

**Freshman Leadership Organization**  
**Office of Student Affairs**  
**Texas A&M International University**

Credits: 0  
Prerequisite: Acceptance into the Freshman Leadership Organization (FLO)  
Time: 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Fridays of every month, 4:00 to 5:00 p.m.  
Location: TBA  
Instructor(s): Gerardo "Jerry" Alva, director of student affairs  
Miguel Trevino, associate director of student activities and leadership  
Office: Student Center 226  
Phone: (956) 326-2280

### **Course Introduction**

This program is specifically designed to provide new first-time freshman an opportunity to learn basic leadership principals and skills and how to apply them. Students that are a part of FLO will be able to identify their leadership strengths and weaknesses, express their image of the future, and search for opportunities to change and improve.

### **Course Description**

The Freshman Leader Opportunity (FLO) will provide new first-time freshman an opportunity to learn of basic leadership principals and skills and how to apply them. The program is designed in a lecture/discussion format and includes activities throughout the year. The program will consist of an introspective look at students' own abilities and build upon these strengths and weaknesses in order to teach the foundations of being an engaged leader at the University and the community.

### **Learning Outcomes**

1. Gain personal competencies
2. Develop a sense of personal leadership identity
3. Understand how their personal leadership identity relates to working with others
4. Build communication and problem-solving skills
5. Connect to the TAMIU campus

### **Texts**

Kouzes, James M. and Posner, Barry Z. (2008). *The Student Leadership Challenge* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, A Wiley Imprint.

Maxwell, John C. (2002). *Leadership 101* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

## **Assignments**

### **Current Events and Issues**

Leaders need to be cognizant of current historical, political, and social issues at the local, state, national and global level. As such, students are expected to review headlines in the *Laredo Morning Times* and the *CNN Website* in order to be aware of and discuss local, state, national and global issues.

*Please note: the Laredo Morning Times is available free of charge at the Killam Library.*

### **Group Service Project**

This is a community or campus service activity planned and implemented by the group. Through this project, students should demonstrate their ability to work together as a team, while improving the quality of life on the TAMIU campus or in the Laredo Community. Assessment for grading purposes includes evaluation by fellow team members, the course instructor, and the project manager/advisor.

### **Reflective Video Journal**

Regular recordings about your learning will enable you to become reflective learners and leaders. The video journal is parallel to the field book or laboratory notes of the scientist. We not only record what happened or what was observed, but in addition, we can record a tentative hypothesis or the development of new understanding. Reflective recordings have the potential to provide us with a systematic approach to our development as a reflective, critical and constructive learner and leader. Our journal can provide an opportunity to make explicit our position on a range of issues of personal significance. Used effectively, these recordings will support us to make a personal sense of a diverse set of experiences -- this is particularly important when learning and leading is to be incorporated into every day practice. The reflective recordings will assist in the reflective process. Minimum number of entries required = 10.

### **Leader of the Day**

This assignment gives you the opportunity to practice your leadership skills, encourages self-expression, develops confidence in speaking before the group, and helps build bonds between class members. Each class member will be required to sign up to be "leader of the day." As leader of the day, each student begins that class session with a thought or exercise that provides insight into leadership and/or personal development and is considered a significant learning opportunity. This exercise must, in some way, be related to the textbook and class discussion for the day. Past leaders of the day have shared leadership readings and/or quotes, or engaged the rest of the group in trust initiatives, yoga relaxation exercises, etc. Approximately 15-20 minutes of class time each week will be devoted to the leader of the day.

### **Active Learning**

Throughout the year, you will be expected to participate in a select number of activities that will enhance the learning inside the classroom. These activities will be announced a minimum of two (2) weeks prior to the date of the event and will be required as part of the program. After completing the activity each student will be required to submit a one-page reflective essay detailing the event and how it relates to what we are studying.

## **Attendance and Participation**

Because each of you is already a community, school, sports, or church leader, focusing on the (good) habits of leadership is important. One habit is dependability. For example, this means regular attendance at class sessions one evening a week and participation in class, group, and outside activities and assignments. Another is trust -- trusting the process and trusting the other members of your class. Your attendance and participation are essential to your learning and to the overall success of the course (especially since this course is held only once a week). Students are expected to keep up with assigned reading and to actively participate in classroom discussion.

Students with extended illnesses or problems that relate to attendance should meet with the instructor, rather than risk loss of points.

## **Students with Disabilities**

Texas A&M International University seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for all qualified persons with disabilities. This University will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to afford equal education opportunity. It is the student's responsibility to register with the Director of Student Counseling and to contact the faculty member in a timely fashion to arrange for suitable accommodations.

## **Classroom Behavior**

The University encourages classroom discussion and academic debate as an essential intellectual activity. It is essential that students learn to express and defend their beliefs, but it is also essential that they learn to listen and respond respectfully to others whose beliefs they may not share. The University will always tolerate diverse, unorthodox, and unpopular points of view, but it will not tolerate condescending or insulting remarks. When students verbally abuse or ridicule and intimidate others whose views they do not agree with, they subvert the free exchange of ideas that should characterize a university classroom. If their actions are deemed by the professor to be disruptive, they will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include being involuntarily withdrawn from the class.

## **Plagiarism and Cheating**

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's work as your own. 1) When you borrow someone else's facts, ideas, or opinions and put them entirely in your own words, you must acknowledge that these thoughts are not your own by immediately citing the source in your paper. Failure to do this is plagiarism. 2) When you also borrow someone else's words (short phrases, clauses, or sentences), you must enclose the copied words in quotation marks as well as citing the source. Failure to do this is plagiarism. 3) When you present someone else's paper or exam (stolen, borrowed, or bought) as your own, you have committed a clearly intentional form of intellectual theft and have put your academic future in jeopardy. This is the worst form of plagiarism.

Here is another explanation from the 2010, sixth edition of the *Manual of The American Psychological Association* (APA):

*Plagiarism:* Researchers do not claim the words and ideas of another as their own; they give credit where credit is due. Quotations marks should be used to indicate the exact words of another. *Each* time you paraphrase another author (i.e., summarize a passage or rearrange the order of a sentence and change some of the words), you need to credit the source in the text.

The key element of this principle is that authors do not present the work of another as if it were their own words. This can extend to ideas as well as written words. If authors model a study after one done by someone else, the originating author should be given credit. If the rationale for a study was suggested in the Discussion section of someone else's article, the person should be given credit. Given the free exchange of ideas, which is very important for the health of intellectual discourse, authors may not know where an idea for a study originated. If authors do know, however, they should acknowledge the source; this includes personal communications. (pp. 15-16)

Consult the Writing Center or a recommended guide to documentation and research such as the *Manual of the APA* or the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* for guidance on proper documentation. If you still have doubts concerning proper documentation, seek advice from your instructor prior to submitting a final draft.

*Penalties for Plagiarism:* Should a faculty member discover that a student has committed plagiarism, the student should receive a grade of 'F' in that course and the matter will be referred to the Honor Council for possible disciplinary action. The faculty member, however, may elect to give freshmen and sophomore students a "zero" for the assignment and to allow them to revise the assignment up to a grade of "F" (50%) if they believe that the student plagiarized out of ignorance or carelessness and not out of an attempt to deceive in order to earn an unmerited grade. This option should not be available to juniors, seniors, or graduate students, who cannot reasonably claim ignorance of documentation rules as an excuse.

*Penalties for Cheating:* Should a faculty member discover a student cheating on an exam or quiz or other class project, the student should receive a "zero" for the assignment and not be allowed to make the assignment up. The incident should be reported to the chair of the department and to the Honor Council. If the cheating is extensive, however, or if the assignment constitutes a major grade for the course (e.g., a final exam), or if the student has cheated in the past, the student should receive an "F" in the course, and the matter should be referred to the Honor Council. Under no circumstances should a student who deserves an "F" in the course be allowed to withdraw from the course with a "W."

*Student Right of Appeal:* Faculty will notify students immediately via the student's TAMIU e-mail account that they have submitted plagiarized work. Students have the right to appeal a faculty member's charge of academic dishonesty by notifying the TAMIU Honor Council of their intent to appeal as long as the notification of appeal comes within five (5) business days of the faculty member's e-mail message to the student. The *Student Handbook* provides details.

## **Course Schedule** (Tentative and subject to change)

### **September 16**

Review of Program Expectations and Requirements  
Sign-Up for Leader of the Day  
Topic of the Week: Getting Extraordinary Things Done in Organizations  
Homework: Read Chapter 2 – The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership

<b>September 30</b>	<p><i>Topic of the Week:</i> Common Leadership Traits  Leader of the Day  Reflective Video Journal Due  Homework: Read Chapter 3 – Model the Way</p>
<b>October 14</b>	<p><i>Topic of the Week:</i> Clarify values  Leader of the Day  Reflective Video Journal Due  Determine Group Service Project</p>
<b>November 4-6</b>	<p><i>Topic of the Week:</i> Set the example  Leader of the Day  Reflective Video Journal Due  Homework: Read Chapter 4 – Inspire A Shared Vision</p> <p>FLO Retreat (Building Leaders Conference)  Reflective Video Journal Due</p>
<b>November 11</b>	<p><i>Topic of the Week:</i> Envision the future  Leader of the Day  Reflective Video Journal Due</p>
<b>November 25</b>	No Class - Thanksgiving Holiday
<b>December</b>	<p>Group Service Project (TBA)  Reflective Video Journal Due</p>
<b>January 27</b>	<p><i>Topic of the Week:</i> Enlist others  Leader of the Day  Homework: Read Chapter 5 – Challenge the Process</p>
<b>February 10</b>	<p><i>Topic of the Week:</i> Search for opportunities  Leader of the Day  Reflective Video Journal Due</p>
<b>February 24</b>	<p><i>Topic of the Week:</i> Experiment and take risks  Leader of the Day  Reflective Video Journal Due  Homework: Read Chapter 6 – Enable Others to Act</p>
<b>March 9</b>	No Class – Enjoy Spring Break
<b>March 23</b>	<p><i>Topic of the Week:</i> Foster collaboration and Strengthen Others  Leader of the Day  Homework: Read Chapter 7 – Encourage the Heart</p>

**April 13**

*Topic of the Week:* Recognize Contributions and Celebrate the Values and Victories  
Reflective Video Journal Due  
Leader of the Day  
Homework: Read Chapter 8 – Leadership is Everyone’s Business

**April 27**

*Topic of the Week:* Bringing it together/Taking the Next Step  
Reflective Video Journal Due  
Program Evaluation

**April 28**

Dinner and Recognition at University Life Awards

**May**

Service Trip Abroad (TBA)