

Student Reflection
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Many questions enter a student's mind when choosing a major or minor area of study. "How many credits will I have to take in order to complete my degree?" "Will I enjoy what I study?" "Will I be excited to go to 8:15 classes?" "Will I get a job?" and, the most important question, "When and how will I use the things I learn?" From leading a G8 summit to leading a late-night study group, I can honestly tell you that leadership studies covers a wealth of topics in professional, political, and everyday life. So congratulations! You already have a leg-up on business school students. But, one small caveat. With such a far-reaching area of study, you will encounter a new question. My father was the first to ask me this question, and I have had many people ask me the same question after him. "Leadership studies? What will you do with that?"

Edward L. Flom, former CEO of Florida Steel, was quoted as saying:

"One of the hardest tasks of leadership is understanding that you are not what you are, but what you're perceived to be by others."

While you may agree with Mr. Flom, and in many cases he was right, my time here has been spent asking and being asked, "What will I do with an education in leadership studies?" Think hard about this question. It means that you have an important choice to make. This is the pivotal moment in your life you've been waiting for. This may sound like mere inspirational jargon, but the decision you make will have a real

affect on the rest of your life and the people you will encounter. In answering this question, consider a few things.

First, identify yourself as the kind of leader you would want to be. How would you lead given the opportunity? There are many answers. Will you be Machiavellian; a utilitarian, efficient, and strong-willed leader who evaluates decisions and does what is necessary. Or will you be other-minded, socially conscious, compassionate, a true servant leader. Or will you seek to transform the minds and sentiments of others, thus changing the world around you. This is an important question even if you don't want to be a leader. Your thought on this matter will better prepare you to choose good leaders.

That being said, don't be afraid to follow. Your professors at the Jepson School will guide you to a greater understanding of leadership and life in general. I encourage you to build relationships with them and benefit from their extensive knowledge. Also, consider the value of your peers' insights. They often enable you to see the multifaceted, "bigger picture" and give you new perspective. Only by listening to others and appreciating differences of perspective, can you learn what it means to be a good leader.

All in all, be active in your education here. Read the books. Thirst for knowledge. Take every opportunity to gain perspective. But analyze every theory and idea. Never take anything at face value. And always ask yourself how you will use what you learn.

Congratulations to you all and welcome to the Jepson School of Leadership Studies.