

My capacity for leadership has been manifest in three broad ways: my experience as a teacher, and as an entrepreneur, and my taking of initiative. As a tutor, I have developed my ability to recognize whether people understand something, and to communicate ideas effectively. During my exchange at Indiana University in 2008, I held an Associate Instructor position which involved weekly consultations with students seeking help, running tutorials, and presenting two lectures on new research. On a number of occasions, I have been asked to give lectures and help run the labs at the Australian Informatics Olympiad schools, which train and select representatives to compete at the International Olympiad in Informatics. Additionally, I have tutored choirs and orchestras at my old school. Similar skills were required for my work as an ambassador of the Australian National University's Colleges of Science, in particular being able to provide effective explanations. Teaching has its own set of skills, but they overlap with those of leadership, especially when the taught material is based on research or problem-solving as in my case.

In 2007, I co-created two entrepreneurial projects: a local matchmaking service for students, and a textbook service connecting buyers and sellers of used textbooks. Developing these projects from initial idea to working product involved project management, becoming adept with the relevant technology quickly, and being able to work effectively with a partner. These skills later proved useful to a research project, in which I designed and implemented software for studying the evolution of an animal signal.

My degree program is research-focused and has included six research projects, each of which required me to find and approach suitable academic supervisors. My ability to take initiative and get something started has benefited from this requirement. On my exchange to IU, in addition to joining university choirs and orchestras, I also selected orchestral players to form a string quartet, which I ran for the first half of the year. My involvement with the Zero Emissions Society at ANU led me to suggest and eventually carry out the project of auditing and replacing all the incandescent light bulbs on campus with more energy-efficient bulbs. These examples illustrate the third expression of my leadership capability: taking initiative.

My commitment to improving the lives of others, in addition to underlying the initiatives described above, is evident in my attitudes towards giving. I support free software, and the values and practices of such projects as Wikipedia resonate with me. I write music and have always placed my works under a Creative Commons license. In the past I have run a collaborative fiction website. I have made microloans through Kiva, and I use resources like GiveWell to determine the most effective ways to spend money on aid. I am still learning the details, but I am confident that I, and my peers, can leverage new technologies and creative uses of institutions like capitalism to preserve and enhance what I presume we all value: the happiness of everything that can experience it.