



# **EXPLORING LEADERSHIP** **IN YOUR SUMMER** **INTERNSHIP** 2007

The purpose of this outline is to serve as a guide to workshop discussion or to individual student preparation for a summer internship program. The goal is to offer a framework for enriching the leadership development and learning experiences during the internship. The outline below may also contribute to journal and reflective paper requirements associated with specific CMC internships.

## **Prior to the Internship**

Invest some time in personal leadership assessment:

- What are your specific strengths?
- What are your specific weaknesses?
- What experiences do you rely on most when in a position of leadership?
- Is there an area you would like to focus your effort on?
- How do you define leadership?
- How do you characterize a “leader”?

Note that there are a variety of individual assessment tools available in the Career Services office. If you have not taken the Myers-Briggs individual personality tool it is recommended you start with it.

## **During the Internship**

There are three areas to explore during the internship: personal, individual and organizational. Periodically addressing some of these questions in your journal may prove very valuable in getting the most out of the internship experience.

***Personal:*** A continuation of the self-assessment begun prior to the internship. Possible areas to explore:

- What has been easiest about assuming your responsibilities? Why?
- What has been the most challenging in assuming your responsibilities? Why?
- Have your strengths supported success?
- How have you managed areas in which you are less confident?
- Are there tools you wish you had better grasp of? (Tool Bag analogy)
- How effectively are you able to assess the environment? (Situational Awareness)
- How much of your time is spent “leading”? How much is spent “following”?
- What is the connection between the two? (leading and following)

**Organizational:** An internship provides an excellent opportunity to objectively examine how an organization operates. Whether your organization is best understood as a system of equipment, functions or people, or some combination of all three, exploring a new organization can directly benefit your work effort as well offering great lessons about future expectations. Possible areas to explore:

- How is the organization structured? (hierarchical, flat, loosely) Why?
- What is the “product”?
- Who is the “customer”?
- Who are the “stakeholders”?
- How are decisions made? By whom? When? Why?
- Does the organization claim a “culture”? (Value on employees, product, timeliness, accuracy, family support, integrity...)
- How does the organization promote this culture?
- Is the organization effective in producing the culture? Why/Why not?
- To what degree must the organization deal with change? How?
- To what degree are employees/volunteers committed to organizational success?
- Does the organization have a “vision” or goal? Is it understood/shared?

**Individual:** Every organization relies on individual leaders. Identifying and observing these individuals provides the equivalent of living case studies in leadership. Possible areas to explore:

- How would you characterize the leader’s style?
- What are the leader’s strengths? Weaknesses?
- How valuable are interpersonal skills, experience, technical expertise, education, motivation, ambition, longevity, accessibility, integrity, trust?
- How much does the leader reflect the organization’s culture?
- How much does the organization’s culture reflect the leader?

### **After the Internship**

Most internship experiences require a reflective paper or presentation. The purpose is generally two-fold; for “us” to better understand the internship and to challenge you to bring closure to the experience. Possible areas to consider:

- Do your observations support/challenge your own definition of leadership?
- Do your observations support/challenge your image of a “leader”?
- Do you believe that the experience helped you to better understand leadership?
- What was your greatest single accomplishment?
- What was your single greatest contribution to the organization?
- If you could have done one thing differently what would it have been?
- If you could change one thing in the organization what would it be?
- Did your experience influence your career thinking?

***Good Luck and Good Learning!***