

THE REFLECTION

The Maroon & White Leadership Program's Newsletter



The Gender Role Gimmick

By Aimee Bourey

There is a way we believe the world works. In an antiquated way, the world is women bearing children wearing long, swinging skirts and men supporting their families: strong and steady. Women keep the house, men make the money so that can happen. This may not be the way we see things now, on this campus, but the shadows persist and shape what we feel we should see.

“Feminism is not only about supporting women, it is also about letting men be who they are outside of masculine expectations.” Hindrik Prenger said this in response to a question about any judgment he has witnessed or felt based on gender. The way others see roles, either masculine or feminine, defines our reaction. He works in outdoor recreation, and once, a female expedition leader asked him to lead a session on camp stove repairs, but he wanted to teach an outdoor cooking class. The anticipations gender stereotypes place on people can cause these small discrepancies between expectation versus reality. Mary Godwin, a cadet in the Corps of Cadets, expressed similarly that being told the “expectation of femininity” has affected leadership roles. These defining roles keep women and men in separate realms with divided expectations. This is how to be a man, and this is how to be a woman: act as such. However; Godwin, a guide and leader at a Boy Scout camp, proves that the world we’ve constructed subconsciously doesn’t have to be a reality.

Jennifer Rangel stated that “a leader’s effectiveness should not depend on their gender, but oftentimes gender may arise as a challenge because of the perception of others.” There are differences, especially in perception, of how each gender should act. This can hurt; we can be seen as unfit or ineffective. Yet, we’ve already moved beyond aproned women doing housework and cigar wielding men at business deals. We, as leaders, are responsible for changing the way the world works.

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Learn the powerful principles Covey has taught the world’s top executives and most influential leaders.

Society Spotlight: Danielle Gore

By Taylor Messinger

From the time Danielle graduated she continued to “jump at any opportunity for growth and development,” leading her to mobilize efforts locally and around the world for causes she is passionate about. Danielle realized one of the most valuable lessons she learned from M&W was to reflect, which may be how she came to truly understand selfless service while volunteering in Kenya. It is there she learned that those with less to give are often the ones who give and teach the rest of us the most, and that “success of a society is not measured by the tallest building, but the biggest heart.”

Danielle reminds herself to remain humble so that she may always learn from others and their stories. Rather than focusing on building one’s resume experience, she encourages other young leaders to “focus on building your character, it speaks stronger than the words on paper.” Lastly, she advises future graduates to continue pursuing opportunities for growth, connection, and impact. The world is full of possibilities... “go find them.”



LEP Spotlight: Dakota Roy

By Taylor Messinger

When asked what advice Dakota would have given himself his first semester in M&W, he said “Use your journal. Set goals early on.” One can see that he has taken this advice to heart, as he has made journaling a daily practice to reflect on how his values are demonstrated in his actions. Through the help of his coach, Dakota spent time sharing his stories and experiences, allowing her to “gracefully turn them into lessons” he could use to identify his leadership values; betterment, empowerment, transparency, tact, and foresight. He uses these to navigate positions of authority and seek out opportunities to advocate for his passions.



Without the support of his coach and the lessons from reflecting, Dakota would never have thought to intertwine his leadership endeavors with his passion for being an LGBT advocate and use his platform to provide Aggie Ally training available to the entire Corps of Cadets. Dakota continues to utilize the lessons he has learned through M&W to develop himself and to leave an impact on those around him.

Upcoming Leadership Events

Houston

POWER On Heels Conference
March 2: 6-8, March 3: 8;30-4
Latinas making a difference

Austin

The BE Conference
March 11: 4 PM, March 12: 8 PM
Change makers and game changers

Dallas

It Works! Green Carpet Tour
April 28: 10-4:30
Leadership training

San Antonio

Women in Leadership Symposium
March 29: All day
Texas Diversity Council

Breaking Biases

By Natalie Coleman

Dr. Pamela Edens, a lecturer for the Texas A&M Psychology Department, asked M&W members to rate her on a scale from 1 to 5 (5 being the highest) on the qualities of her intelligence, sensitivity, and femininity. “There are no right answers,” she said smiling, “I’ve gotten a couple of 1’s and 2’s before.” As complete strangers, we noticed her face devoid of make-up, her confident expression, and her clean-cut pants suit. One. Two. Three. Four. Five.

Dr. Edens’s expressions were difficult to read, only blinking after each wave of hands shot up and back down. Someone who had given her a 5 on sensitivity remarked that she was a mother, while another who had given her a 2 reasoned that she acted like a strong woman. Dr. Edens prompted us to reflect on how we constructed our responses and how society had built up and reinforced these conclusions. Was it an insult or a compliment that students did/didn’t associate Dr. Edens as sensitive or feminine? Why did words such as confidence and aggression represent masculine characteristics while nurturing and emotional carried feminine undertones?

Typically, desired leadership qualities are associated with masculinity; however, this becomes a double-edged sword for women attempting to emulate these very same ideals. In an ideal situation, gender would not be a factor when characterizing people’s leadership abilities, but as stated in the presentation, “six year-olds already have gendered beliefs.” Though we liked to believe that Dr. Edens’s gender had no direct influence on our responses, our ideas on how certain characteristics were positively and negatively associated with either masculinity and femininity, have been ingrained into our psyche since a young age.

However, the conversation that evening allowed students to consciously tear down their subconscious gender biases and examine the remaining rubble in order to create a stronger foundation for their leadership knowledge.