

“An Innovative Partnership”

While completing my MBA at Emory's Goizueta Business School I had an opportunity to participate in one of the most unique leadership academies offered in graduate schools. The Goizueta Advanced Leadership Academy (GALA) combines a series of classroom lectures and group exercises to provide MBA students an opportunity to learn and practice skills that are important when leading high performance teams. The most unique aspect of this program is the final capstone event which is a rigorous 6 day on the water course in the British Virgin Islands that has been developed and operated by staff from the Steve and Doris Colgate Offshore Sailing School.



Emory Students enjoying their first taste of heeling



Keven Wensley taking the Helm for a quick demonstration

The GALA capstone event is a specially designed week of events and challenges that have been crafted over the 9 year partnership between the Goizueta MBA program office and Steve and Doris Colgate's Offshore Sailing School. This capstone event is only possible by utilizing the Offshore Sailing Schools extensive knowledge to be able to coach a group of 30 plus students who have different sailing levels to a proficiency level where the teams are able to race each other by the end of the week. Though I am bound to secrecy on the specific challenges not to spoil it for future participants, I can attest that even a seasoned sailor will be challenged by the activities and forced to utilize the leadership skills learned to complete the challenges.

One of the most significant events of my trip also turned out to be one of the best teaching moments. While unfurling the jib, our boat experienced a traumatic failure of the jib stay, a critical wire which helps support the mast. In a flash the exercise was over and Kevin Wensley, our boats skipper and the Director of Operations for Steve and Doris Colgate's Offshore Sailing School, jumped in to remedy the situation. Though we had only been on the boat for 24 hours, Kevin was able to calmly and collectively organize the group to be able to quickly rig up a backup stay by utilizing the spinnaker halyard. During the evening debrief, the group was able to utilize this as an example of how to correctly coach and lead a team during a crisis.



Participants of the 2014 GALA Experience

Though this experience focused heavily on leadership, I know a large portion of my class, including myself, walked away with a deeper interest in sailing and cruising. Additionally, I know that my time on the boat helped to reinforce my leadership skills while allowing me check off a life goal of sailing in Caribbean. Thank you Steve and Doris Colgate for having the foresight to develop an innovative sailing school that can be utilize for such experiences. Congratulations on 50 great years of instruction and I wish you the best for the next 50 years.

Kyle Royal