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First Year Experience

Longwood University's goals are for graduates of Longwood to become personally responsible for one's actions, to be self sufficient as well as a citizen leader. A graduate who exemplifies these characteristics then has gained the knowledge and experience to enter the world as a well-rounded adult. A student starts to learn about these qualities as a freshman by reading their first year reading book. *The Other Wes Moore* is a real life story of two boys, who were both given ample opportunities to succeed in the world. One chose the correct path of changing his life of defying adults, and went on to become a Rhodes scholar. The other chose to continue in crime and making money the fast and illegal way and ended up in jail. The book is the beginning for college freshman to experience what they want to become after their college years.

One part of the book, explains Wes Moore's first encounter with the police. Wes and his friend Shea were vandalizing a wall with graffiti when the police caught them. Shea didn't take responsibility for his actions, but Wes cried and vowed to never do anything like that again. He swore he would be more responsible. At that moment in time, Wes took responsibility for his actions. A college student has to become personally responsible for their actions as well. When a student comes to college, they are considered an adult and are responsible for all the decisions that they make. For example, a college student can go out and party all night long if they want, but they are still

responsible for waking up the next morning for a test in Sociology. College is all about making the right decisions and taking personal responsibility when one makes a mistake or chooses the wrong decision.

During the reading both boys were at some point on the verge to become criminals; however, when they were given the chance to change one did. First when Wes Moore attended military school, he still defied authority, but after he gave the place a try and took the advice from Colonel Bratt then he began to become responsible. At this point, Wes Moore become self-sufficient because he realized that if he wanted to reach his goals then only he could change his life to get there. This example is true in the life of a college student because once they reach college there is no one to hold their hand and guide them down the correct path. They are in control of their career, and must complete the work on their own. The student has to complete all their homework and study for their tests on their own terms. Also, the student has to become self sufficient if they want to reach their goals of succeeding in life.

In the book, Admiral Hill showed the qualities of a citizen leader. He inspired many young boys at the military school to take control of their lives. He always led by example and maintained the qualities of control and discipline. Admiral Hill was a man who knew what he wanted and accomplished his goals in life and by doing so he inspired many people to strive for what they wanted as well. College students want this to be them. They want their lives to have purpose and they want to have a distinct idea or path that they should head. Admiral Hill knew what he wanted to achieve and that's all a college student wants too. Once a student has acquired these ideals then they have truly become a citizen leader and can accomplish anything they set their minds to.

Becoming personally responsible, self-sufficient and a citizen leader is not an easy task. People have to look deep into them and learn to grow and become their own person outside of their families. Wes Moore grew and became someone that he never could have imagined while the other Wes Moore stayed within his community and never fully captured his true capability in life. If all college students can grow and experience new things then they all can become people who have the ability to be great people in and outside their communities.