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### Final ELI Paper

The Emerging Leaders Institute is a class designed to teach leadership qualities to students wanting to evolve as leaders for tomorrow. Throughout the class, many opportunities are given to students to actively take part in discussions and group activities where leadership plays a key role. One of the main parts of the course is knowing what makes a leader and how to lead effectively and in an appropriate manner. Another important part of the course is knowing that “too many chiefs and too few Indians” is not always a good thing! Sometimes leading is not always taking control, but sitting back and absorbing information from others that will help you in the future. You must always know how to follow before attempting to lead because a leader must always have his followers and know how to actively communicate with them.

At the beginning of the semester we were taught that there is no set definition of leadership. We quickly came to know that leadership could be defined in a great deal of ways. Leadership could be taking initiative or merely sitting back and actively communicating in a group discussion. Perhaps the class that was the most enjoyable to me was when we discussed credibility. In this particular class, Ricardo Nazario Colon taught us how to look for credible sources, not only in people but also internet and book sources. We played a game called “mafia” in which blame was placed on two people and they had to give their testimony. In using their testimony, we had to decide whether or not they were credible and whether or not their stories could be believed.

I believe that credibility is important and teaches us not always to believe what we hear, and that everyone cannot always be trusted. Actively communicating with others and making a name for yourself, one that is well respected and well known, is more important than most other things. I believe that this class has taught me to become more credible and has also taught me how to communicate better with others. It quickly learned that something minor such as not showing up to an event on time can cause others to lose trust in you and not believe things that you may say or do as much as they might have had you not deceived them in the past.

I also feel that ELI has taught me that it is not a big deal to get up in front of a crowd and make a speech. After taking this class I have become more confident in my abilities to speak in front of others and carry a message they will not be forgotten. In one particular class we learned that eye contact, using hand gestures, changing the tones in your voice, and engaging listeners is just as important as the actual words that are coming out of your mouth.

I felt the part of the class that allowed us to use the most of the skills we learned was the individual project. This project was designed to teach us how to build confidence in knowing we can change things, help us build networks, and teach us there will be roadblocks in most of our projects, whether it be in school or any other time in life, but we can't let them keep us from accomplishing what we set out to do. For this project, we had to come up with something that interested us and something we would like to see changed. For my project, I chose to adopt 13 children from the Manchester Center, a local shelter in town designed to help underprivileged children. During this project we would meet with our mentor groups that would advise us of things that were problems in

the area or things that could use some change. I chose to involve each of the sororities on campus in my project. I decided I would contact each sorority and give them the profile of each respective child. In doing so, the sororities could assist me in making each of these children's holiday season a little bit brighter. At first, I felt that I would not be able to take on such a large task, but it was easy to get others to assist me because my plans were thoughtful and well organized. I also thought that by using an organization that was well established such as the Manchester Center, made my project seem more credible to the sororities which also helped in their decisions to pursue this activity with me.

Although I have done all of the work, I do not feel that I will have the satisfaction of a finished project until I know that each and every child had the Christmas they deserve. I believe that this project was not only important in making me a stronger leader, it was also more important in making me a stronger person. I think that taking on such a large task would not have been something that I would have normally done had I not been in the class, however, after seeing how well it went and knowing how gratifying it truly was, I will not be skeptical or scared to take on another task in the future that may be presented.

I feel that this project reinforced many of the things that our teachers had been telling us throughout the semester. The project taught me that you can not always rely on others to do what they were asked to do. One part of being a leader is being able to assist others with any problems they may have but also being able to guide them in the right direction when things are not going as planned at any given point in time. We learned in class that most people believe in leaders that are doing the same things the followers are doing. Saying one thing and doing another does not show good leadership skills. I

learned that if I say what I do more people are willing to follow me. That is why I felt it was important to actively participate in this project with my respective sorority and not just tell others that they should donate and adopt these children. By doing the same thing I was asking others to do I believe it added to my credibility and made others more passionate about my project because it was something they could tell I felt strongly about.

After taking this class, I plan on using many of the skills and assets taught to me. In the upcoming years, I will be acting as Panhellenic president. A Panhellenic president is the leader of every sorority on campus. I feel this will be the ultimate task of what I have learned in this class. Not only must I remain neutral to each and every sorority, I must also make sure that each of the sororities are acting in a manner that is indicative of sorority life at the University of Kentucky. In doing this, I feel that I will have to become strong and assertive in the things I do because I could easily be taken advantage of. I feel that the job may seem a bit overwhelming but I must pursue it and carry it out to the best of my ability. I think that this will be an opportunity that I will not forget when my time at the University of Kentucky is finished.

I would suggest that anyone wanting to fine tune or even learn how to effectively lead and communicate with others take this class. I have learned things that would normally have to be learned on a trial and error basis without having to make the errors. Sometimes I would get discouraged with others around me, but as time progressed, I learned that others must have felt the same about me. It is not always the most glorious thing to be the leader of a particular project, but in the end the knowledge that you

successfully accomplished something that could not be done alone is more gratifying than sitting back and not utilizing skills that may come naturally to someone.

Not only will I be able to lead others in an effective manner, I will also be able to follow in an effective manner. I now know what it takes to be a leader and know that sometimes the most difficult thing about leading is getting others to follow. Although there is not only one way to do things, there is a difference in doing the job and doing the job right. I feel a leader makes following fun and leading rewarding.