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ELI-Final Paper
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ELI FINAL PAPER

I had no idea of what to expect when I first walked through the doorway of room 357 in the student center. With all past classes I could ask a friend who has a friend that has taken the class before. This was not the case for the ELI class. I walked in with what I thought was an open mind and willingness to learn.

When the class started I did not know how to react. I felt out of place and I thought I was out of place. People in my group had plans not only for a project but plans for their life, and I had no idea what I would be doing by the end of the week.

The first assignments, projects and group work I laughed at and didn't take seriously. However, after several weeks I realized what this class had the potential to teach me, and that is when I truly opened my mind and was willing to learn. This was a class that was truly going to mold me into a leader, and make me a person that would make a difference at the University of Kentucky.

This is a class that has had more of an effect on my college career than any class I have had and probably will have. It has given me opportunities that I could not have even imagined and I have learned more than I thought possible. Although if I had to write what I have learned, I do not know if I could do it. The things I have learned have become second nature and become standard. I can't think of any other way to act besides the ways this course has taught me.

I remember speakers that we had and I don't remember every word they said but I do know the reasons why they had my attention. I know that Dr. Voss had my attention immediately because he disagreed with nearly everything the book had to say. Through

his class I learned that things don't have a set path, and that things change all the time for people in all types of positions.

One of my two favorite speakers was Dr. Maloney. When his first class started I didn't think that his session would be one where I learned a lot, but I was wrong. For two days he had the class in the palm of his hand. I do not know how he did it, but he had our undivided attention for two straight days. I think he just approached things different from every other presenter.

One activity that stood out in my mind was that of Dr. Price, she was also my group leader. Her activity was the corpse game. This was where each person would draw part of a picture by seeing only a fragment of what the person before them drew. I think this activity demonstrated the potential for collaboration in any kind of project that an individual or a group undertakes. This is the kind of activity that I would continue to use in any kind of setting that it would be appropriate and have an impact.

I think that the presenters were an important part of the class, but they weren't the most important part. The students of ELI are the future leaders that I will be working with and currently am working with to make a difference in our community. Our class has bonded more than any other class I have been in. Not only do we have class together more than four hours a week, but we also see each other outside of class.

I have become friends with all of my peers in ELI, and I hope that we can continue our friendship. We will work together to solve the problems that are presented to the University of Kentucky. More importantly we will continue our friendship and make our college experience that much better because of our common bond through ELI. This will be a common trait we will share throughout our college experience and beyond.

I might not remember the classroom moments, but I will remember the day at the gymnastics center and the end of the year party.

This semester has been one of the most life changing time periods in all my life. This is partly due to what I have been taught in ELI but more importantly is what ELI has given me the opportunity to do. I now have leadership responsibilities in several elite organizations and I say this is due mostly to my experience in ELI. I am a member of the Inter-Greek Programming Assembly, Student Development Council, and I am participating in the first UK Dance Marathon.

However, ELI has made me become not just a member of organizations, but the leader of these organizations. I am currently the treasurer of my fraternity, treasurer/secretary of the Inter-Greek Programming Assembly, and the Rules and Regulations chair of the UK Dance Marathon. In the past I would say someone should do something about that, but now I say I will do something about that.

Throughout the semester the class took several self assessments about different leaderships styles. I always like doing those assessments, but I do not think they truly told me anything. I scored so evenly in nearly all categories that it was hard to tell. Also I took one test two times and by thinking about a different situation my leadership style changed completely. I learned that I am the type of leader than can mold to any situation.

With gaining the confidence to go make a difference, I have done just that. I do not think that I am a complete leader, but I am emerging into the future leader I will become. This class has unveiled my potential and shown myself along with others around me that I can make a difference.

After I complete this class I think that there is only one option. I have to hold myself to a higher standard and let myself lead others. I need to not only lead by example to make a difference on campus and in my community but I need to find other leaders. The ELI class is only successful if more students apply. These students must come into this course with an open mind and willingness to learn, and they will leave the future leaders of the state of Kentucky.

On one of the first days of class we wrote a definition of what it means to be a leader on the board. I have molded this definition into my own. It is mostly the old definition, only expanded to fit any and all category. If I can live my life through this definition I will be successful in anything I pursue, and so will others around me.

My definition:

Leadership is the persistent ability to effectively and morally motivate others towards an unselfish common goal of excellence.

In this sentence there are several words that to mean are a necessity for a leader, and these words are persistent, effective, moral, unselfish, and excellence. There are many other qualities that leaders need to have, but I believe these characteristics are the cornerstones of leadership.

The first word is persistent. There is a quote by Calvin Coolidge, who happens to be a brother of the fraternity I am in, Phi Gamma Delta. This quote rings true in my life, and I can think of so many instances that it has been true not only in my life but in the lives of family and friends. The quote goes as follows:

“Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan ‘Press On’ has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race.”

The next word is effective. An effective leader is the whole package. An effective leader is an all around person who sees the big picture. This type of leader is better than respected, he is better than loved, and he is better than successful. This type of leader reaches people on all levels and always reaches his goal.

Morals are needed in our society more than ever. People trust their leaders and the leaders must be good people. Morals show the character of a person. They show people in and out of the lime light for what they truly are. Morals keep people on the right path and lead them towards a successful life.

Leaders are leaders for the purpose of making decisions that are best for the common good. It is not only the job but the responsibility to make decisions that might not be in the best interest for the leader themselves but for the majority of people. If a leader is focused on them self, they will not lead, they will only have power. Power can be taken away and it is the responsibility of people to question them leaders, to make sure their interests are being heard.

The final and most important word, the cornerstone for all leaders is excellence. This word has been watered down and does not carry the weight that it should.

Excellence is perfection, and we can never reach perfection but we can be relentless in our pursuit for it. We will never reach it, but a leader will always lead towards this goal of perfection.

Now that I have finished ELI, I will use my definition and I will make a difference in my organizations, my community, and I will make a difference that will be remembered by future generations.