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Spring 2019

Silicon Valley Immersion Program

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Spring 2019

Silicon Valley Immersion Program

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The University of Akron
Silicon Valley Immersion Program
Senior Honors Project
Austin A. Phillips
Spring 2019

- I. **Silicon Valley Immersion Program**
 - A. Acknowledgements
 - B. Project Sponsors
 - C. Project Guidance and Support
 - D. Project Background
 - E. Project Goals
 - F. Experiential Immersion Learning
- II. **Silicon Valley**
 - A. The Silicon Valley Region
 - B. The Silicon Chip: Its Contributions to the Valley and the World
 - C. Silicon Valley's Beginnings
 - D. Silicon Valley Today
- III. **Immersion Learning Experience Benefits**
 - A. For the Student
 - B. To the University
- IV. **Zips in the Valley - Silicon Valley Immersion Trip**
 - A. Planning Timeline
 - B. Latin American Institute of Business (LAIQB)
 - C. Leadership Project Experience Team (LEP)
 - D. Fundraising Presentations
 - E. Student Communications
- V. **Zips in the Valley – Trip Groundwork is Set**
 - A. Trip Website
 - B. Zips in the Valley logo
 - C. Trip Itinerary and Scheduled Visits
- VI. **Trip Costs**
 - A. Program Fees, Transportation and Meals
 - B. Community and University Sponsorships
- VII. **Student Scholarships**
 - A. Student Applications
 - B. Selection of Participants
- VIII. **Zips in the Valley – The Journey Continues**
 - A. Post Immersion Trip Survey and Reflections
 - B. Thanking the Sponsors
 - C. Trip Video and Pictures
- IX. **My Reflections – Zips in the Valley Immersion Trip Project**
- X. **Works Cited**
- XI. **Appendix**

Silicon Valley Immersion Program

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Project Sponsors *

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[Roger T. Read '63 '66, Retired Chairman and CEO, Harwick Chemical Company](#)

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[Raymond K. '79 – Owner, R. Lee & Associates LLC and Sylvia L. Lee '80 '09](#)

[Robert B. Cooper – Friend of UA, Director, CBRE, Inc.](#)

[Gregory D. Hilkert '10 – Software Engineer, Hint Health](#)

* Project Sponsor list as of April 12, 2019

Project Guidance and Support

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[Dr. Steven Ash](#)

[Dr. Terry Daugherty](#)

[Cynthia Sheeks, Director of Development, College of Business](#)

[Kevin Smith, Director, The Institute for Leadership Advancement](#)

[Brittany Riley, Executive Assistant, The Institute for Leadership Advancement](#)

Silicon Valley Immersion Program

Project Background

Planning for my Honors College project actually started during my junior year. Having previously served as both an engaged participant and a trip leader on several service learning trips to Haiti with the Institute for Leadership Advancement, I knew the importance of the valuable lessons that students could learn while being immersed in a global service learning experience. These trips to Haiti offered me, as well as the other students, a genuine appreciation for cultural diversity as well as an expanded global viewpoint, which was truly life-changing.

For my Honors project, I ultimately wanted to create a similar immersion experience but with a focus on learning that would ultimately encourage an individual's creative potential and inspire innovation. Innovation is an essential skillset to have in a continuously-changing global business environment that is constantly challenged by technological advancements. After considering, and then eventually eliminating other immersion trip venues, I decided to research and organize an immersion trip to Silicon Valley. With guidance provided by the Institute for Leadership Advancement and a generous donation from the J.M. Smucker Company, my honors project was soon well underway.

This research first explores the history of Silicon Valley and its perpetual draw for thousands of visitors and future entrepreneurs. Concentrating on immersion learning, the benefits to the student and to the university and community are discussed. The remainder of this research focuses on the Silicon Valley Immersion trip itself including the hours of preparation, the agenda planning, cost determination and the communications presented to faculty, community donors and to current students. Thanks to the generosity of several community and university donors, numerous scholarships were offered to deserving University of Akron students, who were selected based on their application responses, financial need and their genuine interest in continuing their involvement in a future Zips in the Valley student organization at The University of Akron.

Silicon Valley Immersion Program

Project Goals

The ultimate goal of this Silicon Valley Immersion project is to engage the student participants in the ecosystem of Silicon Valley and to expose them to cutting-edge and innovative technologies through immersion learning thereby increasing the cache of the student experience at The University of Akron.

Immersion learning can be defined as taking someone out of their comfort zone or a familiar environment, like their university, and completely engrossing them into a new and different environment. The learner is immersed in life-like experiences and then through multiple iterations of an activity. They gain knowledge and understandings that become second nature to them. Immersion learning is sometimes referred to as experiential learning, which can be described as learning through an experience or by doing (Schwartz, 2012). More specifically, it is described as learning by reflection on doing (Lewis, Williams, 1994):

“In its simplest form, experiential learning means learning from experience or learning by doing.

Experiential education first immerses learners in an experience and then encourages reflection about the experience to develop new skills, new attitudes, or new ways of thinking.”

Experiential learning experiences, like the Silicon Valley Immersion program, expose college students to real-life experiences in the community. Through reflection, the students are able to bridge their academic learnings and integrate that knowledge with their immersion learning experiences. A college education should be more than a completion and a mastery of chapter and final exams. Students should be able to not only recall information that they've learned but to also understand the relevance of what they've learned and apply those learnings appropriately when faced with real-world scenarios. Experiential learning experiences immerse students in such scenarios, which ultimately lead to deeper levels of student engagement and understanding of subject matter. When knowledge is gained from learning immersion experiences, it is more likely to be understood and remembered.

Silicon Valley Immersion Program

Experiential Immersion Learning

The importance of experiential learning is best summarized in an article found on the website for the Association of American Colleges and Universities, which states “Transfer of knowledge requires deep understanding. Recall and reproduction of material taught in the classroom do not constitute understanding. For knowledge to be usable, it has to be acquired in a situation”. (Eyler. (n/d). The article’s author, Janet Eyler, is a professor of Education at Vanderbilt University. Her article focuses on the value of experiential learning experiences and how those experiences can improve the quality of a student’s college education allowing the student to more easily transition to their post-college careers.

Experiential learning is attributed to the work of John Dewey, who is also known as the father of experiential education and “the greatest educational thinker of the 20th century”. (“John Dewey”, 2005) Dewey stated that “...rather than preparing citizens for ethical participation in society, schools cultivate passive pupils via insistence upon mastery of facts” (“John Dewey: Biography”, n/d). Dewey was a proponent of experiential learning, which was often referred to as hands-on learning in the early 1900s. However, the concept of learning by doing can actually be traced back to Aristotle. In 350 BC he wrote “for the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them” (“Experiential Learning”, n/d).

In more modern times, the study and support of experiential learning continued in the 1970s. David A. Kolb is credited with building upon the work of John Dewey and developing the modern theory of experiential learning, which is described as “...a holistic, integrative perspective on learning that combines experience, perception, cognition, and behavior”. (Kolb, 1984). He is also the founder and chairman of Experience Based Learning Systems. Additionally, the National Society for Experiential Education has continued to serve as a non-profit resource since 1971 to further the development of experiential programs across the country (“NSEE: Standards and Practice”, n/d).

Silicon Valley

The Silicon Valley Region

Silicon Valley is an economic, intellectual and geographical region, which is located in northern California spanning the area from Santa Rosa, CA in the north extending all the way down to Monterey, CA in the south (“*Silicon Valley Historical Association*”, n/d). The area, formerly known as the Santa Clara Valley, is now comprised of over 60 cities and continues to expand. The region serves as the headquarters for the many of the world’s largest technology and research corporations as well as dozens of Fortune 100 businesses and countless start-up companies. The region’s name is due to the presence of large numbers of semiconductor manufacturers, who use silicon in the manufacturing of microprocessors onto integrated circuits. The Silicon Valley name itself was first popularized in 1971 by Don Hoefler, an American journalist, who used the name in an article titled “Silicon Valley USA” (“Don Hoeffler”, 2018).

(*Google Images, n/d*)



Silicon Valley

The Silicon Chip: Its Contributions to the Valley and the World

The invention of the integrated circuit, or microchip, by two American electrical engineers, Jack Kilby and Robert Noyce totally revolutionized technology by replacing vacuum tubes and transistors with miniaturized integrated circuits. Kilby, who was working for Texas Instruments in 1958, used a single unit of silicon to design an integrated circuit (*“Jack Kilby: Biography”, 2016*). At essentially the same time, Noyce, a co-founder of the Fairchild Semiconductor Company, combined transistors into a block of silicon to create the integrated circuit. Both men are credited with the invention of the microchip. This single invention of the microchip was the catalyst that later fueled the personal computer revolution. In 1968 Noyce, who favored the use of silicon in the manufacture of integrated circuits, went on to become the co-founder of the Intel Corporation located in Santa Clara, CA and is credited for having put the word silicon in Silicon Valley (*“Robert Noyce: Biography”, 2017*).

Also known as the 14th element of the Periodic Table, silicon is extracted from sand and is used in the manufacture of microchips (*“From Sand to Silicon-Making of a Chip”, 2011*). In 2004, after conducting a three-month long survey with over 119,000 survey participants, CNN named the silicon microchip as the single most significant invention of the past 50 years (*“Silicon chip-most influential invention”, 2004*). The microchip truly revolutionized the electronics industry and thrust the world into the computer information age transforming communications and nearly every facet of our daily lives. Today, because of the microchip, pocket-size smartphones have replaced the giant room-sized computers of the past and explorations by NASA would probably not be possible without it.

Silicon Valley

Silicon Valley's Beginnings

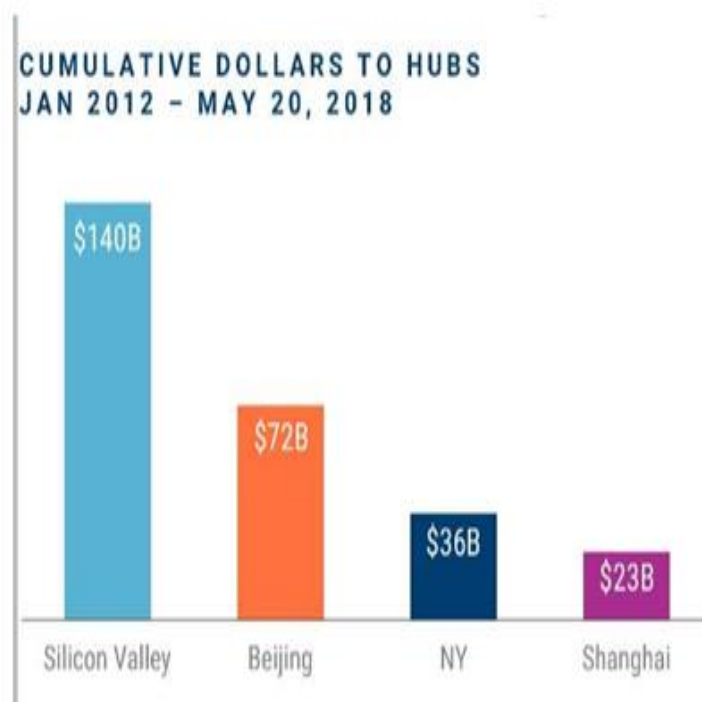
To understand the growth of Silicon Valley, it is interesting to understand its past. The Silicon Valley region was formerly known as Santa Clara Valley, the prune capital of the world ("*The Origins of Silicon Valley*", n/d). "Over the second half of the twentieth century, this region evolved from a primarily agricultural landscape far away from the centers of industry and capital in to Silicon Valley, a sprawling new industrial landscape that was the undisputed global capital of high technology" (O'Mara, Pugh, 2005). The Valley became home to many firsts including the birthplace of electronics and inventions such as the vacuum tube for amplifying sound. This core technology later became the foundation for use in radars, radio, television, tape recorders and computers ("*The Origins of Silicon Valley*", n/d).

The creation of Silicon Valley appeared to have arisen from the perfect alignment of resources. Many say that the Cold-war era spending by the government, the availability of venture capital, the influx of Asian immigrants, the growth of the semiconductor industry with the Department of Defense as its biggest customer, and the industrialization of previously rural farm lands were all key factors in the growth of Silicon Valley (Balachander, 2017). At the center of all this was Stanford University as well as other high quality universities with a population of high intellectuals conducting research and collaborating with large corporations in the Bay area. As the area grew and industry giants were able to "recruit top-class talent from all over the world", the groundwork for the region's success was set (Balachander, 2017).

Silicon Valley

Silicon Valley Today

Today, Silicon Valley is still the most recognized hub for technology, innovation and venture capital in the world and attempts to imitate its success can be seen both here in the United States and around the world. However, Silicon Valley continues to maintain its dominance in the development of software and microprocessors and in the growth of start-ups funded by venture capital.



The above graph shows Silicon Valley's dominance in the growth of start-ups funded by venture capital dollars (Schubarth, 2018).

Silicon Valley

Silicon Valley Today

As the high-tech industry continues to innovate and grow, so does Silicon Valley. With a population of nearly four million in the Silicon area and an extremely high concentration of high-tech talent being located in Silicon Valley, the talent pool functions as a catalyst for both competition and wealth (Florida, 2017). It's no wonder that tech giants including Google, Facebook, Apple and Salesforce all make their home in Silicon Valley (Ravisankar, 2017).

(Meegan, 2011)



Immersion Learning Experience Benefits

For the Student

The Zips in the Valley Immersion program will expose students from The University of Akron to a truly unique experience where they will learn about leadership and be exposed to cutting edge technology. The immersion learning program will allow students to become thinkers and leaders while being exposed to a diverse global-local nexus of business professionals and disruptive enterprises.

The students will experience inspirational visits to globally-recognized enterprises such as Google, Tesla, and NASA and participate in workshops on technology, entrepreneurship and “The Art of Pitching”. At the end of this program, participating students will become well-positioned for professional and personal success.

Other student benefits to participating in the Silicon Valley Immersion program include:

- Better understanding of the global footprint for the corporations visited
- Introductions to and networking with Silicon Valley executives during site visits
- Integrate classroom learnings with experiential experiences during reflection time
- Understanding the critical elements for “pitching” a business idea
- Gain entrepreneurial confidence when seeking resources for a new business
- Increased levels of knowledge, values and ethics acquired during the immersion program
- Innovative and experiential learning experiences can set you apart to prospective employers
- Become a well-respected representative of The University of Akron Zips in the Valley program

Lastly, this program will allow the students an opportunity to meet and network with alumni from The University of Akron, who live and do business in Silicon Valley.

Immersion Learning Experience Benefits

To the University

This Immersion program to Silicon Valley has many benefits to the student participants and also to The University of Akron. This program can be used as a recruiting tool to attract and retain high-quality students to fulfill their higher education pursuits at The University of Akron. Additionally, since the multi-disciplinary program would be open to all students from any of the university's departments, the program would foster collaboration within the university across majors and between departments. The inaugural Zips in the Valley trip will include students from the College of Business Administration, Biomimicry, School of Law, College of Engineering, College of Business Graduate Programs, and the Myers School of Art.

Faculty could also benefit from participating in the Silicon Valley program by learning about cutting-edge technology and innovations, which in turn would assist them by keeping their knowledge current and helping them to improve the curriculum. As the program grows and news of the Zips in the Valley Immersion Learning experience spread to corporate community members, university-community partnerships could be formed, which would result in increased collaborations and financial support of the program and of the University of Akron.

Zips in the Valley could also lead to new course offerings at The University of Akron. The first trip will stay in the dorms of Draper University, which is a highly regarded entrepreneurship incubation center. Draper University currently offers a Semester in Silicon Valley Program in a collaboration with Arizona State University's School of Business (Natoli, 2017). Participants in the semester long program are able to earn a Certificate of Entrepreneurship for completing 15 credit hours at Draper University in Introduction to Entrepreneurship, Entrepreneurship and Value Creation, Mobile and Web Programming, Product Design and 3D Printing, and Immersive Entrepreneurial Experience. Through the certificate students receive training in ideation, technology, market analysis, legal structure, and financial structure.

Immersion Learning Experience Benefits

To the University

The University of Akron could consider offering an interdisciplinary semester in Silicon Valley that is similar in structure to the program offered by Arizona State. Collaborating with an existing organization or a university such as Draper University would be the ideal way to enter the immersion learning arena, as they have the facilities and domain expertise. This semester in Silicon Valley could also be coined a Domestic Study Away Experience. Domestic Study Away participants could “gain a new perspective on the world while simultaneously diving into a potential career field and networking with professionals” (Schritter, 2016).

Another option would be to utilize existing resources and corporate connections of The University of Akron in order to offer an interdisciplinary Immersion Learning semester or course. Topics to be explored could be leadership, disruptive technology, marketing in new ventures, and legal and financial structures. Throughout the semester, students in the program could participate in visits to local companies and start-ups in the Akron area to see what their own region has to offer. Lastly, the highlight of the proposed program would take University of Akron students enrolled in this course to Silicon Valley with Zips in the Valley for a week-long immersion program during an academic break.

Zips in the Valley - Silicon Valley Immersion Trip

Planning Timeline

April 2018: I completed Level II of the Institute for Leadership Advancement's Leadership Designation Program. The Leadership Designation program develops students through academic and hands-on learning into future leaders who will make positive impacts in the organizations that they go on to work in.

The day after The University of Akron's Spring Commencement in May of 2018, I embarked on my second trip to Haiti with the Institute for Leadership Advancement.

October 2018: I gained a Leadership Experience Project (LEP) partner, Sarah Antonelli, and I began to pursue Leadership Adventure Travel experiences for MBA students. Destinations that I researched at this time included Brazil (Sao Paulo, Rio De Janeiro, Ilha Grande), Machu Picchu in Peru and Reykjavik, Iceland. For research details - see Appendix A – MBA Leadership Travel Presentation. At this time, I also asked Dr. Terry Daugherty and Dr. Steven Ash to be my Honors project readers.

November 2018: I gained a second LEP partner, Robert Dallas Clarke. At this same time, I began to comprehend the complexities of establishing and coordinating a new student trip especially to one outside of the United States.

December 2018: While pursuing the Brazilian trip option, we were introduced to the travel partner, Latin American Institute of Business (LAIQB). They were already previously partnered with The University of Akron to offer South American C-suite professionals Executive Leadership Training multiple times a year at the university.

Zips in the Valley - Silicon Valley Immersion Trip

Planning Timeline

December 2018 (continued): In addition to US university programs, LAIOB offers its South American clients Silicon Valley Immersion experiences. Such a trip would definitely capture a lot of interest among the university's students and increase the cache of the student experience at The University of Akron. We decided that by partnering with LAIOB, we could harness their professional expertise of coordinating such a trip. Additionally, partnering with LAIOB would certainly lead to a greater synergy between The University of Akron and LAIOB. In early December, the idea of a Silicon Valley Immersion trip for University of Akron students was presented to Kevin Smith (Director of the Institute for Leadership Advancement). Coincidentally, Kevin was already due to travel to Brazil the following week to meet with LAIOB.

January 2019: I went to Haiti for a third time and my second time as a trip leader. This experience was different than my first two trips, as we had a new service partner, Streethearts, and were travelling to locations in which I had never been before. Streethearts hosted us to partake in their mission of empowering the homeless youth of Haiti. The focus of our time was to introduce Akron students to the struggles of daily life in Haiti while employing young men, who have graduated from Streethearts, to lead us on several hikes to cultural sites and waterfalls. Since returning from Haiti, the most recent group has made the finals of a social entrepreneurship pitch competition to help Streethearts to start and run a new sustainable business to offer employment opportunities to its graduates.

Leading students into an environment that I had never been in before was valuable preparation for Zips in the Valley, as I have never been west of the Mississippi River before. While in Haiti, I learned that LAIOB had agreed to consider our trip proposal at a price point of \$1,500.

Zips in the Valley - Silicon Valley Immersion Trip

Planning Timeline

January 2019 (continued): The day that I returned from Haiti, I scheduled my first call with LAIOB for the following week via Skype. The experience was my first ever Skype call. In the call, I met Luisa Vilela, LAIOB co-founder, for the first time. She shared the background on LAIOB and how they seek to train, qualify, and develop Latin American business professionals and executives through immersive two-week learning experiences. Locations for these experiences include U.S. universities and the business and technology environments of China, Israel, and Silicon Valley. The U.S. universities that LAIOB partners with include The University of Miami, Ohio University, and The University of Akron. Luisa and LAIOB were due to bring over 100 Latin American business executives to The University of Akron for two two-week executive leadership training programs the following month in February. The programs were to focus on Marketing and Management and were structured to offer the best highlights of The University of Akron's MBA program.

February 2019: My team and I arranged time to meet the co-founders of LAIOB, Andre and Luisa. We discussed what a Silicon Valley Immersion Learning trip would look like for University of Akron students at our desired price point of \$1,500. We were presented with two options for a three-day or a four-day experience. We decided to go for three days of company visits, workshops and tours and one day of San Francisco sightseeing. LAIOB was willing to offer us the experience at cost despite many of the company visits requiring high entry fees to be led through the facilities and to receive a lecture from a company expert. Going forward, our team and LAIOB see lots of potential in coordinating Silicon Valley Learning Immersion experiences for University of Akron students.

March 2019: Scholarship fundraising kicked off across campus. Through the group efforts of the Leadership Experience team, The Institute for Leadership Advancement and the Development team, we were able to raise enough funds to send a group of 20 University of Akron students to Silicon Valley.

Zips in the Valley - Silicon Valley Immersion Trip

Planning Timeline

April 2019: With most of our scholarship funds confirmed, we communicated the Zips in the Valley Learning Immersion experience to students. As a new experience led by students, we asked our college supporters to share a message that we had crafted for Zips in the Valley with their students.

The response and interest from students was higher than we expected and we received 60 scholarship applications in a week. We went through a thorough application grading and selection process in order to provide the best students with the opportunity to take part in Zips in the Valley. Travel plans are finalized with LAIOB and Chima Travel (airfare).

May 2019: We hold a trip preparation session with participants to ensure that they get the most out of their Silicon Valley experience and layout rules and expectations for them as representatives of the university. We travel to San Francisco on May 28th.

June 2019: We return from the once-in-a-lifetime experience on a redeye flight on June 2nd.

Zips in the Valley - Silicon Valley Immersion Trip

Latin American Institute of Business (LAIOB)

Information about the LAIOB leadership team and Kevin Smith including their bios is shown below.

Leaders



**André
Fauri**

**Founder at LAIOB
Latin America Institute of
Business**



**Luisa
Vilela**

**Co Founder at LAIOB
Latin America Institute of
Business**



**Kevin
Smith**

**Director, Institute for
Leadership Advancement,
College of Business, UAkron**

André has a career in the financial area in multinationals in the cosmetics and consulting segment. Passionate about the development of his teams, he decided to found LAIOB in 2014, aiming to impact society, training Latin American professionals.

Luisa has experience in project management, entrepreneurship and new business development. Currently works in the coordination of the area of innovation and technology of LAIOB. She also participates in innovation missions in Silicon Valley, Israel and Portugal.

Kevin Smith serves as the founding Director of the Institute for Leadership Advancement in the College of Business Administration at The University of Akron. This Institute was conceptualized from a \$1 million dollar gift from The J.M. Smucker Company. In 2012, after winning a national award for his work in developing a comprehensive university-based leadership center, Kevin was hired away from Ohio University to oversee this, now, \$2 million gift.

Zips in the Valley - Silicon Valley Immersion Trip

Latin American Institute of Business (LAIOB)

Information about LAIOB and the Institute for Leadership Advancement is shown below.





LAIOB - Latin America Institute of Business was born with the objective of training, qualifying and developing Latin American professionals with academic programs.

LAIOB also carries out corporate missions in the world's leading innovation hubs, such as Silicon Valley, Israel and China, connecting local businesses to the world's most technologically innovative environment.



The Institute for Leadership Advancement offers The University of Akron's only comprehensive academic and co-curricular leadership programs to students of all academic majors and interests. Established within the College of Business Administration in 2012 through a gift from The J.M. Smucker Company, the Institute for Leadership Advancement was envisioned to develop new leaders who will positively affect business for future generations.

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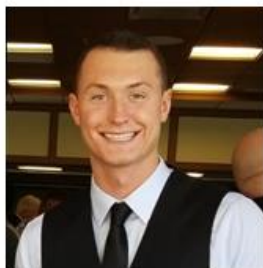
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leadership@uakron.edu
<https://www.uakron.edu/cba/centers-and-institutes/leadership/>

Zips in the Valley - Silicon Valley Immersion Trip

Leadership Project Experience Team (LEP)

Pictured below are the LEP team members including Austin Phillips, who is the author of this Honors research paper. In addition to project research, planning, coordination and fundraising, the author also worked with the other two LEP team members, Robert Clarke and Sarah Antonelli, regarding the student scholarship selection process and in the area of pre-trip planning and communications. During the Zips in the Valley Immersion trip, each of these LEP team members will also serve as a trip leader and work closely with both Kevin Smith, Director of the Institute for Leadership Advancement, and the LAIOB team to ensure a positive Silicon Valley Immersion Program experience for all participants.

<p>Robert "Dallas" Clarke</p> <p>Senior in Biomedical Engineering (Biomechanics)</p>	<p>Austin Phillips</p> <p>Senior in Financial Planning and Marketing</p>	<p>Sarah Antonelli</p> <p>Senior in Chemical Engineering</p>
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Zips in the Valley - Silicon Valley Immersion Trip

Fundraising Presentations

As LAIOB began to plan the details of the Silicon Valley Trip, it became abundantly clear that our team would need to raise a significant amount of scholarship funds. The cost to participate in the Zips in the Valley program was set at \$2,300. With ten weeks until our trip was set to take place, we knew that for the majority of students at The University of Akron a cost of \$2,300 would be difficult to allot for a travel experience in such a short amount of time. However, we only wanted students, who would take the immersion learning opportunity seriously, so we ensured that students would have their own skin in the game by setting the student cost to participate at \$300. This would require our team to raise \$2,000 in scholarships for each trip participant.

We began with four scholarships from the Institute for Leadership Advancement that would cover the trip costs of a faculty member, Kevin Smith, myself and the other two student trip leaders as this was their Leadership Experience Project (LEP). The LEP is the third and final level of the Institute for Leadership Advancement, and students who complete an LEP are able to receive \$2,000 in funding to carry out their project.

For the first fundraising presentation, Kevin Smith put me in contact with Roger Read and Sally Miller, College of Business and University of Akron supporters. Roger and Sally could not have been a better audience for the first fundraising presentation, as I had pitched to them previously to raise scholarship funds for a student to attend the Haiti trip in May 2018. I prepared a simple presentation that covered how our project came to be, who our travel partner was, the expected daily agenda for the trip, the benefits and outcomes for students and the university, a breakdown of the costs and student selection process, and a request for support. After a question and answer period, they agreed to support our project. I could not have hoped for a better start to the scholarship fundraising phase.

Zips in the Valley - Silicon Valley Immersion Trip

Fundraising Presentations

Also, in attendance with Roger Read and Sally Miller was Cynthia Sheeks, College of Business Director of Development. Cynthia is responsible for coordinating Roger and Sally's relationship with the University to ensure that their wishes are carried out and to monitor the number of support requests that they received. Cynthia is also responsible for many other University of Akron supporters. She was impressed with our presentation and shared it with several other supporters. When seeking funding for a university project, it is best to work with the development office as they will ensure that the right people and organizations are contacted for support.

In the weeks that followed, I delivered presentations to the EX[L] Center, the Institute for Global Business, and the College of Business Graduate Programs. From these organizations, we received additional support, which equated to several more student scholarships. Simultaneously, Kevin Smith and University Development offices across campus presented Zips in the Valley on our behalf to other college departments and supporters. Their efforts resulted in even more student scholarships from the College of Fine Arts, the Biomimicry Research and Innovation Center, the Honors College, and several individual supporters. Additionally, University of Akron Alumni, Mario Micale, was sponsored by the University Communications department to participate in our trip to serve as a videographer. Mario is the founder and president of Narrative Digital Media and specializes in producing video content for digital marketing purposes.

In less than three weeks, we received the financial support necessary to offer the Silicon Valley Immersion Learning Experience to deserving University of Akron students. We swiftly created a student scholarship application and application rubric to ensure that we fairly selected the best applicants to participate in Zips in the Valley.

Zips in the Valley - Silicon Valley Immersion Trip

Student Communications

The student communication process began on Wednesday, April 3rd, with the messages found on the following pages being shared to students in the College of Engineering, Honors College, and College of Business.

Students were given through Wednesday, April 10th, to submit their applications, with an announcement of scholarship winners following two days later on Friday, April 12th. The first day of student communications concluded with 20 submitted applications from highly interested and engaged students.

After we first announced the Immersion Learning trip, we offered six info sessions to provide interested students the opportunity to learn more about Zips in the Valley and to have their questions answered. By the time we reached the scholarship selection day, we had received over 60 student applications from a wide variety of majors and degree levels.

Zips in the Valley - Silicon Valley Immersion Trip

Student Communications

An opportunity for Akron Students

Students Austin Phillips, Sarah Antonelli, Dallas Clarke would like to invite Akron students to their honors project / leadership experience project collaboration, Zips in the Valley. Please find attached information regarding an opportunity to travel to Silicon Valley to visit industry experts and tour world renowned organizations, such as Google, Tesla, Draper University, Stanford University, and NASA Ames Research Center.

WHEN: May 28th - June 1st

WHERE: Silicon Valley, CA

WHO: Hosted by the Institute of Leadership Advancement, open to all interested

WHAT: The trip will consist of visiting several top companies (**Google, Tesla, Stanford, NASA, Autodesk**, etc.), sightseeing in San Francisco, entrepreneurship workshops, networking with Akron Silicon Valley alum, exploring delicious food, and more fun activities. Entrepreneurship workshop topics include: **The Art of the Pitch, and Leadership and Disruptive Technology**. Participants will be staying at Draper University for the entire duration of the trip. To find out more, attend one of the trip info sessions, details below. Many **\$2,000 scholarships** are available to cover the cost of the trip. Students who receive a scholarship will only have to pay **\$300 for a deposit**. Students that are interested in applying for a scholarship, **please submit the attached scholarship application to zipsinthevalley@gmail.com by Wednesday, April 10th**. Students who would like to ensure a spot and are able to cover the trip cost are encouraged to contact us as well and to view the attached trip payment document. Also, if you want to keep up on any updates through our journey then we advise you to follow our social media accounts shown below.

Twitter: @zipsinthevalley

Instagram: @zipsinthevalley

Zips in the Valley info sessions (45-Min):

Thursday, April 4th, 10:30 am, Honors Common room

Thursday, April 4th, 1:15 pm, Honors Common room

Friday, April 5th, 9:00 am, Honors Common room

Monday, April 8th, 12:00 pm, Honors Common room

Tuesday, April 9th, 1:15 pm, College of Business Administration 258

Tuesday, April 9th, 3:00 pm, College of Business Administration 258

Zips in the Valley - Silicon Valley Immersion Trip

Student Communications

Zips in the Valley
Silicon Valley Immersion Program

MAY 28 – JUNE 1, 2019

Travel to Industry experts and tour world renown organizations such as Google, Tesla, Draper University, Stanford University, and NASA Ames Research Center



Learn about leadership and disruptive technology

Student Benefits

- Develop skills and academic and professional abilities applicable for use in regional and global contexts
- Understanding critical elements for "pitching" a business idea
- Increase their levels of independence and confidence when it comes to researching and seeking out local resources
- Expand their personal networks beyond Northeast Ohio
- Participating students will become well-positioned for professional and personal transformative success



Explore the unparalleled entrepreneurial ecosystem of Silicon Valley and experience cutting edge technology & innovation firsthand.

- This 4-day interdisciplinary program will raise the cache of the student experience at The University of Akron.
- Participate in a Draper University workshop on Leadership and Disruptive Technology

Join The University of Akron's first ever Interdisciplinary Silicon Valley Immersion Program.



Contact Information

Zips in the Valley Team
Zipsinthevalley@gmail.com

Zips in the Valley - Silicon Valley Immersion Trip

Student Communications

Zips in the Valley

**The University of Akron
Silicon Valley Immersion Key Dates:**

Tuesday-Saturday, May 28th – June 1st 2019



Secure Payment Website: <http://bit.ly/zipsinthevalley>

- April 13, 2019** - \$300 deposit due
- April 15, 2019** - \$456.35 flight payment due to Chima Travel, details below
- April 26, 2019** – 2nd trip payment, \$772
- May 3, 2019** – 3rd trip payment, \$772, Travel Preparation Session
- May 28, 2019** – Depart CLE Tuesday evening
- June 1, 2019** – Depart San Francisco late Saturday and return to CLE, early Sunday

Total Cost Per Person: \$2300.35*

(*does not include souvenirs, meals, small miscellaneous)

- \$2,000 Scholarships are available, please email Zipsinthevalley@gmail.com if interested to apply
- Still welcome to join the trip if you are not a scholarship recipient

Cost Breakdown: \$1844 program fee, \$456.35 roundtrip airfare

Basic Program Information

Program fees: \$1844 per person, includes:

- *Lodging for 4 nights at Draper University
- *University of Akron travel/personal property insurance
- *Private transport around Silicon Valley
- *Tour guide
- *Site visits to Google, Tesla, NASA, Stanford, and more
- *Boat Tour to Alcatraz Island
- *All meals are on own, Estimated at \$200-300



Airfare is separate: \$456.35

Lodging: 4 nights at Draper University

To pay for your airfare, call Sandi Hendrickson (Chima Travel) at 330-867-4770 ext. 138 with a credit card number, date of birth, and name as it appears on your ID. Please call before 4/15.

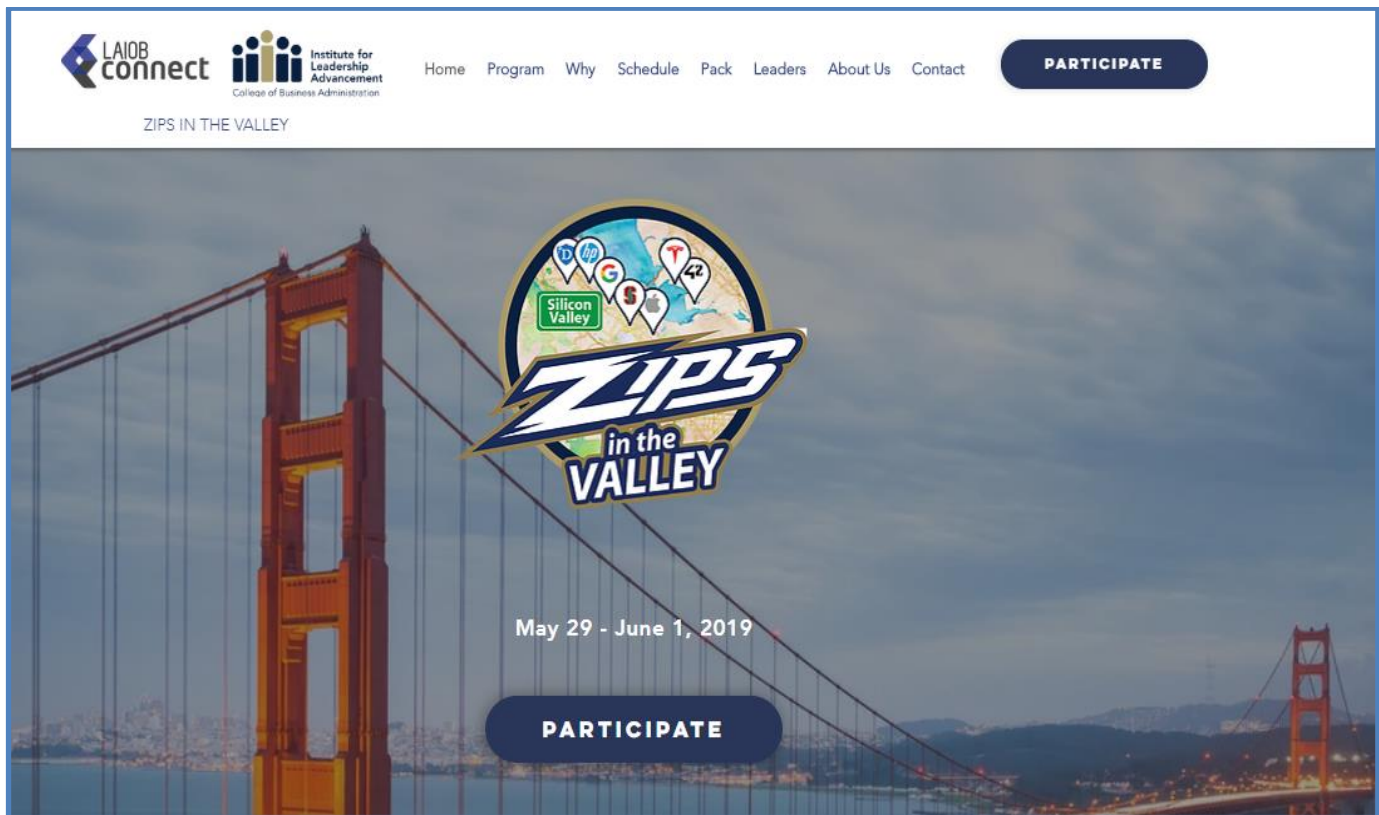


Zips in the Valley – Trip Groundwork is Set

Trip Website

Presented below is a screenshot of the Zips in the Valley Home Page. LAIOB used a standard template to develop the website and then used my input to customize the site for Zips in the Valley. Due to cultural and language differences, I needed to communicate changes to the site several times. Since there was a three hour time zone difference between Akron and Sao Paulo, change requests would often take a week or more. However, since LAIOB was coordinating this trip at cost, I was careful and respectful not to over-critique. Planning ahead, my thought was that the site could be updated after the first trip to include updates and suggestions from the trip participants.

Website Link: <https://www.zipsinthevalley.com/>



Zips in the Valley – Trip Groundwork is Set

Trip Website

Below is a general overview of the Zips in the Valley program as presented on the website.

The Program


Zips in the valley aims to understand, in a general way, how the **Silicon Valley's entrepreneurial ecosystem** works and to learn what the paths and tools used by the **most successful companies in the world** have been and are.

Through guided tours and lectures, the participants will have the opportunity to learn about **entrepreneurship, innovation and culture**.

Present in this program is also the understanding of **new technologies and business models**, as well as the creation of connections between the participants and executives in Silicon Valley.


Below is another section of the website informing students why they should participate.

Why Participate?




Culture and Innovation

Question the culture of your company, make it results-oriented, and learn how to bring technology and innovation to your business.



Latest Trends

Discover the latest trends in management and technology as well as how to prepare for the new changes.



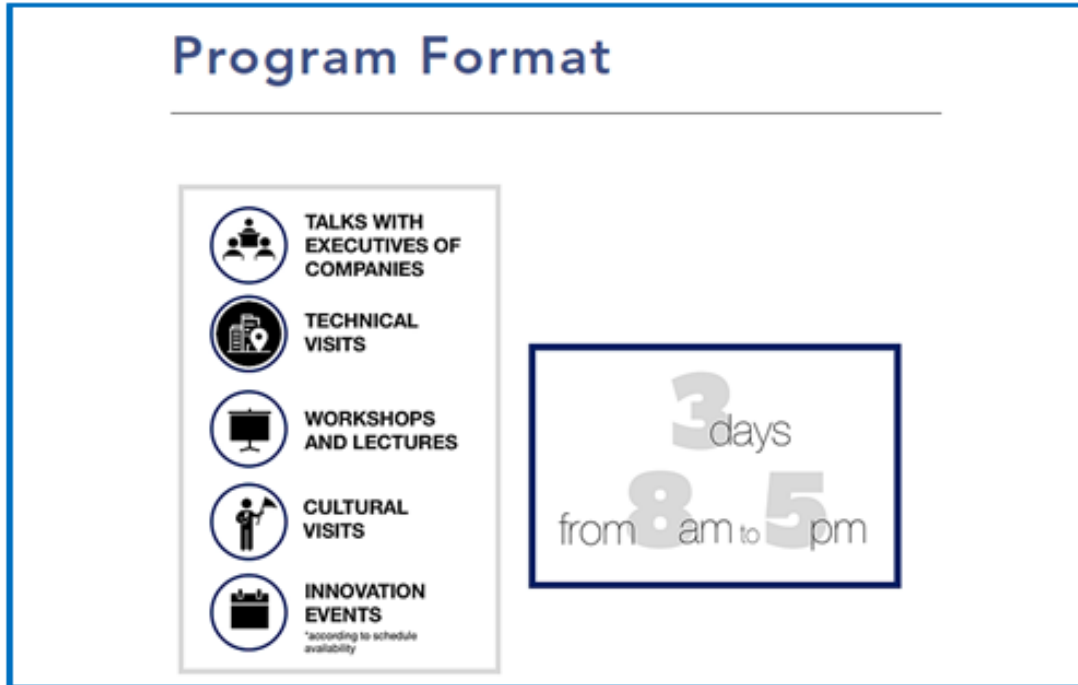
Disruptive Models

Understand how startups reach billionaire valuations and become the big business of tomorrow.

Zips in the Valley – Trip Groundwork is Set

Trip Website

Below is additional trip information detailing what was included in the LAIOB trip fees.



Program Format

- TALKS WITH EXECUTIVES OF COMPANIES
- TECHNICAL VISITS
- WORKSHOPS AND LECTURES
- CULTURAL VISITS
- INNOVATION EVENTS
*according to schedule availability

3 days
from 8 am to 5 pm



What's included?

- PROGRAM**
Lectures, visits, mission materials and participation certificates
- FACILITATORS**
monitoring of an LAIOB team throughout the program
- TRANSPORTATION**
Private vehicle with private driver throughout the program
- PRE-TRAVEL**
Hangout meeting between participants for networking and discussion of the aspects of the mission
- POST-TRAVEL**
Meeting among all participants to discuss how to implement what was taught in the mission
- EXTRAS (NOT INCLUDED)**
Air tickets and food not included in the package

Zips in the Valley – Trip Groundwork is Set

Zips in the Valley Logo

Below is the logo as presented on the Zips in the Valley website. It was developed after a design collaboration that I had with the LAIOB website developer. If time and funds allow, I hope to incorporate this logo onto t-shirts for each of the trip participants, so we can proudly represent The University of Akron.



Zips in the **Valley**

Silicon Valley Immersion Program

Zips in the Valley – Trip Groundwork is Set

Trip Itinerary and Scheduled Visits

The trip itinerary and planned visits for Day 1 are listed below and includes an introduction session and visits to Stanford University, Google and other large corporations located in the Silicon Valley region.

Day 1

5/29/2019



Silicon Valley introductory lecture led by a senior professor at Stanford University. This introduction is intended for program participants to understand how the world's largest innovation ecosystem has emerged and what are the factors that have contributed to its success.



In the 1930s, Stanford University and its Dean of Engineering Frederick Terman began encouraging faculty and graduates to stay in the area instead of leaving California. HP founders William Hewlett and David Packard are considered the first Stanford students who took Terman's advice. The HP Garage is considered to be the "Birthplace of Silicon Valley."



Stanford University is the largest benchmark in entrepreneurship in the world, giving birth to several startups and large technology companies in Silicon Valley such as Hewlett Packard, Instagram, Google, Snapchat, and many others.



Impossible Foods is a company that develops plant-based substitutes for meat and dairy products. The company aims to give people the taste and nutritional benefits of meat without the negative health and environmental impacts that are constantly associated with livestock products. Its signature product, the Impossible Burger, was launched in July 2016.



b8ta is retail-as-a-service company with a chain of retail stores which serve as presentation centers for consumer electronics and other innovative products. Companies can pay to rent out space for their product to be displayed inside the locations, along with a tablet that each brand customizes with software. All of the products in stores are on display out-of-the-box and can be touched and demoed.



Google is the primary subsidiary of Alphabet Inc. It was founded in 1998 by Larry Page and Sergey Brin while they were Ph.D. students at Stanford University in California. The company's rapid growth since incorporation has triggered a chain of products, acquisitions, and partnerships beyond Google's core search engine like Google Docs, Google Sheets, Google Slides, Google Drive, Google+, Google Hangouts, Google Translate, Google Maps, Waze, Youtube, Android among others.

Zips in the Valley – Trip Groundwork is Set

Trip Itinerary and Scheduled Visits

The trip itinerary and planned visits for Day 2 are listed below. In addition to visits to Apple, Tesla, School 42 and the Computer History Museum, a technology workshop is planned.

Day 2

5/30/2019



Apple garage is where Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak started Apple. Located in Silicon Valley, the modest house at 2066 Crist Dr. in Los Altos, Calif., was the place where Jobs and Wozniak, along with others, churned out the very first Apple computers



School 42 is a private, nonprofit and tuition-free computer programming. The school does not have any professors, does not issue any diploma or degree, and is open 24/7. The training is inspired by new modern ways to teach which include peer-to-peer pedagogy and project-based learning.



The Computer History Museum (CHM) is a museum established in 1996 in Mountain View, California, US. The museum is dedicated to preserving and presenting the stories and artifacts of the information age, and exploring the computing revolution and its impact on society.



After 10 years in the market, Tesla ranked as the world's best-selling plug-in passenger car manufacturer in 2018, both as a brand and by automotive group, with 245,240 units delivered and a market share of 12% of the plug-in segment sales. Tesla vehicle sales in the U.S. increased by 280% from 48,000 in 2017 to 182,400 in 2018, and globally were up by 138% from 2017. The company specializes in electric car manufacturing and, through its SolarCity subsidiary, solar panel manufacturing.



Workshop 1:

Workshop on technology, innovation and entrepreneurship. Topic to be decided.


Zips in the Valley – Trip Groundwork is Set

Trip Itinerary and Scheduled Visits

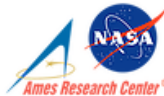
The trip itinerary and planned visits for Day 3 are listed below and include visits to Draper University, NASA and Autodesk Gallery. Another technology workshop is also on the agenda.

Day 3


5/31/2019




Draper University is known for its unconventional methods of teaching business and entrepreneurship through real-world scenarios, unlike traditional lecture-style classroom environments.



The Ames Research Center is a major NASA research center at Moffett Federal Airfield. It was founded in 1939 as the second National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (NACA) laboratory. That agency was dissolved and its assets and personnel transferred to the newly created National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) on October 1, 1958. At last estimate NASA Ames has over US\$3 billion in capital equipment, 2,300 research personnel and a US\$860 million annual budget.



Bringing together stories of exceptional design and engineering from around the globe, the Autodesk Gallery celebrates the creative process and shows how people are using new technology to imagine, design, and create a better world. Named a top destination by Wired magazine and the San Francisco Chronicle, the gallery features dozens of exhibits, including original works by Lego, Mercedes-Benz, Nike, and more.



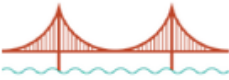
Workshop 2:

Workshop on technology, innovation and entrepreneurship. Topic to be decided.

Zips in the Valley – Trip Groundwork is Set

Trip Itinerary and Scheduled Visits

The trip itinerary and planned visits for Day 4 and the final day of the trip is listed below. The itinerary includes visits to two famous landmarks, Alcatraz and the Golden Gate Bridge.

<p>Day 4</p> <p>6/1/2019</p>	
<p>ALCATRAZ</p>	 <p>Golden Gate Bridge</p>
<p>The Alcatraz Federal Penitentiary (often referred to as Alcatraz or The Rock) was a maximum security federal prison on Alcatraz Island, 1.25 miles off the coast of San Francisco which operated from August 11, 1934 until March 21, 1963. Alcatraz was used to hold prisoners who continuously caused trouble at other federal prisons, including some of America's most ruthless, such as Al Capone, Robert Franklin Stroud, George "Machine Gun" Kelly, Bumpy Johnson, Rafael Cancel Miranda, Mickey Cohen, Arthur R. "Doc" Barker, Whitey Bulger, and Alvin "Creepy" Karpis.</p>	<p>The Golden Gate Bridge is a suspension bridge spanning the Golden Gate, the one-mile-wide strait connecting San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Ocean. The bridge is one of the most internationally recognized symbols of San Francisco and the United States. It has been declared one of the Wonders of the Modern World by the American Society of Civil Engineers. The Frommer's travel guide describes the Golden Gate Bridge as "possibly the most beautiful, certainly the most photographed, bridge in the world. At the time of its opening in 1937, it was both the longest and the tallest suspension bridge in the world.</p>

Trip Costs

Program Fees, Transportation and Meals

Key dates including payment due dates are listed below. Planned departure date is Tuesday, May 28, with a scheduled return to Akron early on the morning of Sunday, June 2.

Zips in the Valley

The University of Akron
Silicon Valley Immersion Key Dates:
Tuesday-Saturday, May 28th – June 1st 2019

SECURE PAYMENT WEBSITE

April 8, 2019 - \$300 deposit due
April 15, 2019 - \$456.35 flight payment due to Chima Travel, details below
April 26, 2019 – 2nd trip payment, \$772
May 3, 2019 – 3rd trip payment, \$772, Travel Preparation Session
May 28, 2019 – Depart CLE Tuesday evening
June 1, 2019 – Depart San Francisco late Saturday and return to CLE, early Sunday






Total Cost Per Person: \$2300.35*
 (*does not include souvenirs, meals, small miscellaneous)

- \$2,000 Scholarships are available, please email Zipsinthevalley@gmail.com if interested to apply
- Still welcome to join the trip if you are not a scholarship recipient

Cost Breakdown: \$1844 program fee, \$456.35 roundtrip airfare

Basic Program Information
Program fees: \$1844 per person, includes:


- *Lodging for 4 nights at Draper University
- *University of Akron travel/personal property insurance
- *Private transport around Silicon Valley
- *Tour guide
- *Site visits to Google, Tesla, NASA, Stanford, and more
- *Boat Tour to Alcatraz Island
- *All meals are on own, Estimated at \$200-300

Airfare is separate: \$456.35

To pay for your airfare, call Sandi Hendrickson (Chima Travel) at 330-867-4770 ext. 138 with a credit card number, date of birth, and name as it appears on your ID. Please call before 4/15.

Lodging: 4 nights at Draper University



Trip Costs

Program Fees, Transportation and Meals

A complete breakdown of the trip costs is shown below. Students are responsible for \$300.

Student Selection and Trip Costs

LAIOB Program Fee: \$1,600

Accommodations: \$200

Alcatraz: \$50

Round-Trip Airfare: \$450

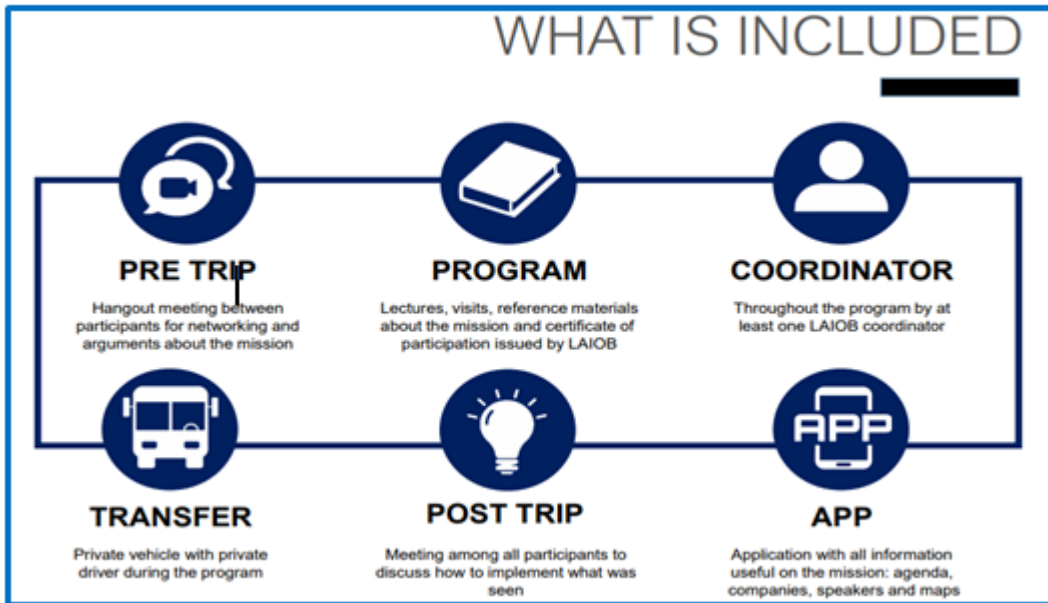
Total: \$2,300

\$2,000 scholarship if selected

- Applications due by April 10th,
- Selections made by April 12th



Students would pay \$300 to participate



Trip Costs

Community and University Sponsorships

The Silicon Valley Immersion program would not have been possible without the generosity of community and private donors. A complete list of generous private and University donors, who supported the Silicon Valley Immersion Learning trip, are shown below in no particular order. The author and selected students are extremely grateful for their generous scholarships.

- The J.M. Smucker Company
- Institute for Global Business
- College of Business Graduate Programs
- Honors College
- E(X)L Center
- Myers School of Art
- Biomimicry Research and Innovation Center
- Roger T. Read '63 '66, Retired Chairman and CEO, Harwick Chemical Company
- Sally D. Miller – Friend of The University of Akron
- Raymond K. '79 – Owner, R. Lee & Associates LLC and Sylvia L. Lee '80 '09
- Robert B. Cooper – Friend of UA, Director, CBRE, Inc.
- Gregory D. Hilkert '10 – Software Engineer, Hint Health

* Project Sponsor list as of April 12, 2019

On April 18th, I had the opportunity to speak to the College of Business Administration's Leadership Advancement Council at the Portage Lakes Country Club about my student experience at The University of Akron. I shared information about Zips in the Valley and received another \$8,000 in donations, which will allow four more students to be able to participate in May. The additional sponsorship information was not available at the time of this writing.

Student Scholarships

Student Applications

A copy of the student Silicon Valley Immersion trip scholarship application form is shown below.

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. If you have any questions, contact zipsinthevalley@gmail.com. Please limit your response to no more than two pages double spaced. When finished, please email your submission to zipsinthevalley@gmail.com. We thank you for your commitment to bettering yourself and for your interest in Zips in the Valley.

Submit by Wednesday, April 10th

1. Please share your major and year in school. Also, state whether or not you are an Honors student, are affiliated with the EXL Center, are a Fine Arts student, or are a College of Business Graduate student.
 2. Please explain your financial need beyond typical student financial constraints and explain the impact this scholarship will have on your financial situation. Please include any relevant information such as student enrollment status, occupation, or family resources.
 3. Have you ever been to Silicon Valley or California?
 4. Why are you interested in participating in this trip?
 5. Please explain how participating in this trip would benefit you and your future career.
 6. What part of the trip are you most excited about experiencing?
 7. What student experiences do you have at the University of Akron that distinguishes you from others?
 8. We envision that Zips in the Valley will become a student organization; how would you plan to participate in Zips in the Valley in the future?
 9. Are you currently enrolled in The Institute for Leadership Advancement (leadership@uakron.edu) and/or are you willing to commit to completing a minimum of Level 1 of the comprehensive program?
 10. If you receive a scholarship, you will be responsible to pay \$300 to participate by 4/15. Students will also be responsible for their own meals during the program which will range from \$200-\$300 for the length of travel. Would you be able to cover the student cost to participate?
-

Student Scholarships

Selection of Participants

Each submitted application was graded using the team-designed master rubric document shown below. The document was stored in Google Docs, so that Kevin Smith could provide guidance and all three student trip leaders could collaborate on the grading of the 60 applications that were received.

To begin, the applicant’s name, year, major, and email address were entered into the document. Then, each application was graded on a point system across four categories, each with a different scoring weight. The four categories were weighted as follows: Financial Need (30%), Reason for Interest (40%), Participation after the Trip (20%), and Distinguishing Factors (10%). The sheet was designed to average the scores assigned by each grader and to then to aggregate the section scores into an overall applicant score. Also, each applicant’s information and overall score were combined onto one sheet to simplify the final selection process. As new applications were submitted, we would copy the blank master rubric template and rename it to the name of the applicant.

First Name		Financial Need (30)	0			
Last Name		Reason for Interest (40)	0			
Year		After the trip (20)	0			
Major		Distinguishing factors (10)	0			
Email		Overall Score (100)	0			
Financial need (30%)		Section 1 Total Points	Avg Score	Sarah	Austin	Dallas
Currently employed working over 15 hours/week (selected when they say a lot, or describe job stresses)		9	0	0	0	0
Currently employed working under 15 hours/week (assumed when they say part-time)		3	0	0	0	0

Work-Study Program	3	0	0	0	0
Self-financing the trip	6	0	0	0	0
Lack of Family resources	3	0	0	0	0
16+ Credit Hours, full-course load	6	0	0	0	0
Grade	30	0	0	0	0

Reason for Interest (40%)	Section 2 Total Points	Avg Score	Sarah	Austin	Dallas
Drawn to trip for the “study away” aspect	3	0	0	0	0
Interested in the Silicon Valley	2	0	0	0	0
Interested in developing leadership skills	4	0	0	0	0
Desire to meet new students and network	3	0	0	0	0
Work well with teams	4	0	0	0	0
Past travel experience	2	0	0	0	0
Desire to travel	3	0	0	0	0
Desire to step out of comfort zone	4	0	0	0	0
Desire to experience thriving technologically advanced companies	5	0	0	0	0
Desire to learn about leadership, technology, and pitching	6	0	0	0	0
Desire to learn about Entrepreneurship	4	0	0	0	0
Grade	40	0	0	0	0

Participation After Trip (20%)	Section 3 Total Points	Avg Score	Sarah	Austin	Dallas
Mention of desire to participate after trip	4	0	0	0	0
Mention of anyone involved in Zips in the Valley	3	0	0	0	0
Desire to take on leadership role	5	0	0	0	0
Enrolled in Leadership Institute	5	0	0	0	0
May join Leadership Institute after trip	3	0	0	0	0
Grade	20	0	0	0	0

Distinguishing Factors (10%) Rate on a scale of 1-10	Section 4 Total Points	Avg Score	Sarah	Austin	Dallas
Ranking	1-10	0	0	0	0
Grade	10	0			
Total Grade	100	0	0	0	0
Problems Facing Travel to Silicon Valley (Flag application)					
Unsure of availability due to an internship					
Inability to cover student costs					

Student Scholarships

Selection of Participants

The scholarship selection process was carried out throughout the entire day on Friday, April 12th, 2019. The three student trip leaders met with the Director of the Institute for Leadership Advancement, Kevin Smith, to oversee the selection. We began by taking an inventory of all of our scholarship funds and marked which scholarships were designated or had preferences to award students with particular majors and interests.

For example, five scholarship opportunities were available to the twelve College of Business Administration (CBA) students who had applied. We first considered CBA applicants who had the highest overall scores. While many of those with the highest scores were selected, we did not simply pick the five highest scores. We wanted to select a diverse group of majors, males and females, unique past experiences, personalities, and future trip leadership potential. Meeting in person really helped as we had a chance to provide reasoning for our scores and to debate the best applicants.

The most challenging part of the applicant selection was deciding which engineering students would be provided a scholarship. We had received 40 scholarship applications from engineering students but only had four undesignated (open to all students) scholarships available to them. We took the same approach as we did for the CBA applicants in first looking at the highest scoring applicants, then comparing their intangibles. The selection of engineering student applicants took a considerable amount of time but it was worth it to fairly select the best students to receive a more limited amount of opportunities.

Some applicants were chosen for scholarship opportunities by the respective college providing support. We welcomed this selection method not for its simplicity but because the college knew more about its students than we could discern from a scholarship essay. All that we asked of them was to pick the students that they believed would get the most out the immersion learning experience.

Zips in the Valley – The Journey Continues

Post Immersion Trip Survey and Reflections

As with any thoughtful project, a trip survey will be conducted and participants will be asked to complete the survey during a reflection time on the final evening spent at Draper University. The survey will ask the participants what worked well as well as what suggestions they have to make future Silicon Valley Immersion Learning trips even better.

Thanking the Sponsors

This 1st Silicon Valley Immersion Learning trip for The University of Akron students would not have been possible without the generosity and support of community and university donors. During reflection time, participants will be asked to write thoughtful Thank You notes to the donors detailing their experiences and explaining how this Immersion trip has personally impacted them.

Trip Video and Pictures

The Zips in the Valley team has the privilege of having University of Akron Alumni, Mario Micale, to join everyone on this trip. He was selected and sponsored by the University of Akron Communications department to participate in our trip and to serve as a videographer. Mario is the founder and President of Narrative Digital Media, which specializes in producing video content for digital marketing purposes.

My Reflections – Zips in the Valley Immersion Trip Project

As I reflect on this project, I am first and foremost thankful my years spent at The University of Akron. The University of Akron Honors College has provided me with inspiring course work that not only challenged me but presented me with diverse perspectives and worldviews. The Honors program and my participation in the Institute for Leadership Advancement have reaffirmed my continued commitment to academic excellence, my service to the underserved in my community, and a true appreciation of a global perspective.

My inspiration for this Immersion Learning project was rooted in my participation in three Service Immersion trips to Haiti with The University of Akron Institute for Leadership Advancement. The most difficult portion of this project was first deciding upon a venue for the trip. Learning that the University already connections with LAIOB was key. When LAIOB confirmed their ability to assist with organizing a Silicon Immersion Experience for The University of Akron, it was the catalyst required for this project.

With costs determined and itineraries set, the wheels were set in motion. I then prepared and delivered presentations and communications to University Departments and distinguished community donors and secured the necessary funding in the form of student trip scholarships. Communications were then prepared and sent out to University students. Despite the short deadline, we received 60 student scholarship applications. The applications were carefully reviewed and the scholarship winners were fairly selected based on criteria defined in the grading rubric. The winners were notified and congratulated while the non-winning applicants were still given the opportunity to participate but at the full cost of \$2,300.

Lessons learned over the past few months, is to start planning such a project much earlier. Despite starting my project nearly a year ago, time flew by quickly and having an additional few months to perform fundraising and to communicate the opportunity to students may have allowed many more students to participate.

My Reflections – Zips in the Valley Immersion Trip Project

Looking ahead, there's still a lot of work to be completed between the end of April and when we depart for this unbelievable Learning Immersion experience to Silicon Valley including pre-trip planning meetings and confirmation of travel arrangements. Additionally, plans are being made to formally make Zips in the Valley a future student organization at The University of Akron that includes an annual Learning Immersion trip to Silicon Valley.

Lastly, I would like to thank Kevin Smith of the Institute for Leadership Advancement for the guidance that he provided throughout this important project, which I know will increase the cache of the student experience at The University of Akron making it the college of choice.

As I now prepare for my graduation with degrees in Financial Planning and in Integrated Marketing, I know that I will take with me all of my domestic and global immersion learning experiences only made possible by being a student at The University of Akron and by the generosity of community and university donors.

After graduation, I plan to work for a Wealth Management firm in the Columbus, OH area that aligns with my personal life goals of genuinely helping people and making a difference in the lives of my clients – Personally, Professionally and Financially.

Learning is a lifelong process and the venue, as I have found, can be found anywhere in our global village whether it's in Akron, Haiti or in Silicon Valley. In closing, I would like to end with a quote that I feel is appropriate and sums up my academic learnings and honors project experience at The University of Akron.

“Education is a social process; education is growth; education is not preparation for life but is life itself.” — John Dewey.

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Appendix A

MBA Leadership Travel Presentation

MBA Leadership Travel

Through my time at The University of Akron as an undergraduate, I have been blessed with the opportunity to travel twice with the Institute for Leadership Advancement to Haiti on a Global Leadership Initiative. My trips to Haiti have influenced much of the wonderful experience that I have had at The University of Akron. Through my trips to Haiti I have been exposed to a culture with poorer living conditions and opportunities than the ones available in the United States. Although I participated in several minor service projects to support our Haitian host school, the true difference was made in my new-found appreciation of my education. Over the past four years, the Haiti trips have impacted over 100 students and have led to the formation of a student organization, Zips for Haiti, whose main objective is to raise scholarship funds for a Haitian student through the sale of Haitian coffee. The Haiti trip has had powerful outcomes but it is often a challenging experience and is not for everyone.

In the three years since my first Haiti trip, I have reaped many benefits that I would not have had otherwise. For example, every interview that I have had in the last few years, I have been able to set myself apart by discussing my experience in Haiti which helped me to score two internships. I have also challenged myself to push my physical fitness boundaries and have trained for and run a half-marathon and marathon. In both races, I wore a Haiti bracelet and a University of Akron hat to show my pride for the two organizations that pushed and inspired me to strive to be my best. My examples are just the tip of the iceberg as it is just one of over 100 trip outcomes and student success stories. The Haiti trips' ability to have such a profound impact on the lives of its participants encouraged me to return as a trip co-leader this past May. By taking care travel arrangements and

Appendix A

MBA Leadership Travel Presentation

facilitating discussions the other students who went were able to focus on the opportunity before them and have their best experience.

Through my honors research project, I would like to explore and initiate a new travel opportunity that will impact the lives and careers of a new potential group of students. I would like to target Akron MBA students and Akron-area professionals as I believe that they are presently not served as well by the Institute for Leadership Advancement's Global Leadership Initiatives. In addition to Haiti other destinations currently include Jamaica, and Italy. The Haiti and Jamaica trips focus on leadership through service, while the Italy trip focuses on Leadership from an International business perspective. All of the current trips are open to all students and majors but tend to predominately be travelled by undergraduate students.

The primary question that I would aim to answer through my research is, would offering travel opportunities as a part of The University of Akron's MBA program be a powerful marketing and recruitment tool that made the program more attractive to prospective students? Leadership travel adventures during or after a student's higher education experience are common at a few of the United States' top Business schools such as Michigan State, Stanford, and the Wharton business school but not at The University of Akron. There are many styles of MBA travel experiences. These experiences take the form of study trips, working seminars, MBA exchanges and leadership adventure. They provide participants the opportunity to transform and grow professionally and personally through exposure to new and often challenging physical, cultural, and ethical environments. On international trips, Students benefit from the real-life experience of a culture that is different from their own which expands their horizons, develops their global awareness, and improves their international perspective as future leaders. On domestic trips, students would have the opportunity to expand their career horizons and opportunities in major US economic centers such as San Francisco and New York or they could take a much-

Appendix A

MBA Leadership Travel Presentation

needed break from their studies to a beautiful destination such as Colorado and partake in fun adventures that would challenge them to use leadership and team skills in order to triumph. These possibilities lead to the second question, What style of leadership trip would provide the most value, benefit, and worthwhile experience? The settled upon adventure would undoubtedly provide participants with an experience that has true career and personal value and the potential to create lasting bonds with their classmates, colleagues, and university that they will always carry with them.

The proposed research questions are:

- 1.) Would offering travel opportunities as a part of The University of Akron's MBA program be a powerful marketing and recruitment tool that made the program more attractive to prospective students?
- 2.) What style of leadership trip would provide the most value, benefit, and worthwhile experience?
- 3.) At what point in the MBA experience does selling the trip make sense? Before or during?
- 4.) Would these individuals have the desire, interest, and means to partake in such an experience?
- 5.) Would offering a travel opportunity to MBA students be a highlight of their Akron experience that strengthened their connection to the university and created a lasting impact on their personal and professional lives?

I will graduate in May with a BBA in Integrated Marketing Communications and Financial Planning. In several of my marketing courses I have conducted market research for a variety of organizations through several of the most common research methods. I have experience collecting quantitative and qualitative research data through interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, and through secondary research databases. My research would include a combination approach of qualitative and quantitative methods to answer the proposed questions.

Appendix A

MBA Leadership Travel Presentation

I would begin by conducting a focus group in the Taylor Institute's facilities. The group would be assembled by requesting participation from soon-to-be, current, recently graduated University of Akron MBA students. The meeting would be set-up at a time convenient to the subjects and their participation would likely be encouraged through gift cards and food. Focus groups are a useful exploratory form of mostly qualitative research. Starting with a focus group would allow me to collect a small sample of opinions and attitudes toward my proposed questions. The insights would provide me a direction that I could further explore through in-depth interviews and ultimately a questionnaire that would be shared with more Akron MBA students and professionals. Other insights could be gained by interviewing individuals through The University of Akron's Study Abroad and Graduate programs office. An interview request would also be extended Ashland University as they have a 1-year International MBA program that involves two short term international study tours to European and Asian destinations. If co-operation with Ashland University should prove unsuccessful, the appeal of their program and programs like theirs would be explored and assessed.

My project would be executed over four phases; research, trip exploration and set-up, recruitment, and trip coordination. The research and trip exploration portion of my proposed MBA leadership trip would take place the remainder of the fall 2018 semester. The trip set-up would take place over December and January. Should the research lead to the positive result that a trip of this proposed style is beneficial to an MBA students' career and personal development then the project would lead to an assessment of potential domestic and international opportunities. The right trip would provide not only educational and beneficial experience but would also be supported by strong interest and feasibility. The trip would likely be coordinated with a third-party travel provider. Most potential trip locations will be ones I have never travelled to before and an attractive third-party provider would offer area-knowledge and travel coordination experience. A group flight and accommodation

Appendix A

MBA Leadership Travel Presentation

booking would be made and a sign-up deadline established. The final two phases are a process that I am all too familiar with through my experiences recruiting and leading two trips to Haiti. The recruitment phase would be set-up well in the research phase and would take place in January and early February of 2019. Research participants would be asked for permission to contact them about future MBA Leadership trip opportunities. I would invite these students to trip info sessions where I would cover details of the trip, trip purpose and benefits, and costs. The first MBA trip would serve as a beta test and likely would not be open to prospective students. Non-refundable deposits would be collected to attract serious participants and payment dates established. The final stage of the project would ensure that all of the travel aspects came together and resulted in a successful travel experience.

My research would build on the research of former honors projects, “Experiential Learning and its Place in a Quality Business Education” and “Leadership Experience Project: Jamaica”. Both honors research projects explored the impact of international travel and experiential learning on leadership and personal development. The authors are all participants from the University’s first-ever Haiti trip. The Jamaica project also explored the motivations of students who travelled abroad and why others elected not to travel abroad. The outcomes of my research would be shared internally with the CBA advisory board and CBA Graduate School program. I would share my research findings and the outcome of the first MBA trip. A condensed version of the presentation would also be shared at the annual Institute for Leadership Advancement award banquet in April to students and benefactors of the program.

The best and most impactful experiences that I have had at The University of Akron have involved travel (Haiti, finance conferences and competitions). Having played the travel roles of participant and co-leader, the challenge of being a trip initiator is a reasonable next step that would truly stretch my mind and abilities while

Appendix A

MBA Leadership Travel Presentation

providing the university with a potentially valuable offering that could be carried on and expanded. This project would call upon nearly everything that I have learned from my undergraduate experience about travel coordination, leadership, market research, social media marketing, accounting, and finance. I view this project as a fitting culmination to the education and experiences that I have received as an undergraduate at The University of Akron.