Creating the Leaders of Tomorrow Today
BY SUSAN REESE

“If your actions inspire others
to dream more, learn more, do
more and become more, you are
a leader.” Those words from one
of our founding fathers, John Quincy Ad-
ams, could perfectly describe the advisers
and students of our Career and Technical
Student Organizations (CTSOs). Students
who participated in CTSOs have gone on
to become leaders in business, education
and public service in our nation. Among
former CTSO members are university
presidents, governors, U.S. Congressmen
and Senators, and a former President of
the United States, FFA member Jimmy
Carter. Who are the students of today’s
CTSOs, and what great destinies are in
store for them? Just learning a little about
the national officers of our CTSOs brings
hope for the future of our nation.

Business Professionals of America

Business Professionals of America (BPA)
National Secondary President Brian
Kelleher is a freshman at the University
of Delaware, where he is studying politi-
cal science and economics with a minor
in legal studies. He previously served as
the national treasurer of the Secondary
Division. For the past six years, he has
been an active member of BPA from the
middle level all the way to postsecondary.
He has served as an officer on the local
and state levels as well. He is a three-time
Ambassador Torch Award Recipient,
two-time Member Recruiter of the Year, a
BPA Merit Scholar, and a WeSeed Social
Circle Challenge winner.

In high school, Kelleher served as
class president and president of Students
Against Destructive Decisions. He was
also involved in the National Honor
Society, Math League, and Mock Trial.
Kelleher is majoring in political science in
hopes of attaining a joint MBA/JD, and
one day becoming a successful corporate
lawyer. Kelleher says, “Through BPA I
have gained the ability, knowledge and
know-how to appropriately conduct myself
in a professional setting while exceeding
the expectations of those I am serving.”

BPA College/Postsecondary President
Micah Hopper joined BPA in 2008 and
has been active in leadership ever since.
He has served as local chapter president,
state president and now the national
president. He has received the Ambas-
sador Award and has placed in the top 10
each year at Nationals in his competitive
events. He has been active in his commu-
nity as an assistant speech coach, volun-
teer assistant football coach, youth group
leader, advisory member of the Economic
Development Authority and through Big
Buddies.

In addition to being a father of three
small children as well as a foster daughter,
Hopper is a business owner and attends
Minnesota West Community and Tech-
nical College in Jackson as a full-time
student. He will have numerous computer
degrees after graduating, as well as a busi-
ness degree, all of which will help him in
his computer consulting business. “BPA
has given me the opportunity to make
a difference in people’s lives by helping
them grow as leaders,” Hopper says. “It
has also given me the leadership experi-
ence that I was looking for to be a success-
ful business owner.”

DECA

DECA High School Division President
Kurtis Conkel, a graduate of Lincoln
East High School, in Lincoln, Nebraska,
began his DECA involvement during his
freshman year. He was the vice president
of public relations for East DECA and
won the state conference in restaurant and
food service management (RFSM) dur-
ing his junior year. He was the vice
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ing his junior year. He served as the vice
president of alumni collegiate DECA ser-
vice for Nebraska DECA, also winning
at the state conference in RFSM at the
beginning of his senior year. At Lincoln
East High School and in the community
of Lincoln, Conkel has been involved in
the Lincoln East Student Council, the

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National Honor Society, Youth Leadership Lincoln, Varsity Track and Field, Varsity Swimming and was an East Ambassador. He is an intern for *Strictly Business Magazine*.

Collegiate DECA President Josh Shankle is a student at Northwood University in Cedar Hill, Texas. After taking a year off to serve the members of Collegiate DECA, Shankle will continue pursuing his bachelor’s degree as a marketing major with a minor in finance. He began his DECA career in 2004 at Haltom High School in Haltom City, Texas, where he served as chapter president and won competitions at the state level in five different events. He highlighted his high school DECA experience by serving as the state vice president for Texas DECA. As a student at Northwood University, in addition to his DECA activities, Shankle has served in the Student Government Association and was selected to serve as a Royal Ambassador for the university. He plans to graduate in 2012 and continue to pursue his passion for DECA as a high school marketing teacher and DECA adviser.

“Collegiate DECA has offered me countless leadership opportunities,” says Shankle. “Whether working with my chapter, state officer teams, a partner in competition or now the national officer team, I have grown as a leader in numerous ways.”

**The National FFA Organization**

National FFA President Riley Pagett attends Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, where he majors in agricultural communications and religious studies. While in high school, Pagett was a member of the National Honor Society, the Spanish National Honor Society and he served as class president. In 2008, Pagett was elected the Oklahoma FFA Association’s state vice president. He has also been involved actively in his college through the Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity, the Oklahoma State President’s Leadership Council, and Collegiate FFA.

As an FFA member, Pagett participated in the Public Speaking Career Development Event, attended the Washington Leadership Conference and had a diversified livestock operation, which included swine, beef and goats. Pagett says, “My membership in FFA has allowed me to experience real, tangible leadership—looking others in the eye when spoken to, shaking hands firmly, holding the door open and practicing manners, recognizing the potential of others and drawing on that potential, delegating work, using time efficiently, allowing others to occasionally take the lead, speaking confidently, remaining flexible, respecting others, remembering the past, making wise decisions, overcoming obstacles, and...”
rising to the call of action when others need you to really serve them.”

Postsecondary Agriculture Association

Postsecondary Agriculture Association (PAS) National President Courtney Peterson attends South Dakota State University (SDSU) in Brookings, South Dakota. She will graduate this month with bachelor of science degrees in agricultural business and agriculture and resource economics. Through her enrollment in the accelerated master’s program at SDSU, she was able to get a head start on her master’s of science in agricultural economics, and upon graduation will have 12 credits completed for her master’s, in addition to her undergraduate courses.

“The agricultural industry is full of outstanding individuals with incredible stories,” says Peterson. “I plan to continue making sure that those stories get heard. Assisting others to reach their full potential is a powerful thing, and the opportunities to do just that are abundant in agriculture.”

Future Business Leaders of America-Phi Beta Lambda

Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) National President Trever Eymard, a senior at South Lafourche High School in Cut Off, Louisiana, has served as his high school’s FBLA chapter president and as Louisiana FBLA state president. In March of 2010, Eymard made history as the first LAFBLA state president to be re-elected to a second term in office. He currently retains that office, in addition to being senior editor of his school paper, executive adviser of the Math and Science Club, and vice president of the National Honor Society. He is also a Hugh O’Brien Youth Leadership (HOBY) alumnus and serves Louisiana Boys State as their 2010-2011 governor.

Eymard says, “FBLA has given me the tools to develop my sense of professionalism and active leadership; and by way of this incredible experience, I’ve learned to live a more passionate and successful life.”

Phi Beta Lambda (PBL) National President Spencer Behrend currently attends Brigham Young University in Utah. During the two years that he has been a PBL member, he has received seven first place awards and one second place award on the state level of competition. He was on the dean’s list for four consecutive semesters at Utah Valley University and was last year’s Utah representative for Who’s Who in PBL. He also served as Utah’s PBL state president during the 2009-2010 membership year. While serving in this capacity, he created new programs that helped the members of Utah PBL experi-
ence more success in the organization.

“My leadership role within FBLA-PBL has granted me countless professional learning opportunities,” Behrend says. “I have developed the abilities to build, lead and work with teams of people from diverse backgrounds. I have also strengthened my networking and communication skills while connecting with members from all over the country. These qualities will benefit me throughout my career—employers have already taken notice and consistently express how much they value my teamwork and leadership experience.”

**Health Occupations Students of America**

Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA) National President Claire Lucas joined HOSA as a freshman at Mooresville High School, North Carolina. She competed in the Creative Problem Solving and Career Health Display; Lucas is also a National Recognition Service Project recipient for her contribution to her chapter for establishing an annual event to raise funds and awareness for those living with cystic fibrosis. Other experiences include The HOSA Internship in the Office of the Surgeon General and The HOSA Washington Leadership Academy.

Now a college sophomore, she attends North Carolina State University on the Park Scholarship and as a University Scholar. Lucas is an industrial engineer concentrating in health systems engineering and biomechanics. She wants to enhance the efficiency of healthcare processes such as operating room scheduling or the fitting of prosthetic limbs. She also engages in service-learning as the associate director for Triangle Youth Leadership Services, an organization that encourages and prepares students to become leaders and effectuate positive change in the community through conferences run by students for students. She is also a member of the ShoeManity Team, a project dedicated to providing shoes to children in the Dominican Republic and Haiti so they can attend school.

Lucas says that throughout her journey, she discovered HOSA members share one thing in common—the desire to better the world at whatever cost. She sees these individuals as exemplifying John Maxwell’s words, “A great leader’s courage to fulfill his vision comes from passion, not position.”

**SkillsUSA**

SkillsUSA High School President Katie Grimnes is an industrial engineering student attending Weatherwax High School in Aberdeen, Washington. After completing her studies, she plans to work as an electrician and eventually open her own business.

SkillsUSA College/Postsecondary President Sam Soto is a computer technology student attending Tennessee Technology Center at Knoxville. He hopes to work as an IT support technician after graduation, but eventually plans to become an educator. “Being a member of SkillsUSA has taught me that I do not have to have a position to be a leader,” says Soto. “I view leadership as helping people and building each other up. When we build up others, we build a better world.”

**Technology Student Association**

National Technology Student Association (TSA) President Zachary Barnes is from Laurel Hill, North Carolina, and attends Scotland High School where he is a senior. After high school he plans to double major in religion and political science. He is involved in many activities and is a great representative of the ways in which TSA fosters personal growth, leadership, and opportunities in technology, innovation, design and engineering.

**The Role of Advisers**

Behind every great student leader is a great adviser, and CTSO advisers are of-
ten unsung heroes who devote their time, energy, knowledge and skills to their students. They instill in these young people the confidence to take on leadership roles in their chapters and in their national organizations. This confidence, along with the academic knowledge and the technical and life skills that are taught in career and technical education classrooms, will help create the leaders of tomorrow.

Explore More
For more information about CTSOs and how they foster leadership skills in career and technical education students, please visit these Web sites.

Business Professionals of America
www.bpa.org
DECA/Delta Epsilon Chi
www.deca.org
Family, Career and Community Leaders of America
www.fcclainc.org
The National FFA Organization
www.ffa.org
National Postsecondary Agricultural Student Organization
www.nationalpas.org
Future Business Leaders of America-Phi Beta Lambda
www.fbla-pbl.org
Health Occupations Students of America
www.hosa.org
SkillsUSA
www.skillsusa.org
Technology Student Association
www.tsaweb.org