Violet Willis

Coach Miller

LSEM 100-50

October 7, 2016

Tension City Essay

Personal responsibility, citizen leadership, and critical thinking are three concepts Longwood University Prides themselves in their ability to impress upon their students. In the short time studying at Longwood, I’ve found all three of these have become a very important part of my everyday life. Reading *Tension City* by Jim Lehrer and then being able to first hand see all of the work and effort that goes into a presidential debate has given me multiple chances to grow and learn in personal responsibility, critical thinking, and citizen leadership.

Watching the long process of preparing for the Vice Presidential Debate, starting and early as my senior year tour of campus, instilled in me a longing to know more of what went into hosting a debate. While reading *Tension City* was not always to the most excited book, I was able to appreciate the intensity of presidential debates. Debates give the people of the country a better sense of who their candidates are, the real cut and dry version of themselves. The candidates are put in the spotlight and asked questions that are important to the wellbeing of this country and the citizens are able to understand, or at least attempt to, the opinions and stances the politicians have. This year’s election is tricky, which just makes it even more important to listen to what our candidates have to say about current issues. There may be many people saying they do not want to vote this November, but it is so important, as a citizen if the United States, to utilize the right to vote our ancestors fought for.

As a citizen one must exercise their right and take responsibility to elect their next leader, because no matter how much they try to convince themselves, in one way or another, this countries next leader will have an effect on their lives. Through Longwood having the Vice Presidential Debate here this year the university has been able to further exemplify their belief in citizen leadership. As college students, we are the up and coming generation and we need to understand how this world works and what we will be faced with when we enter into the real world in a couple years. The students of Longwood need to embrace their roles as the new citizen leaders of the world and continue to take on new challenges, be open to new opportunities, and embrace change. As future leaders, teachers, doctors, lawyers, and everything else under the sun, Longwood students need to pull out the critical thinking abilities in order to think and explore outside the box scenarios. It is our responsibility to prove some of the older generations wrong, we are not a weak link, we are not all completely caught up in the world of social media, we can be successful, we can change the world!

In *Tension City* Jim Lehrer explains and highlights different impactful debates. He shows the importance of having debates during election times by showing the effects of the debates as time goes on. The debate shown live at Longwood’s viewing party quoted many famous debate quotes which were also written in Lehrer’s book. It was fascinating to be able to make the connection between the summer reading and something experienced right before my eyes. I am so proud to be a Lancer. Longwood University does an incredible job creating experiences for their students to learn and grow in personal responsibility, citizen leadership, and critical thinking.