

## **Ryan Hertz**

### *The Emerging Leader Institute*

My experience as an ELI student was very informative and extremely interesting. These are two descriptive words that stand out in my mind about the whole program. There were times in ELI when I questioned myself about being part of the class, but I overcame this once I reflected on the many things that we have learned. From the guest speakers to the projects, the class has always kept me thinking and very busy.

First, the program was very informative. I took in so much information over the course of the semester that I sometimes feel overwhelmed, but in a good way. From learning how to speak in public to overcoming the potential barrier of diversity, the class informed me on how to become a successful leader in today's society. The key word is successful.

Anyone can attempt to lead a group, but personal and group success is what makes a great leader. A leader must be satisfied with himself and the outcome of the group to be a successful leader.

The class was extremely interesting. Who knew that so many speakers could impact the way a person like myself thinks. The way the class was set up is interesting in itself. The half circle that we sat in enabled us to hear each other and speak without having to completely turn, but rather just move our heads. The way that each student could express his/her own opinion is another thing that is interesting. With so many ideas flowing through the room, it is sometimes easy to overlook someone's opinions. I thought at first the class would be a mess. With so many leaders expressing their feelings and ideas, I thought that opinions would start ethical wars. To my surprise, everyone in the

class respected each other's ideas because everyone realized that we are all important to each other's growth as leaders.

The thing that stood out to me the most was the importance and impact of certain guest speakers. Dr. Derek Lane is one in particular that stood out in my mind. His presentation was about risk taking and different leadership styles. He went over how important it was for leaders to sometimes take risks to gain credibility and attention from their followers. I am a strong believer in that aspect of leadership and it helped reassure my own confidence in my style of leadership. The different leadership styles that he expressed helped me develop a sense of where I fall into place in the leadership realm. It explains why I do certain things when I am leading and helps me restrain myself from making mistakes that clash with my leadership style. Ms. Mildred Bailey's presentation on diversity was also very exceptional. She gave us examples on how to deal with diversity in a positive manner. In leadership, diversity must be addressed so a problem is not created. Her examples on life situations and other leadership roles put the class in a relaxing atmosphere that let us speak out about our diversity experiences and problems. I now feel more comfortable and confident that I can work with diverse styles and I can deal with a diversity issue if it evolves while I am leading a group.

There are many, many things I have learned in ELI, as stated above, but mostly just self improvement of leadership skills. For me, I have grown in the area of patience with other people. Before this class, I was very inconsistent with my patience, but after dealing with so many intelligent people, I had to respect their opinions. I looked at all options instead of my own. The prime example for this was when my group's idea of an Easter event for a service project was rejected for the Bob Brown House visit. I was very

angry that my group's project was not the winner. I then went on thinking how stupid the Bob Brown idea was, when in fact it was a great project. I then "grew up" when I realized how committed everyone became once the Bob Brown project was selected. I realized that my bad attitude could affect others and that I was showing poor leadership qualities.

Some of the things in this class just reiterated what types of leadership styles I possess. For instance, I am a social leader and I like to talk and generate many, many ideas. I learned how to cope with others who lead with leadership styles different from my own. This can be very good for small group and team leadership. I plan to use this course as a guideline in my future leadership scenarios. My first leadership position will be with my fraternity where I have become Vice President. I will have to incorporate all my skills that I have learned into this position. My individual leadership project has also brought a future leadership position for me. I will be heading the advertising campaign for a literacy program at Johnson Elementary School. Their plan is to use my experience and education with leadership and advertising to spread the program to hundreds of elementary schools in Kentucky. This will definitely test my leadership skills of public speaking and group cooperation. These are just two of the many leadership experiences that I have planned in my life. I plan to impact the University of Kentucky while I am here and the Emerging Leader Institute has helped me prepare for this adventure. I believe that the future holds great leadership positions for me and I will not be afraid to express my skills to the world.