

Often when one thinks of an all-girls boarding school, especially if that person is a female student, she thinks about what is missing from the institution. Boys. Although they *are* conspicuously absent from our daily life here at Purnell, I think we all do ourselves a favor when we consider what *is* present in our community of young women. What do we gain when we create a world of women? Here we don't worry about what girls are "supposed" to do, or what boys are "supposed" to be good at. No matter what, a girl is the lead in our musical production. At Purnell, a girl always gets the best grade on an engineering test. And a girl is always our president. By design, an all-girls education creates a ripe environment for cultivating leaders because girls are always in the lead. An all-girls school that makes it its mission to focus on strengths not only cultivates female leaders, it creates passionate leaders who are empowered to lead in deeply personal ways.

Our own fearless female leader, Ms. Hill, once told her faculty that we must embody leadership that consists of three parts: leadership of self, leadership of craft, and leadership of others...in that order. All of us, not just Purnell faculty, must first be willing to look inward, to take responsibility for ourselves, to learn what it means to have self-control, to feel confident that we are guided by the strong pull of a moral compass rooted in pure

intentions, and to know that our pursuit is a noble one. Simultaneously, we must sharpen our saws, fine-tune our skills, and become masters of our craft so that we create a level of expertise that truly makes us a leader in our field. Only then may we humbly ask for others to have enough confidence in us to follow us down whatever path we're forging. Any school is equipped to help students develop skills and learn information, but at Purnell students move through a process of looking inward to discover their passions and personal truths *while* learning and growing *and* gaining experience of how to guide others.

Purnell's three guidelines, truthfulness in all relations, use of common sense, and consideration of others, remind us that leading begins from within, emanating with every decision each of us makes. A personal leader needs true integrity, which is to *know* what's right, be willing to do the right thing, and to do the right thing even when no one's watching. Leading oneself means discovering who you are and what you love, assessing and reassessing how you'd like to improve, and taking responsibility for constantly making those improvements. Every student makes a goal at Purnell so that she may focus herself on a particular piece of learning throughout the year. But the true learning comes from the *process*: creating a goal, setting steps for yourself, sticking with it, and feeling a sense of

accomplishment are *most* useful skills that should be replicated throughout life. Once you have success accomplishing a fun goal like learning how to make a dessert or planning your sweet sixteen birthday party, setting and achieving more challenging goals, like improving your relationship with your sibling, or applying to college, becomes more tangible because you've developed the *skill* of goal-making and you know what it feels like to have success.

Our greatest gains are made when we make goals related to developing and enriching the areas in which we already feel strong. And most of us will choose or have chosen careers that utilize the best parts of ourselves. We all know how the hours pass much more quickly when we're toiling in a labor of love, and that motivation and excitement help make learning feel much more effortless. So at Purnell, we spend time discovering where our passions lie. Specifically, students identify their strengths as learners so they are empowered to make choices that give them a personal advantage first in the classroom, and then in any learning situation after they graduate from Purnell. Students spend time thinking about how the kinds of activities, sports, hobbies, and pastimes they enjoy can be brought to the classroom, then majored in during college, and ultimately parlayed into a career or lifelong passion. The affinities program

helps each girl to form her identity, build confidence in her sense of self, and develop language to help her communicate what's great about her. The affinities program also guides girls to build strong, healthy relationships so they may be supported and connected in their endeavors. Our ropes course is designed to empower Purnell girls to put all of their strengths to work in the context of a team setting while building their frustration tolerance, which we know is also an essential quality in any leader. I'm proud to announce that atrio, a group of female professional life coaches, will offer a series of six 2-hour workshops for girls who are interested in doing further work to envision their futures, develop their personal leadership, or explore their potential. Truly knowing oneself by cultivating passions and developing good habits is at the crux of what we do best at Purnell. Leadership of self is the solid foundation upon which a young woman builds herself as a leader.

Teenagers have the amazing, but often daunting, opportunity to develop their leadership of craft every minute of the day. Students are asked to learn and utilize skills throughout the academic day in all of their classes, during organized sports and activities, and during their free time. Our academic classes don't just teach students facts and skills, though. In a Purnell classroom students learn how to question and problem solve, how

to think critically, how to collaborate, and how to be creative. Our class offerings are varied so students have a chance find their niche, explore it, and develop a true strength in it; and, we require students to take a varied course load, even if they're not in love with the subject, because that's how you find new passions and develop new skills. Our many activity offerings also provide students with a chance to develop passions and discover new interests. People lead best when they're leading within their interests. So, we as a school provide students with time and space to refine or build interests and develop their talents. This comes alive when a student participates in a two-week internship the summer before her senior year, or when Project Exploration rolls around and we get to delve into one topic deeply. When students participate in community service, or volunteer for off-campus opportunities they get to see how to develop their strengths and interests in the real world. Believe it or not, Purnellies, when you attend a foreign language movie, attend one of our career speaker talks, ask your advisor for advice, or introduce yourself to a college rep, you're opening doors for yourself. You're acquiring tools for your toolbox that you'll use for the rest of your life. Students, I challenge you to think of how you can be a leader of your craft. In other words, how can you try something new? Or nurture a talent or interest to become an expert in that area? Leaders in

any setting should strive to be experts at what they do. How can Purnell help you develop your craft of leadership?

Purnell provides a great context for students to put their leadership of self and craft to practice in the form of leading others. Students who participate as elected members of council or their individual class are our most visible leaders. They have been charged with the task of being a voice for a body of students and being an agent of change for the school. Many of our clubs and activities have officers as well. These students learn first-hand what it's like to organize people, events, and time...and that it isn't always fun or easy to tell people what to do. Those of you who participate in activities that give back to our community, like big sisters, doorknockers, and Greens, show leadership through gratitude, as you have chosen to give back to your school that has offered you so much. And those of you who volunteer outside of Purnell, you become leaders in your service while gaining invaluable perspective on life. But not all leaders have a title, or belong to a group. Simply through participation you demonstrate leadership. As a member of a group or activity you can act with integrity, lead by example, and be an involved member of the community while developing personal skills. Community members who show up to morning meeting on time, faculty who volunteer to do dinner crew, and students who

ALWAYS wear the proper uniform and never think anyone notices...*you're* leaders. This week I've been particularly moved watching one of our students organize and execute a multi-faceted fundraiser involving a dress down day, a bake sale, and recruiting others for a 5-mile walk she's doing this weekend. Sarah Cogen made announcements to the community, enlisted the help of faculty members to donate baked goods, sent email reminders, and congratulated and thanked the Purnell community this morning when she discovered she surpassed her monetary goal. Sarah is a great example of a student who took advantage of our small, supportive community, utilized her strengths while developing some skills, and created change for a cause she believes in. And she didn't need a title to do so. Leading others doesn't have to be flashy. You sometimes don't even have to say a word if you can just walk the walk.

There's an old adage: To whom much is given, much is required. Purnell is a tremendous gift to all of us here, especially the students who have the privilege of attending. In turn, much should be expected of you while you're here, and as you eventually make your contributions to the greater world. I have no doubt all of you will contribute positively to our society as you walk your chosen path on this earth. But you can do one better. Use your Purnell experience to develop as a leader. Affect change.

In your own way that most excites you. Choose your career or passion or cause or purpose, and think of how your own personal strengths can bring new life to that. Build your leadership around doing what you love, in a way you love to do it. You'll feel the most successful, you'll do the most good, and most importantly, you'll feel the most motivated to keep getting better at it.

Thank you.