



# ACADEMIC PORTFOLIO

Submitted by STUDENT

Submitted on \_\_\_\_\_

For: University of Southern Maine

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## LETTER OF INTENT

Rusty Dolleman, Director  
Office for Prior Learning Assessment  
University of Southern Maine  
PO Box 9300  
Portland, Maine 04104-9300

Dear Rusty:

My name is STUDENT, and enclosed with this letter of intent is the submission of my academic portfolio. In it you will find information that I'll use as the basis for requesting college credits for certain courses in the Leadership and Organizational Studies graduate degree program. Sharon Timberlake will serve as my academic portfolio evaluator. The number of credits I am hoping to earn is 6.

I am a nontraditional student at the University of Southern Maine. At 39 years old, I have worked for over 20 years during which time I obtained a considerable amount of learning and work experiences. I believe I have ample evidence of specific learning competencies that I have acquired through prior learning that relate to college-level content. As an adult learner, I realize that coming to college after being in the workforce for 20 years makes my learning experience that much more unique. I have applied a considerable amount of self-reflection and learning to each course I have taken while at Southern Maine Community College and USM.

The first submission is for **LOS 301 – Group Dynamics**. During my time at both SMCC and USM I have coordinated study groups and worked on several successful team projects. At SMCC I acted as the president of a student group for two semesters. Professors in Organizational Theory and Behavior at USM are currently using my final project as a template for their courses. I have also worked on a board of directors where I lead group discussions, and facilitated board

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meetings. These experiences have provided me with the experience to confidently apply for credits in this course.

The second submission is for **LCC 370 – Toward a Global Ethics**. I have learned the role that ethics plays in an academic setting, professional environments, small businesses and non-profit organizations. I have gained a significant amount of insight into others' perspectives with regard to ethical issues. I was challenged as a group leader to make my own decisions as well as help inform students when moral and ethical decisions arose. Lastly, I have done a substantial amount of self-reflection and have come to my own position about ethics, and will outline why I came to adopt those values.

In this portfolio I have documentation to provide you with evidence of competencies in these areas and will explain the relevancy each learning experience has had on the career path I have chosen.

Thank you for your time and review of my materials. I look forward to the outcome and your feedback.

Sincerely,

STUDENT

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INSERT RESUME HERE

INSERT SYLLABI/LEARNING OUTCOMES HERE

## OUTCOMES MAPPING – OPTIONAL COMPONENT

### GROUP DYNAMICS – LOS 301

| Experience  | Responsibilities   | Competencies/Learning Outcomes  | Supporting Documentation   |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>Short Term Missionary Team Leader - Joni &amp; Friends Family Retreats (JAF)</p> | <p>Leadership Team meetings</p> <p>Lead a group of short term missionaries in activities with their “buddies” in two week long retreats for people with disabilities</p> <p>Created a fundraising letter asking for financial support</p> <p>Attended daily activities for week long retreat for two weeks</p> | <p><b>Leadership:</b> Oversaw and directed groups of over 40 teenagers</p> <p><b>Realization:</b> Improved my appreciation for people with disabilities and gained a heightened sense of my own self-concept</p> <p><b>Personal Development:</b> Gained an improved awareness of my self-concept</p> <p><b>Communication:</b> Led group discussions, prayer times and directed group in several team building games and exercises</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Background check report (Appendix 8)</li> <li>2. Email from Andra Eason, Program Manager at Joni &amp; Friends (Appendix 9)</li> <li>3. JAF Fundraising Ask Letter (Appendix 10)</li> <li>4. Thank you letter from JAF for volunteering (Appendix 11)</li> </ol> |
| <p>Workplace Communications course at Portland Adult Education</p>                  | <p>The course covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Effective listening</li> <li>o Assertive speaking</li> <li>o Clear, positive pronunciation</li> <li>o Handling difficult situations</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Communication:</b> Learned active listening skills involving verbal and non-verbal communication; how to communicate in a team environment; how to handle and resolve conflict;</p> <p><b>Problem Solving:</b> Learned how to identify defensive communication (verbal and non-verbal); where and why</p>   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Workplace Communications Certificate from Portland Adult Education (Appendix 27)</li> </ol>  |

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|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Conflict resolution skills</li> <li>o Customer service communication</li> <li>o Team-based communication</li> <li>o Oral presentation</li> <li>o Communication Dynamics</li> <li>o Myers Briggs Test</li> </ul> | <p>conflict arises, how to deal with conflict in a one on one basis as well as in a team environment.</p> <p><b>Forward thinking:</b> Learned about ways that conflict can produce positive results</p>  |  |
| <p>President of student group <i>The Bridge</i> at Southern Maine Community College</p> | <p>Lead meetings and bible studies</p> <p>Recruit and retain group members of diverse backgrounds</p> <p>Communication through email, documents and meetings</p>   | <p><b>Adapt:</b> Learned to accommodate multiple demands of group members</p> <p><b>Reason:</b> Concluded how to create a supportive environment in a diverse group of students</p> <p><b>Prioritized:</b> Managed the time, energy and resources of the group by discerning the needs of group members and how to make an effective and lasting difference in group members involvement</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Certificate from SMCC (Appendix 23)</li> <li>2. Student group purpose statement (Appendix 14)</li> <li>3. Group calendar (Appendix 14)</li> <li>4. Group roster (Appendix 14)</li> </ol> |
| <p>Study Groups</p>   | <p>Recruit students to study with</p> <p>Set up times and places to meet</p> <p>Communicate with group members</p>   | <p><b>Critical Thinking:</b> Identified life stages of a group</p> <p><b>Creativity:</b> Formed groups with people I'd recently met and learned how to get people of various backgrounds to come together and use their time to effectively</p>  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reference letter by Mark Reuscher, Adjunct Professor of Business at SMCC (Appendix 7)</li> <li>2. Email from Professor Brian Davenport, Ph.D.,</li> </ol>                                |

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|  | Facilitate discussion by setting and focusing on priorities  | study a subject to help one another succeed in a course<br><br><b>Networking:</b> Developed friendships and contacts with students, faculty and professors   | Leadership Studies (Appendix 16)  |
| Organizational Behavior course at USM – led in class group | <p>Topics included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Self-awareness, perception and learning</li> <li>o Individual differences and diversity</li> <li>o Motivation</li> <li>o decision making</li> <li>o Team dynamics</li> <li>o Communication</li> <li>o Stress Management</li> <li>o Power and politics</li> <li>o Organizational learning and change</li> <li>o Work force diversity</li> <li>o Global economy</li> <li>o Learning organization principles</li> <li>o Managerial ethics</li> </ul> | <p><b>Communication:</b> As the group formed, I became the informal leader of our group, managed to effectively communicate between group members, was a spokesperson for our group,</p> <p><b>Organized:</b> Formed clear written materials for submission to professor for group case study homework, communicated through emails and initiated and led study groups prior to exams</p> <p><b>Acknowledgement:</b> Gave credit to other team members for their contributions</p> <p><b>Conflict Resolution:</b> Helped group members to gain insight into members perspectives on assignments by asking questions, getting problems out on the table and coming to a solution as a group</p> <p><b>Lead:</b> Directed the group and learned more about why I became the unspoken</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Syllabus for Organizational Behavior (Appendix 15)</li> <li>2. Email from Associate Professor of Management, USM School of Business, Professor Frederic Aiello (Appendix 16)</li> </ol> |

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|   |  | leader of the group when learning about the life stages of teams   |   |
| Secretary of the Board of Directors/Volunteer/Interim Administrative Assistant at Ruth's Reusable Resources (3Rs) | <p>Supported the CEO/Founder with daily operations, office management, volunteer coordination and product and financial donor relations</p> <p>Assisted in the move from a 7,500 square foot warehouse to a 25,000 square foot warehouse</p> <p>Attended and worked at fundraising events and meetings including the Maine Business Expo, Green Expo, annual fundraising event, and Eggs &amp; Issues meetings with CEO/Founder</p> <p>Created volunteer and board member applications and planned and organized the volunteer and board application processes</p> <p>Produced administrative assistant, volunteer and</p> | <p><b>Management and Administration:</b> Assisted CEO/Founder with all aspects of managing a non-profit organization including budgeting, inventory control, conducting meetings, and creating presentations</p> <p><b>Leadership:</b> Overseeing employees and volunteers, delegating tasks to employees and volunteers, decision making</p> <p><b>Critical Thinking:</b> Became familiar with the mission of the organization and identified the necessity of a mission statement and communicated to board</p> <p><b>Human Relations:</b> Understood the complexities and challenges of group dynamics and addressed interpersonal and human resources related matters such as working on a team, negotiating, mapping the political terrain, and networking during board meetings</p> <p><b>Planning and Organization:</b> Assisted in the planning and organization of daily activities including scheduling,</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Resume (p. 8)</li> <li>2. Reference letter from Ruth Libby (Appendix 1)</li> <li>3. 2008-2011 Board of Directors list (Appendix 2)</li> <li>4. 3Rs Employee Manual (Appendix 4)</li> <li>5. Email to Maine Biz (Appendix 5)</li> <li>6. PowerPoint Presentation for 3Rs 20<sup>th</sup> (Appendix 6)</li> </ol> |

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|  | <p>employee procedures manuals for the organization, databases, electronic and paper files</p> <p>Managed membership application process and financial and product donations</p> <p>Coordinated volunteers and volunteer projects</p> <p>Assisted CEO with daily administrative tasks as needed</p> <p>Created spreadsheets to consolidate and organize the agency's data as well as created an import file to be dumped into databases</p> <p>Maintained and manipulated donor, volunteer, member and employee data</p> | <p>prioritizing, accounting, goal setting and initiating projects</p> <p><b>Information Management:</b> Cataloged agency data by compiling spreadsheets and other miscellaneous documents into spreadsheets, implemented electronic filing system and reorganized paper files, created a contact management system in Microsoft Outlook, updated website</p> <p><b>Communication:</b> Sent out company emails, letters, press releases; talked with volunteers about tasks, communicated with agency members, volunteers, and donors about upcoming events and listened to CEO/Founder to gauge daily activities and priorities</p> <p><b>Networking:</b> Perceived the importance of networking and creating personal and professional relationships and cultivating those relationships in order to see the mission and vision of the organization through more thoroughly and successfully</p> <p><b>Manipulate Information:</b> Organized event contact information, sent out letters and emails and created event contact lists</p> |  |
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## **NARRATIVE**

### **Introduction**

From a young age I have been placed into small groups, some formal and some informal. Beginning at the age of three I was involved in Community Theater and tap and ballet classes. In school I was part of the Greater Portland Youth Chorale, band, orchestra and Olympics of the Mind. These activities caused me to be frequently grouped together with people I did not know. In those groups, members had a common goal: to put on a good show. I realize now that because of our shared goal, each person gave 100% effort. I remember the importance of the relationships that were formed in these groups, and how each different role within each group shaped our experiences. During those experiences I saw group unity and conflict. These experiences taught me about many characteristics of groups as well as some advantages and disadvantages of working with others. Reflecting back, I can see how the size and composition of each group mattered in how the dynamics of the group turned out.

### **Joni & Friends Family Retreat – Short Term Missionary Team Leader**

In 2013, I volunteered as a team leader at Joni & Friends Family Retreats (JAF) in North Carolina. JAF Family Retreats are a place where “special-needs families receive encouragement and care in the comfort of a safe and accessible family camp environment” (Joni & Friends International Disability Center, 2014). I volunteered for two weeks and was responsible for leading groups of 44 teenagers the first week and 25 teenagers the second week. I was also in charge of planning group activities, creating and maintaining group cohesiveness, adhering to JAF’s policies, participating in a training for disability ministry, and team coaching. I had a few

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friends and acquaintances that had a disability, but I had not worked leading a group of people with disabilities this closely before. The perception my disabled friends had left me with was that people with disabilities did not want to be treated differently than everyone else, they wished to be independent, and for those in wheelchairs, they did *not* want anyone giving them a push.

On the first day we had a day long training for disability ministry. One of the women giving a training session had the best attitude I had ever seen, she was energetic, enthusiastic, welcoming and she had MS. Watching her and learning from her made me appreciate her response to what others viewed as a disability. She viewed it as an opportunity to create awareness and educate others. It started to feel as though my outlook and opinions of people with disabilities made me the one with a real disability.

The first day of camp I was assigned a group of 44 teenagers. Each person with a disability is assigned a buddy that stays with them and cares for them the entire week. So there were 22 buddies, or short term missionaries (STMs), and 22 teens with a disability. The size of the group was intimidating. Right away we had to come up with a team motto, logo, and song. We had until the next day to finish this assignment. I had to learn quickly how to harness their energy and get them to focus on the assignment. I promptly began asking questions like, who has a knack for writing, singing and performing? It was to my advantage that most of the teenagers had been coming to the family retreats since they were young children. The first day we came up with our team colors and the beginning of a song.

Part of the day involved team building games. There were three team leaders including myself. Thankfully, we had been planning for these games and exercises for well over six months. One game involved tying all of our group members together with a rope, blindfolding them, and

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designating one person to direct the group on an obstacle course around the retreat center. With only one day with the group, I had to carefully discern who would be best at leading the group. Thankfully, I was able to recognize who had leadership abilities and I chose a strong candidate.

On day two, we were ready to sing our song, shout out our motto without fear, and show off our team flag that held our logo and colors! During the remainder of the week the group became very close and spent almost every waking hour together. I realized that because of my preconceived notions about people with disabilities it affected the way that others communicated and interacted with me at the beginning of the week, when at the end of the week a sweet girl named Elicia told me that on welcoming day she thought I was a snob because I was not talking to anyone. She then reassured me by letting me know that once she got to know me she thought I was pretty awesome and asked me if I was coming again next year. I was choked up with emotion. I told her how nervous I was and how I had no idea what I had gotten myself into. I also told her that I thought she did not like me at first and she told me she was trying to figure me out. By week two I was motivated and committed to making sure that the second week was better than the first.

Participating at JAF helped my personal growth tremendously and showed me the importance of the way I see myself and others. The people I met at the retreat were amazing and inspiring. I went there to care for families that never got a break from the hard work that it takes in dealing with a disability, and in doing so, I was the one who was actually ministered to.

### **Workplace Communications at Portland Adult Education**

In April of 2007, I took a course at Portland Adult Education for Workplace Communications. The first part of the course focused on assertive communication and specifically

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“how to say no.” I had not realized before this course that assertive behavior is often times confused with aggressive behavior and that the only difference is that assertive behavior does not involve hurting or dominating others. I learned that others have the same right to respond to assertiveness with their own wants, needs, feelings, and ideas. Before the course I had a tendency to get offensive when having to communicate something that bothered me emotionally. I learned from this course that behaving assertively would allow me to open the way for honest communication with others as well as establish clear boundaries. One important thing I learned was that in a work environment it was okay to take a day to think about a situation before responding in a way I may regret later.

The next part of the course focused on active listening skills. I was taught to notice nonverbal language and how things like a shrug, a smile, a nervous laugh, facial expressions and body positions can speak volumes. I was also taught that in order for messages to be clear and believable, non-verbal and verbal communication had to match. For instance, crossing your arms with an upset face but saying, “I’m doing great” does not do well to get across what you are trying to really say to others. Until now, I was unaware that listening was actually a skill. I started to go over in my mind the people that appeared interested in what I was saying when I would talk or would make eye contact with me and wait to respond until I was done talking and identifying who in my life was a good listener. This part of the course encouraged me to work at listening and really try to understand others points of view, assumptions, needs and belief systems before formulating a response. This helped me to monitor my own feelings and points of view and recognize that because I had certain beliefs I had a tendency to filter what someone was saying and sometimes even distorting what I was hearing. This part of the course helped me to become more aware of my own attitudes, beliefs and emotional reactions to certain messages and helped me to become better at showing genuine concern when others had something to say.

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The most eye opening part of this course, however, was the piece where I learned about managing conflict. I learned about how and why conflict arises and how to deal with conflict in a one on one basis as well as in a team environment. I learned about concepts like “I” versus “you” language, and how using the word “I” takes responsibility and ownership whereas using “you” points the finger and puts others on the defense. I was taught that when I was upset with people I needed to stay calm, not interrupt, focus on their concerns without getting distracted, maintain confident eye contact, listen completely before responding and then let them know that I want to help resolve the situation. In a team based environment I was taught to ask those having the disagreement to rephrase their comments, work out a compromise, engage in give and take and agree on a solution. I learned that it is helpful to ask each member to list what the other side should do, “If you were in my shoes, what would you do?” I was taught to respect experts on a team and to give their opinions more weight when conflict involved their expertise, but not to rule out conflicting opinions. I learned how to effectively respond to criticism and how to give it. The portion I enjoyed most and have held with me over the years is the part of the course where the class took time to brainstorm about ways that conflict can produce positive results. We came up with the following insights:

- Conflict gets issues out on the table
  - Conflict gets communication flowing
  - Conflict is an opportunity for learning different viewpoints, keeping us open to the ideas and opinions of others
  - Conflict provides solutions to problems
  - Conflict, once managed, can reduce resentment and tensions among team members
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Before taking this workplace communications course I had a tendency to be passive aggressive or aggressive in my communication at work and at home. I learned how conflict and miscommunication can hamper productivity, lower morale, cause more conflict, and lead to inappropriate behavior. During the time I took this course I was also serving on the board of directors at Ruth's Reusable Resources. I quickly recognized that conflict needed to be dealt with immediately or it can fester. A board member and I had met together to discuss an issue that we needed to get out on the table. It was a tense meeting at first, but after we got problems out in the open, not only were we able to come up with resolutions to those problems, we were able to be more productive in other areas that we were lagging. After learning this I applied it to life at home too and once I was made aware that people have a tendency to get along better after everything is out on the table, I am much better at managing conflict in my personal and professional life.

### **President of a student group at Southern Maine Community College**

As a student group leader at SMCC, I was in charge of recruiting, retaining and leading a group of students in a Christian student group called, *The Bridge*. Our purpose statement was "to connect students to the community, church and Christ". I was challenged to meet that purpose by holding weekly meetings where we had bible study, discussions, group activities, community and campus volunteer efforts, and a presence at several campus events.

One-fourth of the group members were from different countries including Rwanda, Burundi, Mexico, and Somalia. The ages and interests of group members ran the gamut. Facilitating these group meetings was a new challenge. Up to this point in time, I had led board meetings and taught Sunday school and had other opportunities to lead small group discussions, but I had not been in charge of leading such a diverse group of students. As I began the first

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meeting, I looked around the room and realized that because this was a diverse group of people, I needed to build some team cohesiveness to help others learn the various perspectives of their group members. I explained to everyone what the purpose of the student group was and what meetings would be like. At the end of that meeting, I decided to give them an assignment. I asked each of them to pull out a piece of paper and asked them to write down the following: their name, where they were originally from, what their major was and why they chose it, the most important person in their life, and what they hoped to gain from being a part of the group. They were then told to fill that paper out and bring it to the next meeting. As we opened the second meeting, I asked each student to fold up their introduction and place it into a hat. At that point, each student pulled out someone else's introduction, read it out loud to the group without reading the person's name, and everyone had to guess who's paper it was. This was a great icebreaker. Students were laughing, getting to know one another and feeling more at ease in the group as well as having me as a facilitator. After we completed this exercise, I wanted to do a team building exercise that I had learned about while working for Demont & Associates. It involved dividing the group into groups of three (we only had 12 members including me) and each group got a set of supplies: glue, a few magazines, a roll of paper and some sharpies. I then asked each group to draw an outline of one of their group members on the roll of paper so they would have a body outline to decorate. At that point, groups were asked to find images in the magazines that represented their sense of an ideal community member. Groups were asked to do so by using the images and gluing them to their outline. After the activity, each group had to report on the characteristics that were most dominant. What a fun exercise!

The week before I had strategically divided the groups up so that each one would contain someone from a different country, a different race, age or gender. It was interesting to see how

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each group decorated their outline. I recall becoming aware of the vast differences of each group member by watching them piece together their ideal community member. I recognized that putting them in this situation helped them to all have a common goal and therefore they were more open to sharing their perspectives on why the outline needed certain characteristics to show that it was an ideal community member. I asked them questions afterward about whether or not there were any arguments to which they all shared areas of disagreement. I asked them to discuss how different their ideals were. This brought up other questions about why they thought they had different ideals and how they came to accept those. I asked them if they felt that these values were reinforced by their families, society, media or friends. I asked about whether or not they adopted certain values at SMCC. This exercise helped the students in the group to become a close knit unit, and it helped me to recognize why people thought the way that they did based on their backgrounds. It also showed me about universal beliefs that people had in regards to an ideal community member because each outline contained something to do with education or family. Some examples of dominant characteristics were: a cross necklace, another had a book in their hand, one had a tattoo that read, "Family", and another had on a suit and tie.

I learned from this exercise that as a group leader I had to be aware of other people's culture and backgrounds, and in what context I was presenting the materials. I am a Caucasian woman from the United States. I have never lived in the middle of a war zone. One of the members of my student group saw every one of their family members murdered before moving to the United States. While both of us will agree that murder is wrong and bad, I realized that I would need to be sensitive to his viewpoint. The majority of the group members were Christian or became Christian while members of the group, and we mostly had the same moral principles. Still, I needed to be sensitive in presenting certain ideas. I also had to create an environment where people could feel

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open enough to present their thoughts on each subject. Our group discussions and bible studies were centered on important topics like sex before marriage, the sanctity of marriage, abortion, capital punishment, bullying, and physical and mental abuse among other issues. There were times when I needed to exercise judgment about how their perception of things would strongly oppose mine and when I needed to do more listening than talking. I also learned that as the group's leader, I had to make decisions to guide members to make right choices, and that would involve making informed decisions about my own actions, therefore leading by example.

This experience helped me to accommodate multiple demands and find creative ways to get a group of people with different backgrounds and various views to work together in a small group setting. I was able to manage students from several backgrounds, some who were not yet Christian and wanted to check out our group. I will be able to draw from this experience throughout my lifetime as a happy and memorable time getting people from different walks of life to become one group.

### **Study Groups and In Class Groups at SMCC and USM**

During my time at Southern Maine Community College I organized several study groups. In class I began to notice the students who seemed eager to want to dive into the subject matter and go beyond the discussions that we had in class. I began to let individuals know that I was interested in forming a study group outside of class. I went to the Director of Student Life to find out where on campus would be a good setting to get some serious studying done. I was given a choice of several locations and chose the ones closest to our classrooms. Getting together with other students helped me to go over again what I was learning in class and helped me to gain deeper insight into the material by having the ability to hear how other students were digesting the

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material. Their different perspectives helped me to gain a better overall sense of the course materials. I also learned that I had a knack for organizing, networking and communicating that I was unaware of before coming back to school. I suppose I had been given the opportunities, but before then it was someone else's idea, and this time it was me, leading the way.

While taking an Organizational Behavior course at the University of Southern Maine, I was able to reflect on the life stages of the groups I had formed at SMCC and how group members' similarities and the size of the study groups I organized had an influence on our group's cohesion. I learned that smaller teams had a tendency to work better when we were studying for tests and had to stay focused on particulars. I also realized that the success of those study groups in those classes created a camaraderie among the students in those groups and throughout my time at SMCC I remained close friends with the majority of those group members. It also created new friendships between the group members. Being a "non-traditional" student, I was much older than the majority of the group members and I remember how good it felt to get students to come out of their shell and meet other people in class and how it contributed to their success at SMCC. I did not realize at the time that I was organizing the groups that I would gain such a positive experience and create a positive experience for others as well. Many of the students I invited to study groups also became a part of the student group that I led at SMCC.

Another opportunity I had while in the Organizational Behavior course was leading the group that was put together by the professor. In that group I was able to manage a conflict that arose among group members. In the group, there were several students that I saw that had the ability to lead the group. However, I realized that these students did not have the ambition or the awareness of their abilities to lead and it was disappointing to see them be careless in their studies.

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The only thing I could think to motivate them was to do the best job I could and apply what we were learning to their lives. I took the time to ask the group members questions about their current jobs and helped them to apply what we were learning about organizational behavior to those experiences. They started to get it.

There was one group member though, that made sure to let us know daily that he used to own his own business, and he was not a team player. He was one of those that could have led the group but frequently missed class or came in late. It was obvious that he did not think I should be leading the group so he would often go against my recommendations. I learned how to find out from others what they thought and had him restate his opinion and to ask him questions about why he thought the way he did. He continued to push back and would not participate in group discussions and would frequently answer for our group without asking if we all agreed on the answer. Other group members came to me asking what his problem was. I figured that the only way to get this guy to come around was to do my absolute best to enlist him as my helper. It was also important that the other members of the team were on my side. After asking for his opinion more and listening to him it did not take long before he began coming to class more and on time and working together with the team to answer questions. People began to encourage him and ask him questions about the material we were reading and how it related to what he thought. At one point in time you could tell he had not even read the chapter, and toward the end of the course he had really applied himself and got to know the material.

By the end of the course we were the most high scoring and successful group in class. I had an IT class right after this one. Several of the class mates from this OB class were in the IT class. When it was time for us to do a final project and look for team members, I had four other

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students from my OB course beg me to be on their team. It was a great feeling and it helped me to see that the extra work to understand others, ask questions, and get conflicts taken care of all pays off. That team was also a success and scored an A+ on their group presentation.

Before coming back to school, I didn't realize my potential and strengths in the area of being a team leader. I always thought because I was an only child and thought differently than most people that I was not a team player and that I just preferred working alone. During my time as a leader of this group I learned that it is quite the opposite. I realized that I prefer being the person that helps others get their jobs done. I enjoy negotiating resources for others, and learned that a strength I have is understanding the politics of groups I am a part of. I have a gift for getting people to work together in group settings, helping them to set goals and providing others with encouragement and positive feedback.

### **Ruth's Reusable Resources (3Rs)**

In 2006, I began volunteering for a non-profit organization called Ruth's Reusable Resources (3Rs). After about a year, I was asked to join the board of directors as secretary, and sometime after that I joined the organization as an interim administrative assistant when a grant came through funding that position.

Before joining 3Rs, I was working as the administrative assistant and database manager for Demont & Associates, Inc. This organization was very professional and very much a corporate environment. Before working here I had worked in several different industries including legal, accounting and business brokerage. Interpersonal communication in a corporate environment was something I was learning to master. In that setting, it was normal to use email to delegate tasks,

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schedule meetings, and even to communicate simple messages to help save time and keep from losing productivity. The corporate climates I was used to were quite impersonal. At 3Rs, it was much the opposite. The culture is centered on family and personal relationships.

Some of the responsibilities I had as a board member were going to events, networking with business leaders and other nonprofit leaders, working closely with volunteer groups, and participating in monthly and weekly meetings. During many informal and formal meetings with 3Rs, I would become overwhelmed with all of the tasks that were thrown at me. I would ask board members to send me their requests via email. This was one of the tools I used to help me prioritize multiple tasks, and it helped me to keep electronic files as well. I came to board meetings with a laptop and everyone else came with a pad of paper and a pen. It was at the beginning of my time serving on the board of directors that I learned how perception plays a huge role in communication.

A few months in to my service, one of the board members went to Ruth and told her that she thought I was rude and that I did not like her. When Ruth approached me about this and said that she wanted to have a meeting, I was a bit frustrated that the person would not have told me this themselves and I wanted to meet right away. We ended up meeting a few days later and before the meeting I had come up with a solution of asking her what it was that she needed from me and what her expectations were of the person in the role of secretary. At that meeting the board member was asked to state her complaint. I listened and began to realize the problem. I asked questions about her work history and how she liked to work best. I found out that she was retired and during her career she rarely used email as a form of communication. Her perception when I asked her to send me tasks via email was that I did not want to help her and that I was pushing back on important issues. When I explained to her the ways in which I was used to communicating and that I used

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email to help me prioritize my tasks, she understood. We ended up becoming compassionate toward one another and worked much better together after our discussion and still have a wonderful relationship today. I realized that age was a huge factor because I was the youngest person on the board and I was not quite used to the way things were around there. The environment that I worked in was very stiff and the way that 3Rs was structured was a fun and free environment and there was lots of face-to-face interaction and discussion and people were very passive about things that I saw as urgent.

It has taken me many years to become used to the loose structure of the environment, but I have learned about how the organization really cares more for people than rules and policies. Working with the board helped me to learn to listen and ask questions and to take time to understand others more when I am involved in a group environment. Over the years I have gained much experience working with 3Rs' volunteer groups, administrative staff and supporters. The organization has helped me to become less rigid and more accepting of different ways of working and communicating in groups.

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## LCC 370 – TOWARD A GLOBAL ETHICS

| Experience   | Responsibilities   | Competencies/Learning Outcomes  | Supporting Documentation   |
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| School of Biblical Evangelism  | <p>Complete 101 lessons and answer questions</p> <p>Read the book <i>The Way of the Master</i> from cover to cover</p> <p>Listen to 16 audio messages</p> <p>Answer questions having to do with life, death, and ultimate realities</p> <p>Adhere to the school's statement of faith</p> | <p><b>Investigation and Research:</b> Came to understand the ethical frameworks followed by members of our society as well as those outside of the United States and identified and evaluated my own position</p> <p><b>Communication:</b> Ability to effectively communicate my own ethical argument after analyzing the arguments and ideas of others' ethical standards</p> <p><b>Critical Thinking:</b> Ability to communicate what has led me to adopt my own ethical position</p> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School of Biblical Evangelism Graduation Certificate (Appendix 20)</li> </ol>   |
| President of student group <i>The Bridge</i> at Southern Maine Community College | <p>Lead meetings and bible studies</p> <p>Recruit and retain group members of diverse backgrounds</p>  | <p><b>Decision making:</b> Ability to make ethical decisions in regards to moral issues that presented themselves to me in my personal and professional dealings with students and faculty</p>  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Certificate from SMCC (Appendix 23)</li> <li>Student group purpose statement (Appendix 14)</li> <li>Group calendar (Appendix 14)</li> </ol> |

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|   | <p>Communication through email, documents and meetings</p>  | <p><b>Adapting:</b> Learned to understand shared influences of ethical decision making and political and social frameworks, belief systems and various views of human nature</p> <p><b>Management:</b> Led a group of students from several different backgrounds including students from Rwanda, Burundi, Mexico, and Somalia.</p> <p><b>Awareness:</b> Learned about different cultures, different perspectives that people from other religions and ethnic backgrounds in a personal and professional way</p> | <p>4. Group roster (Appendix 14)</p>  |
| <p>Secretary of the board of directors at Ruth's Reusable Resources (3Rs)</p> | <p>Created an employee manual</p> <p>Identified with the board of directors the code of ethics that 3Rs would live by in regards to acceptable behavior from workers and volunteers</p> <p>Carefully examined the Founders ethics and how their</p> | <p><b>Planning &amp; Organization:</b> Helped with the planning, creation, and formatting of the employee handbook</p> <p><b>Assessing:</b> Gauged what the current ethical standards were of the Founder and how the mission and vision of the</p>  | <p>1. 3Rs Employee Manual (Appendix 4)</p> <p>2. Reference letter from Ruth Libby (Appendix 1)</p> <p>3. 2008-2011 Board of Directors list (Appendix 2)</p> |

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|  | <p>set of standards impacted the mission and vision of the organization and designed the employee manual in a way that would encourage workers to meet the same level of ethical standards that leadership desired for the reputation of the organization</p> | <p>organization aligned itself with those ethical standards</p> <p><b>Identifying issues:</b> Pinpointed potential problems like sexual harassment, discrimination, and deciding with the board of directors and Founder what would not be acceptable behavior of the employees and volunteers.</p> <p><b>Writing:</b> Conceptualized the code of ethics of leadership along with the mission of the organization and communicated those ethics by writing procedures, specifically employment policies and standards of conduct for the organization's employee manual to be read and signed by all employees.</p> |  |
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## **Introduction: Factors that led me to adopt my ethical position**

Growing up in Portland, I began learning about people from different cultures at a very young age. The elementary school that I went to was Reiche School where the ESL program had its beginnings. Some of my closest friends were Cambodian, Puerto Rican, African American, Irish, Jewish, Pakistani, and Indian. I have fond memories of asking my friends how to say certain words in their languages, and I remember being very interested in how their families interacted with one another. I got to know so much about different cultures over the years. From the time I was four years old until I was about twelve my mother relied upon an African American family from Mississippi to babysit me. Most of my friends' families treated me as a family member and are still in my life today.

Because of the wide range of diverse cultures and beliefs of my childhood and adult friends, I have been able to explore and have pored over many different viewpoints and behaviors. According to *The Art and Science of Leadership*, "A cultural mindset engenders an awareness of and openness to culture and how it affects our own and others' thinking and behavior. It involves both how one thinks and how one acts. Attention to culture is essential because ...culture is stable and hard to change, it influences behavior" (Nahavandi, 2012, p. 46). I have a cultural mindset not only because of my personal upbringing, but my educational experiences have come from scholastic and work related experiences as well. People I met during those experiences were men and women who held very strong beliefs. The resoluteness that was modeled to me by friends, colleagues and coworkers helped me to begin learning at a very young age that I should adopt a set of beliefs of my own. I recall as a young adult taking varying opinions into consideration as an experiment to come up with my set of beliefs. I read the Quran, the Book of Mormon, new age

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spirituality books including *The Secret* and *The Four Agreements*, astrology books, and finally, the Holy Bible. The variety of belief systems, as well as the unwavering beliefs of those views, has much to do with how committed I am personally to what I believe to be sound moral and ethical values.

### **School of Biblical Evangelism**

Before enrolling as a student at the School of Biblical Evangelism (SBE), ethical dilemmas rarely presented themselves as such. I needed a moral context from which to make decisions personally and professionally. Often in my life, I only realized in hindsight that certain situations were actually times when I needed to make an ethical decision. I went throughout most of my life examining other people's values but had no set of morals or principles of my own. Before reading the bible or becoming a Christian, my ethical beliefs were pretty straightforward: if the good that you do outweighs the bad, there is no dilemma. However, there was a point in my life where the good did not outweigh the bad, so I began to question why I even existed. What purpose did I have in life? I was a high school dropout with no career, I had let my mom down and was living with a man that had no intention of marrying me. Where was my life headed? It was at that point that I really began to search for meaning in life. I ended up in Florida with a friend who asked me if I had God in my life. Of course I had God in my life, or so I thought. I had made up a god in my mind and wanted to find out more about the God of the bible. I attended church with my friend and ended up asking God to forgive me for my sins and to help me live a better life and made Jesus Christ the Lord of my life. Shortly afterward, I enrolled in SBE. At SBE, as I completed each lesson, I began to see things from a biblical worldview. The lessons included topics such as: The Ten Commandments, Contradictions in the Bible, Evolution, Atheism, How to Prove the Existence

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of God, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Catholicism, and New Age Movement. These lessons were jam packed with information about these different topics and what each different belief system required. I learned that most of these beliefs involved me having to work my way to God. Christianity, however, showed me that even though I had broken most of God's moral laws, God still decided to come down to earth to forgive me and save me. This helped reinforce the decision that I had made. Out of all the different religions and belief systems out there, Christianity was definitely the one I was going to adopt.

The majority of people I have met believe that morality cannot be put into a universally acceptable list of absolute rules. I realize that I am not always going to make friends by sharing my personal beliefs. However, my position on what is moral is not based on a set of rules that I have come up with myself, but of those that follow biblical doctrine.

In order to learn how to talk with others about what they believe versus what I believe, I want to be sure that I do not become argumentative when stating what I believe or become defensive when others share their beliefs. I have conclude that because the moral arguments I have are based on what the bible says, if others do not agree with me, it is not actually me that they are disagreeing with; they are disagreeing with the bible. This helps me not to take it personally when someone does not share my beliefs. It also helps me to ask questions and listen to what others believe.

My time at SBE helped me to realize the importance of having a position. It also equipped me to share my own ethical argument and to examine the arguments and philosophies of others moral values in a way that is fair. Understanding my own and others positions helps me to be a considerate and open-minded colleague, coworker and friend.

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## **President of a student group at Southern Maine Community College**

As a student group leader at SMCC, I was in charge of recruiting, retaining and leading a group of students in a Christian student group called, *The Bridge*. Our purpose statement was “to connect students to the community, church and Christ”. I was challenged to meet that purpose by holding weekly meetings where we had bible study, discussions, group activities, community and campus volunteer efforts, and a presence at several campus events.

One-fourth of the group members were from different countries including Rwanda, Burundi, Mexico, and Somalia. The ages and interests of group members ran the gamut. Facilitating these group meetings was a new challenge. Up to this point in time, I had led board meetings and taught Sunday school and had other opportunities to lead small group discussions, but I had not been in charge of leading such a diverse group of students. As I began the first meeting, I looked around the room and realized that because this was a diverse group of people, I needed to build some team cohesiveness to help others learn the various perspectives of their group members. I explained to everyone what the purpose of the student group was and what meetings would be like. At the end of that meeting, I decided to give them an assignment. I asked each of them to pull out a piece of paper and asked them to write down the following: their name, where they were originally from, what their major was and why they chose it, the most important person in their life, and what they hoped to gain from being a part of the group. They were then told to fill that paper out and bring it to the next meeting. As we opened the second meeting, I asked each student to fold up their introduction and place it into a hat. At that point, each student pulled out someone else’s introduction, read it out loud to the group without reading the person’s name, and everyone had to guess who’s paper it was. This was a great icebreaker. Students were laughing,

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getting to know one another and feeling more at ease in the group as well as having me as a facilitator. After we completed this exercise, I wanted to do a team building exercise that I had learned about while working for Demont & Associates. It involved dividing the group into groups of three (we only had 12 members including me) and each group got a set of supplies: glue, a few magazines, a roll of paper and some sharpies. I then asked each group to draw an outline of one of their group members on the roll of paper so they would have a body outline to decorate. At that point, groups were asked to find images in the magazines that represented their sense of an ideal community member. Groups were asked to do so by using the images and gluing them to their outline. After the activity, each group had to report on the characteristics that were most dominant. What a fun exercise!

The week before I had strategically divided the groups up so that each one would contain someone from a different country, a different race, age or gender. It was interesting to see how each group decorated their outline. I recall becoming aware of the vast differences of each group member by watching them piece together their ideal community member. I recognized that putting them in this situation helped them to all have a common goal and therefore they were more open to sharing their perspectives on why the outline needed certain characteristics to show that it was an ideal community member. I asked them questions afterward about whether or not there were any arguments to which they all shared areas of disagreement. I asked them to discuss how different their ideals were. This brought up other questions about why they thought they had different ideals and how they came to accept those. I asked them if they felt that these values were reinforced by their families, society, media or friends. I asked about whether or not they adopted certain values at SMCC. This exercise helped the students in the group to become a close knit unit, and it helped me to recognize why people thought the way that they did based on their

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backgrounds. It also showed me about universal beliefs that people had in regards to an ideal community member because each outline contained something to do with education or family. Some examples of dominant characteristics were: a cross necklace, another had a book in their hand, one had a tattoo that read, "Family", and another had on a suit and tie.

I learned from this exercise that as a group leader I had to be aware of other people's culture and backgrounds, and in what context I was presenting the materials. I am a Caucasian woman from the United States. I have never lived in the middle of a war zone. One of the members of my student group saw every one of their family members murdered before moving to the United States. While both of us will agree that murder is wrong and bad, I realized that I would need to be sensitive to his viewpoint. The majority of the group members were Christian or became Christian while members of the group, and we mostly had the same moral principles. Still, I needed to be sensitive in presenting certain ideas. I also had to create an environment where people could feel open enough to present their thoughts on each subject. Our group discussions and bible studies were centered on important topics like sex before marriage, the sanctity of marriage, abortion, capital punishment, bullying, and physical and mental abuse among other issues. There were times when I needed to exercise judgment about how their perception of things would strongly oppose mine and when I needed to do more listening than talking. I also learned that as the group's leader, I had to make decisions to guide members to make right choices, and that would involve making informed decisions about my own actions, therefore leading by example.

This experience helped me to accommodate multiple demands and find creative ways to get a group of people with different backgrounds and various views to work together in a small group setting. I was able to manage students from several backgrounds, some who were not yet

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Christian and wanted to check out our group. I will be able to draw from this experience throughout my lifetime as a happy and memorable time getting people from different walks of life to become one group.

### **Secretary of the board of directors at Ruth's Reusable Resources**

During my time at Ruth's Reusable Resources (3Rs) I was in charge of creating an employee manual. Part of this process involved meeting with the board of directors to walk through each section together and come up with one organized document that was acceptable by government and legal standards. In relation to ethics, we were to ensure that we listed out what the expectations of employees were and describe too, what they could expect from the company.

Although there were certain legal obligations we had to pay attention to, another important factor in coming up with the policies and standards of conduct was the personal set of ethics that the company, the founder and the board had built their reputation with over the years. The operation began in 1994, and I was in charge of writing the employee manual in 2010, so they had operated for over 15 years. I realized that I had to find out what they understood to be correct conduct.

Together with the board we assessed potential problems that could arise like sexual harassment and discrimination, and I tailored the sexual harassment and anti-discrimination policies. When it came down to writing the standards of conduct, the solution I chose was to take the code of ethics that leadership followed, consider the mission and vision of the organization, and ask questions about the public image. From there, I made a decision about how to communicate the standards of conduct.

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## **My position**

My upbringing contributed immensely to making me a conscientious friend, colleague, and co-worker. My background and the experiences that I have written about have helped me to articulate my own ethical position. Because of the enriching opportunities life has presented me to encounter people and make friendships with people from diverse cultures and beliefs, I am aware that there is more than one way of looking at what may be true or right. In order for me to come up with absolute truth for myself, I reflected on other perspectives and reasoned that in order for there to be absolute truth beyond standards that we set for ourselves, there must be a source greater than me that makes a final judgment about that. I realize that without a set of standards to live by and without God to determine what is right or wrong, people are free to do what is right in their own eyes. Some of my colleagues think that lying is okay. My question to them is, “do you like being lied to?” The Ten Commandments gives me a good measurement of what is right and wrong. And although I have failed at keeping most of them, I have found forgiveness and acceptance.

I have come to the conclusion that the bible, God’s word, is the final authority on truth. Although my personal conduct may not always show it, the word of God convicts me and disciplines me in a way that helps me to grow in my love for God and His forgiveness toward me. Biblical Christianity is not chiefly concerned with its followers’ outward behavior modification. It has everything to do with a change of heart that consequently demonstrates itself in a changed life. This happened for me only after I read the Word of God and chose to believe it. External morality and religiosity are only an insincere cover-up. That is why I did not wish to attend church when I was younger because I had met people that claimed to believe in the bible that did not live any differently than I was. They were hypocrites. As I continued to read the bible, I was excited to

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learn that Jesus himself rebuked the religious leaders of his day with these words, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are all like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness” (Matthew 23:27 NASB).

In order to keep the standards of the bible, of course, I must live according to the Word of God and the only way I can do that is with the help of God. For me, no other source of moral insight has offered me help on keeping its rules. It is the power of God and His Word that help me to live the way I should. None of my friends and no one that I have ever met was perfect; so, to me it makes sense to admit to God that I am imperfect and that I need His help to live in a way that will honor Him. This has been the only way to make me love God and my neighbor, and to do unto others as I would have done unto me.

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INSERT SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS HERE