

Pi Gamma Mu Leadership Development Program Review

This year, the Pi Gamma Mu Triennial Convention was held completely online, allowing our honor society to reach further international heights. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, we have learned to technologically adapt to our circumstances, and we are now able to reach even more people. As a participant from the Philippines, it was well worth adjusting to the twelve-hour time zone difference and enjoying the conference as the sun was rising. With an amazing set of speakers, paper presentations, and social activities, there were plenty of highlights to this year's convention, however one part of the program particularly stands out. The Leadership Development Program led by Dr. Allison Knox, is an additional part of our convention featuring leadership lessons and skills in various contexts. This was first launched at our previous convention in Kansas City and returned this year in a fully virtual set-up.

The program offered lessons on Leadership in Literature, Leadership in Academia, Leadership in Special Circumstances, along with a virtual tour from the National Museum of the Marine Corps. Participants of the program were met with a variety of leadership concepts, values, and strategies that were accompanied by real life examples. The discussions gave a taste of what has been published in the area of leadership studies and showed the traits that the United States Marine Corps instills in their officers. These leadership concepts were coupled with stories of leadership in exceptional situations, such as in overseas combat or inside a rushing ambulance. In the context of academia, leadership of faculty during the Covid-19 crisis and editorial leadership of this very academic journal

were discussed. Each session offered eye opening insights from challenging circumstances that demanded competent and creative leadership.

Sessions were not simply lectures like so many of our (occasionally boring) webinars have become during this time of pandemic. The speakers at the program were not merely downloading leadership information into the participants but they created an interactive learning experience. Breakout rooms allowed us to meet new people and exchange different ideas and experiences about leadership. Some of these breakout sessions were skillfully led by facilitators while others allowed the participants to freely lead our own discussions. We got to learn about leadership in different contexts not just from the speaker presentations but also from the experiences of other participants in leading across the globe. Having these breakout sessions after discussing leadership concepts aided in applying what we have learned to our immediate situations and then broadening our horizons by seeing the applications in the contexts of others.

Another avenue for learning was the assignments and activities during the program. Quizzes on leadership aided in identifying our personal style and confidence in leading, helping participants to better understand ourselves as leaders. We were also given a case study to discuss with other participants and identify the best leadership practices in a given situation. This collaborative activity gave us a look into the perspectives of contrasting leadership styles and how they approach complex issues. Assignments included a reflection on the program and a task to synthesize what we have learned into a definition of leadership. This gave us the opportunity to process the entirety of the program and apply our learnings to issues relevant in our context. The National Museum of the Marine corps

also provided participants with a Leadership Inventory, a tool that helped us keep stock of our personal leadership arsenal and resources. This was extremely helpful in self-reflection and for planning our future projects.

With a relevant set of content and excellent facilitation, the Leadership Development Program offers a lot of value in one package. I can only be disappointed at the fact that there were only four sessions, and I was left hungry for more. I can only wish for a longer program, and of course, to meet other participants face-to-face and visit the National Museum of the Marine Corps in person. However, the leadership insights acquired from the program will only truly have value if we practice our new leadership skills once we return to our own circles, universities, organizations, and workplaces. While there is definitely much more to leadership than what the program is able to cover, it provides participants with the tools to lead excellently, and with the quality of mind fit for a leader. Apart from the lessons, the connections made with other participants may also become fruitful partnerships once the conference is over.

We will be celebrating the 100th year anniversary of Pi Gamma Mu at our next Triennial Convention, and along with that we celebrate the generations of leaders that come from our honor society. The centennial celebration alone is worth more than enough excitement, but I can only imagine how the next Leadership Development Program will be like. What kind of leaders will come from our program at the centennial convention? What leadership insights will be passed on from the 100 years of Pi Gamma Mu? I encourage all future conference participants to look forward to and sign up for the Leadership Development program. On behalf of the program participants, I would also like to thank

Dr. Knox, the facilitators, and Pi Gamma Mu for putting together a worthwhile addition to our Triennial Conferences. More than another line on a resume, the Pi Gamma Mu Leadership Development Program adds value and practical insights that equip participants to lead wherever they go.