

Thomas Rauf

Experiencing Leadership

My name is Thomas Rauf and I am sophomore here at the University of Kentucky. This semester I was given the opportunity to participate in the unique Emerging Leaders Institute (ELI). I heard about ELI my freshman year through "Halls in the Stalls" and the "Kernel." At that point, I thought it would be a great opportunity for me to get into ELI, although they had other plans for me, I felt that I was fairly involved, and that I had leadership ability and qualities. As you may have assumed, I was not accepted my freshman year into ELI. I was utterly disappointed, I was a new student still in an unfamiliar setting, and this was the first time I had been turned down. At first I couldn't understand why I was not accepted, I thought that I was rejected as a leader. At first I was consumed in the idea that I was not a leader. I learned quickly from that experience about rejection, and how important it was. That incident helped me develop as a leader. I realized how important it is when you fall of the horse that you get right back on the horse. That experience encouraged me more than ever to foster my leadership abilities and to get more involved. The following year I received an invitation to apply to ELI, and I was accepted. Learning an important skill from ELI before ever going to a class, and that being that persistence pays off.

I think the common misconception about ELI is that it teaches someone how to be a leader, I don't think you can make someone a leader that is not already a leader, ELI helps develop leadership qualities from participants and encourages the participants to be better leaders. ELI has helped me see more of the leader within me, and helped me realize the roads to change that are so much a part of leadership. ELI has lit a fire in me that I

hope will burn long and bright to face the challenges in my life head on, and to see problems and injustice and do what I can to right the wrongs.

"All of the great leaders have had one characteristic in common: it was the willingness to confront unequivocally the major anxiety of their people in their time. This, and not much else, is the essence of leadership." — John Kenneth Galbraith

I also learned from ELI the importance of service in leadership. Besides the various styles and ideas about leadership that is instructed in ELI, and my favorite part about ELI was our service project at the Ronald McDonald House. I realized how important it is to help others and share the gifts that you have been given.

Another important part of leadership that I realized in ELI is how important relationships are to success. All the participants in ELI are able to get to know each other really well. These relationships make it easier to proceed smoothly into the subject matter. This is also important in leadership, it is important to get to know people that you working with if you want to work well together. The relationships that we have developed in ELI are with the students, which are the leaders at UK and will be of great help at UK.

I will be using what I learned in ELI throughout my entire life, in ways that I have yet to foresee. I will use what I learned in my professional life, community life, and family life. I will also, more immediately, use what I have learned in ELI at UK. ELI has helped give me the courage to start an organization that deals with problems in a particular area on campus, that being the College of Arts & Sciences. I will also continue my efforts in organizations that I am already associated with and be more of a leader

within those organizations. I look forward to becoming more of a leader at UK thanks to ELI.

I would like to end this with a quote that I think is important to leadership and should be taken to heart. I invite all those with questions or comments to e-mail me at tarauf0@pop.uky.edu.

"The final test of a leader is that he leaves behind him in other men the conviction and the will to carry on... The genius of a good leader is to leave behind him a situation which common sense, without the grace of genius, can deal with successfully."

- Walter Lippmann