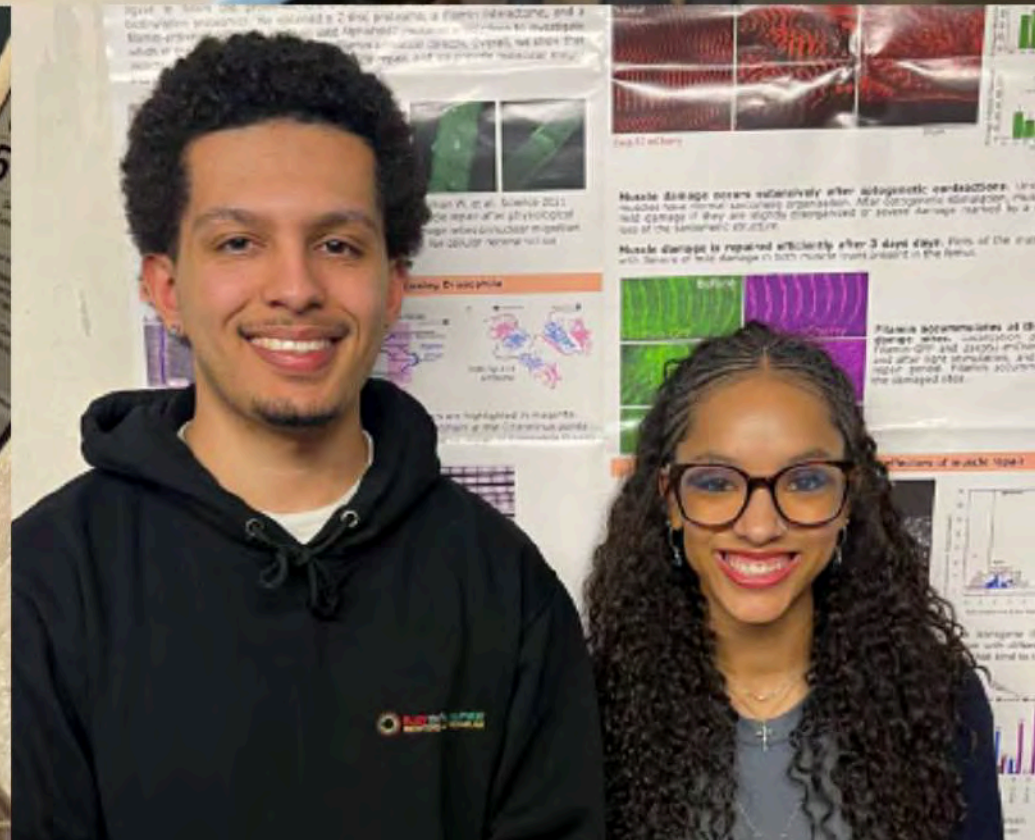
I got help from my mentors and other Dalhousie leaders to develop an online form that gives the opportunity for patients’ voices to be heard, which will enable our team to enhance training sessions and protocols. This is an essential step towards patient-centred care. Through discussions and multiple drafts, I refined the questions to make them both accessible and impactful.

As I reflect on this journey, I am reminded that true leadership is not just about implementing new initiatives but about empowering those around me to engage in meaningful change. Together, we are not just improving a service, we are strengthening a team that prioritizes the voices of those we serve.



**Leadership
Academy**





“For me, leadership isn’t about status; it’s about creating spaces where others feel seen, valued, and empowered. It’s about sharing meals, exchanging stories, and meeting people where they are — not expecting them to conform to spaces never designed for them.”

– Tiara Mulder

I engage in transformational leadership by working to change the isolation I and many other diverse students have felt in STEM. As an African Nova Scotian woman, I have often been the only Black person in classrooms and conferences. This isolation fuels my passion for EDIA in STEM. For me, leadership isn’t about status; it’s about creating spaces where others feel seen, valued, and empowered. It’s about sharing meals, exchanging stories, and meeting people where they are — not expecting them to conform to spaces never designed for them. More than that, it’s about making our own spaces where diverse voices are embraced and centred. I work to ensure future generations never feel like “the only one” in the room. Transformational leadership isn’t just about paving the way, it’s about walking the path together to create lasting change.



**Leadership
Academy**





“It’s not about building a perfect team, but about embracing change, growth, and continuity as we evolve together. My hope is to continue that ripple effect and inspire others to do the same.”

– Ali Brennan

I engage in transformational leadership by creating an environment where learning, connection, and growth happen naturally. The collage I’ve shared tells that story — starting with a photo marking the beginning of my own leadership journey, when I first felt truly supported and part of something larger than myself. That moment inspired me to create the same experience for others. The more recent photo, taken at our recent conference, shows the progress I’ve made in getting others involved and building a strong, connected team. In the short term, I focus on creating shared experiences where people can develop new skills, build relationships, and feel part of the community. Just as importantly, I ensure everyone feels appreciated and valued, knowing positive reinforcement helps people stay engaged and motivated. In the long term, I aim to foster a culture where leadership spreads naturally — where each person inspires someone else to step up. It’s not about building a perfect team, but about embracing change, growth, and continuity as we evolve together. My hope is to continue that ripple effect and inspire others to do the same.



**Leadership
Academy**





“The experience reinforced my belief that leadership is not just about completing tasks, but about creating opportunities for others to connect, celebrate, and be part of something meaningful.”

– William Jones



Leadership Academy

I engage in transformational leadership when I reimagine traditions and create new opportunities for community engagement.

Since my first few days on campus, I've always thought that Dalhousie could do more to harness and support the vibrant student life which exists throughout its community. I've always felt that our campus lacked major events or programs aimed at bringing together all of campus - not just catering to specific interest groups. This year, I got the opportunity to bring that vision to life via Sno-Fest, which represents the culmination of months of planning, coordination, and leadership.

Relaunching Sno-Fest as a major annual concert was not just about organizing a single event; it was about rebuilding a sense of community on campus. I led the charge in transforming “Sno-Fest” from a loose collection of minor events spanning a week or more, into a focused, large-scale winter concert; securing one of the biggest headliners in modern Dalhousie history, and the largest since the pandemic. We welcomed nearly 1,000 students to our first ever outdoor concert in the winter, proving that student life at Dalhousie could thrive even in the coldest months. This required rallying different stakeholders throughout both our campus and broader community (production teams, security, municipal inspectors, student volunteers, and more) and aligning them under a shared vision of creating something bigger than any one person could hope to accomplish alone. When I saw the excitement on the faces of my peers who had never experienced a full-scale university concert, I knew that the effort had been well worth it.

Sno-Fest was more than just an event; it was a statement that student life at Dalhousie is back and stronger than ever. The experience reinforced my belief that leadership is not just about completing tasks, but about creating opportunities for others to connect, celebrate, and be part of something meaningful. Through this project, I have learned that transformational leadership is about action, resilience, and the willingness to take bold steps to make lasting change.



“I engage in transformational leadership when I recognize a systemic issue in my community and take action to create a solution.”

– Mohammed Hamedelnieel

I engage in transformational leadership when I recognize a systemic issue in my community and take action to create a solution. As the owner of a property management company specializing in student housing, I've seen firsthand how confusing lease agreements can be. Our mission for this portfolio is simple: for students, by students — ensuring student renters have the tools and knowledge they need to navigate housing with confidence. Friends and tenants frequently asked me to look over their leases, unsure whether a clause was standard, fair, or even legal. That's when I realized the need for a simple, accessible way for students to check their leases against the Nova Scotia Residential Tenancies Act (RTA).

For my capstone project, I wanted to create a community-focused tool — one that would empower students to better understand their rights as renters. The idea was straightforward: a website where students could upload their lease and get it reviewed, not for legal advice, but as an educational resource. The tool would flag clauses that might not align with the provincial standard lease and prompt users to review the relevant section of the RTA themselves.

I knew I couldn't build this alone. So, I reached out to a friend in electrical engineering who helped design a model that could scan lease documents and highlight sections that could be problematic. The goal was never to replace legal services but to guide students in identifying potential concerns and equipping them with the right information to make informed decisions.

This project is about more than just leases — it's about empowering students with knowledge. Understanding your lease is the first step in advocating for yourself as a renter. Whether it's an unexpected fee, an unusual clause, or something that just doesn't seem right, our tool is here to help students ask the right questions and ensure they are signing fair and legal agreements. The more we educate ourselves, the better we can protect our rights as renters.



**Leadership
Academy**





“As a transformational leader, I value strength built from faith, understanding, resilience, and community and create spaces for creativity, bonding, and lots of laughter. Nurturing ideas into impact.”

– Theresa Afi

I engage in transformational leadership when I begin the change from within, reaching out from a place of shared experiences and a deep understanding of the problems we wish to solve. As a transformational leader, I value strength built from faith, understanding, resilience, and community, and create spaces for creativity, bonding, and lots of laughter. Nurturing ideas into impact.

For my capstone project, I chose to organize a writing retreat for engineering graduate students. This retreat aims to foster focus and self study, while creating room for collaboration and wellness. My journey as a graduate student has deepened my appreciation for academic writing and the diverse practices that enhance it, such as our knowledge and experiences, our mindset, health, and the systems around us. All these play an intricate role in our writing and by investing in these areas, we may be better equipped to articulate our research and ideas effectively. In partnership with the Dalhousie's Engineering Graduate Society (DEGS), we hope that this retreat will be one of many as we journey together from spectator to participant in our writing careers as graduate students.



**Leadership
Academy**





“I aspire to give students the opportunity to have meaningful and impactful conversions, especially with professionals who can help make the transition from school to work easier, which is a large concern for most queer engineering students.”

– Quinn Stanley

I participate in transformational leadership when I have meaningful and impactful conversions with people from a variety of backgrounds. This photo is the 2025 EngiQueers Canada Conference where I had the opportunity to meet and talk with over 100 delegates from across the country about a variety of issues facing the queer community within engineering. I believe that taking the time out of this conference to talk to as many delegates as possible was so important because in order to be a good leader you need to know what the community needs. These conversions set me up to be able to identify where my community was struggling and how to best support them. Through my capstone project, CANEQT, which is a networking platform for queer engineers, I aspire to give students the opportunity to have meaningful and impactful conversions, especially with professionals who can help make the transition from school to work easier, which is a large concern for most queer engineering students.



**Leadership
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Office of the Vice-Provost, Student Affairs
Henry Hicks Building, 3rd Floor
Dalhousie University
6299 South St, Halifax, Nova Scotia
Canada B3H 4J1

dal.ca/leadership-academy