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In January, I embarked on a leadership journey which would prove to teach me countless, applicable leadership skills. Emerging Leaders Institute became much more than just a class. This program has helped me gain confidence, understand leadership on a different level and challenge myself. Instead, this program became instrumental in my adjustment to this university and in my overall development as a person. I was surrounded by a group of diverse, motivated peers who applied for this class to learn how to develop their personal leadership style. We actually wanted to be there and this showed in the overall enthusiasm and participation of our class. My classmates also taught me aspects of leadership by observing their various leadership styles and interesting views. By being surrounded by so many wonderful people I was extremely comfortable in this learning process.

On orientation day we were introduced to our fellow small group members and mentors. At first, I did not fully understand what the small group's purpose was in the process of my development. Later, I realized that this group became the foundation for my experience. We met once week to discuss our experiences and feelings about the current sessions. The group also provided me with constant feedback in regards to my personal leadership project. Having the ability to express my feelings in a secure setting was a wonderful aspect of this program. Group members were always eager to help me with my leadership project roadblocks while offering me possible solutions to the problem. My mentors answered questions and assisted me in many ways which helped me utilize the resources on this campus.

Knowledge that I acquired during this class was extremely relative to my life. After every session I felt as if I was taking something away. I made an attempt to apply this new found information in some aspect of my life, whether it was addressing communities during service projects, communication within a group or managing my time efficiently. Being able to apply the knowledge was one of my biggest rewards. By challenging myself through the application of these ideas I found that I gained confidence in my ability to make a difference in myself and others. I feel that I have grown as a person due to this wonderful experience.

Through weekly sessions taught by knowledgeable guests speakers, I was challenged by their ideas and thoughts. For example, during the Leadership in Community Partnership unit, which was taught by Louise Stone, I was faced with numerous new thought-provoking concepts. Louise spoke about accurately addressing what the people in the communities really need instead of what we assume that they need. This really made me analyze my leadership style when performing service for others. I realized that I had been focusing too much on statistics and other sources for information instead of asking the community. I now realize that as a leader finding out the real need of the community is imperative if you really want to make an impact on their lives. Now I know that whenever I lead a group into an unfamiliar area I will accurately address what the people really need. This is something that I can use in every service project from this point on.

In the Communications section, taught by Rosemary Bryant and Leola McClure, I learned about many aspects of communication including initiating a conversation, finding shared meaning, and understanding the various roles that take place within the group. I

was shocked when I took the Sargent and Miller Leadership Scale quiz and discovered that I was an autocratic leader. An autocratic leader places great emphasis on being in charge and having the power. Through discussion, I realized that I should make an effort to place more focus on group interaction. After this unit, I made an effort to allow others to speak and participate. For example, one morning during my Anthropology lab my small group was extremely quiet during the discussion portion. Normally, I would have filled the silence by answering the questions. Instead, I asked my group members what they thought and allowed them to answer. I would not have made that adjustment if I had not heard Rosemary Bryant and Leola McClure speak.

My individual leadership project seemed to encompass everything that I had learned from the various class sessions. By keeping a progress log, I was able to document my progress with my project. My mentors were able to review this log and give constant feedback. They always seemed to have contacts that would help me further my project. Their encouragement helped me stay motivated about my project. I used Mike Rosenburg's tips on time management throughout the semester. Those strategies helped me use my time more efficiently. Time management was vital in planning my individual leadership project. Watching everyone present their projects was an amazing experience. I was impressed by the originality and hard work demonstrated by my fellow classmates in regards to their particular projects. I truly feel blessed to have had the opportunity to be apart of this special class and get to know this amazing group of people in the process.