

ELI Final Paper  
Keshia Simmons  
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“What is Leadership”

What is leadership? That is a good question. To be honest, I cannot write out the perfect definition of leadership. As long as I can remember, I have always been very active in leadership roles. Reminiscing to elementary school where I would be counting down days until it was my turn to be the “class leader” of Mrs. Holbrook’s first grade class. I enjoyed the feelings of being “in charge”. My leadership experiences continued throughout elementary school, with more and more opportunities opening throughout middle school and into high school. During high school I joined every club and service project I could possibly join, hoping for a leadership role. I was able to attend many leadership conferences, camps, retreats, and workshops. I soon realized that any type of leadership conference was beneficial. Guest speakers had the talents and abilities to motivate anyone, awards and prizes were incentives, but the most I have ever learned about leadership has come from experience.

As I entered college, it was my desire to continue being an active leader as well as active in volunteer service projects. When I heard about ELI, it sounded like the perfect class for me! My first task as a college freshman was to fulfill my dream of starting an Apostolic, Pentecostal Campus ministry. As the president of Campus Ministry International, I applied to the Emerging Leaders Institute with one goal in mind, I wanted to learn as much as I could possibly learn to be the best leader for our organization I could possibly be. To be quite honest, I have not been disappointed at all, ELI has exceeded all expectations I had coming into the class.

I have learned so many different things during this semester. I remember comparing management to leadership, never before had I ever stopped to think about the differences. “Managers fill the bus with people, leaders, however, put the right people on the right seat on the bus.” This idea has stayed with me and intrigued me throughout the semester. I do not want to be a leader who is so concerned about “numbers” but I want to be a leader who helps others to get into the position where they can maximize their individual talents and abilities. Peter F. Drucker once said that “Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things.” It will constantly be a thought in my mind, am I just doing things right, or am I really doing the right things. I want to constantly be doing positive things, things that will continue to benefit others as well as myself as long as I may live.

One of the most vivid lesson I learned and I will not soon forget is concerning Ethics. Dr. Gordon Holbein was presenting on the five practices of exemplary leadership. As an activity to reinforce his presentation, he divided our class into different groups, the groups were all given the same task, and a reward awaited the team who was the most efficient. My team, “Team Camp” was the winner by far, but the tactics some members of my team used were not always ethical. However, I was too excited about winning the competition to care. Reality set in when our class as a whole began to reflect on the events of the competition. Although I may not have been the player who was unethical, I supported my teammate; therefore I supported the ethics of the team. This made me realize how important ethics are in leadership.

Through ELI, I have realized the importance of trust, collaboration, and delegation. One of our first activities as a class was the ropes course. Here we were,

fourteen college students from all different backgrounds working together to achieve a common goal. We did not have time to learn everything about each other; we had a job to get done. I realized through this activity that in leadership roles I might not know everyone that I work with, but I have to trust them in order to get the job done. As we began to work on our class service project, collaborations became a key factor in success. We quickly learned that if everyone had to comment and discuss every decision that was to be made, nothing would ever get done. That is where trust and delegation came into play. We divided into separate committees with each committee having the power to act. When we began to trust the opinions and decision-making capability of the entire group, the details of our “senior prom” quickly fell into place.

Not only have we studied many theories and ideas of leadership, my thoughts and theology have been challenged as well. Dr. Steven Voss challenged me like no one else has ever challenged me before. Dr. Voss did not tell me what I wanted to hear. Dr. Voss presented the material in such a way that caused me to analyze myself as a leader. This is a very important part of leadership. However, I learned through his presentation that I must make up my mind, now more than ever of what I will stand for. I have realized that respect is a very important key in leadership. Everyone is not going to agree on every issue. Although I may not agree with someone, I must respect the views and opinions they might have.

As I ponder my own definition of leadership, passion and vision are words that quickly come to mind. Passion in life is the motivation that drives action. I believe that effective leaders are very passionate about the project they are involved in. This is definitely the case in my situation. My ELI individual project goal was to “Promote and

publicize a positive image of Campus Ministry International (CMI)". Campus Ministry International is a Campus Ministry here at UK that I started my freshman year. Passion and a vision to see this organization thrive and grow, motivates me to brainstorm new ideas, organize special events, pass out flyers, or whatever it would take to see CMI grow. If a leader is very passionate about a project, it is easy for them to share their vision with others. Dwight Eisenhower once said, "Leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something you want done because he wants to do it." If I am passionate enough about my vision, it will be easier to share my vision in such a way that it becomes the vision of others, and they too want to see Campus Ministry International grow and thrive.

It was definitely a blessing of God to get an opportunity to work with Campus Ministry International as a class project. It is not every class you take that you can work on a project that means everything to you, and get three credit hours at the same time. Although my semester in ELI may be over, my involvement as a leader has just begun. I want to use the knowledge I have gained through ELI, to become a stronger and better leader. As I mentioned earlier, the most I have ever learned about leadership has not been from a book, or workshop, but through experience. Starting a new campus ministry at UK helped me to grow so much as a leader, but with each new project, each new event, I feel as though I will continue to grow. I don't believe that any one person truly understand everything there is to know about leadership. I can study every book and case study, listen to motivational speakers, interview the greatest leaders of all time, but if I never experience more leadership, different tasks, I will never grow as a leader.

As I sat in the first orientation of ELI, I had a very optimistic attitude. I was not sure what to expect, but I was looking at thirteen other students just like me, thirteen students that I would have the privilege of getting to know. Friendships have been made that will never be broken. I am very excited to see what leadership roles my fellow ELI rangers will hold in the future.

ELI has been more than just a class; it has been an experience I will never forget. I cannot honestly say however, that I have learned all there is to know about leadership, and I still cannot answer the question of what leadership really is. To be quite honest I am probably more confused about leadership than when I started the class because I have been introduced to so many theories and ideas. The lack of knowledge, however, intrigues me to continue studying leadership, to learn more, and become the best leader I can possibly become.