

SENIOR IHSA ESSAY ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AWARD  
Hannah Bentz  
2019

As a student athlete at the College of Charleston, I have consistently developed qualities of productive leadership. Leadership is not simply reflected in spoken demands or a title, but in the motivation that one sparks in their peers to follow. Sandie O'Connor, the Chief Regulatory Affairs Officer at JPMorgan Chase & Co., said, "A leader must have the ability to win people's hearts and minds. A good leader wins the minds with competence, capability and the vision to guide people in the right direction and their hearts through trust and integrity so that they follow her lead."

IHSA competitions magnify the leadership qualities that we represent ourselves on. Due to my immense desire to learn about the care of the horses and the administrative responsibilities of running an intercollegiate team, I became capable of providing my teammates with direction regarding horse care and IHSA rules and guidelines when traveling to or hosting competitions. Trust and integrity are two qualities that are of the utmost importance when competing alongside twelve-hundred pound animals and with a large team. The IHSA was built on the philosophy that "any college student should have the opportunity to participate in equestrian competition regardless of financial status, gender or riding level," and the value lies in not only respecting, but capitalizing on our diversity. These actions and philosophies won over the hearts and minds of my intercollegiate coach and teammates as early as my freshman year.

In order to prepare myself for a career in finance, I sought out a position in the School of Business Investment Program. The same qualities that I learned over my first five semesters on the College of Charleston Equestrian team were directly applicable to the intense interview process that I underwent to become a member of the Investment Society and to land a summer internship after my junior year at JPMorgan Chase & Co. While I had minimal financial experience, both organizations recognized the commitment to leadership, attention to detail, and an infinite work ethic that were developed through my inherent drive for excellence in the equestrian sport. The ability to efficiently collaborate with my teammates in order to prepare for competitions laid the groundwork to effectively communicate with my professors, classmates, employers, and colleagues in a professional manner. This led to successful stock pitches in the Investment Program, and at the end of my summer internship I was offered and accepted a full-time job offer with JPMorgan to start the summer after graduation.

The education and attitudes that are derived from the most difficult situations define us. Regardless of whether we are working with a horse, teammate, or colleague; it is important to understand that people are driven by their passions and their perceived worth. The most successful people religiously stick to these principles and understand the integral role that even the most minute details play in the decision making process. I am looking forward to building upon the foundation that I have developed over the duration of my career.