Third application question:

Describe your leadership style. What do you believe are the most important characteristics of a leader? Why? What do you hope to gain/learn by participating in STARS College?

I hold myself to leading by example at all times. I place a very high emphasis on mutual respect and understanding in all of my interactions. I never ask another person to do something that I am unwilling to do. I place myself in the shoes of others as far as I can, regardless of their position in relation to me. My leadership style is to continually encourage, support, and facilitate the people that depend on me.¹

I believe that a leader must be patient, and slow to judge or assume. A leader must be reasonable, empathetic, and kind. A leader must know how to balance authority with camaraderie. A leader should consider the manner in which their actions influence the “big picture.” A leader must be careful and diligent with the management and application of resources.²

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¹ There are some that believe that leadership roles are most effective through might or intimidation. Such persons will attempt in varying degrees to influence those that depend on them through fear. One of several problems with this mentality is the purposeful suppression of the group they hold authority over. This kind of style will always be plagued by fear, uncertainty, instability, and inefficiencies. If the suppressed group chooses not to endure this leadership style, by sabotaging it, withdrawing from it, or performing within minimum expectations, the authority figure necessarily loses all force of control.

A leadership style based on self-expectations, mutual trust, and support is likely to withstand conventional setbacks. It is unlikely that a group will abandon a leader that regularly proves they are unwilling to abandon without due reason. Meaningful, enduring cooperation depends on individual dedication to good conduct, observed or not. It is unnecessary to hold a formal authoritative title to forge these kinds of relationships.
A leader must necessarily be patient and slow to judge and assume, in order to best understand a situation and how best to respond to it. A leader should be reasonable, empathetic and kind, to appropriately support and understand the needs of the people they lead. The leader should learn to exert their authority only when necessary, and focus primarily on role modeling, to avoid instigation and cultivate respect, which prevents many issues before they arise. A leader should understand how their actions and expenditures influence the well-being of those they lead, to best guide the organization towards its mission and vision.3

From participating in STARS College, I hope to learn organizational techniques that I can apply in my current endeavors as a Resident Assistant, and future endeavors in Residence Life. I hope to better understand how the Residence Life organization at my University interacts with Residence Life as a whole. I believe I can personally grow from interactions with others at STARS, by sharing in their unique experiences, skill-sets, and personalities. I welcome the opportunity STARS College will provide to advance my personal and professional mission to become a well-rounded leader.4

~ End of Original Content ~