

# Shasta E. Cullen

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University of Houston  
4800 Calhoun Road  
Houston, TX 77004

Dear SSOE Committee,

My name is Shasta E. Cullen, and I am a senior at the University of Houston. I am writing to express interest in highlighting the skills for the SSOE Personal Development Seal. My experience as an ambassador for the Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) and a panelist for the LGBTQ Speakers Bureau aided in my development of these specific skills.

- **Self-Management & Respect.** During one Cultural Conversation for CDI, students discussed the events that took place at the University of Missouri. A student that attended the event stated that the African American students at the University of Missouri were being hypersensitive and the football players should not have walked out. I found myself upset with the student because I did not agree with his statement, but I remained calm and let everyone know that there are multiple ways to look at the situation in Missouri. My ability to recognize both my feelings and the feelings of the student were key to employing behaviors that kept the conflict manageable.
- **Personal Beliefs.** As part of the leadership training for the ambassador team our supervisors asked us to attend a faith based meeting that was different from our predominant belief. Since I identify as a Catholic, I asked my friend who is part of the Jewish community, if I could go to temple with him. After attending the service my friend and I discussed the similarities and differences between Catholicism and Judaism.
- **Identity Development.** Before I entered college it was hard for me to tell people that I identified with the LGBTQ community. I joined the LGBTQ Speakers Bureau to become more comfortable sharing my story. After the panel discussions, students asked for advice on how to navigate college as a LGBTQ student. The more I verbally shared my story with others the more comfortable I felt identifying with LGBTQ community. Through my participation in CDI and LGBTQ Speakers Bureau, I understand and know that there are many identities that make me the person I am today.
- **Ethics, Values, and Integrity.** It is important to me in my role as an officer in my student organization for others to be able to trust my decisions. In order to do that, I have to make sure that my actions match the words that I say. That means that I follow through on my commitments, I am willing to do the work with my team, and that I use my values in my everyday interactions. When we were planning an event, there was a debate on the speaker that we were selecting for a keynote. To make the decision, I made sure that I considered others' perspective in conjunction with my own, to come to a consensus for our decision.

Thank you for reviewing my application for the SSOE Personal Development Seal. If you need any additional information please feel free to contact me at 713-743-5100.

With Cougar Pride,

Shasta E. Cullen