

Program Goal 4: Graduates are prepared to provide leadership for a range of client groups and program outcomes.

1. Students will apply models and concepts of transformational leadership to specific outdoor education settings. (make the group want to change)
2. Students will facilitate group dynamics to maximize team effectiveness.
3. Students will exhibit effective problem solving, decision making, and communication skills.
4. Students will apply ethical principles to common professional issues.

Concepts of leadership have been apart of every class I have taken within the Outdoor Education program. Specifically in the Principles of Field Leadership course and my facilitation at the 4H National Congress, I was reminded that I needed to be a role model for participants and to express empathy and selflessness; by doing so, I placed the needs of others above my own. I believe these qualities combined with hard work make a great leader because you will be someone that people want to learn from and follow. Two examples where I believe I demonstrated quality leadership include the leader of the day experiences in the Principles of Field Leadership course and my diversity-themed program at the 4H National Congress. In the Principles of Field Leadership course, I was responsible for a group of people in the backcountry; I had to develop lesson plans to teach, help with navigation and risk management, and ensure Leave No Trace Principles were being upheld. For the 4H National Congress, I developed a program with sequenced activities themed around diversity. At the end of the weekend, the participants took home a booklet of our program designs so they could use the activities. I received extensive feedback about my facilitation in each of these experiences, feedback that I continue to incorporate into my leadership and teaching style in order to be more effective with groups in the future.

The Principles of Field Leadership course required myself and a partner to develop and implement plans for two separate days over a thirteen day expedition. On these days, we were responsible for everything: when and where we ate and camped, the lessons that were taught, navigation and risk management. Accompanying these responsibilities were themes which were incorporated into activities throughout the day. On the second day of the expedition, the theme was "Orienting the Group." My partner and I lead the group through a challenge by choice activity and helped guide our peers in developing a group contract. By facilitating these two activities, group members were able to discuss concerns and establish expectations for behavior for the rest of the trip. As the leaders of the day, my partner and I did our best to hold our peers accountable. Accountability in the field is imperative for maximizing group effectiveness; as leaders, we helped the group address issues that arose and used the group contract as our guide when developing solutions. The feedback that I received about my leadership on this day was that I empathized well with my peers, but I did not thoroughly plan for the day. There were times where I did not know where we were, I did not adequately scout a campsite, and I could have had more theme related activities. Ultimately, I did not maximize the time I had in the leadership position. You can read my leadership reflection in the artifact "Principles of Field Leadership Reflection." In the future, I know it is important to have detailed plans for each block of the day, that empty time during the day leave participants wondering what they are doing, which in turn downplays your effectiveness as the leader.

Although I received feedback about my plan for the day being incomplete, route planning before the trip was helpful to get in the mindset of being responsible for and thinking about

others. We had to think about where the group needed to be for resupply, how many miles everyone would be capable of given the weight of their bag, elevation changes and water access. This type of planning required my partner and I to communicate and make decisions for the group before we even put our backpacks on. We had to maintain constant communication once in the field because the plans were constantly being refined. On the fifth day of the trip, the group was on a completely different route than originally planned which required my partner and I to recalibrate and revise our plans. As a team, we had to assess the group's needs and develop a new route; this included finding a new camping spot, looking further ahead to where we needed to be for a resupply, incorporating our theme of nutrition and communicating this with the group. Please see the artifact "Principles of Field Leadership Route Plan" for access to the route plan we developed, and the revision I made after the expedition. These revisions were made after reflecting on the experience and incorporating feedback that I received. Leading my peers and being responsible for entire days in the field challenged me to analyze my decisions and use my best judgment, but it also revealed to me the importance of communication, active listening and selflessness. These are skills that I believe make a competent leader.

The 4H National Congress was unique given I was only responsible for a group for an hour at a time, and there was no backcountry element. The event was held in a hotel, and I was in charge of leading activities themed around diversity. Diversity is a broad but sensitive subject for some, and the activities challenged myself and the participants. I focused heavily on behavioral expectations towards the beginning of the program, emphasizing respect for others and active listening; however, this did not prevent disputes. I clearly remember feeling uncomfortable when someone said something I did not agree with, or when participants expressed conflicting beliefs, but it was in these moments that I reminded them on how differences do not have to divide us and that there is much to learn from those with whom we disagree. I believe myself and the participants revealed their leadership capabilities when we created space to listen instead of argue and showed empathy for people we barely knew. View the artifact "4H National Congress Reflection" to read more about this pivotal experience. I learned so much about myself working closely with these participants, as well as my partner and peers during the PFL expedition. I analyzed my definition of leadership and learned the importance of knowing when to follow.