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Competency: Leadership

I am majoring in computer science, and after you get to your junior year, you must apply and pass the interviews to be admitted to the upper-class division. After getting into the program, you will do a total of four projects with real-life companies; in other words, you will be doing four internships. Last semester was my first semester of my upper division classes; we call that J1. J2 is your second semester of junior year, S1 is your first semester, and S2 is your final semester. My J1 semester was successful. I had a strong team and a strong team leader. We were able to complete our project with success, and I was able to learn many things about software engineering and data science.

Now let me get into my story about the incredible leadership I am getting to experience this semester. In short, for my J3 semester, I have offered and been nominated to be a team leader, which means I am the face of the entire project, and this project is for one of the most renowned companies in the United States, Better Business Bureau. You guessed it, there is a lot of pressure on me. Okay, so going back, I am now the team leader of this project, but what does being the team leader mean? It means you must be one of the most technically inclined people on the team, so for any technical questions that your teammates have, you must have an answer for them.

You are the first person who is a bridge between your team and your clients, so for any questions that the clients have, you are responsible for providing the answer, and vice versa. But you might think this is the most challenging part of being a team leader. Not quite. My team is a group of five, including me, and leading and managing four different people is challenging. Some people might contribute more to the project than others, and it is up to you to have a difficult conversation with your guys. Let me give you an example: one of my teammates was not contributing. This was difficult for Mr. because I do not like having these conversations, but I stepped up and asked the person to meet in person, and I began my sentence with, I need you. You are part of the team, and we will need your expertise for this project to be successful. The team also relies on you. I was as sincere as possible, and I would say it is working. Each Monday when my team meets after the weekend, I have a status report that everyone must do, which makes the team more accountable.

Now, let me be honest. I am scared that this project may be a failure and that we might not meet expectations that are always in the back of my mind. There are times I think I am not a good team leader, but I am stepping up and starting to see that this is part of the process. I am learning to trust my team and not carry everything on my shoulders. I have to say that I do not think of myself as a leader. I still have doubts, but I am starting to see if anyone can step up when the situation requires you to. I believe in the power of adaptability. I am still in the process of completing my project. We have days that are very successful and days that may require some work, but by being sincere, open, and assertive, I believe I can bring the project to success at the end of the semester.