

1. Describe how you have demonstrated leadership ability both in and out of school

Think back to elementary school, whenever your class was leaving the room to go somewhere, the teacher would tell the kids to go in a single file line and the first kid would be considered the "line leader". I made sure that kid was always me. Even from when I was just a kid, I have always had a passion and inclination for leading others. Because of that, I have learned how to execute my leadership skills in my daily life. Fast forward to present time, I still hold good leadership skills to the utmost importance. I am a part of the RSO (registered student organization) Women in Business. In this club, we learn vital professional, communication, and organizational skills in the field of business. We also empower each other as women, which is crucial because the business profession is run by males for the most part. It is nice to have such a strong support group while learning about interviews, resumes and dressing appropriately in the workplace. This club is very important to me, and I love being a member of it. Women in Business has given me a lot of newfound confidence in myself. You may be asking yourself, how does this relate to leadership? Well, I plan to interview for the executive board very soon. With a position on the executive board, I will be able to be more hands on, know the behind the scenes of the operations, and be a leader for the younger or newcomers members. I want to give other women the confidence that the current leaders of the club have given me. I want to be a leader they can look up to. I am very excited to interview, and hopefully become, part of the executive board. Outside of school, I am a trainer at my job at Nick's Pizza & Pub. I have had the ability to maintain my job and trainer status throughout college by coming home certain weekends and holiday breaks to work. With my position as trainer, I am able to lead, guide and teach my trainees to have full autonomy in the positions that I am training them on. For example, the main position I work is carryout, and there are a lot of elements to this job. You have to have good phone skills, know every item on the menu and know where the cordoning button is on the computer for menu items, and have good communication skills with guests. In my experience training people on carryout can be a challenge, but I enjoy it. Most people get intimidated with phone or face to face contact, and knowing the entire menu can also be quite the task, but because I enjoy being a leader, I have the patience and skills to lead my trainee to do all of those tasks with their eyes closed. This position has strengthened my leadership abilities because I get to see my trainee flourish in front of me and help their ongoing learning which is very fulfilling.

## 2. Who in your life has been your biggest influence and why?

I remember waiting all year to see her, one plane ride away and I could spend time quality time with her. No conversing through screens for that one week that I was there. The thick beach air around me, waves crashing, warm sun touching my shoulders as I stand and sand sneaks its way in between my toes. This “her” that I am referencing is my grandmother, and she is the most influential person in my life. She lives in Myrtle Beach, I have been visiting her in the summer for many years throughout my life. My family on my mothers side is fairly small, so we are all very close, but living states away from each other can sometimes drive us apart. I hold the yearly family vacation to South Carolina close to my heart. I value my family and understand that they have influenced me to be the strong, confident and caring woman that I am today, but I can especially thank my grandmother for helping me realize these traits about myself. I remember one summer in specific. My grandma and grandpa are permanent residents of a tourist campground, so when my family visits, we rent a house on the campground. Usually, I stay with my mom and brother, but one year my mom had brought up the idea to stay with my grandma that summer. I was a young teen at the time, going through a time in my life where everything was changing, where I was transforming into the woman I am today. Teenage years are always so pivotal to the type of adult you will be. I was excited to stay with my grandma. I couldn't wait to get to know her stories, values, and morals. Getting to know her on a level deeper than I had known before. Every night while staying at my grandmas house we would sit on the porch together. She would have a drink and fix me a bowl of ice cream. With the steady sound of the waves in the background we would talk for hours. She would tell me stories about when she raised my mom. What kind of teenager she was. We talked about my life, and she always gave me the best advice. She taught me to be caring of others and to be passionate about the things you loved. My grandmother is also incredibly strong. My senior year of highschool my mom informed me that my grandmother had lung cancer. That six letter word is crushing to hear in a sentence. My grandmother didn't want to tell me because she thought I wouldnt be strong enough to handle it. At that time, she was right. Cancer not only affects the person diagnosed, but everyone else around them. She maintained strong throughout the journey, and came out on top. She showed me how to be strong, see the glass half full, and never lose faith in yourself or your family. These influences are so important to me. No matter how far away we are, I know that I will always carry a piece of my grandmother with me.

3. What do you consider to be the single most important societal problem? Why?

Growing up in such a technologically advanced society most definitely has its pros and cons. Technology makes it easier to learn and communicate, we have the entire world at our fingertips to use at our disposal. Textbooks, academic publications, and the ability to communicate via email with my professors has greatly aided me in my learning. I have the ability to get instant feedback on questions with one simple Google search. Text messaging and social media allow me to keep in touch with the people that I don't have a chance to see very often, and is much faster than sending a traditional letter through the mail. One drawback, and a very important societal problem is that people are being consumed by technology, more specifically, phones. I for one, know that I am a part of this problem. For example, when I am eating dinner out at a restaurant with my family I know that I shouldn't have my phone out, it is rude and distracting. Even though I am focusing on the conversation that is being held at the table, I am constantly wondering if I am missing anything on social media or taking too long to reply to a text message. The same can be said for when I am in class. I am aware that going to college is a huge privilege and that sitting on my phone is disrespectful to the professor and the other students around me, so I don't use my phone in class. But when I am walking out of class, the first thought on my mind is to check my phone. One particular thing that is a problem due to being consumed in technology that I see amongst myself and other young women is the false perception of beauty on social media. Instagram models is a term used for girls who have a large following on social media and are praised for their physical appearance. Because these girls are considered society's greatest form of beauty, it can make certain girls who don't necessarily look like that feel very insecure and do things to themselves that aren't healthy. There is a lot of pressure associated with one's image on social media. Like I previously stated, social media is a great tool, but sometimes it does more harm than good. When you put so much of your life out there for others to see, there can sometimes be a negative response or hate on a certain post. This hate can lead to the person who posted it to feel angry or sad. There is also no way to regulate hate comments that one might receive. People are allowed to post as anonymous on some websites, hiding behind a screen with the intention to hurt others. Also, because of the overuse of technology we are losing the importance of human interpersonal communication. For some millennials, we are so used to talking through screens, human interaction can sometimes be a challenge. Nowadays, learning how to use technology is easy, but learning how to use it a healthy amount is even harder.

Describe how you have demonstrated leadership ability both in and out of school.

To me the three most important qualities of a leader include responsibility, communication, and decision making. Leadership is not something that you are born with. It must be achieved over time. Throughout my high school and college careers, I have been able to develop the necessary skills to become a leader both in and out of school.

My Junior year in high school my baseball coach selected me to represent our team on the Lake County student athlete leadership team. Being on this team opened my eyes to how valuable being a leader can be in life. I am very thankful to have had this opportunity, because it allowed me to practice communicating my ideas to complete strangers and tremendously boost my confidence in the future.

Furthermore, being on this team taught me that leadership does always have to follow the stereotypical mold of the passionate speech delivered to a group of people to try and inspire them. Rather, one can lead by example. This was something I was able to do on my high school baseball team, making sure that I was always respecting the coach, being prepared, and always putting in my best effort at practice when nobody was watching. I feel like this had an effect on some other of my teammates who seemed to adapt these skills throughout the season. However, when I noticed someone slacking off, I would express to them that they need to give more effort, because it is a team game and if a teammate isn't working hard it could very well hurt the team in a game when it really matters.

In my first two years at college I have continued displaying leadership through group projects. In engineering, there are many labs and projects where there is reliance upon other classmates. For example, my sophomore year I had a class where there was a new group project every two weeks where each team would come up with a design to solve the problem. For each project the team would be assigned a team leader. One of the projects I was the leader for had controversy over the design choice. Two group members were extremely committed to their design. In this situation I needed to make a difficult decision that would cause one person frustration. However, this is a vital skill of leadership. There will be times when you will have to face conflict and ultimately assess the situation from a neutral perspective to determine the best action to take. In this example I let both members argue their idea while keeping an open mind and made a decision that left a team member angry with me. This is all part of leading: there will always be backlash, but as a leader it is important to stay accountable and make decisions that are best for the team.

From high school through my first two years of college I have been able to increasingly demonstrate leadership inside and outside of school. Whether through a sport or class project, I can effectively communicate my ideas while staying accountable to the team. While these are more specific examples of leadership, I have been able to use these skills in my daily life by helping friends make good short term and long-term decisions. This is something I am very proud of and I will continue exhibiting leadership in the rest of college as well as in my career.

Who in your life has been your biggest influence and why?

There have been many people that have had impacts on my life so far, however the person that has influenced me most is my dad. From an early age my dad has instilled his attitude of taking nothing for granite on. Whether it be school, sports, or everyday life he is always trying to do what is best for me.

Beginning as early as kindergarten, my dad taught me the importance of hard work. Pushing me to learn how to read and do simple math seemed unfair to me at the time, because other kids did not have to take time for this. But I realized that making me do this prepared me very well for future schooling. Always being one step ahead is something that has immensely stuck with me. Progressing through school, this attitude stayed the same. My dad was always willing to sit down with me and go over homework when I was stuck. My grades would have been worse if he was not willing to do this, and I would not be where I am today without him. Being at college I have been able to continue this mindset in that making sure that I stay on top of my classwork, because it will save time in the future. I am very thankful for the perspective my dad passed on to me.

My dad has also influenced my life a lot through playing sports growing up. Again, he taught be the importance of hard work. But He taught me the importance of accountability and team work. While these two attributes were important in sports growing up, they also will have a lasting impact on my life because these characteristics can be applied to a career. Playing youth baseball growing up, my dad stressed the significance of being on time. Punctuality shows respect, in this case for the coaches, and this will translate into being on time for work, meetings, etc. Furthermore, teamwork was something my dad emphasized. He always made sure that everything I did was best for the team. Also, making sure that we communicated well from a young age was important to my dad. Teamwork and communication, I believe are two of the most essential skills after college. Because of my dad I will feel comfortable working with groups of people and being able to effectively communicate.

Finally, another reason my dad has influenced me so much is due to his belief in being self-sufficient. He has always attempts to do something himself, whether it is fixing the car or cutting down an entire tree. While this may not seem like a big deal, I strive to be like this one day. Not only will it save money, but it is extremely satisfying knowing that you achieved something by putting in time and hard work. There are many reasons why my dad is my biggest influence, but these are the most important I believe, and I appreciate all that he has done for me up to this point in my life.

What do you consider to be the single most important societal problem? Why?

The most recent United States Presidential Election brought many of today's issues in society to the forefront. Despite the lack of importance placed on it in the last election the issues of education are a big problem. The freshman years of high school and college are viewed as grades nine and thirteen. These milestone years are in fact the beginnings of important phases of education in which a student should be developing interests and gaining knowledge that will help shape his/her future. A lack of parental involvement, oversight and acceptance of responsibility in their children's education is the primary cause of unmotivated and unprepared students.

Parents need to counsel their children on the importance of school work for both its subject matter and for the process by which results are obtained. They need to reinforce the message frequently as the weeks go by throughout each school year, starting at an early age. It takes a lot of energy and resolve from the parents to continue to battle with their children who are exposed to and taking interest in many other things outside of school work. Most parents have no problem devoting energy and attention to their child's extracurricular activities, especially sports. Moms and dads devote many hours teaching and coaching their children in this area, attending their games and performances. It may be more enjoyable for them and some may even believe it provides a path to scholarships but if that same energy was focused on education the child would have far better odds of a rewarding career after school. As a result, many students have absolutely no specific interests in any type of career or field of study when entering college. It has just become the next progression in the life of the child, instead of an exciting and rewarding opportunity.

Parents also don't want to accept that they and their children are responsible for poor performance and lack of progress in school. Students often complain to their parents about unfair teachers as the cause of their problems. Parents assume that the school system is at fault for their child's failures. They react to situations looking for quick fixes for a low grade or test score rather than being proactive in working with their child to make sure they don't put themselves in that position. Another common scenario is that of parents reacting harshly toward their child for poor grades at the end of a semester or school year. They need to help with solutions to the problem instead of being critical of their child when often times the situation is the result of the culture they created that led to the failings.

Increased parental proactiveness, involvement and oversight with respect to education of their children is needed. Children need to be encouraged and motivated beginning at an early age to embrace school and to value the importance of education. It takes hard work and effort by the parents, but it is well worth the benefits to the students and for society.

**Question 1: Describe how you have demonstrated leadership ability both in and out of school?**

So far in my life, my leadership skills have come into play in a variety of ways. While in high school, I was a part of a few different programs that were designed to lead younger students. The first was called LINK, Leading INcoming Knights and it was made up of about 100 senior students. This was a program I was nominated for as a senior and it was designed to mentor incoming freshmen and transfer students. I helped with orientation in the summer, tours of campus, and met with a group of 8 kids every other week throughout their first semester in the high school. This was a great opportunity to reach out to other students who may be having a tough time transitioning into high school and pass on the knowledge I had gathered from three years at the school. The second program I was involved in, I was nominated for both junior and senior year. This was called Knight's Way and it was made up of about 200 leaders. This program was school wide and involved a presentation once a month in every classroom in the school. A partner and I would go into our assigned class each month and start open discussion with the students and staff about safety, bullying, drugs and alcohol, and other difficult topics. This program challenged my public speaking skills but it taught me how to listen to others and get a ball rolling in potentially uncomfortable situations. So far at college, I have been a Residential Ambassador on campus and give tours to prospective Wildcats. I love being a part of this program because I love helping show students and their parents what an awesome campus I live on and what type of community we have built as a Family. This has given me opportunities to meet some amazing people, donors to campus, and even the man some of the residents halls are named after. I'm also apart of K-State Proud on campus as a volunteer. This program was created by students 11 years ago and is designed to help keep students in school who may find themselves in financial or medical emergency that would take them away from their education. As a volunteer, I help the group raise funds by selling t-shirts and hats throughout the year to put money into our scholarship fund. This fund is given to students who have exhausted all other means of paying for school and outstanding circumstances would take them away from their education without this scholarship. I love working with great people on campus and educating others while selling t-shirts. We also host food drives and clothing drives at football games in the fall to further use your resources to help our community of Manhattan, Kansas. These programs and other volunteering opportunities in Manhattan have allowed me to demonstrate my leadership skills on a large and small scale. I love helping other people and hope to continue to find ways to help other people throughout my life.

## **Question 2: Who in your life has been your biggest influence and why?**

In my life, my older sister, Leanne has been my biggest influence. She and I grew up very close in age, our birthdays being only 17 months apart. We both were involved in the same activities such as softball, music, singing, and acting throughout our school years. This caused competitive energy between us and some jealousy on my end. We were constantly trying out for the same musicals, sports teams, and activities with her often getting more success. I did have a couple things that were unique like playing gold and doing marching band but our paths were very similar in middle school and high school. However, she has been my biggest influence because she taught me important lessons about confidence, determination, and perseverance without even realizing. These days, she is a college graduate of New York University acting school and works professionally in theater. Every day, she gets up at 5 in the morning, goes to auditions, works 4 jobs and is almost always in a good mood. She willingly walks into auditions knowing she will probably be rejected and is completely fine with that. She sees every day as a new chance to get experience and learn more. The strength it takes to be in a career in acting and theater is absolutely amazing. Even though we live in very different places, she usually finds times to give me motherly advice on Facetime while going underground on the subway. Now that we are adults, we go through struggles and stresses together and sort through our challenges as a team. She is positive nearly every day and doesn't let the little things get her down. I am very much a worrier and stresser, sometimes when I freak out about something small, I think about how she moved to New York City at 18 years old and made a home for herself and she didn't freak out. I have grown to learn not to compare myself with anyone since I compared myself to her while growing up. I have learned that everyone is good at different things and that's okay. In her career, she's an amazing actor and singer but not the best dancer. In my schooling, I'm good at computer graphics and rendering but not hand drawing. Knowing your strengths and weaknesses is so important to be successful. My older sister has taught me you should always learn something new from a peer instead of comparing yourself to them. When she goes to small acting jobs, being next to other, 22 year old girls with brunette hair would freak me out. I would think that would be a competitive situation to make yourself seem better than her. Instead, she makes a new friend and has a great time while doing what she loves; performing. I have watched her grow up doing the same things that I have, and she has chosen to have a great attitude and outlook on life. While we still bicker when we hang out too long, my sister Leanne has been my biggest influence on my life.

### **Question 3: What do you consider to be the single most social problem and why?**

I consider the unequal spread of wealth is the most important social problem. I would consider this to be the most important social problem because it affects a wide range of people in negative ways. In America in 2017, 12.3% of the population was below the poverty line. While only 1% of the population held 38% of the private wealth in the country and 90% of the population held 73% of the debt in the same year. This may come off as just numbers to some people that are reported and change slightly year to year. However, this spread of wealth is shown in the discrimination of groups from high paying jobs, nicer neighborhoods, and better education. It really becomes a circular problem when hardworking people grow up in rougher areas, try to go to school and better themselves despite the challenges, and then still struggle to get high paying jobs and move to a better place in life. In society, it has been shown that making one mistake or the environment one grows up in can dictate the path of the rest of their lives. I feel that there should be better resources and effort into helping close the gap of the poorest of poor to the rich. Not suggesting that everyone should be equal, just that there isn't much forgiveness in people that would allow them to move on with their lives and better their situation. I have watched stories of homeless people getting suits for their job interviews donated to them, or single mothers receiving complimentary child care for the training week at new jobs when shifts aren't as flexible. Something simple that would allow hardworking people to make an honest living and take a step forward in their lives. People also have trouble finding good jobs in the neighborhood they may be in, but don't have the means to move and apply themselves. This may also be if they don't have access to reliable transportation to reach jobs. While there are a lot of factors that influence in the poverty in America, there are things that can be done. There isn't a simple solution, but there are great thinkers and people in the world who could make a big difference, but their circumstances or discrimination are holding them back. I feel there needs to be greater focus in solving some of the influences; reliable transportation, clothing donations for homeless people, courtesy haircuts, temporary child care, consultation medical care for young mothers, and other resources that can make a large impact. It would be unrealistic to expect people to donate all their time and money to others since they probably believe it's 'not their problem'. This mentality is what is causing so many people in this country to struggle, feel unsafe, be unhappy with their lives, and feel stuck. It doesn't seem right to look at a country and see the luxury, beautiful mansions in a suburb, when there are homeless people a few miles away wondering where they can get a razor and shower to clean up for their job interview the next day. This social problem of unequal spread of wealth is a large and unfortunate problem in America.

## Question 1

*Describe how you have demonstrated leadership ability both in and out of school.*

Leadership is a trait that has been preached to me since I could comprehend words. I can hear my Dad right now asking me if I am a "leader or follower". I have had this idea of being the head of the pack for a while now, so I have had time to form what I really think a leader is and in turn how I make being a leader apart of my life, not just in school but as a functioning member of society. A common misconception that I feel people have with being a leader is the need for being loud or having to be an extrovert. I fell victim to this ideology the majority of my upbringing, because I never thought of myself as a vocally driven extrovert. Little did I know I was slowly molding myself to be a leader in these confusing years. The reason I say this, is because the first step to becoming a leader in my eyes is being able to find what makes you an individual. I am not saying that you have to have everything in your life figured out but when you put you self in positions that you want to be in versus finding yourself in a position set up by someone else it makes it easy to find out what makes you different then everyone else. That is what people naturally gravitate to, the ability to simply be on your own agenda. Following my own agenda does not just mean my schedule, it mostly revolves around my decision making. In my eyes there are two settings that cause for different types of leaders, the work/school leader and the social circle leader. At work, I am at a part-time position but that does not stop me from being a leader. I can still raise moral by setting a positive attitude thus increasing productivity, this awareness is a quality a leader should have. This also leaves room for more than one leader in a given space because there are lots of qualities that display being a leader. In terms of there being a social circle leader this is slightly different because you are not trying to get anything out of this group of people like you would be at work. I am a leader in the social sense by following what I believe to be true and if people want to support that is great because it will create a constructive and mutually beneficial relationship and one does not support there is no harm done. What I also try to do as a leader is to be as inclusive as possible because leaders do not have all the answers to every question nor do they have the best way to approach every situation. My leadership is a melting pot of qualities that have been displayed to me through the years of my existence and it is my ability to display these qualities while also absorbing new ones to improve my ability to lead with dignity and respect.

## Question 2

*Who in your life has been your biggest influence and why?*

Since I was born there have been endless amounts of influences in my life. There are few influences that have stuck around though and that is the community that holds the most significance in my life. An influencer to me is a person who weighs heavily on the decisions I make in my every day activity. The point at which one becomes a more impactful influencer is when they are weighed in decisions consistently and in a variety of situations because that means they must play a bigger role in your life thus will be affected by what you decide to do in a certain predicament. Taking that into consideration it is understandable why the answers to this question more times than not are always mom, dad, brother or sister because they are the ones that are consistently in your life. I am no different, the biggest single influencer in my life is my Mom. She was the one picking up and dropping off to school, the one I went to get groceries with, the one that would force me to get up early on the weekends. All of these little moments in time become extremely valuable in the long run because when find myself in a grocery store or any of those small situations that have built up over time, I am going to think to what my Mom has done. This is not to say that my Dad or Brother are any less important because that cannot be farther from the truth. I would never know how to get front row at a concert without them. The point being that just because you don't refer to them in every dilemma does not mean you will never refer to them. Any relationship is an important relationship. This brings me away from family and towards friends. I almost want to make two categories for my influences because the way my family influences me is more personal while the way my friends influence me is geared more towards society. When I am with my friends it is in a more social setting (unlike family, a more intimate setting) thus causing for a different persona. I am not talking about completely changing your personality but knowing that there are more eyes on you will in turn create some sort of shield around yourself. What friends do is help you open that shield up a little bit and they become this mobile version of your family. I am comfortable in public with my friends which makes the world a much more relaxing place thus influencing the decisions I make in society. In the end, by my definition my Mom (Dad and brother too) would be my biggest influencer, but friends don't go under appreciated because that is what makes me a more well-rounded person and overall a better decision maker since I can combine what my family does in the intimate setting and what my friends so in a public setting to get my own custom set of morals.

## Question 3

*What do you consider to be the single most important societal problem? Why?*

The biggest societal problem is the lack of knowledge on problems outside of our own societies. A society is defined by the aggregate of people living together in a more or less ordered community or at least that's what google defines it as. Going off this definition that means there can be various societies with different norms and challenges within those communities. I grew up in a suburb of Chicago about 45 mins from the city. The way I view the world is so much different than the way I would view it growing in the city. Chicago for me was a place to go on the weekend with the family to enjoy time off work and school. We could shop, go to the beach enjoy the endless amounts of food options. This view changes dramatically when one lives in the city of Chicago. Instead of going to the beach it becomes dealing with a bunch of suburbanites and instead of enjoying the endless food options its complaining about how expensive the food options are. Of course, this goes both ways but the point being that you don't really know what an environment is like when you have experienced it first-hand for an extended amount of time. This problem first came relevant to me on my trip to Israel this past summer. Prior to the trip my mind had an image of a battle field with chaos at every corner. The way that the news is spread now a days is great for getting exposers and spreading news fast but what tends to happen is that the news will spread so fast that key voices and details will be left out. Due to this, my idea of the middle east, specifically Israel, was mis constructed. Israel was a beautiful place with breath taking views and city's that would make you forget you were half way across the world. Nothing you observe was anything like the riots and chaos you seen on the news. I had the pleasure to talk to an Israeli and what they said really resonated with me, He said that "If I based Chicago off of what I saw in the news I wouldn't want to step foot there either". It just goes to show that perspective is extremely powerful when it comes to judging people and where they are from. This is where all of our problems as a society begin because I can't help someone when I don't know the issues they deal in their day to day lives. One might say they can just donate money but what they don't understand is that although money will provide the physical support, that support has an expiration date. When two groups of people understand each other than problems can be resolved with not only less money but with less resources. The closest example I can compare it to is having a best friend. When you guys fight you don't just throw money at each other. What happens is they you wait for tensions to settle and talk it out, so you can hear each other's perspective and gain the knowledge you need to understand their problem.