Crossing The Line
Adapted from: Undergraduate Interfraternity Institute & North American Interfraternity Conference

Objectives
• To emphasize the importance of knowing and communicating personal values
• To highlight how personal values influence the group
• To develop the idea that knowing your values will be the basis for leadership
• To introduce the concept of values based actions

Values
• Presenter begins discussion by asking participants to define values
• Ask participants to identify where they learn their values and who teaches them values
• Ask participants to identify specific values they hold. Ask: Are they people with values? Yes or no?

Introduction
The next activity will afford people the chance to think about their values and to express them to others. It is important to begin Cross The Line by establishing common ground for the activity. We live in a diverse world. In this exercise we will explore the diversity among us by thinking about our values, our backgrounds, our teachers, and our experiences. We might even discover that this fairly homogeneous looking group is much more diverse than any of you would assume. This activity will involve labeling and personalizing some of this diversity. This personalization might prove uncomfortable at times. Eventually, however, it might empower us to break down some of the stereotypes and assumptions that we, as a product of our cultures, experience, and life hold.

Instructions
This activity is fairly simple. Ask everyone to gather on one side of the room/line and face towards its center. I will call out specific categories/labels/descriptions, and ask that all of those to whom this applies, walk to the other side of the room/line. For example, I might request that anyone with glasses please cross the room. If this describes you and you feel comfortable acknowledging it, you would walk to this side of the room/line. Once there, turn and face the crowd you just left. Get in touch with your feelings and think about those people on both sides, then return to the side you started from. After a few seconds, I will continue with a new question. Remember, there is no pressure to cross the room/line if you don’t feel comfortable doing so. You will need to make that decision. At the conclusion of the activity, we will discuss what we felt and what we learned. There may be times when this activity makes you feel slightly uncomfortable. I would urge you to lean into that discomfort since it may mean that you are about to gain an important learning or insight.

Ground Rules
There are two important ground rules to this activity.
1) The first involves listening. Let’s have silence throughout the exercise. “No talking, snickering, giggling, nonverbal messages.”
2) It is imperative that we respect the dignity of each person who is here. All that is shared should remain confidential. “Nothing that is offered should leave this room. However, if after the workshop you really need to talk to a particular person, be sure to ask his/her permission.”

Questions for the Activity
• Anyone who has visited another country
• Anyone who is female
• Anyone who prefers day to night
• Anyone who has never flown
• Anyone who owns your own car
• Anyone who since his/her first year of high school has been in love and been hurt
Anyone who is Atheist or Agnostic
Anyone who is Jewish
Anyone who is a person of color
Anyone who feels that he/she knows very little about his/her cultural heritage
Anyone who would describe his or her family as blue collar or working class
Anyone who would describe his or her family as middle class
Anyone who would describe his or her family as upper class
Anyone who is the oldest in the family
Anyone who is the youngest in the family
Anyone who is an only child
Anyone who sometimes has low self confidence
Anyone who sometimes feels lonely
Anyone who has ever been in a fight to prove you were tough
Anyone who has received a 3.5 GPA or higher last semester/quarter
Anyone who received lower than a 3.0 GPA last semester/quarter
Anyone who considers him/herself a Democrat
Anyone who considers him/herself a Republican
Anyone who considers him/herself a Socialist
Anyone who is adopted
Anyone whose natural parents have divorced
Anyone who has had one or more of their parents pass away
Anyone who believes it is alright for someone to have a date of the same gender at a social event
Anyone who has a family member who is gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender
Anyone who is choosing to abstain from sex until marriage
Anyone who has experienced the effects of alcoholism in their family
Anyone who has experienced the effects of drug addiction in their family
Anyone who has a friend or relative who has attempted to commit suicide
Anyone who has had a friend or relative to commit suicide
Anyone who has a friend or relative who has been sexually assaulted or abused
Anyone who has not yet crossed the line

Does anyone have any other questions that they would like to ask the group? Presenter invites participants to sit and form a circle. Presenter then facilitates a discussion about the activity. “Try to focus on values.”

**Processing Questions**

- Do values matter?
- What kind of feelings did you have as you participated?
- How did you feel when there were very few of you on one side of the room?
- What does this activity have to do with leadership?
- Did you find yourself making judgments of others?
- How did the movement of others influence you?
- What did you learn through this activity that can make our environment more welcoming?
- What did you learn through this activity that will make you a better person or leader?
- Through this activity, intentionally or not, did you share your values?
- Through this activity, intentionally or not, do you think that you learned about the values of others?

**Learning Outcomes**

- How do values represent themselves in everyday life?
- How do values represent themselves in our organizations?
- Are there times in life when values are ignored?
- What is the result when values are ignored, trashed, forgotten?
- Ask again, DO VALUES MATTER?