

Illinois Leadership Certificate Program

Leadership Certificate Portfolio

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PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a vital quality that should be well developed in any individual. In many situations you may be required to step up and take control of the reigns and excel in the role. Leadership development would help me gain confidence, improve my communication skills and learn how to coordinate with others. Through the certificate program I hoped to work with groups better and confidently take control of matters if need be. As a mechanical engineering student, I am required to frequently work in groups, teams and organizations. Through the program I wished to work well as a team member and individual. I hoped to identify my strengths and weaknesses and use this information to my advantage. I hoped to learn how to confront any issue that may come during team work. I wanted to improve my personality to better suit others around me. I also looked forward to meeting other people from various backgrounds and exchange ideas and experiences during the program. I wanted to learn to develop networks and relationships with different people. I also wanted to learn about past leaders and use them as mentors and create my goals and objectives based on their example. Since, ethics is an integral part in a academic and professional environment, I hoped to learn how to carefully traverse through any ethical dilemma. Through the leadership certificate program I expected to develop the aforementioned skills, build my strengths, work on my weakness and succeed as a person and leader.

Throughout the course of the program I was encouraged to take on more responsibilities and roles in the societies and organizations I was a part of. I was eager to apply the values, principles, and rules I learned through my participation in the program in my role as a mechanical engineering student, an undergraduate grader, and a member of Engineering Council. I was able to grow successfully in these positions thanks to the program. I ended up succeeding in all my project based courses in engineering, got positive feedback from the professor for whom I graded, and was elected as the Director of the committee I was a part of in Engineering Council.

To achieve this growth in activities I was involved in, I carefully selected courses, and i-programs to hone or develop specific skills. I enrolled in Leadership Communication and participated in Intersect to develop communication skills especially to effectively communicate one-to-one and publicly. Ignite was another i-program I was keen to attend as I wanted to make a lot of changes in my committee to improve its results and take initiative. The i-program introduced me to systems-thinking, and considering stakeholders and forming coalitions. As an engineer, I am supposed to be responsible, accountable, and considerate, hence, Integrity was a very insightful i-program. Insight made me more self-aware and highlighted my strengths and areas that I could further develop. Finally, Intro to Leadership Studies that introduced me various styles and approaches of leadership that I could adopt and adjust based on my group and environment.

The leadership certificate program was truly an enriching experience overall. Completing the program, I can proudly say I have truly transformed into a better, more confident, and more competent leader.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Personal Philosophy of Leadership

“What is leadership?”, this question was posed to me at the beginning of every discussion, meeting, workshop and lecture I attended at the beginning of the leadership certificate program, and each time I came up with a different definition. Each time I wrote down an answer or verbally replied to the question I came up with the most fitting definition in my mind, but each time I thought of something new to add that I hadn’t thought of before. But eventually I found a concise definition that I agreed with, which is that leadership is “acts by persons which influence other persons in a shared direction” - M. Seeman. This definition of leadership is one I could relate to, especially as an engineering student who has to be involved in multiple group projects. I also anticipated having to regularly manage or lead a group of people with various talents, strengths and weaknesses. I wanted to develop the necessary skills to “influence” such individuals towards a common goal. Through the committees and group projects I have participated in, I have realized that emerging as a leader, regardless of size of the group, is a vital action required in many situations. Having an understanding of not ones own strengths and weaknesses, but that of others as well, and using this knowledge to achieve a goal is a skill worth developing. One needs to be ready to keep motivating others and keep everyone’s morale high. Also, effective communication skills are very important in receiving viewpoints, feedbacks, and ideas to successfully achieve goals.

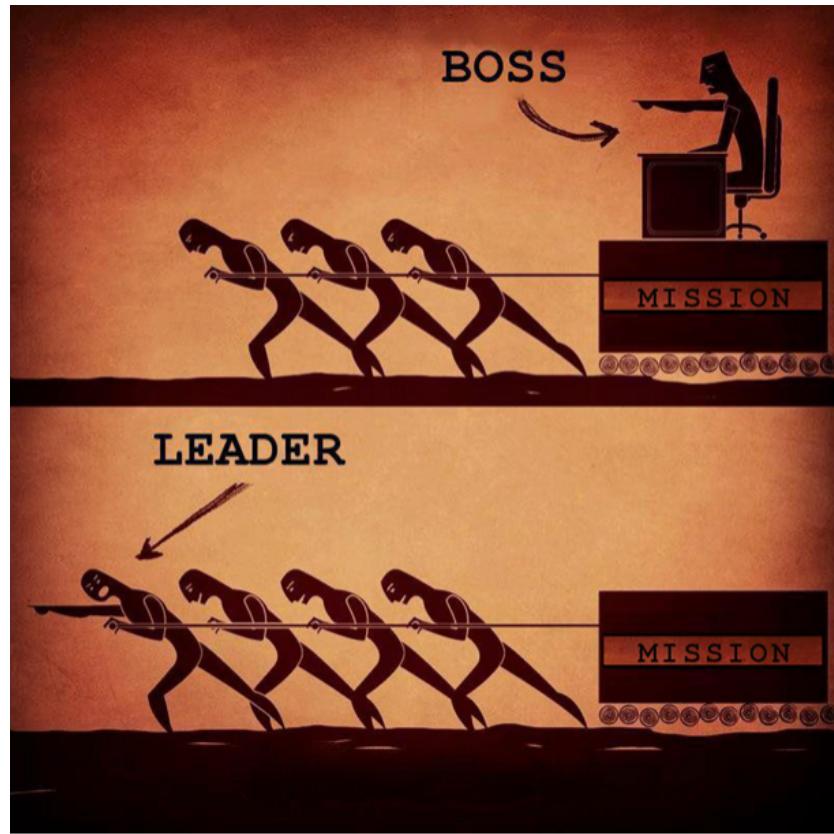


Image from www.modernservantleader.com

The above image illustrates my view on leadership. I believe in inspiring my peers and not ordering them. I want everyone to be motivated and keep their enthusiasms high. I believe in including everyone in the group's efforts and make sure everyone's voices are heard. I make sure good work is applauded and given credit. I also use the situational approach as it allows me to adjust my directive and supportive behavior based on the varying levels of commitment and competence of my group members.

My role model as a leader is Sir Alex Ferguson, the former manager of Manchester United Football Club, who was in-charge of the club for 27 years. He lasted through many players coming and going, change of management, change of resources, and many rivals challenging his efforts. Throughout his tenure he inspired the whole team and all the fans to make sure the club always challenged to be the best. He applauded hard work publicly and at times of despair assured everyone that brighter times were ahead and the team would get through it. He ended his tenure as one of the most decorated managers in football history having one a record 13 domestic titles, 5 domestic cups, and 2 European cups.

My views on leadership were integral in understanding what areas I wanted to develop and what ideals suited my personality and strengths. Based on this understanding I selected the leadership courses I wanted enroll in, the i-programs I wanted to attend and the societies I was keen to join.

Learning Goal: Self-Confidence

When I started the certificate program, I realized I was shy and introverted. It took me time to open up to people, I kept my thoughts to myself, and shied away from sharing ideas. I had a fear of communicating to large groups of people and felt more comfortable in smaller groups. This inhibited me from developing as a person and sharing my ideas with others. Hence, the improvement of my self-confidence posed as the biggest challenge in my leadership development.

I took on this challenge by further involving myself in Engineering Council and getting comfortable with my committee first and then slowly expanding to members of other committees. I realized that if I got comfortable with each member individually I would have a less of a problem communicating with them in larger groups. Although it would become a hassle if I made an effort to know everyone individually in much larger groups, I managed to gain some confidence that would later help me solve this problem. The fear of public speaking was another problem I wanted to get rid of. Hence, I enrolled in Leadership Communication that required me to speak publicly almost every week which made me more comfortable and confident in front of an audience. The communications course also helped me improve my presentation skills, by making me more concerned with the quality and clarity of the presentation. I concentrated more on incorporating ethos(credibility), pathos(emotions, stories), and logos(logic) in my presentation, than on my stage fright. This reaped benefits immediately, as I was

complimented by my peers and professors for my presentation skills when I was presenting with my senior design team.

I can confidently say that my self-confidence improved a lot during the certificate program. As I led a committee in the Engineering Council, I had to communicate with a lot of people from various committees and societies daily and needed to keep my own committee motivated. This allowed me to build my self-confidence and share my ideas more freely. I realized that I made a huge impact as I was more confident of my personality, and ideas. This development was closely related to my second improvement goal of taking initiative, which it positively affected.

Learning Goal: Initiative

Throughout high school and college, I had regretted not making a change that I felt would help everybody. I felt that I could have acted on my impulses and intuitions a lot of times which would have reaped many benefits. Hence, taking initiative was my second improvement goal. I believed that my self-confidence was a huge factor in the development of this skill, but realized there are more components than that when making a change.

The most enlightening experience regarding this improvement goal was Ignite. The program introduced me to systems-thinking, stakeholders, and coalitions. Systems-thinking took into account what all will be affected by my actions. Stakeholders considered everyone who would be affected by my actions. Lastly, a coalition would be a group of individuals with different motives coming together to achieve a common goal. As I became more confident of myself, these tools were helpful in trying to bring a change around me. Once I became Director of an Engineering Council committee, I wanted to bring about many changes in the functioning of the committee like hosting new events, revamping publicity, increasing committee size, and hosting more joint events. This gave me the opportunity to take initiative and actually motivate stakeholders to share my goals and work towards achieving them. I spoke to everyone involved in this change and painted a bright picture regarding the future of the committee to get them to participate with me. This resulted in a very successful year for the committee with larger audiences attending our events, getting positive feedback for the new events we hosted, and many societies and committees joining us to host more events.

The development of my self-confidence also helped me in taking initiative as I was more assured of my actions and hence, I could convince more people to share my goals. The development of my learning goals helped me grow as an individual and leader. I anticipate this helping me in my career as I take on bigger projects and want to make bigger, more lasting changes.

11 Skills and Attributes

Self-Development

Self-Awareness:

Self-awareness is being aware of one's own feelings, knowing why certain feelings occur, what effects they have and when they occur. It is having the knowledge of your strengths and weaknesses. It is also being confident about yourself, being sure about your actions and decisions, and standing out in the group.

I gained a lot of self-awareness through Insight. Insight highlighted the major themes of my talent as being restorative, relator, strategic, ideation, and intellection. Restorative indicates that I enjoy solving problems, and being strategic shows that I can sort through complex paths to find the best solution. Ideation highlights my fascination with ideas of others and my own, while intellection shows that I always like thinking and exercising my mental ability. Lastly, relator indicates that I like to strengthen already established relationships and that I am more comfortable with people I know. I was able to easily associate with these themes. I used this analysis to strengthen my dominant themes by applying them regularly in my team projects as an engineering student, and my involvement in Engineering Council. This led to me gaining a lot of success and positive feedback in all my project based courses. I also ended up becoming the Director of my committee using my strengths. My self-confidence was a major area of improvement I concentrated on during the certificate program. Through my participation in Leadership Communication, and Intersect, I developed skills to build my self-confidence. I applied these skills to my role as Director of a committee in Engineering Council, and as an engineering student participating in numerous team projects.

I have developed in self-awareness a great deal, but I feel there is still scope for improvement and through practice and reflection I can grow more. In the future, I wish to further develop my self-confidence, and be able to influence large groups of people by sharing my ideas, and views.

Self-Management:

Self-management is the ability to deal calmly with stress, stay positive, make tough decisions with confidence, and takes initiative. It includes being adaptable, positive, and achievement oriented. Self-management requires setting of reasonable goals, seeking opportunities, and acting to make a change.

Ignite, and Intro to Leadership Studies were helpful in developing my self-management. Ignite taught me how to take initiative and the right steps to take when doing so. Intro to Leadership Studies taught me how to adapt and adjust my leadership style based on the situation and environment I am in. I was elected as the Director of a committee that was on the verge of being abolished from Engineering Council. I was forced to take tough decisions, such as not including previous committee members who I felt were unenthusiastic and would end up becoming a liability. I had to stay positive

and was constantly on the look out for opportunities that would help the committee grow. I decided to host brand new events that had never been organized. The attendance at these events would also determine the future of the committee, so it was a risk I was willing to take. I also revamped the publicity of our events, hosted events with various departments and societies, and led a team of highly motivated members to overturn the committee's fortunes. Our efforts ended up reaping positive feedback from our audiences and Engineering Council members and the committee seemed almost indispensable now. Similarly, I used self-management in my senior design project to motivate my team to give positive results and make our concept a success.

Self-management was an area I needed a lot of improvement in as I started the certificate program. I believe it has helped me a lot and the skills I have developed and honed will serve me well in the future.

Interpersonal Development

Relationship Building:

Building relationships is an integral part of being a part of a team or an organization. There needs to be trust and a level of comfort between group members. Everyone's voices should be heard and there should be a decision making process that is unbiased and inclusive.

I believed my relationship building skills were good on a personal level because of the relator theme in my talent. I did however wish to build it relationships in larger groups. Intersect helped me develop interpersonal skills to build stronger relationships with people and communicate effectively with them. The leader-member exchange theory that I learned in Intro to Leadership Studies also helped me a great deal in maintaining closer relationships with group members. I used these ideals in my senior design team and tenure as FEO director. In both cases, I used high-context communication to learn more about the background and personal lives of my teammates. This eventually made everyone comfortable with each other and encouraged them to share their own ideas. I also encouraged discussion regularly so that it was ensured everyone's viewpoint was taken into account. Also, whenever a decision was finalized it was revised to make sure that everybody was satisfied with the outcome. I also made sure I had meaningful one-on-one interactions with team members to have an update on their lives, or any problems or opinions they wanted to share. This was beneficial as we became close as a group and enjoyed each other company. Any conflict that would arise would also be easily resolved due to the strong relationships built.

In the future, I believe as I work with different people from different backgrounds, professions, and cultures, I will have to be more aware of the diversity in the group. I will also have to make sure I respect everyone's culture and privacy and adjust my relationship building based on their personal preferences.

Communication Skills:

I have come to realize effective communication is the one of the most vital components of leadership. When we are to influence a group to achieve a common goal, our thoughts, ideas, and visions are conveyed through words. Be it one-to-one via email, text, or phone call, or to a large group though a presentation, speech, or meeting, communication is an integral part of leadership. It is the primary means through which we convey our thoughts.

I knew that I had to develop my communication skills significantly to be an effective leader. I had a fear of public speaking, a basic knowledge on how to conduct meetings, and lack of experience communicating professionally via email. All these skills needed to be improved as I started my tenure as the Director of an Engineering Council committee, and as in-charge of external communications in my senior design team. I enrolled in Leadership Communication and participated in Intersect to develop my communication skills especially the areas where I lacked. Leadership Communication allowed me to speak publicly regularly and helped build my confidence in front of an audience. It taught me to write clear and effective emails, and texts. I learned how to incorporate ethos, pathos, and logos in my presentations to make them more effective and memorable. I also started using detailed agendas in my weekly committee meetings to make the meetings more structured and productive. Similarly, in my senior design project, I was regularly interacting with professors and our clients at Caterpillar on behalf of our team. I had to send professional emails, talk to the clients over the phone, and make sure there was a clear line of communication between the team and them. With my team, I was also suppose to give presentations about our project regularly throughout the semester. I used the skills and rules introduced to me in all my communications and received positive feedback for my role from my peers, professors, and our clients.

I will keep practicing my communication skills as they will only improve that way. I believe everything I learned through these experiences will prove invaluable to me in my career.

Ethical Practices:

A responsible leader is supposed to make unbiased, intelligent, and morally correct decisions. This isn't as easy as it sounds. A leader can regularly come across a dilemma, and at that time it is essential he has the necessary tools, values, and ideals to make the correct decision. An ethical leader is one who has integrity, confidence, and strong values.

As I move on to become an engineer and a responsible leader, I anticipate making tough decisions that will have to be ethical and morally sound. This can become very tough if one does not have the right tools. Integrity was an especially important i-program regarding ethical decisions. It introduced me to the difference between a moral temptation and an ethical dilemma. Once differentiated, if the choice is an ethical dilemma, the Josephson decision-making model can be a very useful tool in making the

correct ethical decision. I associate myself with the ethical values of honesty, family, and open-mindedness, so sticking with these lowers the chances of me making an unethical decision considerably. As a mechanical engineer, I have to make decisions regarding design and research that are morally sound. In the future, a flaw or problem in a design or technology can affect many people. Hence, it is important to make sure the right materials are used and sufficient testing is done before introducing any prototype. In my senior design project, I made sure we didn't compromise on the quality of any component due to budget constraints as it would have been tested by our clients at Caterpillar. They were investing time and money in the project and it was essential that the product was feasible, yet safe.

I recently took the Order of the Engineer oath to be a responsible engineer that made morally correct decisions and didn't compromise on the safety or well-being of others in my work. I hope to use the Josephson model in whatever dilemma I face and make sure that I always do the right thing.

Team Development:

Team development is necessary as the individuals in a group need to grow together and feel comfortable with each other. A fostering environment should be created and maintained for a team to work together there and achieve goals. Also, each team member must be individually assessed to see their contributions and where improvements can be made. Any conflicts that arise should be solved without offending any team member. A conflict should also be seen as an opportunity to get more perspectives when making a decision.

Intro to Leadership Studies introduced me to various leadership theories and approaches that I could use based on my team members and the work environment I was in. An approach I felt comfortable with was the situational approach as it could be used to adjust my directive and supportive level based on each individual's varying commitment and competence levels. I also liked the leader-member exchange theory that encouraged both leaders and followers to make an effort to build closer, more meaningful relationships with your teammates. As I created a brand new committee that I was going to lead, I realized nobody was familiar with each other in the group initially. I made a conscious effort to make sure everyone shared their thoughts and opinions. I allowed for limited side conversations during meetings so that everyone started getting comfortable with each other and felt they could share with others when we met. I also organized a committee bonding event so that everyone got to know each other outside of our typical workspace and got familiar with each other. This fostered collaboration in the group. Any conflicts that arose were welcomed to see if there was any perspective we had not considered and then the conflict was resolved amicably. This made us a very efficient committee who got along and collaborated well to host great events.

I anticipate having to participate in new teams regularly. I feel team development and the related theories I have learned will help me a great deal in the future.

Organizational/Group Development

Leading Change:

A leader should have a clear vision of what he wants his group to achieve. He or she must use this vision to paint a picture of the future for his team members. Only then can they remain motivated and enthusiastic in achieving the goal. The leader must be willing to take risks, and must be confident of his actions to succeed. His team member must look up to him and follow his path with the same confidence and energy.

As mentioned before, I was given the chance to lead a previously unsuccessful committee that was on the verge of being abolished. I had a clear vision for the committee. I wanted to increase the attendance at our events by hosting new, more unique events and improving the publicity of these events. I wanted to improve the quality of our events so that we would get a repeat presence of a part of the audience in future events. Lastly, I wanted to improve the visibility of our committee across campus, so students and faculty knew what we did and how beneficial we were. I selected a committee of highly motivated students and immediately shared my vision and the part they would play. I decided to use intrinsic motivation and told them that they were a part of the rebuilding of a committee that would become a memorable and learning experience for them. I told them to dream big for the committee and not hesitate in hosting an event that was completely new and not been tested. I told them not to be afraid of trying out anything new and fully supported them. In the end, the attendance at our events increased greatly, we got positive feedback from our peers, and the committee seemed an indispensable part of Engineering Council.

In the future, I wish to use my experience in Engineering Council as a memento to remind me not to be afraid to chase ambitious goals, and motivate around me to do the same.

Project Effectiveness:

Project effectiveness is the handling of the main responsibilities one gets as a leader of the group. It includes budgeting, planning, delegating, recruiting, documentation, assessment, etc. It is an important part of being a leader and should be handled responsibly.

As Director of the Future Enrichment Opportunities committee on the Engineering Council, I was in-charge of hosting events with my committee of 5 highly enthusiastic members that I hand picked. Each member had a specific role to play in the organization of each event. However, everyone's input was equally considered in decisions regarding which events to host, or what steps the committee as a whole should take. To organize these events I was given a limited budget and resources. I had to reasonably divide the budget between the events the committee wanted to host and find ways to save money. This actually became an opportunity for the committee to brainstorm. For example, we needed a new logo that would be the face of the committee, so instead of hiring somebody to create one, we started asking our friends

who had graphic design experience. Soon we had a brand new logo without spending any resources on it. Similarly, we organized joint events with other committees and departments to split the cost and still host successful events. I also constantly assessed the performance of my committee members to ensure they were doing their best. I also asked them to assess me through confidential feedback forms, so that I knew if the committee was being run properly. Overall, the committee saw great success and innovation and never let go of any opportunity.

Skills that require the handling of budgets, delegating, planning, and recruiting are very important in leadership. I believe my experience with these skills will help me greatly in my career.

Systems-Thinking:

A leader must be able to analyze the complexity of the organizational environment. He or she must be a critical thinker and must constantly assess the effect of outside factors on the organization. He must be aware of the politics in the organization and should take into account what all will be affected by his or her actions.

Systems-thinking was closely analyzed during my participation in Ignite. I was able to apply this by being a member of Engineering Council. At the weekly Executive Board meetings, I made notes to make sure I was up to date on what other committees and societies were doing and if it would affect my committee's functions in anyway or vice-versa. I looked for opportunities where I would feel some society or committee was doing something similar to what we do, and tried to build relationships with them. This would also make forming a coalition simpler. When there was a budget cut of 20%, I reached out to affected committees encouraging them to host joint events to soften the blow. During my senior design project, systems-thinking was essential. I had to analyze the organizational environment as we were answerable to professors and our clients who had different expectations from us. We also were working on a strict budget, and needed regular reflection of our progress to understand our status. In both cases, I used systems-thinking effectively to tackle any changes in the overall organization and made sure my committee was prepared for the worst of blows.

This type of thinking is very important in the industry, especially huge multi-national corporations. There are a lot of pieces to the puzzle in such organizations. It is essential to know what is happening with other departments and the organization overall, so that you are prepared to adjust accordingly. I believe such a think will reap benefits in my career.

Community Building:

As your team grows you start to represent a lot of cultures, backgrounds, and maybe even professions. The same is true for other teams in the organization. They all come under the same umbrella to function as one organization. Hence, compatibility with other teams is imperative for an organization to function smoothly.

Engineering Council consists of 15 committees that handle day-to-day operations. There are various events, luncheons, fundraisers, bondings that are held by these committees. At times, one committee might have low attendance or a lesser number of volunteers, so in such cases, the more resourceful committees step up to help. This creates a sense of one-ness and support. Another instance is if a new event that is large in scale needs to be planned, such as a World Fair that would highlight the countries represented on campus and make students more informed about different cultures. This is an event I want to host with my committee that would require more resources and help than we have. Hence, I plan to build a coalition to gain support and encouragement from all committees and societies involved and ensure that the fair will be successfully held in the near future. I would also like to consider the stakeholders, everyone affected by this, and involve them in the process as much as possible. This way we will come together as a Council to host an event that enhances cultural understanding in the College of Engineering.

Community building is vital in big organizations that now strive to have a more diverse and inclusive workforce. I will hopefully grow in this area as I join a more diverse organization in the future.

Transitional Development

Sustaining Leadership:

As I transition from college to the professional world, I will further develop a lot of my skills. I will also get to practice more of some skills that I rarely did in college, such as networking, and mentoring. I hope to inspire students starting on the path I have travelled by giving them invaluable advice and suggestions.

Already on my committee there are lowerclassmen that look up to me for advice and recommendations. I wish to continue helping others and planting seeds, so that more leaders grow around me. I myself would like to have a mentor who has more experience than me to guide me and advise me when needed. I also would like to network more and make more acquaintances further in my career. I recently attended Imprint that guided me in the right direction and I made a few invaluable connections during the i-program as well. I would also like to keep learning about new theories, and approaches towards leadership that suit my personality.

I realize that college is only a minor preview of what is to come in the professional world. But I have already taken the first steps into understanding how to work in a team and lead a group of individuals. I hope to learn a lot more as I go along in this amazing and insightful journey of becoming a great leader that I have started with the leadership certificate program.

I-PROGRAM REFLECTIONS

INSIGHT

I attended Insight in the initial stages of my leadership development. The program focused on self-awareness and self-management. It was important that I reflected on my thought processes, behaviors, strengths, weaknesses, and values as I set out to become a better leader. So Insight was the perfect way to start my development through the Certificate program.

The program focussed on building on your strengths rather than fixing your weaknesses. It encouraged asset-based thinking over deficit-based thinking. The Gallup survey I took, identified the dominant themes of my talent as being restorative, relator, strategic, ideation, and intellect. Restorative indicates that I enjoy solving problems, and being strategic shows that I can sort through complex paths to find the best solution. Ideation highlights my fascination with ideas of others and my own, while intellect shows that I always like thinking and exercising my mental ability. Lastly, relator indicates that I like to strengthen already established relationships and that I am more comfortable with people I know. I completely agree with these themes in my talent and can easily associate with them. Recognizing these strengths, I believe I can improve on them and use them to my advantage as a leader. I can use my strategic problem solving abilities, and fascination with ideas to my advantage in the numerous group projects I'm involved in as a Mechanical Engineering student. I can also use these strengths to my advantage as Director of a committee on Engineering Council. I can use my tendency to strengthen preexisting relationships by forging closer connections with my colleagues and subordinates. Through regular practice, I will be able to build on these strengths and learn how to best use them.

The program also encouraged me to recognize my values, and identity. This was especially intriguing and insightful as it helped me better understand myself as a person. The values that I most associated with were family, determination, and contentment. These showed the basic motives that drove me to perform and were factors influencing my work ethic. I also became more familiar with my identity and learned more about social identity and saliency. Social identity is the identity that we share with others around us, and based on the circumstances the saliency of this identity might vary. The 'silent' go round was insightful as I started to recognize my identities and how I felt about them. The Johari window is a useful tool in understanding your relationship with yourself and how you are perceived by others. I hope to use the window regularly to have a better understanding of my own self, and also reflecting on my relationships with others

Insight helped me identify how my strengths, values, and identities affect me and those around me. It made me not only understand myself better, but also opened my mind to understanding the thoughts and identities of my group mates or subordinates. I shall use what I learned in the program and apply it in my role as an Engineering student and the Director of a committee on the Engineering Council.

INTEGRITY

Integrity was a vital program in my leadership development. As a responsible leader and engineer, I need to have strong ethics and morals in the decisions I make. Integrity helped me understand the meaning of integrity in leadership, recognize the effects of unethical leadership, and make ethically correct decisions in the future.

The program defined integrity as being a quality in which the ‘person does the right thing’. An example of being a representative on an Award committee and having your best friend, Tegan, as a nominee for the award was used to explain how to ethically respond to such situations. This example was frequently revisited to better understand how to counter the situation. We were introduced to ethical and non-ethical values, and I associated myself with family, honesty, and open-mindedness ethically, and with money, success, and popularity non-ethically. This realization was important as I understood that I should give preference to my ethical values over my non-ethical values when making a decision. Also, since my ethical values promoted honesty and open-mindedness, sticking with them when making decisions would considerably lower my chances of doing something unethical.

We learned the difference between moral temptations and ethical dilemmas. A moral temptation is something that makes you lean towards doing something unethical for your own satisfaction, while an ethical dilemma is choosing between two right ethical values. Honesty vs. loyalty, individual vs. community, and justice vs. mercy are common ethical dilemmas. An exercise with our small groups showed how different people made different decisions when confronted with an ethical dilemma. I realized how different people can have different reactions to such situations, and using my open-mindedness hoped that in all my group activities in the future, I would take everyone's perspective into consideration.

We were introduced to the Josephson decision-making model which I feel is a useful tool in making ethical decisions. It suggests that when faced with a dilemma, all decisions should consider the interests of all stakeholders. Also, ethical principles should take priority over non-ethical values, and an ethical principle should only be violated if another ethical principle needs to advance and will provide better results in the long run. A list of questions to be considered when making a decision was given. The questions required the consideration of the relevant facts of the situation including the people affected by the decision, identifying the situation as an ethical dilemma or temptation, considering the best solution for the long run, and what values and motives triggered such a solution. These questions successfully guided me in making an ethical decision in the case regarding Tegan mentioned above. Even though it was different to some other answers people had in the large group, it was ethically and morally correct.

In the future, as a responsible leader, I shall adhere to my ethical values of honesty, family, and open-mindedness when making a decision. I hope to recognize an ethical dilemma correctly and hope the questions posed in the Josephson model successfully guide me in doing the right thing.

INTERSECT

I attended Intersect in the advanced stages of my leadership development. This was in the semester I was taking Leadership Communication and was leading the Future Enrichment Opportunities Committee of the Engineering Council. The workshop complemented these two experiences very well. It helped me develop my interpersonal and communication skills thereby improving my ability to work efficiently in groups.

During the program, the importance of communication was conveyed as it is used to persuade, inform, express oneself, and please others. It was intriguing to know that in communication, we generally receive the intended message only 30% of the time. This made me look into my own communication abilities and recognize my strengths and weaknesses. Through the Personal Listening Profile, my listening style was recognized as comprehensive with high preferences towards appreciative and evaluative listening. I learned that, as a comprehensive listener, I try to fully understand a message being conveyed to me. I tend to recognize when someone says something, but means something else and will ask questions to clarify the speaker's intention. I like to organize and summarize the information, and register the key points. This style also helps me elaborate on what has been said and make the message clear for the rest of the group. Being a comprehensive listener has its limitations too. Comprehensive listeners tend to ignore emotional tones in messages and such a style isn't ideal to build close relationships. Also, as I concentrate on key points I may miss out on some details of the information, which can be disadvantageous. These points were highlighted by the lower scores I obtained for empathic and discerning listening. Hence, my goal for the program was to incorporate different listening styles in my communication skills.

The small group divisions allowed us to meet new people, make strong connections, and learn how to effectively communicate as a team. As each of us represented different majors, ethnicities, ideals and communication styles, it was interesting to see how we came together as a group. We learned that, to be successful as a team, we had to establish effective two-way communication, encourage conflicts, and promote high interpersonal effectiveness. These principles helped us communicate and coordinate effectively and complete our group activity successfully. We were also aware that certain communication problems could occur in a team if members don't feel like they are a part of the group. These members tended to lack conviction and their team's lack direction and accountability.

The program helped me develop my interpersonal skills for my current role as director of FEO. I have to lead a committee of six and as a team we communicate with each other regularly. Effective coordination and communication is required for us to host an event successfully. After Intersect, I altered my listening style to make it more suitable for my committee to communicate with me and in return communicate more effectively with them. I also encourage conflicts, so that we can get more perspectives, and make sure everyone's opinions are taken into account. Intersect had a positive impact on my leadership development and I would highly recommend it to anyone looking to develop the way they interact with others.

IGNITE

One of my learning goals was to take initiative and bring about changes I wanted to see around me. I wanted to learn how to better influence people around me to achieve goals. I also wanted to learn how to effectively communicate my goals with others. Ignite was the perfect opportunity to learn how to do this. The program helped me develop techniques to apply a systems-thinking perspective, and understand the value of building a coalition and involving everyone related to the change successfully.

The alumni narratives were very enlightening as they highlighted real life examples of systems thinking, positive relationships, forming coalitions, and dealing with stakeholders. The narrative inspired me to decide a change I wanted to make using the skills I developed during the program. I wanted my Engineering Council committee, Future Enrichment Opportunities, to consider the obstacles and problems international students face when starting their undergraduate studies in the University of Illinois. I would like to soften the cultural shock international students face, and make them feel more empowered and comfortable in the College of Engineering. I would like all engineering students, international and local, to open their minds to different cultures and ideas to make our campus more diverse and inclusive. I wanted to bring about this change through a World Fair at the beginning of each academic year that would include all countries represented on campus in a fair on the Engineering Quad. Each country would have a stall that would showcase their culture, language, customs, food, and dress. There would also be stalls representing American and Illinois culture. This would make international and local students familiar with each other's cultures they start their undergraduate studies.

This served as the change item for my Ignite program. I used the systems-thinking approach to recognize what all will be affected by the fair. I identified the stakeholders who should be included in the change and who all would be affected by it. I also planned to build a coalition to gain support and encouragement from all parties involved and ensure that the fair will last beyond my efforts. I also developed an effective pitch to make a lasting impression on whoever I shared my idea with. Finally, I set up concrete deadlines by which I would take steps towards achieving my goals and appointed a personal stakeholder who would make sure I made my change idea into a reality.

The program showed me the importance of systems-thinking and the role of stakeholders and coalitions in bringing about changes. As Director of an Engineering Council committee, an Undergraduate Grader, and a Mechanical Engineering student, I plan to use these principles in bringing about other changes I have thought about. The program was an invaluable experience that really helped me with my learning goal of taking initiative. I believe these skills will also help me a lot in my career.

LEADERSHIP COURSES REFLECTIONS

AGED 260: Intro to Leadership Studies

This course was one of the most engaging and insightful experiences in my undergraduate studies and the first course I took for the leadership certificate program. Initially in my leadership development, I was asked “What is leadership?” numerous times during workshops, lectures, discussions and meetings, but I never had a definite answer. The course helped me better define leadership as actions that influence other people in a shared direction. After almost a complete semester of studying and analyzing various theories, I am confident I can have a detailed conversation about the topic with anyone. I also started to apply the various theories and approaches in everyday life. I have started noting actions of my colleagues and subordinates, and have started calculating my response and reaction based on the appropriate theories.

From the perspective of a leader, theories like the trait approach, the skills approach, the style approach, and servant leadership were beneficial in understanding how I may be perceived as a leader and how I can improve for my colleagues and subordinates to see me as a trustworthy and confident leader. There are theories that focus on other aspects of leadership as well. The situational approach and path-goal theory emphasize the relationship between the leader’s actions and behavior and the characteristics and developmental levels of the subordinates. This is important as each subordinate is a separate individual and has unique behaviors and characteristics and these theories prepare me for different situations and work settings. The leader-member exchange theory has also been beneficial as it encourages having closer relationships and exchanges with subordinates. I strive to include everyone I work with in the in-group and maintain a positive group dynamic. Servant leadership is another enlightening theory as it has taught me to empower and motivate everyone around me to go above and beyond when accomplishing goals. The emotional intelligence evaluation was extremely beneficial in my development as a leader as it systematically and accurately summarized my strengths and weaknesses and motivated me to improve on my shortcomings.

As I apply these theories and approaches in my group projects, committee meetings, etc., I experience situations that seem right out of the book and have a response available right away. I have also noticed how well the theories complement each other and come together to form the ideal definition of leadership. As Director of a committee on the Engineering Council. I hope to use the concepts I have learned and apply them as I take on this responsibility. One of the theories I’m most counting on is the situational approach. I will be selecting a committee to work with and expect members with varying levels of competence and commitment. Based on each of their developmental levels, I will adjust my supportive and directive behavior. For example, suppose one member has a lot of enthusiasm, but lacks certain skills, I will be more directive and less supportive. I hope a mixture of this and other theories will help me have a successful tenure as Director and more importantly, continue my growth as a leader.

AGED 230: Leadership Communication

In my third semester of the leadership certificate program, I was took on roles as Director of FEO, undergraduate grader for an ME course, and a member of a senior design team. I felt this was the perfect opportunity to improve my communication skills and apply them to the roles I was assuming. Hence, I took Leadership Communication. The course promised to improve my one-to-one communication, and public speaking skills, which I felt would really develop my learning goal of self-confidence.

One of the most useful tools introduced in the course was the development of a communication plan. A communication plan requires the clear definition of the purpose, message, medium, communicator, timing, audience, and feedback. Such an organization makes the message conveyed more effective and clear. I also learned how to write clear and concise emails, and make effective presentations and deliver them impressively. Both these skills helped me in my senior design project as I was in charge of external communications with our clients at Caterpillar who we would be working with, and also had to deliver presentations regularly. I received positive feedback for my communication skills from our client, and my peers throughout the semester. I also learned and adopted the principles of ethos, pathos, and logos. Ethos ensures the message can be trusted and seems credible. Pathos ensures the audience can connect with a message, usually through examples, and stories. Lastly, logos ensures the message seems logical and reasonable to the audience. All the skills, principles, rules, and methods taught in class were applied regularly in the discussion sections that really helped me adopt these concepts quickly. A major communication strength that I have also developed is the efficient use of feedback. As a Director of a committee on Engineering Council, I have to consistently know how my committee members as well as the audience of our events are responding to the committee's actions. I use regular feedback as an indicator of the group's progress and feel it is an integral part of functioning as a team. As an engineering student I have to be involved in group projects frequently and I have learned to gain feedback regularly to understand if I'm doing what is expected of me and give feedback to my teammates to help them improve.

Regarding communications, in the future, I want to be an efficient and effective public speaker. I also want to improve my impromptu communication skills to make a more lasting impression in a shorter period of time. I feel that I need to combine ethos, pathos and logos more effectively to have a greater impact on my audience. I also want to improve my written communication to be more clear and concise. I understand all of these will only improve with practice and with this course I believe I've taken the first step. I am currently the Director of the Future Enrichment Opportunities committee on the Engineering Council and an Undergraduate Grader for a mechanical engineering course and have put my new communication skills to use in these roles. I have started writing more effective emails, making more organized agendas, speaking publicly more often and promoting to and fro feedback. I would like to keep improving on my communication skills as a leader in these roles by practicing effective communication plans, presentations, and written communications. I am sure the development of these skills will be invaluable in whatever I do in my career.

NON-CLASSROOM TEAM EXPERIENCE REFLECTIONS

FEO Director, Engineering Council

My most prominent leadership role on campus was as the Director of the Future Enrichment Opportunities committee of the Engineering Council. This position also made me a member of the Executive Board of the Engineering Council. This experience gave me the opportunity to apply new skills, principles, and techniques I was learning. I was able to apply a lot of the skills I developed through my classroom courses, and i-programs.

Intro to Leadership Studies taught me a lot of theories and approaches that could be applied in this role. I used the concepts I learned and applied them as I took on this responsibility. One of the theories I counted on was the situational approach. I selected a committee to work with and expected members with varying levels of competence and commitment. Based on each of their developmental levels, I adjusted my supportive and directive behavior. I also used ideals taught in my Leadership Communication course extensively to communicate effectively with my committee members and other society and committee representatives. I used feedback and high-context communication, which were my strengths, to help my committee achieve its goals. I had to consistently know how my committee members as well as the audience of our events were responding to the committee's actions. I used regular feedback as an indicator of the group's progress and felt it was an integral part of functioning as a team. I used high-context communication when interacting with my committee members during meetings, so that everyone shared more about their personal lives. Eventually everyone felt comfortable in the group and didn't shy away from sharing their opinions and views. I also started using a detailed agenda that included the assigned facilitator, note-taker, time-keeper, and time period for each topic.

The Intersect program helped me develop my interpersonal skills for my role. Effective coordination and communication was required for my committee to host an event successfully. After Intersect, I altered my listening style to make it more suitable for my committee to communicate with me and in return communicate more effectively with them. I encouraged conflicts, so that we could get more perspectives, and make sure everyone's opinions are taken into account. Ignite showed me the importance of systems-thinking and the role of stakeholders and coalitions in bringing about changes. I used these principles when we hosted different events and make any changes to my committee's functioning. I used my strengths highlighted during Insight to my advantage. I used my tendency to strengthen preexisting relationships by forging closer connections with my committee members. I used the Johari window regularly to have a better understanding of my own self, and also reflect on my relationships with my committee members and representatives of other committees and societies. I stayed a responsible leader throughout my tenure and adhered to my ethical values of honesty, family, and open-mindedness when making a decision. I dealt with ethical dilemmas correctly and used the questions posed in the Josephson model successfully guide me in doing the right thing. Throughout my tenure as Director, I saw various leadership skills and principles come into play, which showed me how effective they can be in influencing people to achieve a common goal.

Senior Design Project with Caterpillar

My senior design project required me to work with a team for a whole semester and we had to regularly communicate with our professors, teaching assistants, and clients at Caterpillar. This role required a lot of my leadership skills to come into play and was the perfect opportunity to apply everything I had learned so far in the program. The experience especially helped me apply my communications, self-confidence, team development, systems-thinking, and project effectiveness.

Communication was an integral part of my experience during my senior design project. I was appointed in-charge of external communications. In this role I would be communicating regularly with professors, TAs, and our clients through emails, phone calls, and meetings. We were also supposed to give status presentations regularly throughout the semester. My enrollment in AGED 230: Leadership Communication really helped me as it taught me how to communicate effectively through emails, meetings, and presentations. I used communication plans that defined the purpose, message, medium, communicator, timing, audience, and feedback. I also incorporated ethos, pathos, and logos in all my presentations. Hence, I received positive feedback for my communication skills from our client, and my peers throughout the semester. I also frequently used feedback to get an update on my progress and if I, or my team, could make any improvements. I made sure I knew the views of my peers, professors, TA, and clients on my work and our team's progress. I also gave feedback to my teammates if I realized there was room for improvement in our work.

Another vital part of the project was team development, systems-thinking, and project effectiveness. Team development was required as we needed to frequently collaborate, and had regular conflicts. I also had to analyze the organizational environment as we were answerable to professors and our clients who had different expectations from us. We also were working on a strict budget, and needed regular reflection of our progress to understand our status. Hence, project effectiveness, and systems-thinking was constantly required and principles I learned in Intro to Leadership Studies, and Ignite helped me in effectively influencing my teammates. I especially used the ideals of servant leadership to empower and motivate my teammates to go above and beyond when accomplishing goals. As responsible engineers I had to make sure our designs and methods were ethically sound. I used the Josephson model to successfully guide me in doing the right thing if an ethical dilemma arose.

Overall, the experience helped me in understanding how to deal with fellow engineers, superiors, and people in the industry. This was an experience similar to what I may face in the future in my career. It showed me how a lot of the values and ideals I have learned during the program will help me in my career.

THE LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE IN PICTURES





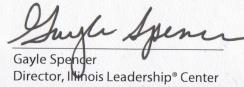
Illinois Leadership® Center

Congratulations

Karan Bhasin

on the completion of **Intersect** on November 9, 2013
at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

*May you continue to develop your personal communication style
and sharpen your teamwork skills to produce positive results.*



Gayle Spencer
Director, Illinois Leadership® Center



Illinois Leadership® Center

Congratulations

Karan Bhasin

on the completion of **Ignite** on February 1st, 2014
at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

*May you aspire to lead change through systems thinking
and coalition building to impact your communities.*



Gayle Spencer, Ph.D.
Director, Illinois Leadership® Center









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 - Lichtenwalner, Benjamin S. "Bad Boss vs. Good Leader Image." *The Modern Servant Leader*. N.p., n.d. Web. 23 Mar. 2014. <<http://modernservantleader.com/servant-leadership/bad-boss-vs-good-leader-image/>>.
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Karan Bhasin

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EDUCATION

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering

Minor in Mathematics

- James Scholar Honors
- Dean's List: Fall 2012, Spring 2013, Fall 2013
- Lean / Design for Six Sigma Green Belt
- Leadership Certificate, Illinois Leadership Center

May 2014

Overall GPA: 3.42/4.00

EXPERIENCE

MechSE Department, University of Illinois

Undergraduate Grade; ME 350: Design for Manufacturability

Urbana, IL

Aug 2013 - Present

- Grade weekly homework assignments and exams
- Provide regular feedback to professor on class' progress

Caterpillar Inc.

Peoria, IL

Outputs, Senior Design Haptics Team

Aug 2013 - Dec 2013

- Designed haptic feedback system to be incorporated in Cat's medium wheel loader line
- Supervised outputs of system and incorporated system into current cab environment
- Created the circuit on an Arduino board to carry the output signals to the vibration motor

Caparo Maruti Limited

Gurgaon, India

Intern, Design and Production Department

Jun 2013 - Aug 2013

- Contributed to the design of the dashboard and chassis for latest Maruti Suzuki models
- Supervised the operation of the electronic and mechanical components in the robotic production department
- Assisted with management of shop floor of the robotic and manual production department

ACTIVITIES

Engineering Council, Executive Board

Urbana, IL

Director, Future Enrichment Opportunities Committee

Apr 2013 - Present

- Organize regular events to help foster the careers of engineering students
- Build and maintain relations with engineering societies and other committees

Computational Science and Engineering Certificate

Urbana, IL

Active Participant

Oct 2013 - Present

- Develop technical problem solving skills with computational modeling
- Analyze and engineered design projects related to finite element analysis, computational thermo and fluid dynamics, and numerical methods

Society of Automotive Engineers, Formula Baja

Urbana, IL

Member

Aug 2011 - Dec 2012

- Designed body panels on ProEngineer and researched light and cheap materials
- Repaired and restored panels of old cars for drive days and parades

SKILLS & HONORS

Software: Microsoft Office, Apple iWork, ProEngineer, ANSYS Fluent, LaTeX

Programming Languages: MATLAB, Python

Bilingual: Hindi & English

Committed Student Award 2013 by Engineering Council