

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM:

A deep dive into student leadership

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Student leadership has emerged as a catalyst for positive change in the evolving environment of educational institutions – supporting growth and development both within and outside the classroom. Student leaders play an important role in establishing the culture of their schools and universities, contributing to a lively and inclusive learning environment.

However, representing an entire student body is a challenging task. Student leadership is a multi-faceted realm. The position comes with a lot of responsibility and primarily requires the ability to communicate effectively with peers. Labib Bin Ahmed, former Deputy President of St. Joseph's Scintilla Science Club, highlights the importance of maintaining cooperation within a team.

"I think one of the most important aspects of being a leader is to listen and communicate properly with your team. Communicating properly can fix most of the problems that come along the way," said Labib.

Abdur Raquib, senior Science teacher at Maple Leaf International School, also explains why it is crucial to build strong connections with your teammates, "Having rapport with the people you work with is an influential factor when you are a leader. Student leaders have a lot of responsibilities on their shoulders. They play a pivotal role in maintaining peace among students, especially when teachers are unable to."

Outside the confines of an academic setting, leaders are encouraged to grow and develop as they learn and thrive in their roles.

"My leadership position has contributed to my growth as a person by expanding my perspective through the variety of people I work with and has been key to learning to let go of my ego. Pride and ego are some of the major roadblocks in teamwork, and letting go of it has helped me become better in aspects of my life outside of my academic pursuits," says Bornil Murchhona,

Member Secretary of the International Relations Club at Scholastica.

As Bornil said, letting go of one's pride can be difficult. Contrary to popular belief, leadership is not all about command and control. Student leaders embody the wants of the student population, and it is their duty to create an environment that celebrates inclusivity and takes into account the opinion of each member, sometimes even at their own expense. Leaders should be capable of making sacrifices and upholding their morals above their own self-interests.

Leaders often face criticism from their teams for the way they operate. Thus, they need to be open to constructive feedback and be willing to adapt their methods whenever necessary.

Mandira Bhowmik, Upper Secondary Head Girl at Delhi Public School, shares insight regarding how she deals with tension in a group. She said, "Whenever there is a plan or an idea, conflict comes up. We discuss the cause, source, possible solutions and their effects on the corresponding field of conflict together as a team where each and every member contributes with their opinions. In the end, we not only come up with a solution but at the end of the discussion, each member has made a contribution and learned something. We mostly do not have any conflicts within our team. However, if we do have any, we try to talk to that person."

Furthermore, leaders need to adroitly balance their academics, personal relationships, and leadership responsibilities, while not letting one overshadow the others. Bornil described how she maintained the precarious balance of the three, "My personal relationship and academics have a delicate balance, but a set routine for academic work helps separate the two. My leadership responsibilities are intertwined with my co-curricular activities. So, the two require spontaneous changes. Creating patterns and handling responsibilities become a habit in the end."

It is also necessary to prioritise rest and self-care of course. As Mandira points out, "I always keep my lunch break free so that I can spend time with my friends. It is very important that you give yourself some time," she said.

As advocates and representatives of the student body,

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student leaders leave an indelible mark on their school's community. Their initiatives often resonate with causes that are of global significance. Even after their time has passed, their work is continued and developed by student leaders who come after them.

"Being transparent about my work process helped the current members understand what to do better and what to avoid. The current members of the club have implemented the ideas I couldn't execute by being more efficient and cautious about the obstacles," added Labib.

These young leaders not only encourage others to do better, but forge tales of empowerment, resilience, and collaboration. By celebrating student leadership, we acknowledge its vital role in nurturing the faces of the generations to come.

Rubama Amreen is a student at Maple Leaf International School.



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