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E.L.I.: The classroom

Surrounding myself with other students who were as motivated and interested in making an impact as I was made for the most incredible 13-week course. I was able to interact with individuals who were bright and apt to thinking creatively. ELI provided an inspiring environment unlike any classroom or course offered at the university or elsewhere. A nurturing, and encouraging place existed within our "home" in the Student Center, in which I was able to develop myself in a capacity that yearned for growth and enhancement. This was made possible through the supportive nature of my peers, as well as the advantageous lessons from the mentors and speakers. The speakers brought to life the subjects of ethics, conflict mediation, diversity, project planning, and value systems. The MBTI instrument pinpointed me as an ESFJ, which has enhanced my understanding of myself. The teamwork activities got us to see how crucial it is to be able to work with others, and how to cooperate effectively in a team situation. Every person brings different strengths and weaknesses into a team situation, but the winning combination emphasizes the strengths in everyone, which maximizes the reward in the end product. The individual project posed a challenge that only I could inspire and solve for myself. In developing and executing my project, however, I was also disclosing my personality in new ways. The most rewarding aspect of this course was the six-hour service project that united us at the Salvation Army one beautiful Saturday. It was a time of sharing, giving, bonding, and learning. It was so gratifying to observe the fruition of our efforts in planning and developing our ideas for the service project being executed.

E.L.I.: The experience

Throughout all the activities, speakers, and service projects, I learned more about myself and how I interact with others as a consequence of my personality and leadership style. I developed a dynamic definition of the qualities that a leader necessitates. Being a leader does not entail one person dictating orders to others, but rather one person who has the insight and ability to facilitate a more constructive manner in which to accomplish a goal or idea. Whether one is leading a discussion group, an orchestra, or a physical operation, certain qualities are exhibited in those individuals that allow them to excel in their venture. Through his composure, character, talent and initiative, a vigor or ambition can ignite all those in his presence to perform at a higher level just because of one person's effort. When one person stimulates the concerns in others and motivates their interests toward the same goal, the potential of that group is phenomenal. Our group service project definitely reflected everyone's willingness and passion for helping others.

My individual service project involved seeking the support of many of the Greek fraternity and sorority houses on campus to participate in an extension of UK's recycling program. Before college, recycling had been part of my daily routine. When I moved into my sorority house and realized that there were no recycling efforts, I knew I had to rectify that situation at once. At first I was hesitant as to how I was going to begin to improve that issue, and secondly how I was going to motivate other houses to get involved in recycling too. Once I made contacts with the recycling chairman within UK's PPD and worked out some details, the rest sort of fell into place. The response that I got from my sisters was so positive and encouraging, it made it easy to persuade the other

houses to want to get involved too. Most of the houses were interested and eager to get recycling put in their chapter houses too. The lesson that I learned throughout the progression of my project is that "You will not discover new oceans without having the strength to lose sight of the shore." Without my past passion for recycling and the positive vision I wanted to incur within the Greek houses on campus, my project might not have had the same success.

Barb Koetsier, an assistant facilitator and ENFJ, lead us in a wonderful workshop to discover our personality type through the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. I am an ESFJ: Extrovert Sensing Feeling Judging. I learned that being extroverted refers to my source of energy and does not necessarily apply to my social interactions or preferences. An extrovert gains energy from being around people and craves those interactions in order to feel energized, whereas an introvert longs for personal time to rejuvenate. Knowing my personality type has allowed me to understand why I behave to certain situations how I do.

Another insightful speaker, Doug Bruce, prompted us to create personal mission statements and performance goals in order to realize our values and priorities. He reflected, "We don't choose the stimulus, but we always choose the response." Therefore it is important for us to make sure our actions are concerted with our beliefs and that we act in a consistent manner. If you don't choose, someone else will. Along the same lines, if you don't stand up for yourself, who will? These were other themes that were touched on during his two-day session.

E.L.I. And beyond

"Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." -

Ralph Waldo Emerson

This course has given me the opportunity to realize the potential that one person has in making a difference and the influence that a larger group of interested and motivated individuals can effect when they unite their efforts and strengths. If any project is going to get done, I know that any time and effort that is put forth for such an endeavor will reap some sort of reward. If it's going to be, it takes just a little effort and determination to get any project off the ground. I will carry away from my experience in ELI a heightened sense of self-awareness, a call to action, a mediating compassion to conflict, a more balanced perspective, a process to manage goals or future projects, and a lasting bond to all the other students who participated. What other class can offer you this?