

At the 2017 Student Leader & Honors Brunch on March 19, Azia Harris-Martin gave the following speech after receiving the College of Engineering's prestigious Hugh G. Rumler Prize.

After spending a couple weeks pondering and procrastinating what I would say to a room full of amazing and ambitious people, I had a class earlier this week in which a guest lecturer spoke about the importance of leadership in the workplace. He related leadership to none other than the four laws of thermodynamics. The comparison that resonated with me the most was the zeroth law. The zeroth law of thermodynamics states that "Energy flows from high to low." He continued with the correlation: "Leadership flows from high to low. True leadership does not flow from the masses. Nothing gets done on its own. If no one takes charge and shares the vision, then nothing gets accomplished." From the lecture I realized that the way each of us defines leadership is as unique as our individual fingerprints. It made me think of ways that I could define leadership and how leadership has impacted my Michigan Experience.

Unlike the guest lecturer, I don't have a sharp-witted way to associate the fundamental physical quantities of life with leadership. Instead I decided to use my best study method, a mnemonic device for LEADER:

- **L for Learn** – Leadership is a set of skills that can be learned by training, perception, practice and experience over time. For me, I've learned the most about leadership through failing and making countless numbers of mistakes.
- **E for Enhance** – Within leadership we all must continue to use our experiences to grow and improve our leadership style, while enhancing the lives of the people we lead.
- **A for Advise** – It is our responsibility to build up the future leaders who will come after us by giving them the guidance to avoid the mistakes we made.
- **D for Delegate** – We each have only 24 hours in a day, which means there's only a limited amount that we can do no matter how hard we work. The easiest way to overcome this limit is to build up a strong team and delegate to others.
- **E for Empathize** – Empathy is the secret sauce for all relationships, something that I think is often overlooked. Seeing the world from someone else's perspective can change how we see the world. With empathy we can tailor our actions, words, and approach for the individuals we lead.
- **R for Risk** – Risk-taking is critical to leadership success. Without risk-taking, leaders remain stagnant, predictable and, ultimately, become complacent.

Leadership is a never-ending experience and as most of us transition from collegiate to corporate leadership, we will continue to Learn, Enhance, Advise, Delegate, Empathize, and Take Risks.

Before ending I would like to congratulate all of the honorees and thank the honors committee, staff, and College of Engineering for the hard work and dedication you all have put forth to make this event possible.

As a last note to all the leaders in the room, an important part of our stories is the diversity in our leadership and the fact that the stories we have and the paths that we have created make us all the more valuable. Within the respective communities we lead don't allow diversity to be a word that we all know is important. Ingrain it in your leadership and make it important every day. Remember the world doesn't give us equal chances and opportunities. But the vital attribute of being a leader and leaving the best legacy is to realize that together we can create equity in the world. The legacy we leave is part of the ongoing foundations of life. Those who came before leave us the world we live in. Those who will come after us will have only what we leave them. We are stewards of this world, and we have a calling on our lives to leave it better than how we found it, even if it seems like such a small part. When we strive to leave a legacy, we are acting with selflessness that can only be good for us. We are leaders, we are diversity, and, most importantly, we are Michigan. Go Blue.