

Leadership Learning Contract

Goal Statement: The three outcomes that I will chose to focus on this year are mastering the depth of knowledge required for a degree, effectively communicating, and preparing to engage in lifelong learning. I believe that these three learning objectives will help me grow as a student currently at Texas A&M and will lay a solid foundation in my life both in my career as well as in the family setting. The three learning outcomes chosen above are all aspects of my life that are not only important in the present but will have a profound impact on my future and the man that I will become.

1. Mastering the Depth of Knowledge Required for a Degree:

Learning Method:

- Mastering the knowledge of my classes to obtain my degree is the goal that immediately comes to mind first. The sole purpose that I am attending Texas A&M is to receive the best education I can and graduate with a degree. My goal is not only to receive a degree, because that has always been expected of me, but to reach certain academic goals throughout my college career. This year, as well as next year, I want to strive to apply myself to my school work to put myself in the best possible position to learn and truly master the knowledge in my classes. There is a difference between understanding the knowledge required for your classes and studies and truly mastering the knowledge. To master the knowledge in my classes there are certain and specific things I will need to do and several changes that will need to be made. First off, I need to attend all of my classes and give my full attention to the professor. The professor is a tool at my disposal, and I need to best use this tool to gain information and knowledge. Secondly, I need to apply myself outside of class and work on my studies in my own free time. To accomplish this I will need to manage my time effectively and be productive and proactive with my down time. I will need to better prioritize my time to ensure that school is the most important activity I am involved in. If school is to be my number one priority, the amount of time spent on it should reflect that. The knowledge that I learn at Texas A&M University does not only apply to my degree. The things that I learn here will be applied in the work place and serve as the foundation of my career. In the future, my job will be a major priority in my life and training myself to put school before leisure time will help reinforce this hierarchy in the future when I have a career.

Evaluation:

- To evaluate whether I have accomplished my goal of mastering the knowledge of my school work I will use several metrics. Some of the metrics will directly apply to measuring my success while others will ensure that I remain on track to accomplish the overarching goal of obtaining my degree in a fashion that I am proud of. First and foremost, the most important goal will be to achieve a 3.0 cumulative GPA every semester that I am enrolled at Texas A&M University. Of course a higher GPA would be welcomed, but I do not feel that it would be realistic to set the bar any higher given the grades I have received in previous semesters. Now with my main goal set, I have several smaller goals that will help me along the way to best set me up for success. First I will skip no more than four classes in the spring semester of my junior year. As mentioned before, going to class is of paramount importance and school should be my number one priority. As of writing this Leadership Learning Contract (LLC), now I no longer give myself the option to not attend class, aside from the predetermined absences specified earlier.. Secondly, I will focus in lecture to best ensure that I retain what is being taught to me. To best ensure this there are several steps I will take. First, every class I will put my phone away in my backpack and not take it out until the class is over. Making sure that I am not on my phone will best guarantee that my attention is on the professor and nothing else. Secondly I will take notes in every class. This semester I have gotten away from taking my own notes in class which makes it much harder to retain the information being conveyed to me. My third evaluation for this learning method will be required study hours. Last year in my LLC I required myself to log at least 10 study hours a week and the benefit was obvious. This year I am going to bring back my study log, where I will physically log how many hours I study a day. If I have not studied an appropriate amount during the week it will be my responsibility to make up the remaining hours on Friday, Saturday, and

Sunday. I will use the resources in the organization in multiple ways to help me accomplish this goal. First I will use the advisor and director to keep me accountable. Also, if the advisor permits, I propose that every time I skip class I have to email her informing her of my skipping. This, in theory, will be four or less emails throughout the semester. Lastly, I will be keeping a study log of the hours I study every week and will use that to keep me accountable and on track of my goal.

2. Communicate Effectively

Learning Method:

- Communication, to me, is one of the most important things in the modern world. Whether it is an organization, job, family, or friends, communication is the thread that is able to hold people together. Without effective communication ideas, plans, and schedules become unorganized and people are unformed and people cannot perform efficiently. There are many things that I can do as a student to work on my communication and these actions will influence my communication in the future. Communication is a skill, and like all skills must be practiced to be improved. The things that I currently want to work on for improvement are my emailing routine and meetings in this organization. I have never used email as a primary form of communication until this year so I have had to learn on the fly and establish my routine. I would like to set standards for myself to follow to ensure that all information is effectively communicated to all parties involved in my student organization work. As for meetings, I want to be better prepared for my meetings in this organization, both general committee meetings as well as committee meetings, to ensure that all information is brought forward in a timely and effective manner. Lastly, I want to work on my communication as a leader. I am very good friends with most of the members of staff which is a great thing, but often I feel that it hinders my communication with my fellow staff members. I am not incredibly comfortable getting after my friends due to the close relationship I have with them, but this is a situation I will face in corporate America as well as the family setting. I need to work on being comfortable leading those under me in all aspects, including disciplinary actions.

Evaluation:

- There are several specific criteria that I can set for my student organization work that will be good learning experiences for me. On the subject of email, I am going to challenge myself to reply to every email I receive within 24 hours of it being sent to me. Although I realize that there will be situations where I will not be able to do this do to chain of command or others being involved, I will then notify all parties involved to ensure that everyone is aware of the email so it can be dealt with in a timely manner. Although I check my email several times a day I am going to set a mandatory time to check my email every morning when I wake up to ensure that I know what has been sent to me. Lastly, I ask to be held accountable by my superiors in this organization. If the other execs or the advisor notices that I have not responded to an email and has not been asked about contact, please notify me. I do not intend for this to be a problem, but accountability can only act as reinforcement for my desired behaviors. These are the steps I am going to take to work on my emailing which I will be able to apply throughout my school career as well as in my future jobs. The second learning method I mentioned is to be more prepared for meetings. I am going to make agendas or lists of important topics for committee meetings, pre-general committee meetings, staff meetings, and Monday meetings with the executive team. Making these lists will ensure that all important topics will be brought to the table and that nothing will slip between the mental cracks. It is irresponsible and inefficient to come to meetings unprepared and to rely on my memory for all of my information. Lastly I want to challenge myself to be responsible in my communication with those I am close to. It is not that I believe that those under me in this organization do not respect me, but I internally attempt to avoid conflict. I tend to shy away from pointing out failure in my staff members and do not feel comfortable getting after them for poor work. This is a situation that I will be in many times in my professional career and need to work on taking myself out of my comfort zone. I understand that it is difficult to set specific, measureable goals for this but this is a situation I need to work on. I will challenge myself to be responsible and point out the

failures (as well as the successes) in my staff members to ensure they understand what is expected of them and to help them mature and grow as leaders.

3. Prepare to Engage in Lifelong Learning:

Learning Method:

- In my opinion there are two types of learning; learning that you must do and learning that you choose to do. School for the most part falls into the category of learning that you must do, but what happens after school ends? Learning is an important part of life as it directly is tied to personal growth and I believe that I should always strive to continue growing. One topic that was on my Leadership Learning Contract last year and was really helpful was recreational reading. I believe that reading is a barometer for how much a person wants to grow. Books expose the readers to new viewpoints, topics, and of course knowledge. Reading has become a large part of my life this year and it is something that I want to maintain throughout my life to continue growing and learning. The second aspect of learning that I want to continue to work on is community service. I believe that there is no greater learning experience than working with people, and the service in this organization has only reaffirmed my belief. It has been easy these past two years for me to be involved in the community since there was a points requirement, but I want to integrate service into my everyday life. I believe that without some goal or standard it would be very easy for me to put service on the backburner and neglect that aspect of my life. Putting myself in new experiences with diverse groups of people is a great way to learn about others and yourself, and as I grow older I want service to be a part of my life, as well as my family's life.

Evaluation:

- Last year in my Leadership Learning Contract I had a goal to read 24 books, or two per month. I was able to accomplish this goal midway through October this year and it has been a very rewarding experience. This year I want to re-up on this goal and set the standard of reading 26 books this year, or one every two weeks. I have kept a reading log of books that I have finished this year and I believe this is something I want to do every year to ensure that reading and learning stays an important part of my life. The second topic that I said was important to me and lifelong learning was community service. This year I am going to challenge myself to meet half of the point's requirement that the freshmen members of this organization have to attain. Ten and twenty hours in the two semesters should not be difficult for me to achieve, especially as the executive director of service. The difficult part of maintaining service will be in the years I am not in a service based organization. Next year, and the years beyond I want to stay involved and will need some metric to judge myself by. Right now I want to attend 12 service opportunities a year starting from my senior year on. I firmly believe that I will be able to volunteer my time once a month after graduation. If this goal proves too easy I will increase the numbers of service opportunities I attend, but I want to continue keeping service in my life and bring it to my family in the future. Obviously it is very far away, but when I am a father I hope to continue having the same metric to judge my service by and serve as a role model to my children so that they may learn through service as well.