

Last year, the University of Rhode Island's (URI) Center for Student Leadership Development (CSLD) piloted a program entitled Sophomore Breakthrough Experience (SBE) which was developed because feedback from the CSLD's leadership minor students expressed how sophomores and juniors almost seem to be forgotten along the journey of completing the minor since the freshman have the leadership institute and the seniors have the senior expedition associated with the minor to specifically enhance their leadership skills. Now that the SBE has been a success for two consecutive years, I wanted to continue to expand this type of program for the juniors around campus. Like the SBE, the junior event was inclusive in that it was not necessarily only for those in the leadership minor, but instead encouraged any juniors at URI to apply. This way, others were shown what the CSLD and leadership minor has to offer, and hopefully also motivated them to join or tell others about the minor and its unique programs. Educating other students about the leadership minor is important to me because being a part of the minor has taught me a lot about myself and others. It expanded my personal definition of a leader from simply being someone who takes charge, to an individual that puts in passion and effort to lead others towards a positive change.

Additionally, being part of the CSLD's Student Organization Leadership Consultants (SOLC) for the past 3 years taught me the importance of equality, and how to make sure each member is included for whatever activity being worked on during a retreat. As a consultant for SOLC at URI, it is our duty to initiate positive peer leadership skills with our utmost passion and respect. We plant these acquired skills onto any students, staff members, and organizations at the university we work with through leadership and organizational development-based programming. These programs are student-run retreats that use a vast variety of activities and debriefing techniques to build stronger relationships and accomplish desired goals and values. The concepts and activities taught and experienced through SOLC have made me a stronger individual, have allowed me to realize how to maximize my abilities towards greater success, and how compassion can really change the future for the better. I used these acquired skills throughout my honors project to make the junior experience as memorable as possible.

For this honors project, I proposed an experience around the theme of "juggling" junior year. Junior year is especially stressful because there is a lot that is going on at once, not only including heavy class loads specific to one's major, but also needing to apply for jobs and internships, researching potential graduate schools, and building up one's resume, which means that having to be interviewed while marketing oneself professionally and successfully is inevitable. Therefore, it was our job as coordinators to design an event that was not only enjoyable, but also valuable to juniors so that they learned all about career building and maximizing their personal strengths to really be prepared for their future. Activities throughout the experience were specifically designed around the juggling theme, such as beginning the day with a simple name juggle activity to get to know one another, to guided workshops on managing finances and building up one's professional brand for resumes, LinkedIn pages, and cover letters, to a final group juggling and reflective activity that asked participants to set a personal goal which they will strive to accomplish this semester.

By taking part in the design of and running this event from start to finish, I expanded my skills as a leader even further than if I were just helping to facilitate the event as I did for the Sophomore Breakthrough Experience. Even though I was most used to being a facilitator through SOLC, this project challenged me to approach situations under the scope of an event

coordinator. After experiencing what it takes to coordinate an event such as this, I can now better prepare myself for any potential leadership or coordinator role in my future career. Reflecting on the post-event questionnaire which contained answers from participants expressing how helpful and beneficial the event and activities was for their future, I am proud in what I successfully accomplished and the example I have set for this event in the years to come.