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Team 1

What Makes an Effective Executive?

On April 1, students in the YLDP group of Houston had gathered at India House to hear from a leader in Houston's oil and gas industry. As Vice President and CIO at Shell Oil, Ms. Amy Suhl works with Shell's technology department, which develops innovative technology solutions that aim to change the face of the industry. The students were able to get a glimpse of the future of oil and gas technology in an animation Ms. Suhl provided which showed a futuristic oil tanker. The future hasn't been nearer for Ms. Suhl, but for her to get to this stage, she's moved between departments, business functions and geographical locations. Her varied career is testament to leadership skills she has developed through her years working in Shell. Ms. Suhl shared with the students which skills she believes has helped her truly pave her way at Shell:

1. Don't be afraid to ask! Ms. Suhl encouraged the students to ask questions about anything they may have a disagreement with, whether it be on opinion or ethics. She stated that without conflicting views, there is never progress.
2. Communicate clearly, and even if there is conflict, keep working. Ms. Suhl noted that information should be shared with everyone who it is relevant to, and progress should be continuous. Even if mistakes occur, the team shouldn't stop trying to make the best of the situation.
3. Maintain your integrity. The true character of a leader can be seen in whether or not they maintain transparency and integrity, especially in corporate America. Ms. Suhl related that it is essential to maintain integrity to maintain trust and respect between leader and peer.

Through various anecdotes from her wide career at Shell, Ms. Suhl was able to convey to the students how important these values are to being a successful executive in corporate America. Ms. Suhl proved that not only must you know the content to be effective, but you must also stay strong in character.