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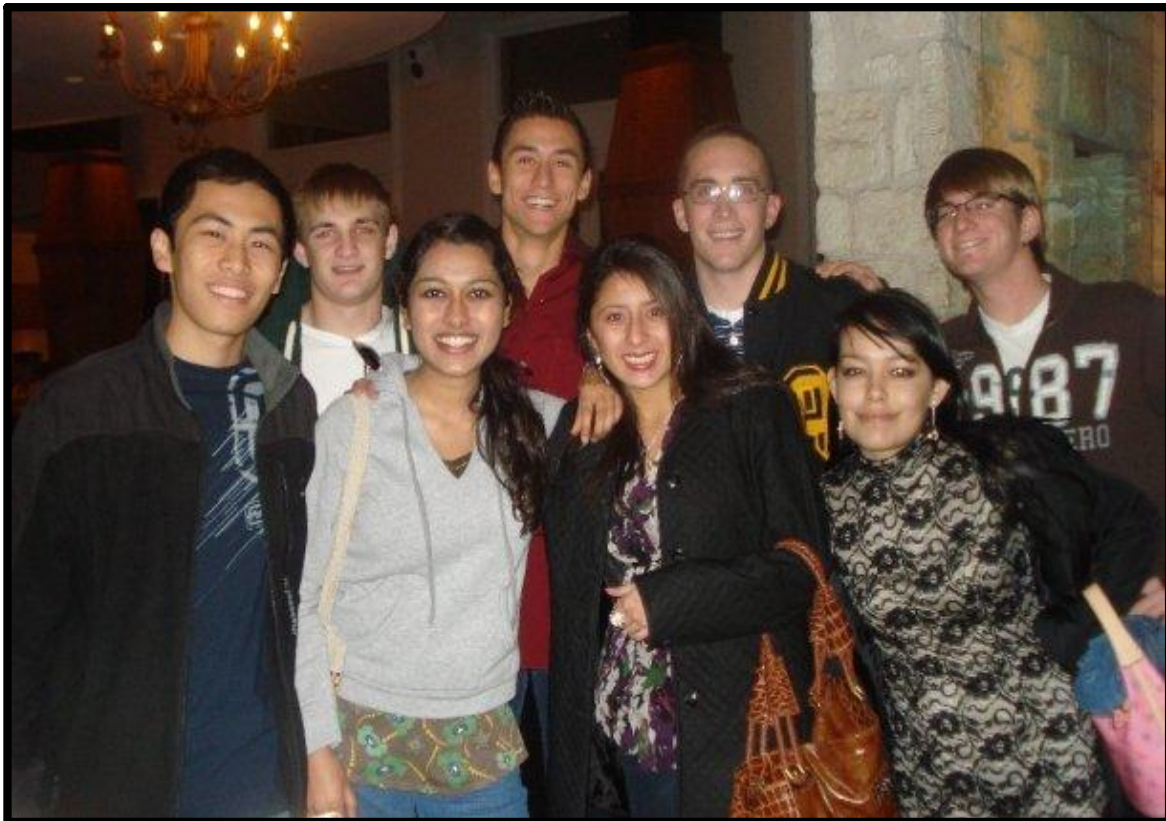
The Experience of Leadership

By: Lina Hidalgo

A state officer grants a title. With the title, comes a professional uniform, a powerful team, and experiences. Since a state FBLA office comes at a time in which a person's personality becomes defined, experiences are especially influential in the life of a state officer. I know that the potential for excellent officers is present in Texas and would like to point out the positive difference that being a state officer offers. I believe the best way of doing this is by speaking about my own experiences because they have had an important impact in my life. I will begin by explaining how I became involved in FBLA and conclude by explaining specific experiences as the State President that have defined my character and prepared me for the future.

My sophomore year of high school, I moved to Katy and was amazed by all the opportunities that my school offered. Overseas, I had never seen such an array of contrasting activities at the high school level and it seemed imperative to get involved in as many as I could. I joined FBLA because I, like many people, believe that everything in the world is business, and being a future business leader was something I could not turn down. I became especially involved at the Area V Fall Workshop where I heard about the implications and benefits of running for FBLA office at a workshop offered by a state officer. It was then that I decided that I wanted to run for office myself. That year, I competed in Public Speaking I and had the fortune of competing at the NLC. The overwhelming number of people at the NLC in Chicago was amazing and everyone's enthusiasm made me value FBLA even more. Besides experiencing the thrill of competition at the national level, meeting people I likely would not have met outside of the NLC and learning from workshops and speakers, visiting Chicago for the first time was an incredible opportunity. That summer, my school's FBLA President, Fei-Fei Zhang, ran for Mt. Plains Region Vice President and by actively participating in her campaign for days, I learned more about the great experiences that FBLA has to offer. When she won, I knew that she had reached her dream and I wanted to reach mine by running for state office the following year. When the opportunity presented itself to me, I saw it as a challenge to achieve something that I had wanted for more than a year. At the SLC in Houston, I was elected FBLA Texas President and by campaigning and holding my office so far, I have grown immensely as a person. In many ways, FBLA has combined and strengthened the abilities I have gained from other experiences throughout my life. My time as a state officer has been marked by new experiences. At officer training, I learned to work efficiently with a group of people I had never met, absorbed the intricacies of etiquette training and concocted a clear list of goals and a plan of action

for the state chapter of an organization. At the National Leadership Conference, I had the opportunity of sharing ideas with state officers across the nation and representing Texas at various meetings. At area conferences, I met people who had a perspective of FBLA that differed from mine and learned how to deliver a successful workshop. In my work with sponsorship, I let to address important figures in multinational corporations as well as business leaders of my own community. At the National Fall Leadership Conference, I successfully presented a workshop with my officers to a hundred students from across the country. At midyear planning, I participated in the board meeting of a large organization: something that I hope to do many times throughout my life. Ultimately, my position taught me to be resourceful, open-minded, patient, methodical, and efficient—all this while helping me discover abilities that led me to define the major that I wish to pursue. I have omitted some experiences for the sake of this article's length but I assure you that if you are elected for state office, you will have as much trouble condensing a memoir of your experiences as I had. I hope that from this small compilation of memories has allowed you to consider running for a state officer. If you have a thirst for leadership and hard work are willing to employ your networking abilities extensively, I urge you to run for office—doing so will complement your character and make a difference in an already powerful organization.



Who is a Leader?

By: Sameen Wajid

How many times have you heard the terms **leading, leader, leadership skills, etc?** When you are on an interview, use one of those words and ta-da, you sound pretty amazing. These words are thrown around a lot, but what exactly do they mean?

Is a leader someone who is bold and courageous? Is a leader someone who always does the right thing by standing up for what he believes in? Does the leader have to be strong? We know George Washington was an influential leader, but what about Hitler? Did he not influence people?

Let's forget about the "Big People" for a second. Let's focus on the custodial staff at your school. What do you think? Are they leaders? You might say no. You might be right. I mean, they clean. They do not have people following them and learning from their pearls of wisdom. They do not have any one working for them. According to the hierarchy of a typical organization, they are more than likely at the bottom-most step. Now imagine, you are a principal of a school. Do you imagine your school to be tidy and organized looking? Well, where did that "neat" image come from? Can you not say that it is the fine doings of the custodial staff that you so often saw that lead you to believe that a school should look clean? Therefore, you can conclude that the custodial staff influenced you. Are they not leaders then?

For me, a leader is anyone who influences their society through the natural personal characteristics that they have, in a good way or a bad way. As much as we like to associate the word leader in a positive sense, unfortunately, that is not always true. A leader can be anyone. A mass murderer can be a leader. You can look up to him and plan a more cunning murder or you can look down upon him and realize you'd never be like that. Either way, you are influenced.

So next time someone asks about your leadership skills, don't be afraid to state your personality. Just because you are quiet and reserve does not mean you can't influence people through your patience. Ghandi is a prime example of that. So step out, and show the world what you have!

The difficulties of being a Leader

By: Nick Luedtke

Being a leader is hard, but nothing great comes

without a challenge or price to pay. When you decide that you want to step up to the plate and become a leader, there are several obstacles you will face, and success lies on the other side.

One of the most difficult parts of being the leader is you have to not only deal, but direct many different types of individuals. A person you lead can range from being a slacker, an overachiever, frank, quite, clueless, overbearing, ect. , and to be a successful leader means you must establish a positive relationship with whatever personality type you come across. The key to this issue is to understand the background of the individual, know the person's incentives, and to simply be friendly yet authoritative.

There are only twenty-four hours in the day to divide between school, sports, hobbies, sleep, and your leadership position and obviously, steps to realize Time Management need to be taken. First, map out your goals in life, and in your particular activities, realizing what you really want to achieve. When you are planning the day's activities, plan to make the best use of the time available, leaving enough time for things you absolutely must do. Save yourself stress by not over-committing yourself to others, and also leaving some down time in your schedule as a "cool off" period, and time to handle the unexpected. Another issue that occurs when leading is deciding what kind of leader you want to come off as. We all have had to serve under a controlling Leader who gives no room to breath, and have encountered the fun, down-to-earth Leader... so what works? No one likes the dictator character that controls every aspect of a project, and the fun, friend leader sometimes cannot get a team to stay under his or her control. A combination of the two; however, can work wonders. Your goal as a leader should be to blend the positive aspects of both in order to form the image of a friendly leader who gets goals and projects accomplished. Between dealing with different types of people, controlling your schedule, and deciding what type of leader to be, being a leader has its challenges. When you decide to step up to the plate and deal with these issues, remember to accomplish them to the best of your ability, and prepare to reap the rewards of being a leader!



Will you accept the Challenge?

By: Eric Li

We all started somewhere. For me, I believe that it truly started in the El Paso State Leadership Conference. It was my first SLC, my first competition, my first time campaigning, and my first time to experience the full breadth of opportunities offered in FBLA. I watched William Clay Brown of High Tower High School campaign for Area V VP; I saw Trisha campaign for the office of secretary. I saw my friends compete and excel in competitions, and with my “parlipro” team members, I, too, succeeded.

I won 1st in Texas that year, but the more important accomplishment was triumphing over my fears—casting off the reclusive shell and restraint that I had

carried for many years. I dared to try new things, I craved challenge, and I wanted to be more. I set out to become a leader of leaders in FBLA.

When I returned to my local chapter, I ran for my first office of local chapter parliamentarian. I filled out the application, wrote a letter of intent, and prepared a speech. It was nothing spectacular, but it was a first step.

That step started me on an upward path that challenged me with more responsibilities like giving speeches, organizing luncheons, introducing key note speakers, and much more. Locally, I became the “go to guy” whenever anything needed to be done. It was a role that exposed me to the inner workings of my 350+ member chapter and fueled my motivation to become more to serve this organization of exceptional business leaders.

Just as Will and Trisha had done a year earlier, I decided to run for state office myself. What could be more fitting than State Parliamentarian? Preparation was intense and involved reading the gigantic Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised multiple times. My determination did not waver however, and I did everything necessary not only to improve my own knowledge, but also to help my team succeed at state. At the Houston SLC, I won the office of State Parliamentarian, and the team I led also won 1st. The experience of leading a team of just four friends, of working through the easy times and the hard, was a memory I will cherish forever. Working with 350 local members on a superficial level could not compare to working with just 4 members on an intimate level. The challenges of leadership tested me and allowed me to hone my abilities as a leader. Becoming a state officer was a wonderful achievement, but the gratitude, pride, and learning that I gained by leading my team prepared me for the state position.

I have never been easily satisfied. I do not “settle.” In FBLA, I had been challenged, I had learned, and I had grown. I decided to run for National Parliamentarian so that I could give back to the organization that had shaped me into a leader I never expected myself to be. Robert’s Rules came back with a vengeance, as I again reread the book multiple times. I won the position though, in a tie breaker, at the NLC in Atlanta. After becoming National Parliamentarian, I have corresponded with teachers, state officers, and members across the US, and I even had the exceptional opportunity to meet with US Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings. It keeps getting better and better.

Thus far, my experiences as an FBLA officer on so many levels has forced me to become a more versatile, understanding, and effective leader than I was even a few months ago. It is a constantly changing role that is guaranteed to be a rewarding experience to any who dare to do it. I dared to accept the challenge...will you?

It's about giving

By: Nicholas Tanner

There is nothing like being a leader, whether it is in **the classroom, in your organization, or on the court.** When you see that final product to whatever you have been working on, the feeling is indescribable. You know that you were the leading force behind that assignment, project, or team's success. Leaders always step up when they need to and usually this is to help out someone else and in turn help their selves in the process. For example last year Area 6 only had three officers but after asking for increased leadership on the area level, this year we have all six area officer positions filled. They knew we needed to have increased leadership at the area level and now that they stepped up they have an area officer title and get to speak on stage at the Area Conference. That is the time when all the effort that you put in as an area officer, being a leader, actually pays off. Yes, I know what you are thinking being a leader is a lot of work and I don't think I have the time or the willingness to put out that much effort. Here is the thing being a leader is well worth your time and effort.

The thing I enjoy most about being a leader is after you have each your goal and achieved whatever it is you wanted to achieve in the first place, is the feeling you get knowing you accomplished what you wanted to accomplish is just an amazing feeling. This is why I always recommend to my fellow FBLA members to apply to hold leadership positions in FBLA because I want them to experience the same feeling I feel each and every time I achieve a goal through a leadership position. I just want to encourage everyone to always be a leader in something that you are doing. Because it is an irreplaceable feeling and looking back depending how important it was to you, you just might just remember it the rest of your life.



Note from the Editor

By: Jerry Ferguson

Leadership. It's mental, physical and sometimes even spiritual and yet all of us have it within us. It is a learned trait, and it exhibits the need to help others by showing them the way to a goal. Future Business Leaders of America had the goal of increasing membership, and this years officer team met it. What we need now is the new leaders of tomorrow to step up! To show the incoming and ongoing members at the local level the way to the goals this years incoming officer team will set.

We all need to understand that we can bring more change to this great organization. Texas is the lone star state, and the state with the most pride by far of any other. We possess the will and power to be the greatest state in FBLA throughout its many locations. Remember the wise words of Lincoln, "Be sure you put your feet in the right place, then stand firm". If you don't know yet where your feet stand in this great organization find out through leadership. Be strong, humble and wise in all that you do, but do not be afraid! There are advisers to help you every step of the way. With your feet in leadership, you stand firm to not make only a difference for your community, but for your great state of Texas.