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When I think about my experience in the Emerging Leader Institute, the first thing that comes to mind is growth. I think about how this growth applies to a world of aspects in my life both academically and leadership oriented. I have been able to overcome obstacles and to look at myself in a confident new light. I have instilled in myself the ability to think clearly and "outside of the box." I also allowed myself the time I needed to fully understand some of the concepts learned in class so that I could become a successful leader. And most importantly, I learned that leadership comes in all different shapes, sizes, colors, ethnic backgrounds, qualities, skills, experiences and opinions. One of the most important qualities I gained/learned during my experience in ELI was the ability to listen to others more intently and to be able to focus on what they were saying and try to understand where they were coming from. For example, when I first entered ELI I knew exactly what I wanted to do and how I wanted this class to help me accomplish my goal. I had a very close-minded attitude and felt that no one could help me, because no one else knew how I wanted my final product to turn out. However, when Rhonda Strouse gave us the personality test, I suddenly became aware of the type of person I was. Not that this was a bad thing, but I began to realize how I act in certain situations, more particularly situations of leadership.

The personality test was an eye-opener for me and made me begin to refocus my aspects of the Institute and I began to look at things differently. When I received my results I found out that I was a combination of "S" and "I." The "S" stands for Steadiness and the "I" stands for Influential/Influencing. I could totally agree with my results because I have qualities of both and the majority of them are not bad qualities, but there

were many I found that I could improve upon. So, in a nutshell, I began listening more instead of always feeling like I had to respond to the question or situation at hand. I began to think in more abstract and open-minded ways and I began to realize what leadership is all about. I started to focus more on our group as a class and as a working committee of leaders instead of just focusing on my own leadership capabilities and qualities. Doing these things in the Institute has prepared me for the many leadership opportunities that do lie ahead for me and the skills that I have gained through this class have given me the chance to see myself in a new light.

When you learn something you keep it with you for the rest of your life, if you learn it well the first time around! Well, during my experience this past semester I have learned several things about myself, and the way I like to conduct leadership business. The Institute impacted my leadership life as well as my social and academic life. I was able to learn to listen more not only to my friends and mentors, but to my teachers whom gave boring lectures and I was subject to sit and listen intently. I was able to respect the effort people put into their schoolwork and their community projects. At first I thought that we just had to complete our project to get the "P" for Pass, but then I realized that it was the amount of effort and time that you devoted to help others and the desire that you had to want to make this campus and community better, that really counted the most. I also learned that leadership doesn't always mean that the loudest or the most outgoing person is going to be the most beneficial to the group. I learned that sometimes you have to "give in" and listen to others before you can fully understand where they are coming from. I was the type of leader that never delegated and did most everything on my own. I was President of my sophomore, junior and senior class and each year I found myself

extremely busy and complaining about how no one would help me. The whole time though, I was just being stubborn and refusing to let anyone help me for fear that they wouldn't produce the results that I wanted and had envisioned in my mind. Through ELI I was able to set those differences aside and let others take control because I knew if I let myself go and start doing things that I used to do, then it wouldn't be a positive experience for me. This was one of the hardest things for me to do, but I was able to achieve this and it has proved to be very successful for me. When my community service project came to an "end" I began to realize why we had all been working together during the different activities and classes. We were building up relationships with people that would eventually carry over into the way we led our projects or our organizations. I realized that the peer mentors and mentors were there to guide us and make us aware of the way we do act in certain situations as well as the impact that we can have on a group of people and ourselves. This and much more is what I learned from my experience in the Emerging Leader Institute.

Where do I go from here? I am definitely going to keep working with my community service project, which is Increasing Public Awareness of Tourette Syndrome because my little brother was diagnosed with the disorder when he was seven. I am going to continue to educate others about the causes and symptoms of Tourette Syndrome and how they could help others who they think might have it as well. I am going to continue to use the skills and abilities that I have learned to better communicate and work with those that I may come into contact with in the future. I am also going to listen carefully to what everyone has to say and be open to new ideas. I am also going to encourage people

to get involved and to not be shy and to let their voice be heard! Because these are some of the most important things I have learned from the Emerging Leader Institute.