**Honors Experiential Learning Project Proposal Form - Leadership**

**Basic Information**  
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College: CEAS

Major: Biomedical Engineering

Title of Project: HOBY: A Crash Course in Leadership

Expected Project Start Date: July 18, 2013

Expected Project End Date: July 28, 2013

**Project Information**

1. **Provide a brief overview/abstract of your proposed honors experiential learning project.**

My proposed learning project is a volunteer opportunity called Hugh O’Brian Youth Leadership (HOBY). This is a leadership organization that puts on seminars worldwide for high school students to help teach them how to develop their leadership abilities and how to think, not what to think. There are various aspects involved with this program especially behind the scenes operations like transportation, meals, activity planning, and much more. My specific focus will be in the operations category at the World Leadership Congress (WLC) for HOBY, specifically team alumni. This is a team of alumni of the HOBY program who do the bulk the background work for the seminar. All members of the team are younger than 21 and come from different background to make a super team for the seminar. We move food to ambassadors, help transport them around the city where WLC is held (Chicago this coming year), set up rooms for ambassadors, and do any other behind the scenes work to make the seminar run smoothly. I will be part of this team for the coming seminar. I will be volunteering about 14-16 hours of the day for 11 days, tallying up to 154-176 hours.

1. **Clearly state how each of the following elements will be exhibited in your work (refer to the first two pages of this document with the full description of what is expected in each of these areas).**
2. Substantial Content and Quality within Leadership Theme

The four main leadership objectives for the UHP are:

* Possesses knowledge of various leadership theories and identifies with the characteristics of leadership
* Identifies the various characteristics of a leader in a given situation/role
* Has the ability to relate, communicate and work effectively with peers
* Develops a vision of the future and acknowledges the impact of decisions (as applicable to the individual and affiliated organizations)

I will address the first by closely studying a couple leadership theories and observing the different theories being practiced around me. Along those same lines I will analyze myself to see which theories I use most and what is most helpful for me. This goes right along with the second leadership outcome listed above too. Working with the other Team Alumni at HOBY very closely over the 11-day period will obviously cover the third. It will be essential for me to be able to relate, communicate, and work effectively with them, or else the seminar could fall apart. The last outcome will be accomplished through taking what I learn at HOBY and developing an outlook for the next year following the seminar on how I can take what I’ve learned and apply to the ins and outs of my everyday life. Below is a little bit more detail on how I will accomplish the objectives.

There are different characteristics to go along with each ambassador and staff member. Some people will lead by being an outgoing influence, some will lead by example, and some will lead by being a good listener. HOBY teaches you to embrace each style and learn which way is your best approach to leadership. In various situations, leaders can have different roles. Not everyone can be in charge. This requires other leaders to have the control to lead by listening and following or by example.

Through the above, I will be influenced as well, especially working with a tight group of unique individuals. This group will teach me to communicate by presenting challenges and communicating with each other to find the best solution to those challenges. One concrete example of this from previous years is moving pizza and water for 430 ambassadors from the street to Millennium Park in Chicago. After placing all the food, we were told by the park police we must move it. We had to quickly move the food and water to another area of the park with very limited time to ensure the hungry ambassadors did not get impatient.

All of these aspects will be combined to create an experience in which I will be taught different leadership ideas, given opportunities to observe and practice them, and overall help me develop for future success in leading in the workplace, classroom, home, and anywhere else in life. The main content will be the ability to relate with, communicate, and work effectively with my fellow team alumni members, other staff, and ambassadors.

1. Connection to Academic Goals and Theories

As an engineer, I will be given a lot of team projects. Ideas may differ and disagreements will occur, but in the end we will need to come together and get the job done. HOBY, and specifically team alumni, will help develop these skills of teamwork and fair decision-making. Throughout the course of the HOBY WLC seminar, a lot of challenges will come up that team alumni will not agree on. For example, ideas may differ on the most efficient and safest way to transport ambassadors from campus to Navy Pier for the banquet. Although there may not be full agreement, a quick plan must be made and executed without discontent from other members to get the job done. If one person strays from the final plan, the whole plan could become a disaster. Even if it isn’t my idea that is chosen, I need to do my part to make the chosen idea successful. The same will be applicable in engineering projects. If one person fails to do their part, the whole project could result in failure. However, the learning does extend beyond engineering.

A big goal of mine is to develop my interests outside of my major. HOBY teaches a lot of practical life skills, leadership skills, and interactive skills that are applicable inside and outside of my major. For example, HOBY allows me to study first hand the effects of group dynamic and relation on a large scale. With various teams and various jobs, it takes unity to run a big program like the WLC. For example, team alumni, director of transportation, and facilitators all have to work cohesively to transport ambassadors around Chicago. I am interested in studying the dynamic and smoothness of such a large group. HOBY provides that with its broad range of different situations and dynamics.

To sum it all up in three specific goals, I want to be able to work better in a team, study group dynamics, and practice the logistics behind a large operation.

In terms of theories, reading, and coursework, I want to address a couple leadership theories directly, while also reading and studying on the topic of leadership throughout the HOBY experience by reading *Leadership: Theory and Practice* by Dr. Peter G. Northouse. My main theories of focus will be the behavioral theory and the relationship theory.

The behavioral theory is the idea that leaders aren’t born, they are made. This will be observable and practiced at HOBY. Not everyone at HOBY is a noticed leader coming in. HOBY teaches ambassadors how to express their leadership in their respective forms. I will be given the opportunity as a volunteer to see ambassadors develop into the leaders they have the potential to be. This will also wear off on me as well with the relationship theory. The relationship theory is the idea that you are influenced by others around you, whether that be a motivating or depressing influence. Someone once said to me, “show me your friends and I’ll show you your future.” This is very true with HOBY because being surrounded by so many outstanding people will challenge you to be even more outstanding. I have seen this with my previous involvement with HOBY. There is always someone around you participating in an amazing organization or living each day to the fullest by the way they treat others. This theory says that they will wear off on you. I learned about these theories over the past few years through HOBY and other involvement but never knew what they were actually called. A simple Google search helped out and I learned a little more on this site <http://psychology.about.com/od/leadership/p/leadtheories.htm>.

The two theories above are very significant because they can help shape myself and others into, not just productive, but outstanding members of society. Both theories have the power to make or break a leader and I think the observation of these theories will help me to influence others in a positive manner and will bring out the best in my leadership abilities.

The reason I chose the book listed above as part of my HOBY experience is because it is a great guide to help take the most out of my experience. Northhouse hits hard on major leadership theories. One major thing I noticed is that a lot of theories can get confused and sound similar. Northhouse really hits on the major theories in depth, which will help me better distinguish between the theories I will be observing.

1. Initiative, Independence and Creativity

There is a large amount of initiative taken into the HOBY project. Over 200 people apply just for team alumni and around 14 are chosen each year. I am lucky enough to be among the 14. I had to fill out an extensive application and background check as well as volunteer at local seminars for a couple years before being chosen. It takes a lot of planning before hand to complete such an extensive volunteer project. I fulfill requirements like planning travel, coordinating activities, gathering supplies, working out logistics for ambassador arrival/departure, and much more pre-seminar.

Independence comes in the fact that I have completely chosen to continue my service to HOBY on my own. It is a separate entity from any other aspect of my life, yet it continues to overflow and better the other parts of my life as a result. All the travel, fundraising, and pre work is independent of others, unless I find time to coordinate with someone across the state or country to complete these pre-seminar duties together.

This project is very creative in the fact that I offer a unique set of skills to the project. There are many unique activities and experiences that make the overall experience original and meaningful to each person. One creative thing is my unique skill set I bring to the team. I am one of the stronger members of the team physically, so I can help a lot more with the heavy lifting and moving. I am also good with organization and logistics because my mind works much like an engineer. I am not good, however, at the artistic aspects of decorations, postcards, and welcome packages; those are better suited for some of the other members. In this way, skills balance and a unique team is created.

Another creative aspect of the project is problem solving. There are typically many different ways that will work to solve a problem at HOBY and in life. My way of problem solving for various situations sets me apart from others in the fact that they may not have the same idea for solving the problem. This is one of the most creative aspects because there is no outlined right or wrong way (in most situations).

1. Reflection & Dissemination

For the reflection section, I will do a daily journal of what I learned and did that day. This will help me keep track of the days and how I learned and grew over that day. At the end I will do a reflection overall of the journey from the beginning and compile pictures of the experience. A short overall reflection and compilation of pictures should convey the experience to others. I can put the more important pictures and learned material into a short powerpoint presentation to convey the experience to others. I can share my learning with others by speaking on my experiences and sharing lessons I’ve learned with them in the powerpoint and in everyday actions. I will also post the final reflection and pictures to the e-portfolio. However, the main way to share the experience will be to live out what I have learned at HOBY in my everyday life and use that to affect others (through the relationship theory).

After the seminar is done, all of the staff gathers for a reflection of their experience. Here I will convey my learning to them and offer them a copy of my reflection if they want to check it out.

The main powerpoint and material will be geared towards non-HOBY people to teach them more about HOBY and the leadership objectives I observed there.

1. Advisor

The advisor for this project will be Dave Deangelis, Director of Team Alumni, [david.r.deangelis@gmail.com](mailto:david.r.deangelis@gmail.com)

1. Budget

The budget for this project is as follows:

-334 miles from Peoria (home) to Chicago (Loyola University) round trip. At 25 mpg, the cost of travel with gas at $3.50 per gallon will be $47.

-Food: Most meals will be provided, however, there are 5 meals that will not be provided for. At an average of $8 dollars a meal that will be about $40.

-Total cost: $87