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LSEM 100-53

August 29, 2015

New Lancer Days

Longwood’s New Lancer Days (NLD) was a period of time filled with seminars and activities to help prepare the first year students with tools to let them succeed in a community of scholars, such as the one found on the campus of Longwood University. The coordinators of NLD emphasized the importance of personal responsibilities, self-sufficiency, and citizen leadership. Being an honors student, I knew most the people in LSEM already, thus negating one of the primary objectives of NLD, which was to get to know our fellow new students. One of the other primary goals was to familiarize ourselves with the campus, so that we could be ready for classes to begin; this also was negated by the four days I had already spent on campus, meeting people, including some of my professors.  
 Personal responsibility is an important part of life no matter whether one is on a college campus or running their own companies. Taking responsibility for one’s own actions is one of the greatest skills one can learn. NLD highlighted this with the honor and integrity ceremony, numerous seminars about alcohol and sexual assault, and bystander training. The honors and integrity ceremony, where we signed the honor creed, pledged on our honors to not cheat and steal or tolerate those who do. This showed the importance of our own responsibility to self-govern our own actions and take ownership of those actions, acknowledging when wrong and accepting the consequences of those actions. The seminars demonstrated that we could not blame others for what we had done, whether it be drinking ourselves into a stupor or not taking the time to get proper consent. Though I never intend on ever drinking myself into a stupor or neglecting to get proper consent, nor do I intend on putting myself in situations where I would be at risk of doing either of these things, it is an important part of personal responsibility. While I already knew much of what was present from previous classes, bystander training emphasized the personal responsibility necessary to have a functioning society, built on the trust to help others. This falls into the third point that was emphasized in NLD, of citizen leadership.

The aspect of self-sufficiency was emphasized when Dr. David Magill spoke to us and during the Peer Mentor Prime Times (PMPT). Dr. David Magill, a Longwood professor, stressed the fact that this was our college careers and we had to make the most of it. He pointed out that he we had to choice to decide what to do with it and we had to be self-sufficient enough to decide what we wanted to do and to budget our time to do it. The PMPT were led by our mentor, JD. He made sure we knew how much of our college life fell onto us to decide; how much we had to figure out for ourselves and work at on an individual basis.

The final point that was told to us in essentially every event, in almost every way possible, was that Longwood is a community of citizen leaders. This was shown in the Honors and Integrity Ceremony by the student led honors board. It was told to us by President Reveley in all his speeches to us. It was told to us by Wes Moore in his speech to us about choices. It was told to us in the Bystander Training by explaining all the ways people can step up and prevent bad situations. It was told in so many ways by so many people, all trying to get the new students, including myself, to understand that Longwood is made up of citizen leaders all doing their part to keep Longwood the best place it can be.

All these trait and more were practically shoved down our throats throughout NLD, but that is okay, because sometimes the only way to learn is repetition. NLD will hopefully prevent an assault or convince someone to step up in the case that there is one. Between NLD and the Honors College Retreat that preceded NLD, I hope that everyone is a better person and will make the right decisions, and even if they don’t, that someone will step up and try and fix it. My main take away from NLD is not personal responsibility or self-sufficiency or citizen leadership or anything that we received a seminar on because I already knew most of that, but rather, the number of people willing to step up and help, be leaders, and take responsibility for their actions. The true take away isn’t anything I learned about myself, but what I learned about others that I now know I can trust.