

## Final Reflection Paper

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As I reach the end of the Graduate Leadership Institute (GLI), this is an opportunity to reflect on what I have learned and how I have grown. This journey has provided valuable insights into leadership, both in theory and in practice. In this paper, I will address my original leadership goals, my evolving understanding of leadership, and the growth I experienced in four specific leadership competencies.

At the beginning of the course, I set goals to improve my communication skills, become more adaptable in diverse environments, and gain a deeper understanding of what it means to be a strong, inclusive leader. My aim was to be able to communicate ideas clearly and lead projects with confidence, especially in international and diverse settings where perspectives can vary greatly.

Reflecting on my progress, I feel I have made significant strides. GLI provided multiple opportunities to practice communication and adaptability, such as working with classmates from different backgrounds and engaging in small-group discussions on complex topics. However, I still see room for improvement in quickly adapting to unexpected changes. Moving forward, I plan to continue developing this skill by seeking diverse team environments and taking on roles that require rapid adjustment to new challenges.

Initially, my understanding of leadership focused mainly on guiding a team toward a

goal, providing direction, and motivating others. Now, I recognize that leadership encompasses much more than this. Through GLI, I have learned that leadership also involves understanding people, creating an environment where everyone feels valued, and listening to diverse perspectives. True leadership is collaborative and involves empowering others and fostering a culture of respect and inclusivity.

To me, communication is the ability to share ideas clearly and ensure mutual understanding. In GLI, I frequently practiced this skill, particularly during group activities. I learned the importance of active listening and providing constructive feedback. Now, I am more confident when presenting ideas and can communicate my message clearly without causing confusion or overwhelming others.

Adaptability, in my view, means being able to change plans or approaches as situations evolve. Throughout GLI, I encountered various opportunities to collaborate with students from diverse backgrounds, which challenged me to adjust my thinking and actions. I am now more comfortable handling unexpected changes and can find solutions even when situations deviate from the original plan.

Team collaboration involves working effectively with others toward a common objective. GLI highlighted the importance of fostering an open environment where everyone's input is valued. I learned to encourage others, solicit feedback, and ensure that every voice is heard. Additionally, I recognized that effective teamwork relies on building trust, and I have become more adept at nurturing that trust with my team members.

I define inclusivity as ensuring that all individuals feel respected and valued, regardless of their background or identity. GLI reinforced that inclusivity is not simply about avoiding

exclusion; it requires actively welcoming and involving everyone. I now focus on listening more attentively and creating a safe space where people feel comfortable sharing their thoughts.

Overall, GLI has been an invaluable experience that has significantly influenced my understanding of leadership. I am proud of the progress I have made in communication, adaptability, team collaboration, and inclusivity. I feel better prepared to work in diverse settings and to lead with respect and openness. Moving forward, I aim to apply these skills beyond the classroom and into my career, where I hope to help build strong, inclusive teams that foster individual and collective success.