Family Guide
to
The Arizona Blue Chip Program
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Phase II Eco Theme posing for a quick photo before completing their theme class community service project
Letter from the Blue Chip Director

Dear Blue Chip Family Member,

We would like to welcome you and your student to Phase I of the Arizona Blue Chip Program...known usually just as Blue Chip! My name is Tina Wesanen-Neil and I am the Director of Blue Chip and have been for the past 5 years. You may be wondering, what is Blue Chip and what can we expect? The answers to many of your questions can be found in this Family Guide. And if you have more questions please feel free to send us an email at arizonabluechip@gmail.com.

Definition of Blue Chip

Blue Chip (bloo chip) n. 1. A stock that sells at a high price because of public confidence in its long record of steady earnings. 2. An extremely valuable asset or property. 3. A program designed to certify the top student leaders on campus as “Arizona Blue Chips,” the finest graduates The University of Arizona can inspire.

The Arizona Blue Chip Program is a four-year comprehensive leadership enrichment program designed to build leaders who desire to make a difference. Since 1999, with the induction of the first 238 members, the Arizona Blue Chip Program has gained exposure and recognition within the University, Tucson, the state of Arizona, and in many other places all over the nation. What was once a dream to inspire student leaders has now evolved into one of The University of Arizona’s finest campus programs.

Blue Chip is what we call the “ultimate adventure” in leadership development at The University of Arizona! The program is nationally recognized and is one of kind in the country. We, do however, have a sister program at the University of Wollongong in Australia. Over the past several years, we have experienced phenomenal success with Blue Chip and we look to continue our momentum throughout this year. We are extremely proud that your student has chosen to join us in this experience and, as promised, we hope to challenge your student in ways that are both fun and personally rewarding.

As a family member of a Blue Chip student, we hope that you will support your student in this leadership journey. You can do so by reading our quarterly newsletters, joining us at Family Weekend, and simply asking them what they are doing in Blue Chip this semester. Please read through this packet to find out what Phase I (the first year of the program) is all about, how you can support the program and your student, and what the financial commitment is for participating in the program.

Blue Chip has the potential to be one of the more personally fulfilling things your student can do at The University of Arizona. Through participation in Blue Chip, students will make a difference on our campus and in the lives of their peers. Each year Blue Chip develops over 400 leaders who contribute over 4000 hours of community service. We look forward to working with your student to be a leader who makes a difference!

Sincerely,

Tina Wesanen-Neil
Director of the Arizona Blue Chip Program
What is Blue Chip?

The Arizona Blue Chip Program is a four-year leadership development program that combines academic leadership courses and extracurricular activities to enhance leadership knowledge and skills. The program integrates self-reflection, skill development, community service, social justice education, teambuilding, career development, and event planning to help students learn, practice, and engage in leadership for social change. Blue Chip is designed to help students gain self-awareness and an awareness of the world around them. Blue Chip does not define leadership as positional, but as a relational process. For that reason we believe not only that everyone has the opportunity to learn and grow into a leader, but that everyone has a responsibility to be a leader.

The Blue Chip Mission: “Build Leaders Who Make a Difference”

Values of Blue Chip: The four core values of our program reflect the program’s components and the way in which leadership is viewed within the program:

- **Integrity**: Knowing the difference between right and wrong and doing the right thing all the time... even when no one is watching.

- **Diversity**: Leaders are inclusive, first through awareness of self, expanding to include awareness of others, and becoming multiculturally competent.

- **Service**: It's not about me, it's about us. Leaders care about people and seek to enhance the lives of those around them. By serving others, leaders serve themselves.

- **Excellence**: Understanding your capabilities and limitations and then doing your best all the time... accepting nothing less.

How Does Blue Chip Differ from other University Activities?

- **Blue Chip** is a university program, not a student club, and is staffed by 4 professional staff members and 2 part time leadership coordinators. Blue Chip has a meeting space, computer workstations, student staff workspaces, and gathering areas for all Blue Chip students to use. The Blue Chip space is located in the Center for Student Involvement & Leadership on the fourth floor of the Student Union.

- **Blue Chip** gives students the knowledge and skills to be effective leaders in any context. Many Blue Chip students are also leaders in clubs, fraternities/sororities, student government, and other organizations. They use the leadership skills they learn in Blue Chip to help them engage in effective leadership practices in these roles.

- **Blue Chip** has received national recognition for its contributions to Leadership Development. During the past decade, the Arizona Blue Chip Program has been recognized locally and nationally as a leader in higher education and as major benchmark for other leadership development programs around the nation.

  - Blue Chip was featured as one of only a handful of model leadership programs in the U.S. in The Handbook for Student Leadership Programs (Komives, Dugan, Owen, Slack, & Wagner, 2006).

  - Blue Chip was used for a pilot study for the Leadership Identity Development (LID) Model by Susan Komives (University of Maryland), Felicia Mainella (Peace College), Julie E. Owen (George Mason University), and Wendy Wagner (University of Maryland). This model is well documented and used in the field of leadership.
What Do Students Have to Say?

About the program:

“Blue Chip has allowed me to find a community on campus that makes me feel at home and allows me to make a positive change in the world. I have been lucky enough to have diverse experiences that highlight the program’s core values of Service, Integrity, Diversity, and Excellence. My experience at The University of Arizona has been phenomenal thanks to this dynamic and unique program.”

~ Chelsey Belmer, Blue Chip Alum

“Blue Chip gives students all the tools and opportunities to shape them into the leaders they want to be.”

~ Michelle Faas, Blue Chip Alum

“I attended a Capstone project, in which a fourth year Blue Chip member recounts their experience, and I realized in the coming years there were so many great things to come. I truly cannot wait for my next year in Blue Chip and all the wonderful experiences to come.”

~ Brendan Devine, 1st year Blue Chip Student

“As a person who normally keeps to herself, Blue Chip has given me the strength to expand my comfort zone and become a confident leader.”

~ Jenna Wild, 2nd year Blue Chip Student

“Blue chip has been a great experience; it’s where I have met many long-term friends that I will definitely keep in contact after my undergraduate career. The third phase is where I have had the most memorable experience! You attend a 3-day retreat called EQUISS where you learn about social justice and it’s where you really get to know everyone in your phase on a personal level and become great friends with those who you were previously just acquainted with. I will be in phase four next year and although I am not sure what’s ahead of me I know that it will be an unforgettable experience since the past three years have provided just that.”

~ Reynaldo Hernandez, 3rd year Blue Chip student

Blue Chip students with the former U of A President at the annual Leadership Service Showcase
Meet the Staff

Tina Wesanen-Neil, Director of Blue Chip
Eco Theme Coordinator
Tina was born and raised in Rhode Island. Her passions are for leadership, social justice, and outdoor education. She has earned two degrees from the University of Rhode Island, a B.S. in Accounting and an M.S. in College Student Personnel. She has served as the Director of Blue Chip since 2008.

Dr. Corey Seemiller, Director of Leadership Programs
Corey has been at the U of A and with Blue Chip since 2002. She loves leadership programs and getting to know students through her classes and programs. Corey received her Bachelor’s degree from Arizona State University, her Master’s degree from Northern Arizona University, and her Ph.D. from The University of Arizona.

Jessica Crombie, Director of ATLAS and NCLC
Jess Crombie, Sr. Coordinator for Leadership Community Development Theme Coordinator
Jess has worked at the U of A for many years as the Leadership Coordinator for Residence Life but has served in many volunteer capacities with Leadership Programs during that time such as course instructor, ODK advisor, and Equiss staff member. After receiving her Master’s degree from Ball State University, she began working at The University of Arizona in Residence Life, until 2013 when she joined the Leadership Programs team.

Meghan Grace, Coordinator for Leadership Social Entrepreneurship Theme Coordinator
Meghan graduated from Chapman University in Orange, California with a B.A. in Communication Studies. Currently she is pursuing her M.A. in Higher Education at the University of Arizona. She is the Blue Chip Social Entrepreneurship Theme Coordinator and oversees Phase III of the Blue Chip program.

Devon Thomas, Coordinator for Leadership Admissions and Global Theme Coordinator
Devon grew up in Rochester, New York and graduated from The College at Brockport, SUNY with a B.S. in Psychology. Currently she is pursuing her M.A. in Higher Education at the University of Arizona. Devon is responsible for Blue Chip Admissions and she also teaches courses in the Minor in Leadership Studies and Practice.

Our staff can be reached via our program email: arizonabluechip@gmail.com

For more information on our other leadership programs please visit www.leadershipandsocialchange.org
Phase I: Engage
How your student will engage in leadership development in Phase I

**Fall Semester**

**Opening Event:** Students attend a welcome back program for all Blue Chip students on the Sunday before classes start. *(August 25, 2013)*

**Weekly Team Meetings:** Students attend meetings in a small team facilitated by a Blue Chip Team Leader covering topics such as time management, personal leadership styles, and wellness. *(Dates set by team)*

**Symposium:** Students participate in a mini-conference where they learn about being a role model and a leader. They learn more about Phase I as well as other topics including how to protect your reputation online and teambuilding. *(September 8, 2013)*

**Blue Chip Meet-ups:** Students attend 2 meet-ups planned for and by Blue Chip students. *(Dates TBA)*

**Field Day:** Students participate in a half-day event where their Phase I teams engage in a variety of team-based activities. *(September 29, 2013)*

**Blue Sync:** Students participate in a lip-sync competition with their team to practice collaborating with others. *(October 25, 2013)*

**Team Service Project:** With their team, students complete a service project on an issue of the team’s choice. *(Dates set by team)*

**Spring Semester**

**Blue Chip Forum:** Students attend a gathering for all Blue Chip students where they receive updates about Blue Chip as well as attend sessions on personal and professional development. *(January 26, 2014)*

**Foundations of Leadership Class:** In the spring, students take a 3-credit leadership course with other Phase I students on leadership theories, social change, and how to engage in leadership. During the class, students complete a Leadership Portfolio and select their Blue Chip theme for Phase II. *(Students choose the class section that fits their schedule)*

**Theme Event:** Students attend 1 Theme Event during the Spring Semester. Theme Events are put on by Phase III students within the Arts, Eco, Global, Community Development, and Social Entrepreneurship themes and cover a particular topic of interest. *(Students choose one from over 15 events during the semester)*

**Spring Community Service:** Students complete 5 hours of community service of their choice during the Spring Semester. *(Date determined by student)*

**Mentor Selection:** Students select a mentor and meet with him or her to learn about each other. *(By the end of Spring semester)*

**Theater Sports:** Students participate in a team-based improv comedy competition to practice their public speaking skills and get to know other Phase I and II students. *(March 7, 2014)*

**Attend Case Competition Finals:** Students attend 1 of the 4 final presentations of the Phase II Case Competition. *(April 11, 2014)*

**Service Showcase:** Students attend this event to share their community service involvement for the year. *(April 24, 2014)*

**Leadership Recognition Ceremony:** Students can attend this event to receive their completion certificates and celebrate the end of the year. *(May 7, 2014)*

*For more information on the activities for Phases II-IV, check out our website at www.arizonabluechip.org.*
Blue Chip – A Program of Excellence

Blue Chip is unique.

- Blue Chip believes that leadership should be affordable, accessible, and inclusive in order to develop leadership capacity in all people. For that reason we believe that not only everyone has the opportunity to learn and grow into a leader, but that everyone has a responsibility to be a leader. Blue Chip has unique partnerships which provide opportunities for students to engage in both extra-curricular and curricular experiences to enhance knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors for effective leadership.
- Blue Chip students earn a minimum of 6 credits in leadership over their 4 years in the program as part a partnership with the Department of Educational Policy Studies & Practice. Many students apply some of these credits towards a minor in Leadership Studies & Practice.
- Students can transfer directly from Pima Community College or Paradise Valley Community College into Blue Chip Phase II because of a collaboration agreement between Blue Chip and their leadership programs.
- Students make a difference in the Tucson community by working with several local community partners each year and providing over 4000 hours of community service. Community partners include:
  - YWCA of Tucson
  - Pima County Attorney’s Office – Community Justice Boards
  - Local Tucson Schools: La Paloma Academy
  - Sahuaro Council of Girl Scouts
  - Watershed Management Group in conjunction with the Rincon Heights Neighborhood Association
  - Arizona Operation: Military Kids
  - Imagine Greater Tucson

Blue Chip students have higher levels of leadership competencies.

- Data from the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (2006) shows that compared to other University of Arizona students involved on campus but not in Blue Chip, Blue Chip students have higher levels of:
  - Understanding their own values and purpose in life
  - Acting with integrity
  - Ability to collaborate in teams
  - Ability to effectively handle conflict situations
  - Social responsibility
  - Appreciation of diversity

Blue Chip students learn to be self aware and socially responsible leaders.

- Participants in the Arizona Blue Chip Program were asked to self identify their learning and development through an assessment that measures a change in their leadership competencies. For the last 2 years:
  - 99% of Phases II, III, and IV students indicated that participating in Blue Chip increased their understanding of being a socially responsible community member.
  - 94% of Phase I students indicated that participating in Blue Chip increased their self awareness.

Blue Chip can benefit a student’s future career.

- Participation in a college leadership program can increase students’ leadership skills for personal, academic, and career development. All 49 academic accrediting organizations regardless of career field expect their students to be able to engage in effective leadership upon graduation.\(^1\) In addition, students with higher levels of leadership skills are also better prepared for competing in a highly skilled workforce and viewed more favorably by employers in the hiring process.\(^2\)

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Staying Connected
How to stay connected to Blue Chip and contribute to the program

Stay Updated with Blue Chip
Blue Chip wants to keep our students’ families involved with their experience. Here are some ways you as a family member can keep tabs on what is going on!

arizonabluechip.org
• Check out the Blue Chip website for pictures, updates, and other information about the program.

facebook.com/AZBlueChip
• Like us on Facebook for event updates and to connect with other Blue Chip students.

Newsletter
• Blue Chip sends out a quarterly newsletter to family members and alumni to keep them in touch with program events, reminders about projects, and announcements for upcoming activities.

Family Weekend BBQ-October 18, 2013
• Every year Blue Chip hosts a BBQ on Family Weekend when we invite Blue Chip students and their families to meet other students in the program. The event takes place at our Living-Learning Community site, Pima Lodge Residence Hall, on the Friday of Family Weekend.

Support Blue Chip
Blue Chip is always open to any help and support that family members can offer to us. Here are some ways you as a family member can help the program in its mission to “build leaders who make a difference!”

Help us find workshop speakers
• Blue Chip offers small group chats between our students and influential leaders and figures within our community to talk about their leadership experiences and their positions in the community. If you know of someone that has an interesting experience as a leader, please refer us to him or her. We are always looking for individuals to speak to our students about their diverse experiences. Contact us at arizonabluechip@gmail.com.

Help us find service and internship opportunities
• Every year Blue Chip students do thousands of hours of community service and we are always looking for more projects to get our hands on. Our students are also always looking for more “hands on experiences” within their field of study. If you know of a great program or cause in the Tucson area that our students can get involved in, please contact us at arizonabluechip@gmail.com.

Donate
• The Arizona Blue Chip Program is self-supporting program; we do not receive any state funds or tuition dollars. Access to Blue Chip, however, does come at a cost to our students through a $350 per year fee in order to participate in this unique program. To keep the program as accessible as possible, we provide about 10-15 fee waivers per year for students who demonstrate a financial need. Any contributions to the program allow us to continue to offer fee waivers and to enhance our program in our efforts to build socially just leaders. If you are interested in donating to our program, please visit our website at www.arizonabluechip.com and click on the “donate now” button on the left of the screen.
Your Student’s Financial Responsibility

The Arizona Blue Chip Program requires students to pay a fee of $350 per year to participate in the program. This fee is used to cover some of the costs of staff and other materials associated with the operation of the program. It is the responsibility of your student to fulfill this financial requirement in order to participate in the Arizona Blue Chip Program. This fee is charged to your student’s Bursar account and can be paid in the same manner that tuition is paid for: by check, credit card, scholarships, grants, and loans. Your student is notified of this policy when he or she fills out the Program Agreement, which is the form your student fills out to agree to participate in the Blue Chip Program for the year, thus securing them a spot in the program. The following language is used in the Program Agreement in regards to the financial commitment:

“The fee posting for 2013-2014 will occur on the first Friday of classes (August 30th). If I [the student] decide I do not wish to participate in the Arizona Blue Chip Program, I must fill out an Exit Form (available on my OrgSync account) by 5pm on August 30, 2013 in order to not be charged the annual $350 Blue Chip fee. I must also return my unmarked Blueprint, leadership planner, and Blue Chip T-shirt by August 30, 2013 by 5pm or I will have a $20 replacement fee deducted from my refund. After 5pm on August 30, 2013, the $350 fee is nonrefundable. The $350 annual fee for Blue Chip will be charged to your bursars’s account each year by the first Friday of classes. If I choose to discontinue participation in the Arizona Blue Chip Program at any time, I will need to submit an Exit Form before the first Friday of classes (August 30, 2013) to avoid paying the upcoming yearly fee. Failure to submit an Exit Form by the first Friday of classes will result in a nonrefundable billing of the $350 fee.”

Your student is also notified of this commitment in their acceptance e-mail, welcome e-mail and at the Blue Chip Symposium when signing the Arizona Blue Chip Code of Conduct.

Why a $350 fee?
Blue Chip is a self-supporting program at The University of Arizona. The $350 per year fee covers only some of the costs for your student to participate in 1 year of the program. These costs include but are not limited to: professional staff; program materials for all events, classes, and meetings; t-shirt, planner, and Blueprint (your student’s guide to their Phase I experience); and access to assessments such as the Myers Briggs Type Indicator. All of these costs actually add up to approximately $500 per student per year. Through other supporting partnerships, we are able to offer Blue Chip to students at a subsidized rate of $350 per year.

Why is the $350 fee nonrefundable after the first Friday of classes?
Each year during the summer, Blue Chip recruits 250 students to become members of Phase I of the program. Once 250 students have been admitted for the incoming class, further applicants are deferred due to lack of space. Your student’s commitment to Blue Chip, through the Program Agreement Form, reserves one of these 250 spots in Phase I.

Blue Chip’s budget is based on the fees of a 250-person incoming class. Since Blue Chip does not receive state or university funding to offer this program, the program relies heavily on these student fees to pay for staffing, resources, materials, and even administrative costs like printing and phone calls. By the time classes have started, the fees from 250 Phase I students have been committed to pay for the staff and materials already purchased for the upcoming year.

The first of 3 major Blue Chip events for Phase I occurs on the first weekend after classes start. If a student Exits the program during the first week of classes, Blue Chip is able to, in many cases, admit a student on the waiting list and have the student attend that first major event and continue in Blue Chip to fill the vacancy. If your student decides to Exit the program after the first Friday of classes, the first major Blue Chip event has already occurred and there is not an opportunity to offer another student their spot thus resulting in both a budget shortfall and a lost opportunity for another student to participate.
We understand that sometimes students change their mind about their involvement, and that is why we offer the chance to Exit the program through the Friday of the first week of classes. However, beyond this time period, the program cannot refund any of the $350 fee.

Blue Chip is committed to providing methods to assist students in paying their Blue Chip fee. If your student needs financial assistance to participate in the Blue Chip Program, there are two options:

- **Fee Waiver Application**: Your student can fill out this form to be considered for a full or partial fee waiver for one year of the program. They will have to re-apply each year they want to be considered for a fee waiver. The scholarship application can be found on the website at [www.arizonabluechip.org](http://www.arizonabluechip.org).

- **Payment Plan Application**: The Payment Plan Option is available to students who have financial aid and/or family/personal budgeting conflicts with having the $350 fee charged in total at the beginning of the Fall semester. The payment plan will entail the fee being split into two segments. $175 will be charged to the Bursar's account in the Fall and $175 will be charged in the Spring. If your student is on a Payment Plan and exits the program in the fall, they will still be responsible for paying the other half of the fee in the Spring. The payment plan application can be found on the website at [www.arizonabluechip.org](http://www.arizonabluechip.org).

If your student decides to Exit the program, it is his or her responsibility to fill out an Exit Form on OrgSync (the Blue Chip Program’s online platform) and notify our staff of their exiting. If this process is completed no later than the first Friday of classes, your student will receive a full refund as long as they return their unmarked Blueprint, unworn t-shirt, and unmarked planner. Students who qualify for a full refund but do not return these materials will have a refund of $330. **There will be no refunds if a student Exits the program after the first Friday after classes begin.**

If students misplace any materials necessary to complete the requirements for the program it is his or her responsibility to replace those materials at his or her own cost.
Frequently Asked Questions

What is the time commitment for Blue Chip?

- In the Fall semester, Blue Chip is about a 2-3 hour a week time commitment. Most weeks, students are only attending their 1 hour a week Team meeting. The additional hours are for the few Friday, Saturday, or Sunday events that occur during the semester including Opening Event, Symposium, Field Day, and Blue Sync. All of these events are scheduled in advance and your student is notified of them several times in the application process, at the start of the semester, and throughout the semester. Students receive a planner at Opening Event that contains all these dates and Blue Chip posts these dates on OrgSync, the program's online organizational platform.
- In the Spring semester, your student will take a 3 credit leadership course, thus the time commitment will change to 2.5 hours in class per week plus class assignments and readings. In an effort to compensate for this time, the Blue Chip Program has incorporated many of the Spring requirements into the class. There are still a few outside class events including: Forum, Theater Sports, and Service Showcase. Like the Fall event dates, these dates are already set and posted in advance.

Who can your student speak with if he or she has questions?

- During the Fall semester of Phase I, students are led by a Team Leader who is a Phase III student in the program. If your student has any questions, his or her Team Leader is usually the best person to start with because of how often they interact with each other. In addition, the Blue Chip Director and other Blue Chip staff members are always interested in meeting with and getting to know your student.

If your student can’t make it to a required event, what does he or she do?

- Students should speak with a Blue Chip staff member prior to the event to make arrangements for their absence and to find an appropriate make-up event.
- If your student missed an event without notifying a Blue Chip staff member ahead of time, he or she must contact a Blue Chip staff member as soon as possible following the event. He or she will be responsible for making arrangements to make up the missed event, sometimes resulting in an additional cost for your student.

How does my student receive communication from Blue Chip?

- Blue Chip has an online organizational platform called OrgSync, which operates similar to Facebook, but is designed to serve organizations. Most student programs, clubs/organizations, and fraternities/sororities at The University of Arizona use OrgSync.
  - OrgSync allows Blue Chip to send messages to students, create events and calendars, post documents, and interact with students through discussions posts.
  - Your student will be given an OrgSync account at the start of the Fall semester and will be taught how to check their calendar for events, fill out event completion forms, send and respond to messages, and use the additional features such as the Resume Builder, the E-Portfolio, and the Leadership & Involvement Transcript.
  - OrgSync also allows your student to engage with other students on OrgSync through messaging, discussions, polls, and to-do lists.

Can my student leave UA to participate in an internship, study abroad, or National Student Exchange while in Blue Chip?

- The Arizona Blue Chip Program encourages students to take advantage of learning opportunities that may be away from The University of Arizona for a semester or year. Your student should submit a Blue Chip Temporary Leave of Absence Form on OrgSync and work with a Blue Chip staff member to make arrangements to continue in Blue Chip upon return to the program.