

The ZICKLIN LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE

The Zicklin Leadership Initiative is a carefully-designed, two-year-long, series of assessments and experiences, that identify and develop students' potential for leadership. It is built on a comprehensive assessment of leadership potential, and stresses themes of diversity, shared leadership, ethical decision-making, and community service. The various components are either linked to existing courses, or are granted course credit.

The first phase is a thorough assessment of each student's leadership potential, and prospects for growth. Components include the application of a carefully selected battery of leadership assessment instruments, a student-oriented 360 experience, and individual statements of the each student's leadership objectives.

The assessment phase is completed some time during the first semester. Each student has a private discussion of the results of the above activities with a member of the faculty. Each of these personal counseling sessions results in an individualized Leadership Development Action Plan, and the initiation of a Leadership Portfolio. As students complete each experience in the Action Plan, they will add a reflection of that experience to the Portfolio.

In addition to the experiences designed for the entire class, each student will be offered opportunities to lead various group efforts throughout their two-year stay at the Zicklin School. Students who might otherwise remain in the background are encouraged to come forward and lead class projects, as well as extra-curricular projects such as student clubs. Reflections on each of these experiences are added to the Leadership Portfolio.

Throughout students' four semesters of graduate study, students have an opportunity to observe and evaluate successful leadership models. Senior business executives come to campus and speak to students as part of the Leadership Lecture Series. Students attend and critique these presentations, and then conduct small group interviews of the visiting executives to prepare Leadership Profiles. Students also identify a functioning team, and then analyze the leadership processes at work.

In the Spring term of the first year, students may take advantage of a carefully designed Leadership Mentoring program. This mentoring program was informed, in part, by mentoring programs in place in a substantial number of Fortune 500 Companies. Mentors are carefully selected both from Zicklin School alumni, and other prominent business leaders. Both Mentors, and Students participate in orientation programs, and preparatory materials are provided to each party. Students meet with their Mentors periodically throughout the remainder of their time at the Zicklin School.

During the first Spring term, students participate in two unique experiences, that are linked to the required core course in Organizational Behavior. The first is an Experience in Shared Leadership, presented in co-operation with the world-famous, conductorless, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. Players from the Orpheus come to campus, and conduct live rehearsals, without the benefit of a conductor. Then student and players have a opportunity to discuss the mechanisms by which the players, collectively, make the subtle decisions that result in their artistic interpretation of a piece of classical music.

The second unique experience focuses on diversity. The Anti-Defamation League, through its “World of Difference” program conducts two days of executive training that sensitizes students to issues of diversity, and prepares them to lead, and benefit from, diverse business and cultural environments. Students prepare reflective papers for both the Orpheus, and the ADL experiences.

In the second Fall term, students participate in one unique experience, and begin another. An Ethics Immersion Experience is linked to the required core course in Business and Society. While ethical issues are raised in the course, a classroom setting does not permit the soul searching associated with ethical dilemmas in day-to-day business decision-making. The Ethics Immersion sets aside a full day, devoted to probing, ethical decisions through small group discussions, and team exercises.

The Zicklin School believes deeply in the need for executives to project themselves beyond their respective businesses, and to improve their communities, however they may be defined. The Voluntarism Experience establishes a foundation for individual community service, and corporate citizenship. All students are required to provide at least fifty hours of direct, volunteer service to the clients of organizations dedicated to improving the lot of underserved citizens. Many of New York's most important community service organizations provide placement, and supervision for students. Introductory, and reflective activities frame the volunteer experience.

Near the end of each student's time at the Zicklin School, they meet again with the faculty member who assisted them in preparation of their individual Leadership Development Action Plan. Students and their advisors take this opportunity to review the Leadership Portfolio. Accomplishments, and targets for future development are discussed, and used as an action plan for students post-graduate development.