Emily Wolfrum

Peer Leadership Application Essay

Now, over a year removed from my own University 101 experience, and a month from my first time as a peer leader, I feel that I can fully attest to the benefits of this class. I speak often about the person I was first semester freshman year—apprehensive and shy. By no means was I a “go-getter,” merely hoping to get by quietly and unnoticed. And, though as a peer leader, Dr. Pastore still described my approach as “quiet,” this silence came with more confidence and certainty, in large part due to my experience in his class the year before.

I never considered myself the type of person who could be a peer leader. In high school, these students came with big personalities and lots of energy; they were more social than academic, and certainly much more self-assured than I was at the time. And, like most college freshmen, I carried with me these remnants of my high school self, which had closed me off to many experiences. I sat attentively in University 101 from week to week and slowly and subtly became more comfortable with an environment I had stubbornly settled into fearing. Dr. Pastore commanded my interest from week to week, and the laid-back and approachable attitude of my peer leader, Jessica, was something I could relate to and was at ease with.

 As a peer leader, I look for students like my former self and hope that I can give them the same peace of mind and comfort that I felt, and continue to feel, at Pace. Without a doubt, it was this goal alone that drove me to apply for the position last year. But, I met a lot of very different students last year, and realized that it isn’t just the shy and nervous students like myself that benefit from University 101; that each of these students has needs, big and small. I learned last year how to work with students who were very unlike myself and who I never thought that I could relate to as well as I did. They trusted me with their problems and motivated me to branch out even more.

As a peer leader next year, I believe that these experiences and learned lessons will only strengthen the work that I know I am already capable of. I am so eager to utilize these tools and my increasing confidence to help another group of freshmen, and also to learn and grow more from them and the relationships I build with them.