Leadership Initiative was developed by a team of committed individuals at Washington University to identify what makes leadership at Washington University distinct. A definition, principles, and learning outcomes were created and are now known as the Leadership Initiative – our leadership framework.

**Definition of Leadership**

Leadership is a process through which students, regardless of their role, strive to create positive change in their communities. To accomplish this, they must be able to develop and articulate a vision of what they hope to achieve and foster meaningful relationships to advance the goals that lead to the accomplishment of the vision. Throughout this process, students will be committed to understanding themselves, others and the communities in which they serve while striving to recognize and appropriately address the ethical challenges they face. Student leaders at Washington University in St. Louis recognize the benefit of bringing diverse perspectives together and lead with a commitment to inclusiveness.

**Leadership Initiative Principles**

**Self-Knowledge**

Learning is the foundation for every student’s collegiate experience and is an essential component for all student leaders. Student leaders constantly seek new knowledge that will help them be more effective. They also understand that learning does not exist in a vacuum; rather, the ability to reflect on one’s own values, make decisions and take action congruent with those values is essential to effective leadership.

**Communication & Collaboration**

Student leaders consider how their actions further the vision and goals of those involved. They seek input from group members and work to implement outcomes consistent with the expressed desires of those involved. Student leaders effectively communicate their plans and goals with stakeholders.

**Service to the Community**

Leadership is an outwardly directed endeavor. Leaders consider the greater good and strive to improve their communities. They are aware of how their service to others influences their leadership experiences and contributes to their own growth and development.

**Inclusion & Diversity**

Student leaders are committed to respecting the human dignity of all. They actively seek out diverse points of view and are inclusive of others with different life experiences. Leaders are purposeful in creating a culture where all voices are heard and recognized as essential.

**Ethics & Integrity**

Student leaders hold themselves to high ethical standards and articulate this expectation to others. They will consider the ethical implications of their decisions and subsequent activities. Their decisions and behaviors are consistent with their personal values as well of those of the community.
Leadership Initiative Competencies and Learning Outcomes

**Self-Awareness** - Student leaders develop a thorough understanding of themselves across multiple dimensions. Through formal and informal reflection, they will recognize how their leadership practice and beliefs are influenced by their values and experiences as well as how their personal behavior affects their ability to build trust and credibility as leaders.

Students who demonstrate competence in self-awareness can:

a. Define and articulate their personal values
b. Discern and describe their personal leadership style, strengths, and limitations
c. Appropriately apply their learning and leadership style and strengths
d. Recognize their own multiple identities, experiences and biases and how these affect their ability to lead
e. Actively seek, evaluate, and, when appropriate, incorporate feedback
f. Evaluate and reflect on their actions and modify as necessary

**Vision & Strategy** - Leaders understand the importance of challenging the status quo and applying creative and innovative solutions to affect positive change. To do this, students will develop a vision for change and successfully formulate goals and action steps necessary to bring their vision to reality.

Students who demonstrate competence in vision and strategy can:

a. Define and articulate a vision for their organization, community, or cause
b. Evaluate existing conditions to identify opportunities to enhance organizational effectiveness
c. Redefine problems and create new paradigms
d. Identify and employ innovative solutions to challenges as well as current conditions
e. Develop realistic goals and action plans connected to their vision

**Communication** - Student leaders understand that effective communication is a crucial component of successful leadership. They will demonstrate proficiency across multiple modes of communication and effectively and appropriately utilize technology. They are able to engage in meaningful conversations and interactions with others.

Students who demonstrate competence in communication can:

a. Articulate thoughts and ideas coherently through written communication
b. Articulate thoughts and ideas coherently through verbal communication
c. Demonstrate active listening skills
d. Deliver relevant content with appropriate intent
e. Assess situations and apply appropriate modes of communication

**Valuing Others** - Student leaders understand the value of having diverse perspectives within a community. They seek opportunities to develop cultural competency and understand themselves as contributing to the improvement of a global society. Student leaders create opportunities for the inclusion of multiple perspectives to develop synergistic results.

Students who demonstrate competence in valuing others can:

a. Recognize and identify the roles that diversity plays in a global society
b. Understand their own cultural identities and their impact on the community
c. Seek to understand the communities in which they are a part
d. Appropriately integrate differing viewpoints and experiences for maximum organizational performance
e. Undertake opportunities to serve their communities
Integration and Meaningful Action - Effective leaders translate ideas into action. They develop critical thinking skills that allow them to make decisions, solve problems, and respond to the needs of their community. Student leaders develop the confidence and resilience to take appropriate risks that lead to positive change.

Students who demonstrate competence in integration and meaningful action can:
   a. Employ creative problem solving and critical thinking behaviors
   b. Gather and analyze necessary information before making a decision
   c. Make decisions with incomplete or ambiguous information
   d. Demonstrate resiliency in the face of challenges
   e. Demonstrate the ability to take appropriate action
   f. Evaluate group processes and actions to determine progress towards a desired result

Ethics and Integrity - Student leaders understand their actions, both public and private, are reflective of their values. When faced with ethical issues, student leaders challenge themselves and others to act in ways congruent with their personal and shared values. Student leaders will demonstrate the highest level of integrity in all aspects of their lives.

Students who demonstrate competence in ethics and integrity can:
   a. Identify ethical dilemmas
   b. Distinguish behaviors and actions which support personal and organizational values
   c. Make decisions in alignment with their personal and organizational values
   d. Demonstrate ethical and equitable behaviors through their decisions and actions
   e. Define and articulate the importance of role-modeling

Connection and Collaboration - Student leaders seek out meaningful relationships to foster positive change. They understand these relationships not simply as a means to an end, but as an integral component of creating an effective community. They find ways to motivate, utilize and incorporate others to move a vision forward.

Students who demonstrate competence in connection and collaboration can:
   a. Seek input from others
   b. Create a safe, open and trustworthy environment
   c. Empower, utilize and motivate others
   d. Understand and value the process as well as the final outcome
   e. Recognize and identify individual and collective behaviors that enhance or impede the group process
   f. Engage in open, direct, and respectful conversation with others
   g. Address and resolve conflict with civility
   h. Prepare and empower future leaders to ensure sustained community effectiveness.