ESD.801 Leadership Development
Assignment 3: Elevator Speech

Prepare a 45-second *elevator pitch*.

An elevator speech a very brief, concise, and well-delivered "pitch", which describes your key idea(s) on a topic that you are passionate about. Imagine that you step into an elevator in the headquarters building of {NASA, IBM, EPA, French Ministry of Energy, UK Parliament, the World Bank, an NGO—name your organi-zation/encounter} and you find yourself riding with the CEO/President/ Chair. You have about 45 seconds to explain your idea and express your passion to him/her, and you want to make sure that every word counts.

Components

There are three deliverables for this assignment—all are short and simple, but please do not underestimate the level of effort required! Use this opportunity to challenge yourself, explore a topic you might be uncomfortable with, and hypothesize a meeting with a leader or decision-maker at the highest level.

1. **Draft** your speech. Submit a written draft,[1] illustrated text or digital audio file on Course site by **11:59 pm, Friday, 31 October**.

2. **Rehearse** your pitch. Your DG (as a group), DL, and others outside ESD.801 can help—but please rehearse at least once in a 1-on-1 format with an

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[1]If you choose this option, please type or paste your draft directly into course site, rather than uploading a word processor document or PDF.

ESD.801 classmate. Explain to your classmate the connection to your personal values, vision and mission (as outlined below). Give the context and details of your idea, so that they can help you hone your delivery. Then submit a 2-to-3–sentence note[2] on Course site by **9:59 am, Friday 7 November**[3] which explains specific changes you made to your pitch, in response to your classmate's feedback.

3. **Present** your pitch during class on **Friday, 7 November**. The instructors will set a random order. To frame your elevator pitch, prepare to state in 15-20 seconds the *context* for your pitch. We will also allow 1-2 short questions and answers after each pitch. The pitches will be video recorded.[4]

Connection to your personal vision

In the lectures, we introduce the concepts of values, vision, and mission. You now have a rough list of core values, and a draft personal mission statement. These items are very important for your leadership (or life!), but although they may be *stable* over time, they can be very difficult to *express* properly. We encourage you to regularly revisit your list of values and your draft mission, and to attempt to write down your personal vision. It is entirely normal to revise these repeatedly as your understanding changes.

Your elevator speech is *not* a presentation of your values, vision and/or mission—but it *is* closely connected. The speech should be focused on a *specific, concrete* idea or conversation you want to have with your target leader or decision-maker. It should be specific enough to be supported with evidence, and concrete enough to have a clear 'ask'—something your target can *do* in response to your pitch.

But in choosing a topic on which you can make a passionate pitch, employ your vision: what will you be pursuing in 1, 5, 10 or 30 years? How, where and with whom will you be working to change the world? The answers to these questions will help you select your target.

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[2]Again, typed directly in course site, rather than in an uploaded document.

[3]i.e., before class time.

[4]The recordings are kept by TPP for you to revisit in the future, but not shown elsewhere without your permission. If you nevertheless wish to opt out of the recording, please let Dava know by Oct. 31.

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