

## Sample Organization Leadership Award Application Responses

*\*\*sample responses below pulled from a combination of different applications with student and organization names changed for anonymity\*\**

[specific notes about why an answer is strong marked in bold face type with the notes and feedback in brackets]

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**What is the mission of your organization? What distinguishes your organization from the many other student organizations on campus? (500 words max)**

**Sample Application Response:**

The mission of the Buckeye Society of Future Engineers (BSFE) is the OSU chapter of an international organization that empowers students to achieve full potential in careers as engineers and leaders, expands the image of the engineering and technology professions as a positive force in improving quality of life, and demonstrates the value of diversity and inclusion. **The Ohio State University section of BSFE narrows this mission towards supporting engineering students to achieve their full potential while in college and prepare them for opportunities post-graduation. The end mission and vision of this organization is that all engineering students graduate from Ohio State as confident engineers and individuals, with the skills to be valuable contributors and leaders.** [explanation of mission is clear, concise, and specific to the organization. It discusses both the vision and impact of the organization.]

**BSFE is one of the largest organizations in the College of Engineering with both a graduate and undergraduate student chapter** [discusses a specific way the organization stands out from its peers]. If a student is looking for a supportive group of engineers, there is a place for them in this organization. Additionally, we provide a multitude of opportunities and resources. **Our programs include mentorship through Big-Little, an award-winning Professional Development series, an Early Leader Ambassador Program, LGBTQ+ & Allies and other affinity groups, and opportunities to attend conferences put on by BSFE. Our events cater towards members' educational, social, professional development, and mentorship needs.** [Gets specific about the detail programs the organization offers as well as their goals.] BSFE also hosts large events throughout the year, including the Engineering Ball and BSFE Career Fair (both of which are open to the entire College of Engineering), the Wellness Retreat, and a Dress for Success Fashion Show. Seeing as most members and leaders in BSFE are in engineering, we understand what it is to have a busy course load. To participate in the Ohio State section of BSFE, there are no dues or required meetings - we encourage members to attend what will benefit them and what they have time for. **Through BSFE's events and programs, we develop our members as a whole person, not just someone engaged in one particular topic. This organization is distinguished through its accessibility, welcoming and supportive community, variety of events, and plethora of leadership opportunities.** [Identifies specific ways the organization stands out]

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**What specific steps or programs does your organization engage with to promote member development? (for examples of areas in which an organization can develop members, please reference the Student Organization Success Framework)**

### Sample Application Response:

Buckeye Society of Future Engineers (BSFE) is particularly driven by the leadership development of members. Our primary leadership team in 2022-2023 consists of 4 executive board members, 14 officers across 13 positions, and an ever-growing panel of chairs. The 19 primary BSFE leaders participate in a Strategic Planning event three times per year, in which the section determines the short- and long-term goals for the section and aligns on how to achieve these goals. **The directors also participate in Officer Training to help them grow into their roles and understand what is expected of them as a leader.**

**[Identifies a specific way officers develop their leadership]** Monthly, the 15 officers meet with their assigned executive board member to discuss their progress into the year, and the executive board member is able to give them feedback and guidance regarding their performance in their role. **Officer Training, Strategic Planning, and Monthly Check-Ins are crucial to BSFE, as they provide space to evaluate one's strengths and weaknesses and grow as a leader within the organization. [Identifies how member development is part of the organization's culture.]**

**Further removed from the primary leadership team is the recently rebranded Early-Leader Ambassador Program (ELAP). [organization explicitly addresses development of new members]** Initially entitled Freshmen Ambassador Program, this selective team was intended to give a small group of promising new BSFE members the opportunity to get an inside look at the inner workings of BSFE leadership. The members of ELAP participate in frequent leadership-driven meetings in which they learn to evaluate themselves from the framework of the BSFE Leadership Competency Model and to realistically consider their strengths and weaknesses as they relate to leadership. **This program also entails presentations from BSFE leaders, covering a variety of topics including Budgeting, Effective Communication, Presentation Skills, Planning an Event, and Overall Leadership Competency. [Direct explanation of leadership development within the organization]**

BSFE prioritizes the professional development of our members as well. Each semester, we hold numerous professional-based events in collaboration with corporate sponsors. These programs often include resume reviews, mock interviews, elevator pitch preparation, and an overall career fair preparation. **Each year since its creation, the program has grown in size and success. [Demonstrates progression over time.]** As we host the BSFE Career Fair each spring, these events are vital in ensuring our members find success. Finally, BSFE utilizes several formal and informal recognition systems to promote personal, professional, and leadership development. **BSFE gives out annual scholarships to members that demonstrate commitment to the organization and leadership development. BSFE recognized 36 active members in FY21 with scholarships; the recipients included directors, chairs, ELAP members, and general body members. [Member recognition system that applies to all organization members, not just officers.]** Ohio State BSFE also incorporates social media spotlights into active practices as an informal recognition system; where we highlight active members, rising BSFE leadership, involved mentor/mentee pairings, and more. One of BSFE's primary goals and priorities is the development of section members, as we strive to build up our members to be strong professionals and leaders, and the section is particularly intentional regarding Leadership Development at all levels of leadership.

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**Application: What success and/or improvements has your organization made in organization operations during this past year? (For more examples of areas in which an organization can excel in terms of operations, please reference the Student Organization Success Framework)**

**Sample Application Response:**

This past year BSFE has made many improvements both to our internal processes and our external efforts. **Internally, we have kept the wellness of our executive board members as a top priority. In past years we have had members of our organization's leadership team become overwhelmed and overworked within their roles. In an attempt to prevent this from happening again, one thing we did was organize the roles on our board by adding more roles to balance the workload better. In addition to this, we have updated from monthly e-board meetings to biweekly e-board meetings to keep meetings from getting overwhelmingly long. [Identifies specific parts of the Success Framework where the organization has made improvements this year.]** At these meetings, we give attention to each e-board member to update the others on their progress, as well as how they can be supported. We also emphasize working sessions in these meetings to ensure we do not overwhelm leadership with an increasing action items list. **Outside of our meetings, each e-board member is checked on periodically and given a safe space to be able to ask for support from other leaders in BSFE whenever they are faced with a major, upcoming event or stress from other facets of their lives. [Identifies member wellbeing even in organization operations.]**

Another improvement we have made in the organization this year falls in the realm of BSFE's financial wellness. **We have made a concerted effort to expand our funding sources and take advantage of resources that are available to us that we had not been using in the past. [Identified a specific area for growth that is named in the Success Framework.]** This effort was sparked by the return of the Society of Future Engineers National Gathering to an in-person setting. BSFE takes a group of members to the National Gathering each year, and with the conference returning to Orlando the costs of attendance skyrocketed. **This change prompted our e-board to realize we needed to increase our fundraising efforts, start thinking about expenses earlier on, and think ahead about funding for future years to promote the long-term financial health of BSFE. [Connects change in organization operations to member wellbeing and engagement.]**

One last improvement we have made is expanding the network of student organizations that we collaborate with during the year. **In the past couple of years, BSFE has focused more on collaboration with other engineering student organizations, such as [examples]. This year, we have continued to collaborate with these organizations but have also made an effort to connect with computer science-specific organizations that we have not worked with recently. [Specific about intentional collaboration efforts from past and present.]** Specifically, we hosted a CSE Halloween Social with Code 4 Community, AI Club, Women in Cybersecurity, Cybersecurity Club, and Competitive Programming Club. There, members of all of our organizations were able to network and socialize with other students in computing-related majors. As an organization, we take every opportunity to reflect and learn from our past experiences so we can continue to grow.

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**In what ways has your organization made an effort during the past year to engage with the student organization, university, and/or broader community? (for examples of areas in which an organization can engage with the community, please reference the Student Organization Success Framework)**

**Sample Application Response:**

**BSFE has made a commitment to facilitating members' connections across different student organizations through collaborative social mixers, outreach events, and panels. With group messaging and promotion of other clubs' meetings, our executive board has built mutually beneficial relationships and broadened our network. We frequently hold events with other student organizations in the College of Engineering and engineering organizations in general, like our [examples]. BSFE has also held collaborative events with other Computer Science organizations like our [examples]. [Specific explanations of ways the organization engages within their own community and the student organization community.]** Our leadership team also actively engages with the Engineering Department, attending the Engineering Leadership retreat each year as well as having two members acting as liaisons to the department. Additionally, our president represents BSFE on the college's Equity & Inclusion Council. The council's purpose is to support the Dean and senior leadership in identifying actionable inclusive excellence activities, monitoring the progress of strategic plans, and recommending practices to promote an equitable, just, and welcoming environment in the COE. **There, our president is able to review and provide feedback to the leadership on DEI initiatives and priorities for undergraduate and graduate students in the college. [Demonstrates impact of community engagement]** Furthermore, our executive board members have attended CSE department town hall meetings to keep up to date on department news and advocate for CSE students and student organizations.

**BSFE is able to engage with the broader Columbus community through outreach event partnerships with local organizations and relationships with companies in the area. So far this year we have hosted K-12 coding workshops with 4-H and the Columbus Metropolitan Library, to introduce students to different computer science concepts who may not otherwise have gotten that opportunity. [Specific example of community engagement beyond Ohio State.]** Additionally, our community outreach coordinator and president were able to travel to a local high school and speak to a class about the CSE program here at Ohio State. In the realm of company events, we maintain relationships with various companies around the Columbus area and beyond. This year we have hosted events like a Top-Golf social with JPMorgan Chase and a discussion about Mental Health in the Workplace with CapTech.

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**If your organization has received this award before, what have you done differently to continue to improve as an organization since then?**

**Sample Application Response:**

**BSFE has received this award in the past, and we have since grown our organization through membership initiatives, back-end changes, financial improvements, and the improvement of BSFE Affinity Groups. [Identifies specific areas where the organization has driven to improve.]** A number of membership initiatives have been improved recently, including the Early Leader Ambassador Program and Membership Spotlight. **We've grown in our efforts to recruit Regional Campus and Transfer**

students, and we've even had Columbus State Community College students attend our general body events to connect with a larger community of future engineers. We've also sought to improve our alumni engagement both near and far, by holding events like our Conference Alumni Dinner, in which we connected with 12 alumni at the Society of Future Engineers National Gathering. [Identifies specific populations the organization has improved outreach to.] We've improved several back-end functions as well, including our data tracking efforts, attendance record-keeping, and Key Performance Indicators.

Further, we have been curating a new application for Chair Applications and Conference Applications. In the past, we've relied solely on written applications that tend to reward members more for their writing style than their merit. **We've found that this often leads to strong candidates with limited writing ability not earning positions that they likely deserve. On the other side, it also leads to less qualified candidates receiving positions that they aren't ready for. Because of this, we're beginning to shift to a more interview-based style of applications for these roles. We're also creating "what-if" style case questions for chair positions, to help people with strong ideas and ambition earn positions.** [Identified a weakness in an organization process and updated it for equity purposes and to improve organization function.]

We've also modernized our scholarship program recently, particularly throughout the application process. Previously, scholarship applications were completed via Word Document downloaded from our newsletter, then submitted via email. This method was not particularly secure, and applications could easily be lost in a storm of emails. This year, we've shifted to a Google Form based application on a private Google Drive to ensure both privacy and security. **Finally, BSFE has made monumental changes to our organizational finances this year. We've restructured our sponsorship packet and more than doubled the financial contributions we've received from company sponsors. We've also started to widen our budgets for conferences and scholarships, to help even more members partake in the opportunities and resources BSFE provides.** [Identifies specific ways the organization made improvement in key organization operations since they last won this award.]