

**Cadet Manual**

***Last updated June 2019***

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**SECTION I**

**Welcome**

Welcome to the Youth Leadership Academy (YLA)! As a YLA cadet, you have been selected to be part of a group that is dedicated to helping you reach your dreams in life!

*“Goals are dreams with deadlines.” – Diana Scharf Hunt*

“*Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”*

*– Nelson Mandela*

**Why Should You Do This?**

There are many good reasons for participating in YLA! Here are just a few:

* To spend your time doing positive things for yourself and for others.
* To learn and grow as a leader.
* To get to know people who can help you with school.
* To make friends who like to work hard at school and volunteer like you.
* To understand how to make good decisions in your life.
* To open doors of opportunity for jobs, careers, and more.
* To earn a scholarship for college.
* To help you achieve your dreams!

**Purpose of this Manual**

The purpose of this manual is to communicate clearly with all YLA members and affiliates (cadets, parents, staff, volunteers, etc…) about YLA policies, how the program functions, and what the expectations are for participating in the program. YLA families are encouraged to read through this manual carefully together, and then discuss how they will work together to support their cadet in successfully completing this program.

**Mission of the YLA**

We engage and inspire youth to maximize their potential to become successful community leaders through the access and responsible utilization of post-secondary education.

**Vision of the YLA**

Through participation in YLA, students will realize their full potential. They will complete high school, graduate from a post-secondary education institution, and become productive leaders and role models in the community.

**Selection of Cadets**

The Youth Leadership Academy is a selective organization. Applications are open annually on January 1st, and are typically due in March or April. Only current 6thgrade students residing within the Elgin Community College (ECC) District 509 area are eligible to apply. The ECC District 509 area includes Illinois school districts U-46, D300, D301, and D303. Through careful review of applications and recommendation letters, some students are selected for interviews. After careful deliberation from these interviews, the YLA will invite up to 25 new students to become YLA cadets. Cadets are selected based on a mix of the following: cadets' responses to application and interview questions, recommendation letters from teachers and other adults (not parents or other relatives), family income eligibility, and commitment.

YLA applications are distributed to all schools with a 6th grade classroom within the ECC 509 geographic area every year. School administrators can then share this opportunity with families in their school who qualify (usually those on free or reduced lunch). Interested families may also call the YLA office (847-214-6965) for an application, or print the application from the YLA website at [www.ylacademy.org](http://www.ylacademy.org). The new YLA application is posted on this web site every year after January 1st.

**The YLA Program**

The YLA program is delivered through a team of trainers, mentors, and volunteers, who meet with cadets an average of two Saturday mornings per month during the academic year. About 20 of these sessions occur each year. YLA cadets are expected to attend every session, starting at 9:00am and concluding at 12:00pm. Sessions are typically organized as follows:

8:00 am – 9:00 am: YLA Staff Team Meeting + Student Council Meeting

9:00 am – 9:20 am: Announcements

9:20 am – 10:15 am: Instruction Block

10:15 am – 10:35 am: Grade Focus Debrief

10:35 am – 10:45 am: Break

10:45 am – 11:40 am: Instruction Block

11:40 am – 12:00 pm: Reflection

12:00 pm – 12:30 pm: YLA Tutoring / Success Skills Sign-in / Lunch

This schedule may be changed by YLA staff or volunteers to accommodate special program activities. In this case, announcements will be made in the YLA Newsletter and via an email blast to YLA parents. YLA sessions take place at Elgin Community College in Building K, unless otherwise announced.

The goal of the YLA curriculum is to provide cadets with the support and experiences that will help them reach their full potential as individuals who are still very young and who are responsible for making important choices about their adult life. There are three training approaches that the YLA uses in conjunction with each other to deliver a unique program to our cadets that help them accomplish this goal: A) Self-Determination/Leadership, B) College Readiness, and C) Service Learning.

1. ***Self-Determination/Leadership***

SELF-DETERMINATION and LEADERSHIP principles together form the foundation that serves as the leadership training philosophy used at the Youth Leadership Academy. SELF-DETERMINATION is defined as an individual being the primary activating factor in his/her own life. It is characterized by understanding the power of one's own choices, and by behaving as one who is responsible for making future life goals come into being. Self-determined individuals report greater happiness in their lives, are empowered to make decisions that reflect their own personalities and goals, and are reflective of the reality of one’s own abilities, interests, and values.

There are six principles of Self-Determination: 1) Self-Awareness, 2) Support Networks, 3) Autonomy, 4) Aspirations, 5) Work and Work-Like Experiences, and 6) Social Skills/Inclusion. Every YLA session and every YLA experience addresses at least one of the six principles of Self-Determination. The goal is for each YLA cadet to develop a strong foundation from these principles over the course of six years within the YLA program. A narrative explaining each of these six principles in more detail is included in *Appendix A* of this manual. See *Appendix E* and *Appendix* *F* for evaluation rubrics.

1. ***College Readiness***

Getting to college is one thing, but staying in college to complete a degree is another. A student's chances of staying in college and completing a degree will be highly dependent on how ready he/she is for the college experience. To be ready for college, he/she must work hard in his/her academic classes. This requires good scheduling, organization, and study skills.

A student who is ready for college must also have contextual knowledge about, and understanding of, the high school classes that will prepare him/her for college, the entire process of college selection and admissions, financial aid, and what to expect from college-level classes. Most of all, a college ready student is solid in his/her priorities: school comes first. While the reality remains that high school and college students may need part-time jobs for various reasons, it is critical that the number one focus be on academic progress.

The importance of a college degree is not to be underestimated, and it is never too early to prepare one’s self to obtain it. In addition to earning nearly twice the yearly income of a person who does not obtain a college degree, statistics indicate that a college graduate has a higher sense of personal fulfillment and confidence in all of life, and are in general healthier than people without college degrees. Today's fastest growing jobs require post-secondary education or training. The Youth Leadership Academy’s focus and promise is to deliver quality programming to help each cadet be ready for college and complete a college degree. See *Appendix B* for each Grade Focus.

1. ***Service Learning***

*“An education that teaches you to understand something about the world has done only half of the assignment. The other half is to teach you to do something about making the world a better place.” – Johnetta Cole*

Service learning projects are hands-on opportunities for cadets to practice and fine-tune the leadership skills that they acquire at YLA. Working together in teams with other young people from various grade levels, students establish team relationships from which they can learn how to get things done in groups. Each team of cadets is supported by a trained YLA adult mentor who helps them stay on track and accomplish their team goals.

Each service learning team follows the **Five Stages of Service Learning**, a teaching curriculum used by educational organizations across the country. These five stages are: 1) Investigation, 2) Planning and Preparation, 3) Action, 4) Reflection, and 5) Demonstration. Through this process, cadets gain particular affinity for community issues and important values are nurtured. In essence, service learning is YLA’s way of developing the next generation of community leaders. See *Appendix C* for the application of the five stages of service learning to each grade level and *Appendix F* for the evaluation rubric.

**Field Trips**

If finances allow, the YLA will host field trips, which will be held on “no school days”. The details of each field trip will be shared in advance via the YLA Newsletter or classroom announcements. All field trips will be educational in nature and may include visits to local colleges, universities, and/or cultural sites. Some field trips will provide transportation. Others will require that the parents drive the cadets to the field trip location (within the Elgin area). Again, details for all field trips will be shared ahead of time so that cadets and their parents can be prepared.

A permission slip MUST be on file for a cadet in order to participate in any field trip. The permission slip requires parental signature. The YLA office requires a Risk Management Plan for each field trip that ensures quality care and the safety of cadets for each trip.

## **YLA Policy on Cell Phones and Other Electronics**

In order for cadets to adhere to the Code of Respect and be engaged in the leadership curriculum, the Youth Leadership Academy cadets must adhere to the following rules for *limited use of cell phones and other electronic equipment* during YLA activities:

* During YLA Saturday sessions, cadets may keep their cell phones on ***for emergency purposes only*** (but they must remain on vibrate), UNLESS the cadets have permission from his or her mentor and are doing so for YLA program purposes.
* There will be absolutely NO TEXTING during YLA class time.
* Cadets may only use their cell phones during YLA break times, unless they are in an emergency situation.
* There will be absolutely NO LISTENING TO MUSIC WITH EARPIECES during YLA class time.
* Other electronics, such as PSPs, eReaders, handheld TVs, and video devices, are NOT to be used during any YLA activities.
* *Cadets are encouraged to NOT bring any unnecessary electronic devices to YLA sessions.*
* While using ECC computers, cadets are **not** allowed to go to internet social networking sites such as Facebook, watch videos on YouTube, or check e-mail UNLESS they have permission from his or her mentor and are doing so for YLA program purposes.
* There will be ABSOLUTELY **NO** FOOD OR BEVERAGES IN ECC COMPUTER LABS.
* Cadets who fail to adhere to this policy will be subject to disciplinary action as recommended by YLA staff. This may include (but is not limited to) confiscation of their electronic devices, loss of privilege in using ECC computers, and being placed on WARNING status.

**Volunteer Hours**

Cadets will be required to volunteer a minimum of five hours per year at a YLA-approved volunteer opportunity. These opportunities are posted on the YLA website or announced to cadets in classrooms. The purpose of the volunteer requirement is to give cadets experience in working for an altruistic community cause. It is critical that the cadets make arrangements for their own transportation to and from the volunteer opportunity for which he or she signed up. Completed volunteer hours, documented via the YLA Volunteer Form, must be submitted to a cadet’s mentor once per quarter, along with a copy of his or her school grades.

**Parent Meetings**

Parental (or legal guardian) involvement is critical to each and every college-bound student. The YLA program includes many learning opportunities for parents. There is also a wealth of information that YLA gives to parents that can make the difference between a cadet successfully completing or being dropped from the program. To this end, YLA has a requirement for each parent to attend a minimum of four YLA Parent Meetings per school year. The YLA Parent Meeting schedule is made available at the KICK OFF event every fall. Parent meeting topics are selected based on input from parents, and are almost always offered in both English and Spanish. Parents are encouraged to attend as many meetings as they are able.

In special cases, parents may send an approved designee to YLA Parent Meetings on his or her behalf. For example, a cadet’s aunt, uncle, or older brother or sister may attend a YLA Parent Meeting in place of the cadet’s parents, but only with prior approval from the Executive Director.

Parents or guardians who do not meet the four-meeting requirement will be contacted and asked to meet individually with the Executive Director and/or a YLA Board member in order to make-up the meetings on an individual basis and develop a plan for the family’s continued involvement in the YLA. If, after the parent or guardian is contacted three times, the parent or guardian does not respond to messages regarding their lack of fulfilling this meeting requirement, their cadet will still be able to attend YLA sessions. However, their cadet will no longer be eligible for the YLA Scholarship at ECC, until all requirements are satisfactorily met.

**YLA Communication**

It is critical that communication between YLA cadets, parents, staff, and volunteers be effective in order for the mission of YLA to be met. Various forms of available communication include:

* Classroom Announcements – upcoming opportunities, especially those that require sign-up sheets, will be announced during the first 10 minutes of a YLA session. It is critical that cadets show up to YLA class on time!
* Parent Meetings – upcoming opportunities will be shared during Parent Meetings as well.
* Emails to YLA Parents – it is important for parents to send any updated email addresses to the YLA Administrative Assistant and to check their email regularly. Emails will be sent periodically to all YLA parents, and many of them will require parent action. The YLA email address is [**YLAAdmin@elgin.edu**](mailto:YLAAdmin@elgin.edu)**.**
* YLA Newsletter –this is published electronically each month during the academic year. Electronic versions of the newsletter may be sent to all cadets and parents who have updated e-mail addresses with the YLA office.
* YLA Website – all who have internet access are encouraged to visit [**www.ylacademy.org**](http://www.ylacademy.org), where they can find an updated calendar of all YLA activities and other organizational information.
* YLA Facebook Page – reminders, article links, and other updates are shared on this particular form of social media. The group’s name is “YLA – Youth Leadership Academy.” If you “Like” this page, your Facebook feed will automatically include all YLA Facebook page posts. Note that each year, YLA will have a Parent Meeting that will help YLA families navigate the dangers of social media. If used properly, social media can be a useful communication tool.
* Calling the YLA Office– parents and cadets are always encouraged to call the YLA office at either 847-214-6910 (direct line to the Executive Director) or 847-214-6965 (direct line to the Administrative Assistant). Please be aware that YLA office hours during the school year are 9:00 am to 3:00 pm Monday through Friday. During the summer, YLA office hours are 9:00 am to 1:00 pm Monday through Thursday. **Note that the Executive Director often has work-related appointments away from the office, so if he/she is not available to talk on the phone when you call, leave a message and he/she will call you back. Be sure your name and contact information are both included in your voicemail.**
* Visits to the YLA Office – parents are welcome to make an appointment with the Executive Director to discuss any matter in person, but **it is important to call ahead to schedule your visit**.
* Communication with Mentors – as part of their service learning projects, cadets will often be expected to communicate in between YLA sessions with their project team members, including their mentor. Communication is a leadership skill that is greatly emphasized at YLA because of how important communication is for one’s educational and professional future. Parents are also welcome to contact their cadet’s mentor if they have questions about upcoming sessions or other YLA expectations. Mentors' contact information will be listed on the class syllabus shared with all YLA families at the KICK OFF.

**YLA Cadet Council**

The purpose of the YLA Cadet Council is:

1. to strengthen cadet leadership within YLA,
2. to facilitate communication between cadets and YLA staff and volunteers,
3. to help advance the YLA program so that it remains relevant to the cadets’ interests and goals, and
4. to give cadets an opportunity to develop leadership by organizing and carrying out YLA activities and service projects.

### *Members*

The YLA Cadet Council consists of all class captains from each grade level, along with two elected individuals from 11th and 12th grade that serve as President and Vice President. Two cadets must also serve as Treasurer and Secretary. The President and Vice President are not required to be class captains; however, the Treasurer and Secretary must be class captains.

The YLA Cadet Council members:

* Speak on behalf of cadets with YLA staff regarding YLA activities
* Have a voice at YLA Board meetings
* Meet at 8:30 am prior to YLA sessions and/or 12:00 pm after YLA sessions
* Support the staff in delivery of leadership training sessions
* Serve as positive examples for all YLA cadets
* Report back to his/her grade on the decisions of the YLA Cadet Council and YLA Board
* Plan and deliver special leadership projects and/or events in the community
* Speak positively on behalf of the YLA with the public

### *Meeting Times*

At 8:30 am prior to YLA sessions and/or at 12:00 pm after YLA sessions. All council meetings must be coordinated with YLA administration.

### *Mandatory Activities*

1. At least one fundraiser, where ALL funds will be used for YLA spirit activities such as celebrations and special trips.
2. One service project for the entire YLA cadet body to participate in.

Other activities are welcomed and encouraged, but must have the Executive Director’s approval.

The YLA Cadet Council has adopted bylaws to oversee its own work. These are available in *Appendix D.*

## **YLA Board of Directors**

The YLA Board of Directors is the highest decision-making entity of the organization. The YLA Board consists of up to 15 members, including the President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. The Board is responsible for approving YLA policy, appointing the Executive Director, establishing the budget for the organization, and offering strategic long-term leadership for the organization. The YLA Board meets an average of nine times per year and welcomes parent representatives and cadets (usually from the Student Council), as well as visitors, at each meeting.

As of June 2019, the YLA Board of Director membership is as follows:

Dr. Wes Scott, President

Wes Scott US Dept. of State

Gregory Robinson Elgin Community College

Mia Hardy Elgin Community College

Shimon Blanchard Sleep Number Corporation

Tiffany Via Sherman Hospital

Jasmine Williams Parent Representative

Miriam Mata Parent Representative

Anthony Bell Alumni Rep/College Student

Stephanie Maxwell Staff Representative

# SECTION II

## **How Cadets are Evaluated**

*The YLA program is designed to help each and every cadet make progress in reaching their full potential as developing leaders.* As a way of monitoring this progress, cadets are evaluated by YLA staff in the following areas listed below. Evaluation information is shared with parents/legal guardians at Parent-Mentor Conferences, which are held every December and May and at any other time during the academic year upon request.

* **Self-Determination/Leadership**

Cadets evaluate themselves each year on their level of confidence in their own abilities. Various questions about these abilities translate into, and are indicative of, the six Self-Determination principles emphasized in the YLA program. Progress is measured from year to year. Satisfactory progress is made when cadets report greater confidence in applying each of the six principles across the six years in which they are engaged in the YLA program. See A*ppendix A.*

* **Service Learning**

Cadets are assessed on their ability to successfully realize each of the five stages of service learning. *Appendix C* contains the rubric for this assessment, which is used by the YLA mentors who work most closely with the YLA service learning groups.

* **College Readiness**

Cadets and parents will also be assessed on their college readiness. This evaluation is carried out through a series of questions regarding the student’s preparations for the college process. These questions include, but are not limited to: goals, career choices, academic accomplishments, and college ambitions. These questions will be asked of our cadets and parents throughout the year.

## **Academic Performance**

Students who want to go to college must place significant importance on their academic performance. Succeeding in school is a prime indicator of a student’s readiness for college-level work. Leadership skills are a plus!

The YLA scholarships at both Elgin Community College and Judson University have minimum GPA (grade point average) requirements for sustaining the scholarship. The GPA requirements are 2.0, which translates to a C-average on a 4.0 scale. If a YLA graduate’s GPA falls below 2.0 at either institution, he or she will lose the YLA scholarship. Once this scholarship is lost, it is not possible to gain it back.

In order to best prepare YLA cadets for college – placing priority on academics, and thus encouraging good habits within cadets that would help them maintain such scholarships – YLA requires that cadets maintain a minimum GPA of 2.0 while they are in the program (7th through 12th grade). The YLA will request academic progress reports for all cadets each school quarter (with permission from parents/legal guardians). If a cadet’s cumulative grade point falls below a 2.0, or he/she receives a failing grade, then the cadet will be placed on academic probation. The cadet will also be required to acquire tutor assistance at school and provide proof of regular participation. Parents are expected to be supportive in this effort, and additional communication between the staff, volunteers, parents, and the cadet will take place. YLA cadets and parents who do not complete a plan and/or who do not participate in tutoring through his/her school may be asked to leave YLA.

It is important to understand that cadets will be encouraged to do their best and perform above the minimum academic requirements to the best of their ability. Leadership in all areas of life – including academics, and later on in a career – calls on a person to do more than “just enough to get by”.

The value of a YLA scholarship is not to be underestimated! First and foremost, the scholarship saves a student thousands of dollars in college tuition. The value of the scholarship can also be measured in dollars earned in a job that is accessible only by completing a college degree. These earnings can add up to hundreds of thousands of dollars over a lifetime!

## **Attendance Expectations**

Cadets are expected to attend all YLA sessions scheduled for the academic year. If a cadet is not able to attend a YLA session, the parent must notify the YLA office ahead of time. The calendar of YLA activities is distributed during the summer before the next academic year, so that cadets and their families can do their best to plan around these dates.

On average, the YLA schedules two Saturdays per month during the academic year for cadets. The hours of these Saturday sessions are 9:00 am – 12:00 pm. Attendance is taken by the YLA staff at the beginning of each of these sessions. Staff member take note of cadets who are absent or late for each session. Please note that in addition to the Saturday sessions, attendance is also recorded at special events like ECC College Night, Indigenous People’s Day, and MLK Day. Absences at any of these special events will be documented in the cadet’s attendance record.

## **Absences**

Each absence will be recorded as either an excused absence or an unexcused absence. An excused absence is one where the PARENT or LEGAL GUARDIAN (not the cadet) has contacted the YLA office BEFORE any scheduled YLA session to notify the office that the cadet will not be able to attend the session. Keep in mind that the office is officially closed at 3pm on Fridays, so it is encouraged that phone calls to the office be made before this time if it is known that a cadet will miss a Saturday morning session. In case of a family emergency, a phone call after the start of the session will be acceptable at the discretion of the Executive Director. A phone call to the YLA office any time after Saturday will be considered an unexcused absence.

When calling the office, if no one is available to pick up the phone, please leave a message! When leaving a message, please speak slowly and clearly (in English or Spanish) and identify: 1) the full name of the cadet, 2) the grade level of the cadet, 3) the name of the parent/guardian calling, and 4) the reason for the absence. The YLA office phone number is **847-214-6965**.

No more than four excused absences per year per cadet are acceptable. This means that after four excused absences, a cadet who misses for any reason – even if a parent or legal guardian contacts the office before the session – will be recorded as an unexcused absence.

If a cadet misses a session and a parent or legal guardian does NOT contact the YLA office beforehand, that absence will be recorded as an unexcused absence.

After two unexcused absences, the YLA cadet will be placed on WARNING status. After three unexcused absences, the YLA cadet will be DROPPED and will have to begin the YLA Reinstatement process within 30 days if he or she wishes to return to YLA.

## **Late/Tardy Policy**

Cadets are expected to be in their YLA classroom before 9:00 am; otherwise, they will be considered tardy. It is highly encouraged that all cadets arrive at ECC by 8:45 am to locate their classroom and be seated before 9:00 am.

If a cadet arrives any time after 9:00 am due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g., car problems), the parent or legal guardian needs to leave a message with the Executive Director to request that the late arrival not count against the cadet’s attendance record.

After a cadet is marked late for three YLA sessions, those marks will turn into one unexcused absence on the cadet’s attendance record.

## **Leaving Early**

Cadets are NOT permitted to leave the session early unless they have permission from *their parent/legal guardian and the Executive Director*. Parents or legal guardians are to call the YLA office with at least three days' notice and provide the reason that the cadet needs to leave YLA early. The Executive Director will mark the cadet’s absence excused or unexcused based on the reason provided. If the cadet is given permission to leave before noon from both the parent/guardian and the Executive Director, then it is the cadet’s responsibility to inform his or her mentor before the session date, for the purpose of contributing to the class or group in other ways. If the cadet is NOT given permission to leave before noon from both the parent/guardian and the Executive Director, an unexcused absence will be recorded for the whole session on the cadet’s attendance record.

Please note that if a cadet has a part-time job, the cadet is expected to supply the YLA schedule to the job supervisor in charge of scheduling so as to avoid conflicts with YLA sessions. Leaving a YLA session early for a shift at work will not be approved by the Executive Director.

## **Warning Status/Drop Policy**

Any cadet on WARNING status is at risk of being dropped from the YLA program. An official WARNING letter will be sent to the cadet’s home within seven business days of being placed on WARNING so that the cadet’s family is clear about his or her status.

Being dropped from the YLA program means that the cadet will no longer be eligible to receive leadership training, mentoring, or other program benefits from YLA. It also means that the cadet will no longer qualify for the full-tuition ECC scholarship or the full-tuition Judson University scholarship.

**YLA Make-Up Sessions**

Once per semester, the YLA will make available one make-up session. Cadets are not required to attend this session - however, cadets who do attend will have a previous absence (from that semester only) removed from their attendance record. Cadets may not “bank” the make-up session, meaning it cannot be used to remove an absence after the make-up session takes place. Cadets who wish to participate in make-up sessions must sign up at least two weeks before the make-up session by communicating with the YLA office.

**YLA Parent Meeting Attendance**

Parental (or legal guardian) involvement is critical to each and every college-bound student. The YLA program includes many learning opportunities for parents. There is also a great amount of information that YLA gives to parents that can make the difference between a cadet successfully completing or being dropped from the program. To this end, YLA has a requirement for each parent to attend a minimum of four YLA Parent Meetings per school year. The YLA Parent Meeting schedule is made available at the KICK OFF event every fall. Parent meeting topics are selected based on input from parents, and are almost always offered in both English and Spanish. Parents are encouraged to attend as many meetings as they are able.

In special cases, parents may send an approved designee to YLA Parent Meetings on his or her behalf. For example, a cadet’s aunt, uncle, or older brother or sister may attend a YLA Parent Meeting in place of the cadet’s parents, but only with prior approval from the Executive Director.

Parents or guardians who do not meet the four-meeting requirement will be contacted and asked to meet individually with the Executive Director and/or a YLA Board member, so as to make up the meetings on an individual basis and develop a plan for the family’s continued involvement in the YLA. If, after the parent or guardian is contacted three times and the parent or guardian does not respond to messages regarding their lack of fulfilling this meeting requirement, their cadet will still be able to attend YLA sessions. However, the cadet will no longer be eligible for the YLA Scholarship at ECC, until all requirements are satisfactorily met.

**In Case of Attendance Error**

If, for whatever reason, it is believed that the cadet was marked absent or late by mistake for any YLA session, the parent or legal guardian will have 10 business days – no more – to contact the Executive Director to request a revision of the attendance record.

In a similar manner, if a parent (or legal guardian) attended a YLA parent meeting but documentation of his/her attendance was not marked properly by YLA staff, the parent (or legal guardian) will have 10 business days – no more – to contact the Executive Director to request a revision of the record. Parent Meeting attendance records are shared at Parent-Trainer Conferences, but a parent (or legal guardian) can request a copy of their attendance from the YLA office any time when the YLA office is open.

**Reinstatement Policy**

Cadets who are dropped from YLA for reasons related to attendance or tardiness will be offered an opportunity to be reinstated into YLA. A cadet must complete all of the following reinstatement requirements:

1. A written letter, delivered to the Executive Director within 30 days of being dropped expressing interest in continuing with the YLA and explaining extenuating circumstances that caused previous absences or tardy arrivals.
2. A face-to-face interview between the dropped cadet, his/her parent(s)/legal guardian(s), the Executive Director, and one YLA Board member or other staff member to assess special circumstances deserving of reinstatement. At this interview, a timeline will be assigned to the cadet to complete the following:
   1. Serve a required probationary period for 6-12 months. Summer months do not count toward the probationary period, during which time the dropped cadet will need to maintain good attendance at the YLA.
   2. Complete a minimum of 10 hours of volunteer service in the community during this probationary period, maintain a volunteer service journal for these hours, and write a one-page report on the volunteer experience. The volunteer service plan must be approved by the Executive Director before starting.
   3. Provide evidence of good academic standing (minimum 2.0 GPA) in school.
   4. Submit a letter of recommendation from an adult (not a parent, relative, or YLA board member, volunteer, or staff) who has witnessed growth in the dropped cadet over the course of his or her probationary period.
3. After successfully completing this probationary period by completing all requirements listed above, the YLA board will then need to take a formal vote to reinstate the cadet. If reinstated, confirmation of this reinstatement vote will be delivered in writing to the YLA cadet, who will once again be eligible for all YLA benefits, including the ECC scholarship.
4. The opportunity to be reinstated shall be offered to a cadet no more than once over the course of his/her six years in the YLA program. If a cadet requests to be reinstated for a second time, the Board will only consider such requests under extraordinary circumstances and if at least 12 months have passed since the cadet was formally reinstated the first time.

## **Dress Code**

All cadets MUST follow the YLA dress code. Any cadet who is not following YLA dress code at any YLA activity will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the dress code policy.

### *Why do we have a Dress Code?*

There are many reasons! Primarily, YLA cadets must have experience with a professional dress code so that they are well prepared for their professional futures. In addition, it is a common leadership skill to “dress the part”. Business Casual is a standard dress code for a professional work environment, and it serves as a perfect guide for the YLA leadership culture. One never gets a second chance to make a first impression! Dressing for success is one of YLA’s premier and distinguishing features as a youth leadership development organization in the community!

### *Business Casual/YLA Dress Code*

• Clothing that works well for the beach, yard work, dance clubs, exercise sessions, and sports' contests may not be appropriate for a professional appearance at work.

• Even in a business casual work environment, clothing should be pressed and never wrinkled. Torn, dirty, or frayed clothing is unacceptable. All seams must be finished.

• Any clothing that has words, terms, or pictures that may be offensive to others is unacceptable.

• The YLA shirt is always OK! In fact, it is encouraged!

• The dress code is required for all YLA events both on and off campus, unless otherwise specified by the Executive Director or the President of the YLA Board.

• Gang-related dress is not tolerated in any form and disciplinary action will be taken immediately if worn.

• In addition to dressing appropriately, it is expected that all cadets are to maintain good hygiene during any YLA activities.

### *Slacks, Pants, and Suit Pants*

Permitted pants include slacks that are similar to Dockers and other makers of cotton or synthetic material, pants, wool pants, flannel pants, and dressy capris. Inappropriate slacks or pants include jeans, sweatpants, exercise pants, any kind of shorts, bib overalls, leggings (unless a dress or skirt is covering them), and any spandex or other form-fitting pants such as people wear for biking. Baggy pants of any material are inappropriate.

### *Skirts, Dresses, and Skirted Suits*

Casual dresses, skirts, and skirts that are split at or below the knee when sitting down (even if wearing leggings underneath) are acceptable. Mini-skirts, skorts, sun dresses, beach dresses, and spaghetti-strap dresses are inappropriate.

### *Shirts, Tops, Blouses, and Jackets*

Casual shirts, dress shirts, sweaters, tops, golf-type shirts, and turtlenecks are acceptable attire. Most suit jackets or sport jackets are also acceptable attire, if they violate none of the listed guidelines. Inappropriate tops for work include tank tops; midriff tops; shirts with potentially offensive words, terms, logos, pictures, cartoons, or slogans; halter-tops; tops with any bare shoulders; sweatshirts (including hoodies); and t-shirts, unless worn under another blouse, shirt, jacket, or dress. Tops must cover the waist and not be low cut.

### *Shoes and Footwear*

Conservative loafers, clogs, boots, flats, dress heels (under two inches), and leather deck-type shoes are acceptable. Athletic shoes (sneakers), flip-flops, slippers, and any forms of open-toe shoes are not acceptable.

### *Hats and Head Covering*

Hats are not appropriate. Head covers that are required for religious purposes or to honor cultural traditions are allowed.

Cadets are encouraged not to dye their hair in any bright, non-natural colors. Cadets may not show any tattoos or body piercings.

If you have any questions/concerns regarding the YLA dress code, please contact the Executive Director or a member of the YLA Board.

### *Disciplinary Action*

• First offense in the school year: a verbal warning will be issued to the cadet and parent(s)/guardian(s).

• Second offense in the same school year: a letter will be sent home to the parent(s)/guardian(s) requesting a meeting to discuss YLA dress code and other policies.

Any further offenses will result in disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by the Executive Director, including (but not limited to) being placed on WARNING status, which means the cadet would be at risk of being dropped from the YLA program.

**Code of Respect**

In all that they do, YLA cadets are expected to follow YLA’s **Code of Respect**:

***We respect ourselves and others and treat each other with common courtesy.***

***We respect our diversity – in respect to race, gender, ethnicity, religion, physical and mental abilities, class, age, and opinion.***

***We do not tolerate discrimination of any kind in our community.***

***We take pride in our academic work and contribute actively in the classroom and our learning community.***

***We are respectful of our environment and take pride in it.***

***We participate in our community through attending and volunteering.***

***We look out for our fellow cadets both and off campus.***

***We trust ourselves and each other to abide by the policies and expectations of Youth Leadership Academy.***

***We speak up about important issues because each voice does make a difference.***

Any concerns related to a cadet not following the Code of Respect will be handled in a timely manner on a one-on-one basis.

## **Overall Engagement in the Leadership Program**

YLA cadets are expected to be more than just "present" at all leadership training sessions. They must also participate! It is alright to be shy; however, the YLA training environment aims to bring young people out of their shells.

**YLA Scholarship – Elgin Community College**

The YLA Scholarship for Elgin Community College is awarded to YLA cadets who complete six years in the YLA program. The scholarship is available at Elgin Community College only. Cadets are not required to attend Elgin Community College; in fact, on average a third of YLA graduates attend other institutions. YLA staff members will help cadets in identifying and applying for other need-based and merit-based scholarships and other financial aid at other institutions, although there is no guarantee that they will receive them.

The YLA Scholarship at Elgin Community College covers tuition only, not books. It is a scholarship that is “stacked” on top of other federal and state grants for which the cadet may be eligible (for example, the federal Pell grant or Illinois state MAP grants). For this reason, the amount of the YLA Scholarship is different for each cadet. The estimated cost of attendance at Elgin Community College for the 2019 - 2020 academic year is approximately $11,635 (which includes tuition, fees, books, supplies, room and board, transportation, and personal expenses).

In addition to completing the YLA six year program, a YLA graduate must do the following in order to receive the YLA Scholarship:

* Apply and be accepted to Elgin Community College.
* Register for classes at ECC for the fall semester immediately after high school graduation (cadets cannot take a year or a semester off).
* Register for a minimum of 12 credit hours for each semester, such that the YLA graduate is qualified as a full-time student (the graduate cannot be a “part-time” college student). This means that if a student drops a class, which results in that student's status changing from full-time to part-time student, he or she will lose the YLA Scholarship. Once the YLA Scholarship is lost, it cannot be awarded back to the cadet.
* Maintain a 2.0 cumulative GPA while at Elgin Community College. If a cadet’s cumulative GPA goes under 2.0 at any time while at ECC, he or she will lose the YLA Scholarship and will not be able to regain it.
* Complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) each year that he or she plans to attend college. Cadets in their senior year of high school and their parents will be required to attend a FAFSA workshop during a YLA session in order to learn how to do this. The FAFSA requires that parents file taxes every year. *Special note: the FAFSA is not technically considered completed until the institution has satisfactorily received all verification documents from the cadet. This means that after submitting the FAFSA, the cadet must respond to requests (usually sent via email) from the ECC financial aid staff and meet all of their deadlines for submitting additional documents.*
* Maintain residency within Elgin Community College District 509.

Any questions about the YLA Scholarship can be directed to the YLA Executive Director and /or the ECC Financial Aid Office.

## **YLA Scholarship – Judson University**

A maximum of four individual YLA Scholarships for Judson University will be awarded to YLA alumni at any given time per calendar year. Each YLA Scholarship covers full tuition at Judson University. YLA recipients have a choice of participating in any of the undergraduate traditional programs or undergraduate adult programs.

YLA recipients must be one of the following:

* An Elgin Community College graduate.
* A YLA alum that is attending another community college and transferring to Judson with at least 60 credit hours.

To sustain eligibility for the YLA scholarship, the student must maintain a 2.0 GPA (grade point average) and submit the FAFSA on or before November 15th each year for up to a maximum of three consecutive years.

Note that the scholarship can only be applied towards tuition charges; YLA scholarships cannot be applied towards books, room and board, parking, technology or any other fee outside of tuition.

It is important for the YLA recipient to understand that Judson University requires all of its students to complete four mandatory classes in order to graduate: (1) Faith and Learning – 3 credits, waived for all transfer students; (2) Introduction to Old Testament – 3 credits; (3) Introduction to New Testament – 3 credits; and (4) Faith and Life – 3 credits. Any YLA alum who is awarded the YLA Scholarship for Judson University must then be sure to include these courses in his or her class schedule. YLA alumni who have graduated from Judson University with the YLA scholarship in the last two years were at Judson for a total of 2.0-2.5 years. For questions about the YLA Scholarship for Judson University, please contact the YLA Executive Director.

Similarly to the YLA Scholarship for Elgin Community College, the YLA Scholarship for Judson University is a scholarship that is “stacked” on top of other federal, state, and institutional grants for which the cadet may be eligible (for example, the federal Pell grant or Illinois state MAP grants). For this reason, the YLA Scholarship amount may differ for each cadet. Tuition alone at Judson University for the 2019-2020 academic year (not including fees, books, room or board) is $28,840. To learn more about Judson University, visit their website at [**www.judsonu.edu**](http://www.judsonu.edu), or call them at 847-628-2500.

**SECTION III**

**IMPORTANT NOTIFICATIONS**

### *Prompt and Respectful Use of Breaks*

Cadets will be given one 15-minute break during regular YLA working sessions (Saturday mornings), during which time they are allowed to purchase and consume snacks or beverages of their own liking. At no time are food and beverages allowed in ECC computer lab rooms.

If cadets take breaks that last longer than 15 minutes, the break privilege may be withdrawn. To make the best use of their break time, *cadets are encouraged to bring their own snacks*. This option is recommended because it usually costs less and gives cadets more time to eat their snacks rather than wait in line at ECC vending machines.

A cadet who does not follow any part of this policy on prompt and respectful use of breaks will be subject to disciplinary action as deemed appropriate by the cadet’s mentor and/or the Executive Director.

### *Nondiscriminatory Policy*

YLA admits students of any race, gender, color, national, and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities accorded to students at the Academy. It does not discriminate in administration of its education policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic or other school-administered programs.

***Transportation***

Due to insurance liability concerns, YLA strictly prohibits all YLA staff and adult volunteers serving in any YLA capacity from giving rides to cadets in their personal vehicles for any reason. Cadets needing rides to YLA activities are encouraged to call other cadet families for help with carpooling. YLA staff and volunteers can help connect families to arrange such plans.

***Social Security Numbers***

A cadet MUST have a valid social security number in order to be eligible for the YLA full tuition Scholarship at Elgin Community College once he or she graduates from high school and the YLA program. A valid social security number is required for the cadet to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), a form that must be submitted to the federal government during the cadet’s senior year of high school in order to receive the YLA Scholarship at Elgin Community College (or any other form of financial aid at another institution). For this purpose, the YLA requests cadet social security numbers at the time of application. The YLA does validate cadet social security numbers. Cadet information is stored securely in the YLA office.

***Taxes***

Parents must file taxes in order to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), a form that must be submitted to the federal government during the cadet’s senior year of high school in order to receive the YLA Scholarship at Elgin Community College (or any other form of financial aid at another institution).

***Residency within ECC 509***

If a YLA cadet’s family moves outside of Elgin Community College District 509 (which includes Illinois School Districts U-46, D300, D301, and D303), they must let the YLA Executive Director know immediately. While the cadet may be invited to continue attending YLA sessions, the family needs to understand clearly that the ECC Scholarship is awarded only to graduates from the YLA program that live within ECC District 509.

***Documentation of Special Concerns***

If any YLA employee or volunteer develops a special concern about a certain cadet, the concern will be documented with the YLA office and appropriate follow-up will be taken by the Executive Director. This follow-up does include communication with the parents or legal guardians. Any concerns, such as those relating to substance abuse, addiction, and illegal or unhealthy behavior, for which it is believed that the cadet’s well-being is endangered, will also be shared with the appropriate authorities or professional referral organizations.

***ECC Emergency Response***

To ensure the safety and security of YLA staff/volunteers and cadets during any YLA-related activity taking place at Elgin Community College, YLA staff/volunteers and cadets will receive regular updates on Elgin Community College’s Emergency Response systems. Also, parents may request a copy of ECC’s Emergency Response in either English or Spanish. As a general rule, for major emergencies, anyone is able to dial the ECC Police Department by dialing 7777 from a campus phone or by dialing 911 from their cell phone. In the case of tornadoes or other severe weather taking place while YLA is in session, cadets will be directed to ECC rooms designated as “Severe Weather Shelters”. (Note that all restrooms are designated as severe weather shelters.) Cadet families are encouraged to sign up at [**www.emergency.elgin.edu**](http://www.emergency.elgin.edu) to have ECC send a text message directly to their cell phones alerting them of any campus emergencies or cancellations.

***Closings/Cancellations***

In the case of detrimental weather, YLA will cancel sessions if ECC campus closes. To learn about YLA session closings, call the YLA office at 847-214-6910 after 7:30 am on the day of the scheduled session. The outgoing message will state if a YLA session has been cancelled for any reason.

***Serious Offenses***

Any YLA cadet who makes a serious offense will be immediately subject to disciplinary action as recommended by the Executive Director, including and up to being dismissed from the YLA Program. Examples of serious offenses which are strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated include, but are not limited to:

* Intentionally damaging or vandalizing ECC or YLA property or property belonging to another person.
* Verbal or physical threatening or actual infliction of bodily harm to any student, trainer, or other person. This includes excessive teasing or bullying of any kind.
* Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol at any session or event directly related to YLA, regardless of location.
* Bringing drugs, alcohol, weapons, or drug paraphernalia to any YLA activity, regardless of location.
* Sexual harassment of any other person.
* Theft or possession of stolen property from ECC, YLA, or another cadet or person.
* Arson or attempted arson.
* Participation in gang activities, including the wearing of gang colors, during any time they are in the YLA program.
* Smoking during any YLA activity, regardless of location.
* Failure to maintain good behavioral status at school any time they are in the YLA program. If a cadet is expelled from school or put on probation for any reason, it is the parent’s responsibility to notify the YLA as soon as possible.
* Leaving the premises without permission or before a YLA session or field trip is complete.
* Use of vulgar or obscene language.
* Possession of explicit magazines or any other inappropriate or insensitive materials in YLA sessions and/or the transmission of such materials through YLA communication mediums.
* Trespassing in areas of ECC not assigned to YLA cadets.

**APPENDIX A**

**Self-Determination Narrative**

This narrative contains a brief explanation of each of the six principles of Self-Determination, as they are applied in the YLA program.

### *1. SELF-AWARENESS*

Self-Awareness implies an extraordinary understanding of one’s self. It encompasses all aspects of personality, including but not limited to physical, emotional, social, cultural, ethical and religious beliefs, morals, and goals. In order for these appropriate insights to develop, the cadet must be aware of the full range of each of these characteristics. Just talking about these traits is not sufficient. The cadet needs to identify individuals exemplifying both good and bad examples of these traits and whether the example is personally desirable or to be avoided. A next step of development is the direct application of these traits to self. The cadet should be able to recognize those aspects in themselves and identify areas where they are satisfied and those areas where they feel a need for some attention and development. As our cadets begin to establish their own goals, they should be able to evaluate themselves against their own standards and that of the general public, and additionally to that of leaders who are in their own age bracket and other leaders who are adults. Whether any of us, cadet or otherwise, ever really reach the full understanding of ourselves is a matter of personal opinion, since changes and expectations develop throughout our entire lives.

### *2. SUPPORT NETWORKS*

It is the rare individual who does not at some point need some assistance, or at the very least an outside opinion to test hypotheses. Unfortunately, the most frequently utilized resource for today’s young people is other young people. Again, unfortunately, there is either a definitive lack of expertise of the world in general, or an over-abundance of self-proclaimed experts in their lives. It seems the only qualifications necessary for consultation are proximity and prior acquaintance. It is critical then, that our cadets are introduced to the concept of support and mentoring along with the necessary criteria to assure that appropriate, knowledgeable advice is sought and received. Our cadets must be made aware of the legitimate need for social/emotional, and advisory council. They need to identify key individuals in their own sphere of acquaintance or availability that would provide good counsel and be of assistance BEFORE the need exists. The middle of a crisis is NOT the time to try to establish a trusting relationship. Our cadets need to identify the different types of assistance they may need for the foreseeable future and learn to differentiate appropriateness of various sources of help for different problems. They need to be familiar with characteristics of both good and poor support and then actually access and learn how to use the sources. Service learning and mentoring activities are both excellent ways to build these skills and develop confidence in the ability to seek assistance. Those in a position to give assistance need to remember that the healthiest way of providing support is not giving opinions as to what to do, but to help look at the positive and negatives of the many options along with the support for the cadet to make decisions that best suit him/her. Various stages of both application and evaluation exist in this category according to the various developmental stage of the cadet. Mastery will not occur until the cadet has managed to establish more adult-like networks that emulate personal/academic and professional supports that may be needed and the ability to function as a part of others’ support networks. Our cadets must be comfortable with both the concept and the utilization of support networks.

### *3. AUTONOMY*

Autonomy represents all those various skills that enable one to operate as a fully independent adult. Specific areas include self-care, responsibility in all areas such as general decision making and action follow-up, financial competence, academic and on-the-job behaviors that lead to overall success and promotion. Another important aspect of autonomy is the ability to think independently, and the courage to act upon that independent thought to follow the cadet’s own goals and expectations. A good part of the decision making is the ability to think analytically of possible outcomes, to weigh the inevitable consequences and advantages of each and then choose the best alternative. This is a skill that cannot be simply intellectualized successfully but must be practiced over and over at every level of maturity. It can begin as a toddler deciding which t-shirt to wear (color, sleeve length etc.) and proceed through adult decisions of career choosing and relationships. The adults that surround the cadet provide incredibly important modeling and mentoring. Whenever possible (and safe), non-judgmental processing and exploration and the final decision should be left up to the cadet….often a difficult task when, as an adult, you have definite opinions.

### *4. ASPIRATIONS*

Everyone needs to have hopes and dreams. We lose many of our young people when they have no direction and no hope for their future. It is our job as trainers, mentors, and significant adults to help foster the development of long and short term goals AND realistic action plans with back-ups so our cadets have an active investment in their own future. A perfect example of misplaced aspiration is the young person who wants to be a professional basketball player, who is failing PE, doesn’t participate in team sports, and is hesitant to participate in physical activity unless it’s a quick pick-up game in the neighborhood all the while unrealistically clinging to the goal. While goals are present, accompanying behaviors and action plans don’t support the goal, and the chance of fulfillment is slim. Exploration of aspirations in conjunction with self-awareness insights can greatly help in keeping the goals realistic and creating alternative choices.

### *5. WORK AND WORKLIKE EXPERIENCES*

One of the biggest complaints of would-be employers today is that our young people don’t know how to work. The joy of a job well-done is not a natural phenomenon and must be learned developmentally from small tasks to larger/longer jobs that are developmentally appropriate. These experiences can begin as a toddler “helping” and picking up toys, and progress to chores and increasing responsibilities as maturity and executive function develop. At home responsibilities, academic and volunteer experiences and projects, and training opportunities all provide opportunities to learn and understand the responsibilities required and characteristics of good working skills. Of course, actual job experiences are invaluable. Opportunities to develop habits should NOT wait until the first paying job at minimum wage. Again, one doesn’t simply absorb these traits on site, but examples both good and bad need to be pointed out and explained. As trainers and supportive adults, every field trip, or encounter can be turned into a learning experience if we are willing to take the time and help our students explore.

### *6. SOCIAL SKILLS/INCLUSION*

Individuals need to be a part of a larger group. The need for belonging is often a critical deciding factor in the direction of our cadets’ future. They need to identify their own allegiances, and examine whether those groups are reflective of their goals and aspirations. Additionally, we need to reinforce their identity as a cadet and be sure that the standards we consistently represent are indicative of the caliber of association that the cadets want to aspire to. We must constantly reinforce their value to the academy and our community while walking the fine line of accountability at the highest level they are able to achieve.

If SELF-DETERMINATION is achieved, our cadets will have high levels of satisfaction with their lives because they will have been responsible for their own direction. They will have the insight, flexibility, and tenacity to follow their aspirations as high as they want to go in a manner uniquely their own. They will know how to seek help when needed, and will be an asset to their communities.

**APPENDIX B**

**Grade Focus**

The Path to College for any YLA cadet is a 6 year process starting with the complex exploration of self and ending with the confidence of independence to launch our cadets onto the college campuses across the country. Our cadets are selected in 6th grade through a rigorous application process including an interview with commitment and potential as the key motivators.

***7th Grade – Finding your Gifts***

**Self-Awareness ∙ Talents ∙ Gifts ∙ Personalities**

The focus here is on the exploration of talents and skills, as well as on helping our cadets understand their personalities, beliefs and values so that they can make positive decisions, decipher emotions and plan their future. The qualities learned here would be developed throughout YLA years, as the cadets mature and learn to become independent.  Our mentors play a key part as realistic role models that encourage self-confidence, focus on cadets’ values and how to both handle stress and understand where it comes from.

***8th Grade – Finding your Voice***

**Public Speaking ∙ Branding ∙ Social Media**

The focus here is for our cadets to be able to speak persuasively - a skill that is vital not only for our future politicians, business leaders and teachers, but also for everyone in general, because almost everyone will, at some point in their lives, [have to persuade others](http://www.presentation-guru.com/ethos-pathos-logos-the-three-pillars-of-rhetoric/). Our focus goes beyond just speaking; it also includes teaching our cadets to build positive brands of themselves. We guide our cadets to ask, “What do others think of when they see me, based on their perception of me?” We teach them positive ways to interact with people, and how to carry themselves publicly in a variety of different situations, along with different social platforms and media.

***9th Grade – Finding your Peace***

**Cultural Tolerance ∙ Cultural Awareness ∙ Diversity**

With today’s globalization, and in a world that has become connected multi-culturally through the far-reaching powers of the Internet, establishing tolerance and harmony has become very crucial and important.  Our students must learn to live with people of different backgrounds, cultures and religions in an environment where fostering mutual tolerance and affection has become vital. YLA aims at helping our cadets counter influences that lead to fear and exclusion of others.

***10th Grade – Finding Your Future***

**Career Ready ∙ Work Skills**

The skills our YLA cadets learn are skills that successful people have in any career.  Being ready for a career means that by now, our cadets have a good sense of self and are willing to have conversations about the world of work.  This is the grade where we focus on expanding our cadets’ visions of the future.

***11th Grade – Finding your Path***

**College Knowledge**

From applications to dorm drop-off, we are there to help our cadets make the important decisions within the college process.  We realize that choosing the universities our cadets will attend for about half a decade is not an easy task. We help our students navigate the academic programs, locations, social atmospheres, sizes and types of colleges they want to have their crucial early adult memories associated with.

***12th Grade – Finding your Independence***

**College Transition ∙ Life Skills ∙ Professionalism**

Just because our cadets will be going to college does not mean that they are ready to live on their own.  Life skills are essential for our students to succeed and master their college experience. Keeping themselves safe, knowing the options for asking for help, handling finances and budget, and keeping track of personal and professional records are just a few essential skills for our cadets to survive on their own.  This last year of YLA focuses on allowing our cadets to succeed in accomplishing college completion and getting ready for independence in the world.

**APPENDIX C**

## **Community Service Learning**

YLA utilizes the 5-Step Service Learning Model to provide our cadets with a framework for understanding their talents and interests as well as how to leverage them to help address community needs.  The primary purpose of Service Learning in the YLA is to offer a structured setting in which the cadets can practice and improve their leadership skills. In addition to building the next generation of community leaders, Service Learning is an intentional way in which young people can inherit important philanthropic values.  Some of these values include volunteering and building foundational relationships with organizations that address issues in which they are particularly passionate.

In short, we are putting our cadets into our communities to actually solve our big issues.  We are harnessing their passions to apply their achieved skills to working with community leaders directly to solve problems.  By doing so, YLA will increase the value it provides to our cadets (enhanced skills) and the community (enhanced services).

The five steps of Service Learning are:

**Investigation** – learning more about the core issue under the need for service

(7th - 8th Grade)

**Planning and Preparation** – working as a group to do something to address the core need in their community

(9th Grade - 10th Grade)

**Action** – implementing the project, which can be a direct or indirect form of impacting the community

(11th Grade)

**Reflection –** intentionally facilitated group time to articulate what was learned from the overall experience

(12th Grade)

**Demonstration –** presenting to other groups what was accomplished and why, with the goal of inspiring others to do the same or more in the future

(12th Grade)

After students spend the first 2 years exploring issues, they are ready upon entering high school to choose a problem in their community that they can collectively put ideas, resources, and energy behind to solve.  In the last year, cadets conclude their experience by analyzing and reflecting on results, and then packaging their takeaways into a celebrated presentation left behind as a framework for others to follow.

**APPENDIX D**

**YLA STUDENT COUNCIL BYLAWS**

Bylaws are a set of rules created and adopted by an organization to help govern its own affairs. The YLA Student Council updated and adopted these bylaws on June, 2019.

YLA is restructuring its student council and we are hoping for a lot of success in the future. The new guidelines for the student council are as follow:

New Name: Cadet Council of YLA (CCYLA or CC for short)

### *Article I - Purpose*

The purpose of the Youth Leadership Academy (YLA) Cadet Council is to:

1. To give cadets an opportunity to develop leadership by organizing and carrying out some YLA activities and service projects.
2. To planning events that contribute to YLA’s spirit and community welfare.
3. CCYLA will be the voice of the cadet body.
4. Establish firm communication between cadets and the YLA Board.
5. Improve the YLA program so as to benefit cadets.
6. Help collect feedback from cadets.
7. Promote productivity among the cadets.
8. Help resolve problems that may occur.

### *Article II - Vision*

The vision of the YLA Cadet Council is to see improvement with cadets and the YLA program with respect to education and to stimulate self-determination and perseverance in YLA cadets.

### *Article III - Membership*

The membership of the YLA Cadet Council shall consist of all class captains from each grade level plus 2 elected heads to serve as President and Vice President from 11th or 12 grade. There must also be a Treasurer and Secretary. The President and Vice president are not required to be class captains.

### *Article IV - Duties*

Section 1. General Duties of the Cadet Council include:

1. Discussing the sessions.
2. Respond to cadet concerns.
3. Striving to be present at all Cadet Council meetings.
4. Getting feedback from every class at least once per quarter.
5. Holding a minimum of thirteen (13) meetings per year, with additional meeting as necessary when planning special events.
6. At least one (1) member being present at all YLA summer events.
7. At least one (1) member being present at YLA Board meetings.

Section 2. Duties of the President include:

1. Calling Cadet Council meetings to order.
2. Leading the Cadet Council in their decision-making process.
3. Facilitate Cadet Council meetings.
4. Organizing the meeting agendas and distributing them to the Council members at least one week in advance.
5. Serving as a communication link to the YLA Board.

Section 3. Duties of the Vice-President include:

1. Co-facilitating Cadet Council meetings with the President.
2. Filling in for the President when he or she is absent.
3. Assisting the President in his or her duties.

Section 4. Duties of the Secretary include:

1. Keeping track of attendance at meetings.
2. Taking notes at all meetings.
3. Send meeting notes and Cadet Council attendance records to the YLA Executive Director on a regular basis.
4. Coordinate all communication within the YLA Cadet Council with the President.

### *Article V - Meetings*

Section 1. Attendance at Meetings

All Council Members are expected to attend all Cadet Council meetings and maintain a regular presence at YLA. Council members are allowed three (3) excused absences and one (1) unexcused absence per year to be able to stay on Council. Council Members are expected to notify an officer of their absence before the meeting they are missing whenever possible.

* 1. Meeting Times: 8:30 am prior to YLA sessions and/or 12:00 pm after YLA sessions. All council meetings must be coordinated with the administration of YLA.

Section 2. Quorum and Voting Procedure

In order for a meeting to be called to order and considered an official meeting, or for an official vote to be taken, there must be one (1) representative from each class and at least fifty percent (50%) of the Council present. If the requirements for quorum are not met, an official vote cannot be made.

Section 3. Teleconferencing and Electronic Voting

Any Council Member may be part of the meeting by phoning in or video conferencing. Their participation in this way will be noted in the minutes. Cadet Council members participating via teleconference or phone will not be allowed to vote.

Section 4. Visitors at Meetings

Cadets will be allowed to visit Student Council meetings, but they need to notify an officer two weeks in advance.

Section 5. Voice and Vote

All Council Members have full voice and vote during meetings of the Cadet Council. Visitors may have voice but no vote.

### *Article VI - Elections*

In October of each calendar year, classes are able to vote for representation for their class on Cadet Council. Candidates who receive the highest number of votes win the election. Each class needs to have a minimum of one (1) and a maximum of three (3) representatives on Council. Members of the Cadet Council will then elect the Officers of the Cadet Council. All Officers have one (1) year terms.

### *Article VII - Removal from Office*

Section 1. Council Members may be removed from office for the following reasons:

1. Disrespectful behavior.
2. Two or more unexcused absences.
3. Not fulfilling assigned responsibilities.
4. Abusing powers.

Section 2. Notification and Defense

Once a motion to remove an individual from Council is made, the whole Council (including the Member being voted on) is notified two weeks in advance of the date of the vote and the reason for the vote before the vote is taken. The Member being voted on has the opportunity to present a written essay defending himself or herself up until the day of the vote, and is allowed a verbal statement (closing argument) to the Council before the vote is taken.

Section 3. Voting to Remove a Member from Council

Removal from Council requires a two thirds (2/3) majority vote of the whole Council minus the Member being voted on.

### *Article VIII - Filling Vacancies*

Section 1. Officer Vacancies

In the case of resignation or removal from office of a Cadet Council Officer, the next highest Officer takes on the title and responsibilities of the vacated position until the Council is able to take a formal vote naming the replacement. In the case of a vacancy of the Secretary, the Council will appoint a Council Member to fill in during the interim until permanent replacement is chosen.

Section 2. Procedure for Filling Vacancies

A position is declared vacant within two (2) weeks of removal from office or resignation. Applications to fill the vacancy will be taken within thirty (30) days. Cadet Council will fill the vacancy through a Council vote by the same procedure as they normally elect Officers.

### *Article IX - Adoption and Amendment*

These bylaws may be ratified by a two thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Cadet Council. Any cadet may propose amendments to these bylaws.

# APPENDIX E

**YLA Leadership Rubric Form**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Leadership Skills:** | **Superiority of Expectations (5)**  **Superior Demonstration (5)** | **Exceeds Expectations (4)**  **Clear Demonstration (4)** | **Meets Expectations (3)**  **Basic Demonstration (3)** | **Progressing Toward Expectations (2)**  **Minimal Demonstration (2)** | **Below Expectations (1)**  **Lacking or Incorrect Demonstration (1)** |
| **Participation and Engagement** | \*Takes clear leadership in class or group activities  \*Encourage others to participate  \*Initiates activity with no direction | \*Participates and engages often and consistently  \*Clearly helps class of group to progress in goals of the day | \*Participates and engages at expected level  \*Potential for greater participation is clear | \*Demonstrates some participation and engagement  \*Lacks consistency or is often hesitant | \*Has not participated and/or displays distracting behavior that undermines participation or engagement by others |
| **Responsibility and Follow-Through** | \*Complete all assigned tasks (and perhaps additional tasks) independently  \*Highly reliable and/or obvious consideration is given to end outcome and impact  \*Places high priority on reaching goals | \*Completes tasks well with little prompting  \*Approaches tasks in a positive manner and potential for excellence is clear  \*Strives to take on additional responsibilities without depriving others of opportunity | \*Completes tasks with some prompting, but there is no evidence that he or she would place them as a high priority on his or her own  \*Potential for greater responsibility is unclear | \*Above average prompting is required to motivate him or her to follow-through  \*And/or need help understanding how to execute tasks  \*And/or does not appreciate how his or her tasks fit into the larger goal | \*Did not complete task(s) or refused to take on any responsibilities  \*Classroom or group work is not a priority |
| **Safe-Awareness and Maturity** | \*Demonstrates clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses  \*Behaves with exceptional maturity and insight typical of a competent professional adult without being over-confident | \*Demonstrated clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses  \*Responds with maturity (or mature growth) and insight expected of someone a year or more older | \*Demonstrates understanding of some strengths and/or weaknesses  \*Displays consistent appropriate behavior and some developmental insight | \*Inconsistent understanding or no clear articulation of strengths and/or weaknesses  \*Sometimes displays immature behavior, perhaps associated with social influences | \*Shortcomings in understanding or acknowledging strengths and/or weaknesses to the point of concern  \*Consistently and/or inappropriate behavior |
| **Interpersonal and Teamwork Skills** | \*Demonstrates an inordinate ability to include and support all team members  \*Seen and recognized by most as a natural leader | \* Deals effectively with all participants  \*Supports other team members  \*Displays acceptance of all cadets | \*Interacts appropriately with others  \*Experiences some disconnect, but manages to compensate or overcome this with participation in class or group activity | \*Interacts appropriately with some, but not all, team or class members  \*Progress of the class or group is slowed down by an unintentional lack of support or unintended conflict | \*Very little, no, or inappropriate interactions with other class or group members  \**Explanation:* |
| **Oral and Presentation Skills** | \*Demonstrates exemplary presentation skills, including confident and well-organized delivery, obvious rehearsal and editing  \*Speaks clearly and concisely, sensitive to class or group context  \*Strong impact or message is received | \*Very competent in presentation skills including organized delivery  \*Speaks clearly and reasonably  \*Effective message is conveyed to group | \*Presentation skills are adequate, but could be strengthened with practice  \*Messages are delivered and received positively | \*Presentation skills show some weakness (additional individual attention is recommended for strengthening)  \*Speaking in class or group may be unclear and/or not concise | \*Presentation skills are significantly underdeveloped to the point of concern  \*Motivation may be in issue and should be discussed if further participation in YLA is desired  \*Spoken messages may have a negative impact |
| **Reflection and Critical Thinking** | \*Demonstrates excellent learning and growth from self-reflection on experiences and learning  \*Comprehensively identifies and absorbs lessons at a leadership level  \*Makes connections to specific ways in which the future will be affected and takes great strides to implement change | \*Reflections show strong insight and capabilities in conveying a synthesis of information  \*Identifies and absorbs lessons at an above average level  \*Identifies examples of change for the future and makes notable progress in those areas | \*Reflects on experiences but does not go much beyond what is required  \*Identifies implications to self and others at grade level  \*Identifies several examples of change for the future and implements those changes to a degree | \*Reflections and lacking in depth and/or clarity due to a lack of confidence or motivation  \*Identifies some implications to self but they are limited or not implemented  \*Identifies some potential effects on near future | \*Has completed very few if any written reflections  \*Does not identify implications to self or others  \*Does not acknowledge impact of lessons on future |

# APPENDIX F

**Service Learning Rubric**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **UNSATISFACTORY** | **NEEDS IMPROVEMENT** | **PROFICIENT (Adequate or Above Performance Goals)** |
| **Investigation** | Has done little or no research with little or no overview of the issue. | Has done limited research and some processing of its meaning. | Has completed research – multiple sources and good synthesis. |
| **Planning and Preparation** | Little or no evidence of planning and preparation | Some planning and preparation evident, more in-depth work is necessary. | Good planning and preparation evident, major issues are identified and future direction is clear. |
| **Action** | No participation evident. | Participation requires prodding and direction. | Ample participation – volunteers readily, evidence of leadership in group setting. |
| **Reflection** | Little or no understanding of issues and personal learning process. | Medial understanding of issues and personal learning process. | Good understanding of issue with evident insight into personal learning. |
| **Demonstration** | Unable to show, explain or teach others about the group accomplishments. Leadership is not evident. | Explanation, teaching of group’s accomplishments is difficult to comprehend. Leadership needs strengthening. | Is able to show, explain, and teach others the group’s accomplishments and development of leadership skills. Leadership is noticeable. |