**WHAT QUALITIES MAKE A LEADER?**

When asked who is a leader, most people will respond with a boss, mentor, CEO or president of a club and organization. However very few understand that a leader is so much more than a position or hierarchy. Donald H. McGannon, the past president and chairman of the board of Westinghouse Broadcasting Corporation once said, “Leadership is action, not position.” True and effective leaders can be anyone from a new employee to a CEO, for it is the personal qualities of a leader that inspire and bring out the greatness of others surrounding them.

John C. Maxwell, known as America’s expert on leadership wrote a book entitled, *The 21 Indispensable Qualities of a Leader*, to assist individuals recognize and develop individual leadership styles and skills to be effective leaders today. Character, charisma, commitment, communication, competence, courage, discernment, focus, generosity, initiative, listening, passion, a positive attitude, problem solving, relationships, security, self discipline, servanthood, teachability and vision are the key elements that Maxwell believes make an effective and successful leader. Take a moment to think about the meaning of each of these characteristics and how they correlate to leadership. Each characteristic focuses on elements of relationship building, communication and self awareness.

The opportunities for growth in leadership are endless at Worcester Polytechnic Institute in both the academic setting and outside the classroom as every student is encouraged to work in groups whether it be through a research group or involvement in a club or organization. These are the arenas where individuals can explore their own leadership style, practice new techniques and hone their skill set before entering the working world. The experiences in these groups are the ones that employers will want to hear about in a job interview in addition to academic achievement, because they expose the kind of team member or leader that you will be in their business.

There is great value in reflecting on what leadership means in your life, as it is a question you are bound to answer more than once. The definition of leadership and a leader is different for every person due to the experiences and knowledge base of every individual. However, those who have had the privilege of working with a true leader, are much more likely to understand what being a leader means. Leaders are able to listen to those around them and empower every person to act to achieve group goals. They understand their weaknesses as individuals, but enlist others for assistance and build relationships based on respect, understanding and compassion, while still holding people accountable. It is a delicate balance and a skill set that is never perfect.

Right now, in your eyes, what qualities make a leader? Are those qualities that you hold? Do you use them on a regular basis? Take the time everyday to reflect on how you can enhance the qualities that make you a leader, and reflect upon the ways that you can grow today and tomorrow. Attending an institution of higher education is the perfect time and laboratory to enhance your leadership skills.

**NEED TO GET OFF CAMPUS?**

A retreat is the perfect way to bring your organization together at the beginning of the year or at the start of an officer transition. It allows individuals to build relationships within an organization, set short term and long term goals for the group, share expectations and bring focus to members regarding their responsibilities.

Planning a retreat can be a large task for organizational leaders and can be overwhelming at times. It is important to make sure that more than one person is in charge of planning a retreat whether it be an entire executive board or an ad-hoc committee. This allows members of the organization to provide more than one perspective, share the work load and set goals that the organization wants to accomplish during the retreat.

Whether you hold your retreat on or off campus, it is important to make plans early an ensure that you can obtain the facilities necessary to accommodate your organization. You will also want to make sure that you have money set aside in your budget and know what that number is so that the board or committee can plan accordingly for the facilities, food, travel and any other necessities that will be needed to ensure that your retreat is successful!

If a retreat is planned well, it can be fun and productive for the organization. The Student Activities Office staff is available to assist any organization in making sure that an organizational retreat is fun, interactive, engaging and beneficial for everyone! You want to make sure that there is an agenda for the retreat, time for fun and interaction among all members and ample time for sleep. Retreats can be one of the most beneficial things an organization can do for its membership and the growth of its organization. For more information, visit the Student Activities Office.
As a student, we can all do our part to make a difference in our community. What makes WPI so unique is the opportunity we have to make a difference around the world. Through the help of the Interdisciplinary and Global Studies Division (IGSD), many students can decide to complete one of their qualifying projects outside of WPI, with the same goal: to better the community. Thinking back to my IQP experience which will be 1 year ago this term, I thought about whether that was the only goal, the only area that we strive for during these projects. I now realize that there was one more goal. My IQP allowed me to better myself, to grow into the person that I am today.

I can not help but be thankful for the opportunity to do my project aboard. During the Global Fair I talked to many students who all raved about their IQP, the people that they met, the projects the worked on, how they became a better person for it. As someone who had never stepped foot out of the US with the exception of Canada, this was my chance to make a difference in myself, in my team, and in the world. What I didn’t expect was the affect that my team, and the world would have on me. During my preparation for my IQP, my group and I worked together to determine who we wanted to help and how we could help them. We thought about who we needed to talk to and what we needed present, since we all came from different backgrounds. More importantly, we learned how to put our strengths together to be an effective team.

In Venice, the real learning experience began. Besides learning to adjust my leadership skills to adapt to my project group, I realized that I had to take a moment and familiarize myself with where I really was. I couldn’t be as effective if I wasn’t comfortable and aware of my surroundings. I had to learn the Italian language, the mannerisms, the culture. I had to first develop a lifestyle that was similar to the citizens of Venice so that my project would take on a new meaning. This helped me to grow in appreciation of how different the world really is and yet how everything still goes in motion.

Throughout the project, I encountered many people that would tell stories of Venetian life and would love to show me around. I learned to become a better listener and a better communicator. I didn’t have to try to initiate everything, but rather, I learned that I can be a good leader by putting the interests of other first. The friends that I met took me, a stranger in, and helped me to be comfortable in a new place so that I could complete my project in the best way possible. For that, I am very thankful.

Recently, I have had the chance to talk to fellow Venice Project Center Alum Kyle Miller about his experience. I asked him how he thought the IQP changed his leadership skills and his answer was enlightening. “My IQP in Venice was my first major team experience at WPI, requiring me and my teammates, all from diverse backgrounds, to get along and work together towards a common, long-term goal. There were times when we would disagree, and it made me realize that it is the leader’s job to keep people happy and on track…Venice taught me the importance of always seeing the forest for the trees, and of getting work done even in adverse conditions. It built my confidence as a leader, gave me direction in my own personal development, and allowed me to put my work and studies into healthy perspective.”

With over 400 people deciding to do their IQP outside of WPI, many others are realizing the opportunity that the IQP overseas brings. It is not all about going somewhere that you’ve never been to or getting away from the 3 classes a day routine. The Interactive Qualifying Project can change who you are as a person, a project partner, and as a leader. Originally, I was planning on using my leadership skills for my IQP but instead my IQP enhanced my leadership skills.

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**SPOTLIGHT ON TALENT**

The National Residence Hall Honorary (NRHH) is a residential leadership honor society, and WPI over the past year has been working to start a chapter. One of the functions of NRHH is to do recognition initiatives on campus. Every month NRHH choose “Of The Month” award winners from the campus community for various categories. These awards are submitted to the Regional NRHH board and then to the National NRHH board if they should win regionally. Below are the campus winners for the month of September as well as the any additional awards that have been won. The nominations can be viewed at otms.nrhh.org if you are interested.

Advisor of the Month: Rebekah Freeman-Schultz, Regional Winner
Community Service Program: Work on Worcester
Campus Community: 16 Elbridge, Regional Winner
Diversity Program: Ramadan Dinner
Educational Program: Capture the Flag/Conflict Resolution (Founders 3)
Executive Board Member: Eric Carlson
Faculty/Staff Member: Oleg Pavlov
First Year Student: E.J. Spofford, National Winner
Organization: Student Support Network
Resident Advisor: Vicki Mason
Social Program: Man Night
Campus Spotlight: Parents Weekend
Student: James Montgomery, regional Winner
Leadership Lecture Series
The Leadership Development Committee is proud to present a new addition to the leadership programs at WPI, a Leadership Lecture Series. The first lecture was a great success and took place on September 13th.

The next lecture will take place on January 27th featuring Andy Masters. Please look for more information regarding this event! For more information, contact the Student Activities Office.

Snack on Leadership!
Snack on leadership is a series of workshops held throughout the year to assist students and organizational leaders with specific issues, discuss various topics related to student organizations and provide resources too! The next Snack on Leadership will be:

Wednesday, February 11th
Topic: Ethics and Teamwork
Time: 3-4pm
Location: Morgan Room located in the Campus Center.

If you are interested in attending, register for these programs online at https://www.wpi.edu/Regi/SAO/

Leadership Lunch
The Leadership Lunch series provides the opportunities for leaders connected to and outside the Worcester and WPI Community to come to you. Once a term, a speaker will come to provide information about their leadership experiences and how it prepared them for where they are today! Lunch is provided.

The next Leadership Lunch will be on:

Wednesday, February 25th
Time: Noon to 1pm
Location: Higgins House

Consortium Leadership Conference: Save the Date
“009: Agent of Change “
Date: Sunday, February 8th
Time: 10am-3pm
Location: Assumption College
Price: $10.00

Leaders of the Term

Gabriella Serrati
Gabriella is a senior and Chemical Engineering major at WPI. She series as the VP for Activities for Panhellenic Council, is the Senior Week Chair for the Class of 2009 as well.

Grégory Dominique Pierre-Louis
Grégory is a student leader involved in the Black Student Union, National Society of Black Engineers and is a Resident Assistant at WPI. Grégory is in his senior year and is majoring in Electrical and Computer Engineering.
Arriving at WPI, I would have never imagined that I would become so involved on campus or that I would be considered a “leader”. But now in my senior year, as the Vice President of the Social Committee, I have become just that; a leader. I started as a co-chair for the Annual Events Committee in SocComm, which is responsible for putting on events such as Winter Carnival and Quadfest each year. Quickly I learned that leadership is not just making the phone calls and scheduling the meetings, but also organizing a group to carry out a successful campus-wide event. It is not just handing out jobs to half-hearted volunteers and making the final decisions, but rather energizing the group and keeping everyone involved in the decision making process. The next year I became Vice President, and it became my job to make sure the co-chairs of committees in SocComm keep their sanity in their busy programming schedules. While having the experience of Annual Events was certainly an asset, fostering new ideas and letting other leaders step up became part of the job. I learned the important lesson that leadership should never be, “well back in my day, we did this or that...”.

The Leading Edge Series, sponsored by the Student Activities Office, taught me leadership can be embodied in countless ways. Some lead by example, others choose to delegate, and some lead by inspiring those around them. In SocComm, I found inspiration works best. You cannot delegate a year’s worth of programming without it becoming painful and repetitive, so by giving others the same excitement for ideas and events that I have, I can lead in a more meaningful and effective manner. You always want the people you’re working with to have the same enthusiasm for a project that you have, and as a leader you have the unique ability to inspire that enthusiasm.

The skills I developed in the Social Committee were critical in other aspects of my life at WPI as well. During my IQP in Australia, our group of four had to work together to adapt a zoo’s educational programs for students with disabilities. There was no designated leader, so we had to work in such a way that jobs were still delegated and goals were still accomplished without any one person taking too much control. In group settings, it can be easy to take on too much work or to let others take the lead, creating an unfair workload for some. In SocComm, working with a co-chair taught me to bounce ideas off of others and to share a workload, which inevitably makes life easier for everyone. These leadership skills will be with me in every job I take and in countless situations in life, so while I came to WPI for a biology degree, I’m also leaving with the ability to lead.

### TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Have you read the entire Xcel Newsletter? Fill out this quiz and answer the questions that cover everything from topics in this publication to recent pop culture knowledge and return it to the Office of Student Activities located on the 3rd floor of the Campus Center by December 18th! People who answer all the questions correctly or the most correctly, will be entered into a drawing for a prize!

1. What does IGSD stand for at WPI?
2. How many feet can a kangaroo jump?
3. Where did Dukens Rene go for his IQP?
4. Name five qualities that John Maxwell considers important for an effective leader?
5. How do lizards communicate?
6. Through NRHH, who won advisor of the month?
7. Is leadership action or position according to Donald McGannon?
8. The average man walks how many steps in a day?
9. What are the names of the leaders of the term?
10. How many words in the English language rhyme with month?

### LOOKING AHEAD...

- 11/24-11/26: Thanksgiving Break
- 12/7-12/13: Winter Carnival
- 12/10: Hazing Education Speaker
- 12/18: Last Day of Classes