

# A Knight to Remember

## Philip Shibly LEADs at UCF

By Catherine Smith

Philip Shibly, 19, may not be a knight in shining armor, but he's one heck of a leader. Okay, maybe he is a Knight, since he's a student at the **University of Central Florida** where the Golden Knights rule. But most importantly, he's proven himself in UCF's LEAD (Leadership, Enrichment, and Academic Development) Scholars program. Shibly found his calling after learning about the program during his sophomore year in high school at UCF's leadership summit, LIFT (Leaders Involved For Tomorrow). He had the experience, skills, and potential of a rising leader and has proven himself through the hard work and dedication he has put into LEAD Scholars. Shibly will serve this year as the co-executive director.

While taking his first LEAD course, Shibly discovered an important attribute of the academic side of leadership. "It's learning about how there are different kinds of leadership within whatever you're taking," he says. Shibly says he can apply this knowledge of diversity in leadership to other areas in his life, including the versatility needed to be co-exec.

During his first semester as a LEAD Scholar in fall 2001, Shibly applied for the co-executive position. After getting 150 signatures from current LEAD Scholars, he competed against four well-qualified candidates. One of the reasons that he won was his active participation in other groups and organizations. He's the assistant director of scheduling and events for EKCEL (Every Knight Can Excel in Leadership), a Team Leader in the Burnett Honors College, a Pi Kappa Phi fraternity member, a Mentoring Knights member, and a member of the Union Staff.

"Phil is a student who goes above and beyond—even as a young, emerging leader, he's interested in helping his peers learn, develop, and grow in leadership," says

Micki Pannozzo, assistant director of LEAD Scholars.

"What makes Phil an outstanding leader is his quiet confidence," says William Faulkner, director of LEAD Scholars and UCF's student leadership programs. "He doesn't need to boast about his accomplishments because he lets his actions speak volumes about his ability to get things done."

Shibly's responsibilities as co-exec include gathering input from 500 students and implementing their ideas and opinions



into programs. "[The co-exec position] is the final step in the student leadership structure within the program, which means that everything has to fall in place or we're behind," Shibly says. He doesn't take all of the credit himself and contributes the success of the program to the team of students working with him. "They're the ones who plan and carry out the social events that LEAD Scholars have," he says. "I have no doubt that our goals, vision, and enthusiasm have enabled us as both a program and as individuals to become better leaders of tomorrow."

LEAD's other co-executive director, Vanessa Bowman, met Shibly at a leadership conference in 2000 before either had become a LEAD Scholar. "Although he tends to take on too much and from an outside perspective, he might seem unorganized, Phil is just the opposite," Bowman says. "He always follows through and puts so much time and energy into his organizations, especially LEAD Scholars."

Some of Shibly's other responsibilities as co-exec include allocating LEAD's \$20,000 budget and running the accounting system, working with faculty members, planning Training Day for first- and second-year LEAD Scholars, attending weekly meetings with advisors, attending the majority of events, and coordinating the Recognition Dinner, the end-of-the-year event.

One program Shibly has been working on implementing is the LEAD Scholars Alumni Council. "My vision is to have LEAD alumni from various colleges of the school who would serve as the contacts for current LEAD Scholars to help them with anything they might need," Shibly says. "We know we have to take baby steps in the process."

Because the LIFT summit left such an immense impression, Shibly worked as a facilitator for it this summer hoping to have the same effect on other high school students. "I wanted to see how it was on the other side of the spectrum," he says. In the fall, Shibly will be helping LEAD FLIGHT (Facilitating Leadership In Guiding High school Teams), in which LEAD Scholars teach Orlando-area high school students the virtues of leadership, including teamwork, communication, diversity, and trust.

Shibly aspires to one day use his leadership skills by designing new technology and taking charge of larger projects for major companies such as Nvidia, IBM, or Intel. Though a sophomore majoring in computer engineering with a 3.4 GPA, Shibly also sees himself working in international relations in the Middle East.

Shibly's high self-expectations and infectious personality most certainly attribute to his success as the co-executive director. "Many student leaders I've worked with in the past have substituted platitudes and gregariousness for effectiveness. Phil is the opposite; he carries himself with an easygoing manner that makes him very approachable and comfortable among his peers," Faulkner says.

"He's a very charismatic, involved, and energetic young man," says Stacey Lazenby, assistant director of LEAD Scholars. "He's an excellent representative of the LEAD Scholars Program and exhibits mature and conscientious behavior in his actions."

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Find this interview and details on UCF's LEAD Scholars at [www.floridaleader.com](http://www.floridaleader.com)

### Shibly's Style

- **Have an open mind.** Learn everything you can about what interests you, and don't make decisions based on a biased view. In today's world, biased views and closed minds are one of the primary sources for global conflicts, problems, and bad decisions. Learn and set yourself apart.
- **Find balance.** Don't take on more than you can handle, but remember that you're the only one who sets your limits.
- **Communicate.** If everyone's not on the same page and doesn't have the same vision, then it's much harder to accomplish your goals. The small things like day-to-day tasks have just as much

impact on the group as do the final steps, so make sure your group knows about everything that's going on, not just what they're required to do. And listen to your group.

- **Seize opportunities.** Everything that comes your way will somehow benefit you in the long run. And don't burn any bridges. You never know who you will need to count on later in the future.

- **Build up others.** People look to you to set the example. Your team will be so much stronger when everyone's striving to be their best.

- **Be accountable.** Take responsibility for your actions and step up when called upon. It's easier to take credit for something you haven't done and much harder to actually do something.