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21st Century Leaders Announces First Ever Leadership Certificate from Goizueta Business School for Georgia's High School Students

Atlanta - [21st Century Leaders \(21CL\)](#), a non-profit and Georgia's and premier youth leadership development program, and [Emory University's Goizueta Business School](#) have leveraged their nearly 20-year partnership to present an opportunity for high school students to earn a Leadership Certificate from the business school through a capstone project focused on social enterprise and entrepreneurship. This is the only program through which high school students can obtain this certificate.

Through 21st Century Leaders' proprietary online learning platform, [Leadership Connect](#), students engage with gamified lessons that they complete at their own pace, earning points and unlocking rewards as they develop their leadership skills in an online community and "level up their leadership." Leadership Connect's four levels of content, comprising over 170 lessons, focus on foundational leadership competencies; social-emotional learning and diversity, equity and inclusion; life skills including financial literacy and civic engagement; and the capstone of social enterprise and entrepreneurship. Over the past decade, 21CL has been developing Leadership Connect's content, with the culminating level of curriculum, *Level 4: Social Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Capstone*, recently launched in fall 2024 in collaboration with Goizueta.

"At Goizueta, we believe in the power of leadership and innovation to drive positive change. We're thrilled to extend this experience to high school students through our partnership with 21st Century Leaders," shares Gareth James, John H. Harland Dean of Goizueta Business School. "This Leadership Certificate focuses on topics such as entrepreneurship and social responsibility, offering young leaders a unique opportunity to develop skills early on that are essential for thriving in the world today. We are excited to see the impact these students will make as they apply what they've learned in their communities and beyond."

In its inaugural year, *Level 4: Social Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Capstone* is time-bound and project-based; students complete lessons and submit assignments between monthly meetings with a cohort of peers and Leadership Connect coaches, all of whom are current MBA candidates or graduates of Goizueta. Collaborating with Goizueta faculty and students, 21CL built out this customized social enterprise curriculum through interactive, gamified content and videos recorded by Goizueta professors and MBA graduates/candidates tailored to high school students.

Between now and April 2025, these 21st Century Leaders' high school students will work with their assigned MBA volunteer coach to develop a social enterprise and business pitch together,

which will be presented at the end of the school year. The experience will end with an exciting pitch day in person at Goizueta Business School on April 19, 2025. Those that complete Level 4 also receive a Leadership Certificate that is jointly presented by 21st Century Leaders and Goizueta, an exclusive credential for high school students to have as they pursue post-secondary education and career pathways.

“This is an extremely exciting time not just for 21st Century Leaders as an organization, but also for our students who are receiving an experience and education in entrepreneurship and leadership from an international-ranked MBA program - as high school students!” says Kate Hewitt, Executive Director of 21st Century Leaders. “Our partnership with Goizueta Business School has unlocked potential and opened doors for thousands of students over the last two decades, but this certificate and curriculum has the power to take students to a whole new level of opportunity, success, and careers.”

This year’s cohort includes 28 students from across Georgia - including Berrien, Emanuel, Jefferson, and Harris Counties - and 14 coaches representing Goizueta.

Please join us in congratulating and thanking our 2024-2025 MBA volunteers:

- Prashant Patro, MBA Candidate ‘25
- Mackenzie Heriford, MBA Candidate ‘26
- Jeff Shibata, MBA Candidate ‘26
- Taylor Green, MBA ‘21 (21CL Alumna)
- Tom Moak, MBA Candidate ‘25
- Simran Verma, MBA Candidate ‘26
- Delaria Ridley, MBA Candidate ‘25
- Benjamin James, MBA Candidate ‘26
- David Azu, MBA Candidate ‘25
- Harsh Tilwani, MBA Candidate ‘26
- Braden Skripak Gordon, MBA Candidate ‘26
- James Cochran, MBA Candidate ‘26
- Alina Mencias, MBA ‘24 (21CL Board of Directors)
- Nathaniel Okyere-Bour, MBA Candidate ‘26

About 21st Century Leaders

21st Century Leaders is a non-profit organization with a mission to connect, transform, and inspire high school students from across the state of Georgia to leverage and promote diversity and inclusion, explore career opportunities, and become leaders across their schools, communities, and, ultimately, the workforce. Through innovative programs and experiences, we’re equipping and empowering young talent to lead in companies and communities, while fostering a culture of inclusion and service. Visit www.21stcenturyleaders.org to learn more about our transformational programs for high school students across Georgia.

About Goizueta Business School

Business education has been an integral part of Emory University's identity since 1919. That kind of longevity and significance does not come without a culture built on success and service. Emory University's Goizueta Business School offers a unique, community-oriented environment paired with the academic prestige and rigor of a major research institution. Goizueta develops business leaders of today and tomorrow with an undergraduate degree program, Full-time MBA (Two-Year MBA & One-Year MBA), Evening MBA, Executive MBA, MS in Business Analytics, Master of Finance, Master in Management, Master in Business for Veterans, Doctoral degree, and a portfolio of non-degree Emory Executive Education courses. Together, the Goizueta community strives to solve the world's most pressing business problems. The school is named for the late Roberto C. Goizueta, former Chairman and CEO of The Coca-Cola Company.

For more information, visit goizueta.emory.edu.

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