2020-2021 Fellow Handbook
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About PULSE

PULSE (Pittsburgh Urban Leadership Service Experience) “cultivates a community of young servant leaders to transform Pittsburgh”. PULSE invites talented university graduates to partner with Pittsburgh nonprofits for a year of service and leadership. PULSE fellows serve with a Pittsburgh nonprofit, live with other fellows in intentional community, and grow professionally and personally.

Core Purpose:
PULSE cultivates a community of young servant leaders to transform Pittsburgh.

Core Values:
- Engaging in the Possibility of the City
- The Transformative Power of Serving
- Celebrating the Creative Energy of Young Adults
- Building Strong and Enduring Relationships
- The Exploration and Development of Faith

Over the last 25 years, over 350 PULSE fellows have partnered with more than 175 Pittsburgh nonprofits, contributing some 500,000 of hours of service to the city and its residents. PULSE’s unique model which focuses on fellows, nonprofit partners, and city neighborhood has created lasting change in the lives of thousands of individuals and organizations.
Brief History:
In the early 1990s, PULSE founder John Stahl-Wert recognized that Pittsburgh was losing its young adults at a rapid rate. This loss of young adults contributed to a need for educated, skilled workers in the city’s nonprofit sector. At the same time, Stahl-Wert observed that recent college graduates across the nation were struggling to find creative, meaningful service opportunities, particularly in the arts.

In response to these needs, PULSE was formed in 1994 by John Stahl-Wert who was, at that time, pastor of the Pittsburgh Mennonite Church. He envisioned a program that would place talented, recent college graduates into meaningful organizations where they could apply their skills and passions. The fellows would live in an intentional community where they could process their experience in an urban environment.

Program Philosophy:

PULSE believes that the body, mind, and heart cannot be separated from each other, and that self-actualization is a holistic process toward the “goal” of self-transcendence that includes all of these of dimensions of the human being (in this instance, self-actualization refers to the process whereby one actualizes one’s full creative potential, and self-transcendence refers to the employment of that creative potential in service and leadership of others).

The three Program Pillars of PULSE – SERVE, LIVE, and GROW – correlate to mind, body, and heart, respectively:

- **SERVE (SERVE WITH A NONPROFIT)** - PULSE nurtures the minds of its fellows, allowing them to SERVE and flourish professionally by providing them with service, outreach, networking, and learning opportunities oriented towards the transformation of Pittsburgh.

- **LIVE (LIVE IN COMMUNITY)** - PULSE nurtures the embodiment of its fellows, allowing them to LIVE and flourish domestically by providing them with an intentional community, home, neighborhood, stipend, and other practical resources in the city of Pittsburgh.

- **GROW (GROW AS A LEADER)** - PULSE nurtures the heart of its fellows, allowing them to GROW and flourish personally by providing them with space for exploration, self-reflection, and storytelling as growing leaders in Pittsburgh.
Therefore, these three primary, interdependent components are fundamental to the PULSE program and serve to reinforce one another in achieving our mission – SERVE with a nonprofit, LIVE in community, GROW as a leader.

**SERVE with a Nonprofit:**

**Nonprofit Partnership**

PULSE fellows are people who have answered the call to serve. Nonprofit partnerships are the primary means through which they respond to this call from an occupational lens. Through the nonprofit partnership process, PULSE matches fellows with nonprofit organizations that are in need of their unique skills and passions. By collaborating with PULSE, nonprofit partners build much-needed capacity within their organizations and give the PULSE fellow a meaningful experience through which they can develop personally and professionally.

Nonprofit partnerships become the laboratory in which fellows learn from their colleagues, try new ideas and serve the community through their organization’s mission-based activities. PULSE encourages its fellows to communicate regularly with their nonprofit partner supervisors on what they are learning and how they can make a greater impact in their nonprofit partnership.

It is critical to maintain the proper perspective when it comes to nonprofit partnerships. Some of our nonprofit partners are small organizations where every staff member pitches in on larger tasks that may not fall directly in their area of responsibility. Whether it’s direct or indirect service, your primary role at your nonprofit partner is to help them achieve their mission and this will invariably require flexibility on your end. However, your nonprofit partnership is for 35 hours per week and this gives you adequate time to explore other opportunities during your PULSE experience.

**PULSEStart Event**

PULSE fellows come to Pittsburgh July 11th – 14th, 2020 for an introduction to PULSE staff and co-fellows, the PULSE community, and Pittsburgh. PULSE will also facilitate an interview opportunity for interested prospective nonprofit partners and accepted PULSE fellows on July 13, 2020 to determine where fellows will serve in the 2020-2021 year.

**Evaluation**

PULSE fellows complete mid-term and year-end evaluations concerning nonprofit partnerships, seminars, community living, and staffing. Staff members also conduct mid-year nonprofit partnership evaluations with fellows’ supervisors.

**Staff Role with Nonprofit Partnerships**

Staff will assist fellows in order to ensure the highest quality nonprofit partnership experience. Occasionally, such assistance results in staff communication with nonprofit partnership supervisors. Fellows are responsible to seek out staff involvement in how to effectively serve at their nonprofit partnership. Fellows should consult PULSE staff with any nonprofit partner change (or potential change) in nonprofit partner supervisor and/or position description.
LIVE in Community:

Intentional Community

Intentional community is a counter-cultural protest against the individualism and materialism that negatively impacts both individuals and communities. The community aspect of the program is designed to challenge the fellows to reach beyond themselves within a supportive environment. It provides a sustainable approach to meeting basic human needs and creates an atmosphere where fellows can work creatively together in the pursuit of common ends.

Community should be a source of comfort and challenge. Living with other young adults who are experiencing similar challenges provides a network of support that can be an effective antidote for alienation. Because of the varied interests and passions of each community member, shared experiences provide exposure and engagement to activities beyond the normal purview of an individual member. Community also can be a source of challenge because it forces individuals to think beyond their own needs, a very counter-cultural idea. For example, accommodating vegetarian diets when one is a committed carnivore forces everyone to think through their assumptions and think of new ways to prepare food. It also challenges individualistic approaches to faith exploration and encourages dialogue on the important social issues confronting emerging leaders.

In the PULSE program, intentionality is achieved through a multi-faceted approach. With the bulk of the monthly financial allotment held in a common account, fellows must practice effective community stewardship to meet the nutrition and transportation needs of all household members. The orientation, retreat and seminar requirements are also designed to foster community through recreational, intellectual and cultural activities. While these requirements set a minimum standard for community engagement, the true mark of success within community is the personal investment of each fellow into the other members of the community. Sharing personal resources, especially one’s time, creates strong human relationships that can be transformative. Being aware of the many distractions that take the individual away from community is a key to intentional community.

Intentional community forces individual fellows to think of the community’s needs before their own. While recognizing the need for individual perspectives and the temptation to sacrifice deeply held beliefs for community “peace”, special attention must be made in decision-making to ensure that all perspectives are heard and considered. Thus, consensus decision-making, as opposed to a simple majority vote, should be considered as the preferred means of community decisions. While it may take longer, peacemaking is often not the most efficient short-term option, but it’s far more just in the long run.

Choosing to live in intentional community provides fellows the opportunity to engage with others from diverse backgrounds and varying lifestyles. While this experience can be rewarding, some fellows may experience conflict. Please read Appendix A stating PULSE’s Diversity Statement. Keeping the following tips in mind may help fellows minimize, manage and resolve any conflict that may arise:

Complete the House Agreement:

- Program Coordinators may provide this agreement during the first week of the program.
- This agreement will help facilitate discussion about expectations for living together.

Establish ground rules that everyone can live by:

- Decide who will clean, when and how often.
- Define conditions required for sleep and work times.
Discuss use of personal and community property.
• Talk about when guests will be welcome and how often.

Communicate:
• Good communication is the most essential factor in any successful relationship.
• Listen, and be patient.
• Talk about concerns with your housemates directly and immediately.
• Show consideration and respect for others.

Keep or develop your sense of humor:
• Having a sense of humor helps to keep things in perspective.
• Don’t sweat the small things.

Have an open mind:
• Always make an effort to understand, to share, and to accept.
• Be flexible, and remember that there is more than one way to do things.

PULSE will provide times of regular check-in concerning how the House Agreement is being lived out over the course of the year. Staff reserves the right to intervene to ensure the wellness of the community.

Intentional community is the wellspring from which the rest of the PULSE program flows. Without it, we lose the source of our strength and an important aspect of our program identity. While it is often the most challenging aspect of the PULSE program, it has proven over and over to be the most valuable and investing in it will pay large future dividends as we strive to cultivate the next generation of leaders.

GROW as a leader:

Fellow Development Program
As mentioned, PULSE’s fellow development program aims to fulfill our mission of “cultivating a community of young servant leaders to transform Pittsburgh” through a holistic approach.

As an integrative program, PULSE seeks to open a space for its fellows to GROW. To GROW with PULSE means to:

1. Increase awareness of self, others, and systems. Fellows grow in self-awareness and others-awareness, the first layer of emotional intelligence (EQ). In addition, they extend that awareness to systems beyond the individual.

2. Cultivate accountability for one’s values and actions in the community. Fellows grow in the ability intentionally respond to self and others, which is the second layer of emotional intelligence (EQ). Fellows discern their values and actions, intentionally manage them and take responsibility for their own influence on both individuals and community.

3. Navigate barriers with creativity and resilience. Young adulthood is marked by uncertainty. PULSE’s vision is for its fellows to come to terms with this uncertainty, thereby discerning their purpose and focus in life. Fellows practice navigating personal barriers with resilience and systemic barriers with creativity.

4. Articulate one’s own vision to self and others. Fellows know who they are and why they do what they do. PULSE believes that becoming a leader is about being able to articulate one’s vision to oneself, and to narrate that vision for others as well.
PULSE defines its growth as a leader through a Listen, Learn, Love, Lead framework:

**Listen** - Leadership begins with a process of both active and reflective listening, of both concentrating, understanding, responding and remembering what is being said as well as asking questions to seek to understand other individuals or institutions.

**Learn** - Learning involves far more than thinking: it involves the whole person – senses, feelings, intuition, beliefs, values and will. Learning occurs when we gain a mental or physical grasp of the subject, make meaning of that subject through interpretation, use our newly acquired ability to knowledge, and do something with the new knowledge, putting knowledge into practice.

**Love** – Love takes us beyond the ego of our human selves. Love brings one to feel extraordinarily deeply for, and to identify with the other. Loves means accepting another person in the strongest way possible, supporting them in anything and everything, even when you may not agree. The challenge of love is primarily internal: developing a sense of self-worth that is not based on appearance or performance, but rather on an unchanging value. A love governed in identity rather than a need for approval.

**Lead** – Leaders focuses primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong. Leaders share power, putting the needs of others first and help develop people to perform as high as possible. Leadership involves empathy, awareness, listening, building community, conceptualization, and a commitment to the growth and development of people.

Several modes of delivery are used to execute this program:

- **Orientation (August 29th – September 6th, 2020):** During this week, fellows become better acquainted with themselves, one another, PULSE, their neighborhood, their placements, and the city through a variety of activities and reflections.

- **Weekly seminars (Wednesday afternoons, 1:00-5:00 pm):** PULSE weekly seminars explore a variety of topics that support the greater learning outcomes of the program. Fellows learn through a variety of vehicles including discussion, experiential learning, guest presenters, exploration, and service.

- **Bi-annual retreats:** PULSE has two mandatory retreats that occur approximately 6 weeks into the program (October 9-11, 2020) and 6 weeks from the end of the program (April 16-18, 2021). The retreats are times of community building, individual reflection and recreation. Fellow input is always appreciated.

- **Regular meetings with a PULSE Program Coordinator:** This time is used for fellows to personally connect with their program coordinator and focus on individual personal development.

- **Mentoring:** Each fellow will be provided with the opportunity to have a mentor to journey with them through their PULSE year. Fellows are matched with a mentor who meets their specific personal development goals and objectives. Mentors meet with fellows once a month to discuss how the PULSE year is going and to provide further support.

- **Community Outreach:** PULSE provides ample opportunities for fellows to connect intentionally with their Pittsburgh neighborhood. Fellows are encouraged to attend at minimum one outreach event per month, which could include participating in a community meeting and/or volunteering with a cause that one is individually passionate about.
Logistics:

Financials
Fellows are provided the following monthly financial benefits:
- $90 personal stipend (Not considered taxable income and a W-2 will not be issued)
- $217.50 allotted to house per person for food and transportation

Community House Funds
Each house operates with a community house account, where each fellow’s food and transportation stipends are pooled and considered community funds. These community funds should not be thought of as an individual allotment and are to be used according to the community’s priorities. House members are expected to take turns preparing meals and the community shares meals together. This not only saves a lot of money when compared to individual meals but builds the bonds of community.

Transportation
PULSE has consistently affirmed the value of public transportation and encouraged its fellows to thoughtfully consider their transportation choices. In addition to the economic and environmental benefits of public transportation, there are also significant social considerations. The house community is strengthened through shared trips, conversations, and conservation planning. Social capital is built through conversations at bus stops. On the bus, fellows also get to learn the perspectives of others in their neighborhood and community (compared to driving their own vehicle). Taking public transportation helps the organization better fulfill its mission values of sustainability, justice, peacemaking and stewardship.

As Pittsburgh becomes more bike friendly, PULSE also realizes the values of bikes for a form of transportation. If fellows choose to ride a bike for recreation or transportation during PULSE, they must wear a helmet. Additionally, all rules of the road must be followed, including the requirement for front and rear lights if you are riding at night.

While fellows are encouraged to use the other forms of transportation outlined above, they are free to bring their personal cars to Pittsburgh. Personal cars can benefit the community as they are often helpful for food shopping. Free on-street parking is available in PULSE neighborhoods. Cars should be locked at all times. All costs of vehicle ownership, including regular maintenance and insurance, are the fellow's responsibility.

Loan Forbearance/Deferral
PULSE Fellows may be able to forebear or defer their student loans during their service with PULSE. PULSE Fellows will be provided with a letter from PULSE confirming your enrollment in the program from 8/29/20-7/31/21 as a full-time unpaid volunteer. You can use this letter to provide proof of service to your loan holder(s). We strongly recommend contacting your loan holder(s) prior to joining the program to discuss your plans to participate in a year of service and how this affects your loan repayment plan. Loan holders each have their own policies and procedures regarding service years.

Housing
PULSE provides a basic, furnished house (kitchen items included), and covers utilities, internet, phone, laundry facilities, and major maintenance (often through landlords). Fellows will have the opportunity to tour the PULSE houses at PULSEStart and let PULSE staff know of their housing preference. That being said, PULSE will acknowledge preferences, but housing is determined by taking into account a myriad of factors and PULSE staff decides who lives in which house.
PULSE reserves the right to change the housing situation of a fellow or the makeup of fellows at any particular house at any point in time. PULSE takes seriously the safety of its fellows.

Rent
PULSE covers monthly rent/mortgage bills for each property and major repairs.

Utilities
PULSE covers all utilities, including electricity, gas, water, and wireless internet/phone. All houses also have printers available for use. There is a phone in each house and one phone line, covering all local and domestic long distance calls.

Maintenance
PULSE encourages participants to respect and maintain the property during their stay. In terms of the houses, participants are responsible for: cleaning, repairing what they break, damage, or mark, participating in occasional (3-4 times a year) workdays to improve the structure and appearance of the houses, yard care and community garden. In terms of yard work, participants should keep the grass at a reasonable length, clear the sidewalks during the winter, maintain the compost pile, pull weeds, and pick up trash as necessary. Staff will remind fellows of any of the above tasks if property upkeep has been badly neglected or abused. The houses (front and back door, windows, etc.) should be locked at all times to ensure the safety of fellows and property. Participants may not lend out keys. Only PULSE staff or contractors are permitted to make repairs or changes in the houses and rooms.

For more information about Housing, a copy of the PULSE Fellow Resident Handbook is available upon request.

Fellow Development Grants
Each fellow can apply to access to up to $150 in fellow development grants per PULSE service year that can support classes, lectures and conferences to assist in their personal and professional development. These cannot be used for Graduate/Admissions fees or testing requirements. Fellows also have the opportunity to use these funds to design and undertake personal projects, which in past years have ranged from a sound studio, short story writing, to visual art and design work. (Support for these projects can come from the personal development funds or can be negotiated with staff on a case-by-case basis.) Many fellows find that they have more time on their hands than during their years at school; fellows are encouraged to take advantage of the extra time that the PULSE structure provides.

Physical Activity Grants
Fellows can apply to access up to $50 in total per person for the PULSE year to use for activities that help them to stay physically active. In addition, as part of the Mind, Body, Heart philosophy, additional resources have been allocated to your overall wellness through other aspects of the program. Many fellows have found that this helps particularly in the winter to subsidize a low-cost gym membership (although it will likely not cover all); PULSE encourages fellows to obtain “family memberships” if possible. Fellows can also use these funds to cover things like a yoga class, a boxing class, or a local running race.

Health Coverage
In light of the Affordable Care Act, PULSE encourages the following:
• Fellows to stay on their parent/guardian’s plan (if available and whenever this is a feasible and economical option). In assessing this, please consider all relevant factors, including in-network vs. out-of-network costs if the young adult lives in a different geographic area than the guardian’s current plan covers.

• Fellows to obtain their own insurance through the www.healthcare.gov marketplace. (Fellows can also look into the availability of their own short-term insurance plan for 1 year, which would offer limited coverage.)

• Fellows obtain Medicaid, if one qualifies based on income. One can sign up for Medicaid at any time of year. To see if you qualify, visit www.healthcare.gov.

PULSE will pay up to $500.00 in premium costs or medical expenses per PULSE year, not calendar year, August 29, 2020 to July 30, 2021. PULSE can pay this directly to the provider or will reimburse payee upon receipt of invoice/expenses. Fellows must keep and submit out-of-pocket receipts for reimbursement.

PULSE does not want the lack of health insurance to be a concern for fellows or prohibit one’s decision to join PULSE. Please direct any questions or concerns to PULSE’s Recruiting and Program Coordinator, Neal Donovan, at ndonovan@pulsepittsburgh.org, or call 412-361-0124.

Vacation/Holidays
Nonprofit partners agree to provide full-time (35 hours/week) fellows with two weeks (10 business days) of vacation during the year. There are also 12 scheduled PULSE holidays and 6 personal/sick days. The 12 PULSE holidays are the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Year’s Day (January 1st)</th>
<th>MLK Day (January 18th)</th>
<th>President’s Day (Feb 15th)</th>
<th>Memorial Day (May 31st)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fourth of July (July 4th)/July 5th (observed)</td>
<td>Labor Day (Sept 7th)</td>
<td>Veteran’s Day (Nov 11th)</td>
<td>Thanksgiving (Nov 26th)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 27th</td>
<td>December 24th</td>
<td>December 25th</td>
<td>December 31st</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any vacation/time off must be cleared by the nonprofit partner’s site supervisor, PULSE Program Coordinator, and PULSE Director of Operations and Partnership at least two weeks in advance.

PULSE Fellows may not plan to take vacation or personal time during the last two weeks of the PULSE program and may not save their vacation and/or personal time in order to exit the program early. This has serious ramifications on the PULSE nonprofit partnership agreement and program exit.

Additional Information

Terms of Service
The PULSE year runs from August 29, 2020 to July 30, 2021. Move-in will occur between 1:00 and 5:00 pm on August 29, 2020.
Key Dates:

- July 11-14, 2020– PULSEStart Event in Pittsburgh
- August 29 – September 6, 2020 – Orientation
- September 8, 2020 – First day at Nonprofit Partner
- October 9 – 11, 2020 – Fall Retreat
- April 16 – 18, 2021 – Spring Retreat
- July 28, 2021- Last Day of Nonprofit Service
- July 29, 2021- PULSE House Clean-up and End of Year Celebration
- July 30, 2021- Move Out Day

Fellow Communication and Fundraising

PULSE requires fellows to invite others to journey with them over the course of the year. This is not just about financial support; rather it is about deepening relationship with friends, family, communities, etc. through ongoing communication about the work of PULSE and your role in it. We take our mission value of stewardship very seriously and always seek ways to economize in order to maximize the impact of each dollar.

Fellows will be asked to send letters inviting their friends and family to support the work of PULSE. There is a minimum goal of $2,500/fellow, which adds up to a large group goal. In addition, fellows can set up an online crowdfunding site to raise support. This is a group goal; some will raise more, some less, but we hope to raise at least $2,500/fellow (about 10% of the costs and benefits associated with having a fellow in the program). Most other programs require $4,500-$6,500/fellow. Your commitment to invite your friends and family to support the work of PULSE is taken seriously.

Deposit

Upon acceptance of your PULSE invitation, fellows will submit a $250 non-refundable deposit to secure their spot in PULSE.

During move-out weekend, each fellow must clean their room and make necessary repairs, clean and repair public spaces, return their key and provide a forwarding address. Upon staff inspection, if the space is deemed satisfactory and the fellow has fulfilled all requirements, an appropriate reimbursement of the room deposit will be issued. A checklist will be provided in July for cleanout requirements.

Outside Community Commitment

PULSE discourages fellows to pursue substantial commitments outside the PULSE community beyond their nonprofit partnerships. “Substantial commitments” can be defined as evening/weekend jobs, classes, coursework, volunteering, etc. that last for a lengthy period of time (e.g., working at a coffee shop or retail store) and take you away from your PULSE community for a substantial part of your week.

This policy aims to protect adequate time and energy for engagement in community life, commitment to nonprofit partnerships, exploration of the city, personal growth, and an encouragement to live simply and within the means of the program. Nonprofit partnerships must always take first priority if a scheduling conflict arises.
PULSE understands that each PULSE fellow has different needs and resources that may require them to pursue employment, classes, volunteer commitments, etc. In this regard, PULSE strongly suggests the following:

- No Outside Commitments during the first six weeks of service (Move-in to Fall Retreat)
- After Fall Retreat, PULSE strongly recommends that fellows engage in no more than 5 hours/week of substantial commitments outside the PULSE community. If you choose to engage in more than 5 hours/week, please discuss with your Program Coordinator.

This policy is deliberately flexible. Obvious exceptions include temporary, more informal jobs such as: occasional housecleaning; babysitting; lawn mowing; maintenance work; theater productions; and other sporadic, short-term work (such as working at the Three Rivers Arts Festival). Ideally, these jobs would not take up more than one weeknight or a Saturday morning. If an employment opportunity falls within the gray area of this policy, it is always best to discuss with PULSE staff before making a commitment.

Prior to making an outside community commitment, PULSE fellows strongly encouraged:
- Discuss the commitment with their housemates at a house meeting
- Receive approval from their PULSE Program Coordinator at least two weeks in advance.

**Early Termination**

PULSE fully expects that each fellow will complete their full year. Fellows have made a commitment to PULSE, their service at their nonprofit partnership, and their house community. In the rare and regrettable event that a fellow decides to leave the PULSE program, they will relinquish all fiscal and other benefits derived from PULSE, and will be asked to leave the PULSE house within a reasonable time period.

Additionally, PULSE prohibits all illegal activity (such as drugs, illegal firearms, etc.) while a fellow is part of the PULSE Program. Any fellow found engaging in illegal activity will be expelled from the program.

**Conclusion**

PULSE fellows SERVE with a nonprofit, LIVE in community with other fellows, and GROW as a leader both professionally and personally. All three of these primary components are fundamental to the PULSE program and serve to reinforce one another in achieving our mission, which is to “cultivate a community of young servant leaders to transform Pittsburgh.” This is an exciting program that journeys with young adults through this experience of service and leadership. We look forward to growing with you!
Please initial the following, agreeing to your commitment to:


____ Full engagement and participation in:
- Serve with a Nonprofit Partner
  - Serve 35 hrs/week, September 8, 2020 to July 28, 2021
- Live in Community
  - Live in community with other PULSE fellows
- Grow as a Leader
  - Weekly seminars on Wednesday afternoons from 1 – 5 pm
  - Retreats: Fall (October 9-11, 2020) and Spring (April 16-18, 2021)
  - Regular meetings with PULSE Program Coordinator


____ PULSE’s monthly stipends: $90 personal stipend, $217.50 allotted to house per person for food and transportation.

____ Share my commitment to PULSE with family and friends, seeking to raise at least $2,500 toward a larger group goal.

____ Agree with and agree to adhere to the framework and tenets of the PULSE Diversity Statement.

____ Submit a $250 non-refundable housing deposit upon acceptance of invitation to serve. If there is a concern regarding this commitment, please contact Neal (412.361.0124 or ndonovan@puls epittsburgh.org).

I, _______________________________, have read and understood this document and its contents. I will adhere to all policies set forth in this document.

___________________________________
(Signature)                                          (Date)
Appendix A: PULSE Diversity Statement

PULSE is committed to acknowledging, advocating, celebrating, and educating all people who serve, live, and grow in PULSE. We are professionally and personally committed to creating a community that supports diverse perspectives, celebrates the rich diversity of people who live and serve within our community, and fosters an environment of continuous learning.

We have created this Diversity Statement so that all fellows, staff, nonprofit partners, neighbors, and any other individual or organization, may understand the importance of diversity in PULSE, in our houses, in our nonprofit partnerships, in our neighborhoods, in the city of Pittsburgh, and in the world. We will not tolerate any form of behavior pertaining to racism, sexism, bigotry, harassment, intimidation, threats, or abuse, whether verbal or written, physical or psychological, direct or implied. We will not accept ignorance, humor, or substance use as an excuse for oppressive behavior.

Acknowledge

We acknowledge that human differences comes in many forms, including: race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, ability, or status as a veteran. We recognize that the knowledge we gain from interacting with and learning from one another has both educational and personal value. Furthermore, by acknowledging the presence of inequalities and oppression and engaging in uncomfortable conversations, all members of our community experience an incomparable experience. These experiences are crucial for developing the requisite skills to thrive as a member of a pluralistic society and as a responsible global citizen.

Advocate

We strive to create an environment that allows all people to advocate for and support underrepresented populations. We maintain a safe and friendly environment that embodies our ideals of cooperation and mutual respect by protecting the right of respectful expression and by confronting hateful or victimizing acts. We will be deliberate in educating our staff and fellows to respond proactively to such behavior.

Celebrate

We consider the cultural diversity at PULSE and in Pittsburgh as one of our finest assets. We endeavor to celebrate all people by offering programs and activities that promote a high level of experiential learning. Encouraging fellows to embrace diversity is at the heart of our mission to provide a holistic education and to help our fellows become effective citizen leaders in our communities and in the world.

Educate

We provide opportunities for holistic education, in part, by prioritizing fellows living in community. Through fellows living in community, fellows will learn the skills necessary to promote a supportive and inclusive environment. Fellows will have the opportunity to engage in programs, activities, and discussions regarding current events, as well as social, political, intrapersonal, and interpersonal conflicts through the PULSE program and in their houses. Within PULSE, living in community is embedded in our commitment to create the best experience for fellows and to prepare them as they engage in the world.