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Leadership Scholarship Program

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### Leading by Impact

Over the course of this year, the word “leadership” has been redefined by instructors, guest speakers, and my peers. In the Leadership Scholarship Program course, we have been strongly encouraged to exemplify, “Purposeful actions that elevate yourself, a cause, or a group.” One way to elevate yourself is to strengthen your talent themes. Joel Todd guided us in the search for and improvement of our talent themes. Last semester, I identified my top five to be: strategic, achiever, communication, woo, and focus. During spring semester, I chose to develop my top talent theme through active participation in my cohort’s service project. My actions on the ASU Events Committee helped bring awareness to our cause: addressing the issue of youth homelessness in the local regions of Tempe and metropolitan Phoenix. Ultimately, my cohort’s combined efforts positively affected several groups of people, including the Tumbleweed Center for Youth Development and its constituents, on-campus community service organizations, and the Arizona State University student body population.

The most significant action I took as a leader was exploring my individual capabilities outside of my comfort zone. Prior to this semester, I had never done a service project that aided in the ongoing resolve of youth homelessness. This experience was something entirely new to me, and I was hesitant to become engaged, out of fear for making a mistake. One of my father’s hackneyed cliches rang in my head, “Do it afraid.” I stepped up in class and documented my cohort’s goals for the project, “To create awareness of the issue of homeless youth. To improve and increase resource accessibility for homeless youth of the Valley served at Tumbleweed

Center. To garner funds to provide comfortable [temporary] housing, basic hygiene materials and clothing, and life skills seminars.” I stepped into the ASU Events Committee, with the logic: if I could define a mission for the team, I could define one for myself. I began with the self-assigned role as the data/logistics specialist, a job that entailed organization and communication, two other related talent themes. It wasn’t until after I completed the Individual Processing Assignment that I realized my committee role didn’t match my personal goals in this project. I stopped to reflect on my decision. Why am I performing a service project? What should I be learning? Whom should I be leading? Whom should I help? Ultimately, I chose to begin with the end in mind. The project’s objective is not solely providing resources for homeless youth; the objective is to inspire my cohort, advisors and staff, and the community to take action against homelessness. Everyone has the power to help, but my goal is to persuade people to care to help. By strategically planning events to connect with an audience and garner their support, engaging people in the cause becomes much easier. In early April, I sent out a mass-email to all ASU students, inviting them to participate in our club fair. I strategically shared our mission statement, how they could get involved, and why they should contribute to our cause. Within the first week, ten organizations contacted me, expressing interest in participating in our cause. I feel that this is an example of effective leadership with respect to elevating myself.

As a leader with purpose, I am held accountable to my defined responsibilities, as well as my word. To stay organized, I created a task list that divided my data/logistics role into smaller, more manageable parts. I also drafted short-term and long-term goal lists to share with my committee members so we could stay on-track for event planning. I wrote tasks and goals on my agenda, and set reminders on my phone and digital calendar so the target was always in eyesight. In addition to my own strategies for time and task management, I asked my committee members

to be my accountability partners. Together, we set deadlines for each other, and followed up by presenting results at committee meetings. If one of us needed extra time to complete a task, we informed each other, and were gracious with extensions. Two tools that were extensively used to expedite committee communication were Google Drive and Facebook. All of my committee's meeting minutes, planning documents, copies of emails, and survey results were organized in a shared Google Drive folder, accessible to each committee member. We provided encouragement and motivation on our committee Facebook page and in messages/texts to one another. I believe our consistent optimism and empathy fostered positive vibes; everyone was completely willing to collaborate with one another in my committee. I believe our synergy and shared mission/goals made the ASU Events Committee much more effective when planning and executing event plans.

Another take-away from this service project was adapting to the new situation when your plans don't go as expected. I witnessed this first-hand when my cohort and I were renovating the Tumbleweed campus in downtown Phoenix. Members of the Renovation Committee purchased paint, flowers and pots, and cleaning supplies. A small group of us were beautifying walls in the late afternoon, and were running out of paint quickly. Instead of bolting for the store, my frugal peers combined the remaining drops of paint to make new colors. Instead of painting an entire wall, my creative peers designed a kaleidoscope template for the wall that balanced white space and color. I admired their quick thinking, and learned from their problem-solving. This lesson would soon be very applicable to me. Just two weeks later, I received disheartening responses from groups that had RSVP'ed for the club fair that the ASU Events Committee was planning. Of the fifteen organizations that had indicated interest in participating, only three would host booths at the event. I was initially upset, but remembered, "It's about quality, not quantity." The

participating groups would be just as interactive, informative, and inspiring. When I arrived for my shift at the Leadership Scholarship Booth on Friday, my heart dropped. I learned we had sold one t-shirt, to an LSP-er who happened to pass by our booth on his way to class. I spoke with the representatives from the other organizations, and found that they hadn't raised many funds, or much awareness of their strategies for combating homelessness. I suggested we move our tables from Hayden Lawn to just outside the Memorial Union, where there was higher student traffic. More students, staff, and visitors did grace our tables. By asking them to add to the Kindness Tree, streaming videos, and stimulating dialogue, we were able to share our missions with more members of the ASU community, briefly. Minutes after relocating, our club fair (or should I say four?) was rained out. Weather was a problem that I couldn't solve. This experience taught me to make the most of the opportunities that I am given. Not a moment we spent planning and executing the club fair was wasted. Our goal was to inspire people to take action against homelessness, and it was accomplished, on a smaller scale.

The opportunity to grow from the service project inspired me to pursue my own personal mission: to cultivate the next generation of innovators, and inspire others to join a relentless pursuit of changing our world. I am intentionally choosing to be a resource for students of all ages to elicit input for engineering-related inquiries, college and scholarship preparation tips, and career search advice. I would like to pass down everything I have learned through my project.

My project addresses the problem that 53% of Arizona's high school grads do not qualify to enroll in public state universities, including ASU [1]. Some existing solutions include high school visits and promotional videos. However, these only motivate students to consider higher education. They do not address the fact that students still lack information on how to prepare to meet college admission requirements. My project mission statement is to provide stimulating

resources to inspire high school students to pursue secondary education at ASU by guiding them through the application process. The target audience is high school juniors and seniors. The project's impacts include: (1) inspire students to prepare for and apply for college, (2) encourage students to use online exploratory resources, (3) exposure to degree programs/career pathways, (4) recruitment for ASU, and (5) increase applicant [and students enrolled] demographic diversity. To further develop my project proposal, I connected with the Engineering Recruitment Office and Student Admissions. Together, we determined that the primary execution of my project mission would be digitalizing and promoting the "Senior Timeline", a resource that outlines the steps seniors should be taking to satisfy university application requirements. This timeline already exists in some places on ASU's website, but Student Admissions would like to increase its versatility and make the timeline accessible and relatable to all prospective students.

I have included my reflections on discussions with the Fulton Office of Recruitment's and Student Admissions' initiatives and procedures:

1. Resource accessibility: One of my favorite links on the bottom of ASU's engineering website is the "Next step for admitted students" tab. There are numerous links and flashy pictures that walk students through the whole process. What about the step before it? How do we walk students through the application process so they *are* admitted?
2. Another big idea- resource library: Having links to SAT/ACT/standardized exam prep, scholarship application tips, essay writing tips, and financial info is integral to ensuring that students follow the senior timeline. These links don't have to redirect students to ASU content (Collegeboard already has SAT prep resources); and we don't have to reorganize the website. Putting everything in one place makes preparing for the college

application process a little easier for parents and students to find information. They don't have to hunt for it on all of the subpages.

3. Promotion: Even if we did create a resource library, we have to let people know about it. Encouraging START student representatives, Devils' Advocates, and other student ambassadors to include this topic in their presentations could spread the word verbally. Strategically putting this resource library on an ASU admissions subpage could garner visibility.

By promoting synergy between different branches of Student Services (Student Admissions and Access ASU) as well as recruiting offices, I believe that I can help ASU prepare, attract, and retain more qualified students. LSP has equipped me with strategic communication to focus on and achieve this mission.