Dean Williams strongly believes that good leadership is the key to the success of future communities and to society. While an undergraduate at Transylvania University in Lexington, Kentucky, he made it a point to stay involved and active within the school and community, taking advantage of opportunities that allowed him to explore different leadership positions.

“I became very actively involved in the university choir. I was an RA [residence assistant] for one year and it was interesting. I was also active in a fraternal organization for the campus,” Williams said. As a junior and senior, Williams took advantage of another leadership opportunity by helping with orientation for first-year students. He is certain his undergraduate leadership experiences helped lay the foundation for him to succeed in his academic and professional careers.

“So, I was very active, and I think that was another life skill that I’ve appreciated that the undergraduate experience afforded me.”

Although he attended a small university, Williams believes that no matter what size the college, all undergraduate students encounter a lot of the same struggles as they enter their new environments and adjust to their new lives.

Along with adjusting to his new environment, Williams was also undecided about his major which he believes is another major struggle that incoming students are faced with. As an undergraduate student, Williams was interested in both law and psychology so he explored courses in both of these subjects. His interests changed, however, when he had to take a biology course. It was in this course that he grew to love biology, and so he pursued a bachelor’s degree in biology.

In Williams’ undergraduate experience, he was not exposed to a program like University College, but he believes that having a program committed to the first-year experiences of students would have been very beneficial to him as an incoming undergraduate. Now, years later, his alma mater (Williams is on the board of trustees) has invested in a similar program. Like University College, the program is “structured to exposing them [students] to different avenues, different degrees, different majors….”

Williams believes that “today the trend in American education is much more focused on… getting a good start at the university level,” Williams said.

Dean Williams’ philosophy of education is all about extracting the best from students in order to graduate intelligent and confident individuals who are ready to make an impact on society. There are a number of issues such as the economy, healthcare, and the environment that impact not only local communities but also communities globally. Williams emphasizes just how significant leadership is in tackling these challenges and states that leadership is absolutely going to be required to make large scale changes.

“I think University College is an excellent example of being able to expose students to those basic concepts of leadership that will carry them, support them well throughout their career, and have an impact on society.”

In addition, Williams thinks that University College does a great job providing students with the right avenues to practice much needed life skills like core communication skills, critical thinking, and the understanding of cultures and societies that are part of the Principles of Undergraduate Learning (PULs) that University College fosters in students in their beginning years.

Although he has only been a part of IUPUI for one year, Williams has been very impressed by the outreach focus of IUPUI, a focus that he presumes begins with students who are and have been part of University College.

In his closing remarks, Williams stated, “I just want to wish University College well. This has been a very nice opportunity for me to share a few of my thoughts about the impact that University College has on the future of society. And so I compliment what they do.”