

The Newest Offering in the Higher Education Leadership Movement: A Model Campus-Wide Residential Program for Faculty and Staff

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Introduction

The purpose of this article is to review the recent emphases by institutions of higher education on leadership development and to describe a model program for a population not yet widely addressed: faculty and staff.

Historical Context

In recent decades, leadership scholars have bemoaned the lack of true leaders and leadership education at all levels and issued the fabled “cry for leadership” (Burns, 1978; Gardner, 1990; Wren, 1995). Although institutions of higher learning have been engaged in guiding the leaders of society since their inception, they offered no formalized programs or courses until relatively recently. Although the education of leader-citizens is an enduring theme in university mission statements, it is only recently that the teaching of leadership to students—both as curricular offerings and co-curricular development programs—has become a wide spread phenomenon among many college campuses.

Between 1990 and 1998, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation funded a study of 31 collegiate leadership development programs and concluded that we need a new generation of leaders who could bring about positive change in local, national, and international affairs (Zimmerman-Oster, & Burkhart, 1999). Although not one of the schools

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studied, Kansas State University followed the development of the field of leadership studies as outlined in this study. After extensive co-curricular leadership development efforts beginning in the 1970s, Kansas State University began teaching a course on leadership for credit in the late 1980s. In 1996, deans of student life and professors of educational leadership proposed a formal leadership studies minor that was the result of their collaborative work. The minor's mission statement, “Developing knowledgeable, ethical, caring leaders for a diverse world,” both preceded and supported the Kellogg study's conclusion. The program that began in 1996 is now the School of Leadership Studies, the largest and only public school of its kind in the nation.

Further evidence of the efficacy of this program is demonstrated by a recently concluded study—again unique among leadership studies programs. In January, 2009, the Kansas State University Office of Educational Innovation and Evaluation concluded a 16-month analysis of the university leadership studies program. This analysis pointed out many program strengths, including:

- A strong mission that is an integral part of the history, development, and ongoing operation of the program;
- Specific, measurable student learning objectives that are regularly assessed and are tied to program coursework and activities;
- Historical and ongoing institutional support and commitment to the mission of the program;
- Specific leadership development content and skill development within the activities of the program; and
- Inclusion of recognized successful practices in the program, such as student recognition, capstone experience, service learning, and community involvement.

As success was being demonstrated at the student level, the leadership studies program endeavored to expand its offerings to faculty and staff. The reasons for the development of the first faculty and staff leadership residential institute were twofold: the School of Leadership Studies had previous successful experience with an effective program offered for students entitled “Leadership Challenge”; and there was recognition that faculty and staff need, want, and deserve the same leadership development opportunities as students.

Literature Review

In researching leadership development programs for higher education faculty and staff, the authors found only one program currently offered to faculty and staff at their home institution which was potentially available for all faculty and staff. The program offered at Mississippi State University began in 2007 with small classes meeting monthly around topics of university governance, conflict resolution, and other related topics. There have long been national programs that have served faculty identified by institutions as leaders or potential leaders. The oldest is the American Council on Education (ACE) Fellows program which began in 1965. Additionally, the Harvard Institute for Higher Education for established leaders, the Higher Education Resource Services (HERS) Management Institutes, and the Executive Leadership and Management Institute at Stanford are all highly selective residential programs for already identified leaders from higher education institutions. Finally, there exist specific national conferences for faculty holding specific leadership positions such as the Academic Chairperson Conference which has been in existence for 25 years.

The literature on the development of faculty and staff leadership is sparse. Gmelch (2000) wrote specifically on leadership succession when becoming a new dean. Preparing new academic leaders was the general subject of a work by Hoppe and Speck (2003). With attention being paid to “student-centered” institutions, servant leadership has emerged in campus conversations about leadership development. Buchen (1998) postulated that the theory of servant leadership should be the model for all faculty and student relations in and outside the classroom, but neglects to mention any methods for moving this theory into application. The need for community college leaders to be developed was articulated in a book edited by Piland and Wolf (2003) that also focuses on the theory of servant leadership.

A Summary of the James R. Coffman Leadership Institute

In January of 2004, development of a professional leadership institute was initiated by the School of Leadership Studies, formerly known as Leadership Studies and Programs, and supported by Kansas State University Vice Presidents of Administration and Finance, and Institutional Advancement. The institute was established to address the need to encourage and assist leadership development for Kansas State University faculty and staff, and it was named the James R. Coffman Leadership Institute to honor the leadership of retiring Provost Coffman. A planning committee, comprised of members across all academic and administrative units on campus, was convened and charged with developing a high quality learning experience that would have practical leadership applications for day-to-day functioning for all levels of members of the “Kansas State family.” The leadership institute was based on the belief that empowered individuals result in enhanced institutions; and, as stated by Provost

Coffman in the initial brochure, “Faculty and staff leadership skills development is essential, both for individual career development and for collectively furthering the future success of the university” (Karim & Scott, 2004).

The planning committee and Institute Director (leadership studies associate director), under the auspices of Leadership Studies and Programs, developed the first Professional Leadership Institute for the summer of 2004, and the institute became an annual tradition. The institute began with three primary objectives:

- Provide opportunities for participants to refresh and develop their leadership skills in a safe, yet challenging learning environment (a 4-H lodge, located 45 minutes from campus);
- Provide opportunities for networking and interdisciplinary cooperation for university faculty and staff;
- Infuse the university with more empowered faculty and staff leaders.

The institute continues to be based on the philosophy that every individual can be a successful leader. This success depends on learning leadership skills as well as recognition of one’s own leadership style. Further refining of that leadership style, understanding of associated strengths and challenges as well as the impact on decision-making, conflict resolution, and problem-solving preferences continue to be the major focus of the institute.

Participants are involved in a two-and-a-half-day, two-night, in-residence experience with learning activities arranged in a variety of formats: workshops; expert panel discussions with current Kansas State University leaders; small and large group activities; formal and informal small group discussions; multimedia presentations; case studies; and self-assessments. Each day is organized thematically, as

Table 1
Five-Year Participant Evaluation Data on Institute Effectiveness and Participant Effectiveness

Evaluation Items	Percentage of Participants Rating Item Effective to Highly Effective				
	August 2004	May 2005	August 2006	May 2007	August 2008
<i>Effectiveness of each activity in reinforcing concepts discussed in the Institute *</i>					
Workshops	94.0	97.5	83.3	87.2	77.8
Panel Discussions	70.0	95.0	80.6	64.1	75.0
Small Group Activities	92.0	95.0	80.6	89.8	n.a
Large Group Activities	92.0	97.5	83.3	71.8	n.a
Informal Small Group Discussions	92.0	95.0	80.5	84.6	83.3
Self-Assessments	n.a	92.5	68.5	74.4	77.8
Overall, the Institute met participant expectations.	88.9	100.0	80.0	92.3	91.7
Number of respondents	45	42	39	39	36

*Likert scale 1-5: 1=extremely effective to 5=entirely ineffective.

follows: Day One/Knowing Yourself; Day Two/Knowing Others; and Day Three/Building Community. Participants are encouraged to explore and initiate collaborative projects and discuss leadership issues as they strengthen current relationships and build new ones with other Kansas State University professionals. One significant measure of success is that the graduates of the institutes have formed an alumni group that continues to meet and host ongoing leadership development activities.

The summer institute now has a five-year history of success, engaging over 200 participants. Provost M. Duane Nellis described the institute as “building on the tremendous success of the inaugural event that helped transform participants’ abilities, benefiting the university in new and exciting ways” (Karim & Scott, 2008).

Findings

In 2008, the Kansas State University Office of Planning and Analysis compiled and analyzed evaluations of the institute and the workshops for years 2004-2008. The summative feedback provided a comprehensive review of the entire institute. Table 1 represents participant responses by year to the variety of activities offered and overall participant expectation ratings. Approximately, 92% of participants rated the most recent workshop “effective to extremely effective.” During the five year period, responses ranged from 80% to 100%. Comments such as “I thought the conference was great overall,” and “I was pleasantly surprised about the entire experience” were indicative of the overwhelming, positive response.

Participants were asked to evaluate each workshop offered in the institute. Participants reported overall favorable experiences ranging from 71.9% to 97.5% in Table 2. These results speak to the relevance

of the topics and the efficacy of the session presenters, and demonstrate the responsiveness of the planning committee, which based decision-making about the agenda and format on feedback from annual evaluations.

The second stated goal of the Institute is to provide networking opportunities. In selecting participants, efforts were made to include individuals from all areas of the university. Table 3 demonstrates the diversity of participants by number of units represented, comparing the distribution of participants by college or unit by year, including the five-year total. The five-year total of 201 participants represents an equal distribution based upon the size of the respective unit. In addition to the quantitative data, “most of the additional comments praised the quality of the Institute and the sessions or workshops” (Kansas State University, 2008).

Conclusions

The “cry for leadership” that Burns (1978) and others issued over the last 30 years awakened colleges and universities in dynamic ways whose ripple effects may indeed change the core of the academy. However, as administrators, students affairs professionals, progressive academic departments, and students embrace this new discipline of leadership studies and the entire learning community associated with it, essential parts of the university have been overlooked. While there exist highly selective programs for faculty who have been ordained leaders by their institutions or are on a leadership track, only two institutions of higher education provide ongoing leadership development in which all have the opportunity to participate. As demonstrated above by the five-year evaluations of the James R. Coffman Institute held annually at Kansas State University, over 90% of the

Table 2
Five-Year Participant Evaluation Data on Individual Workshops

Evaluation Items	Percentage of Participants Rating Item Effective to Highly Effective				
	August 2004	May 2005	August 2006	May 2007	August 2008
<i>The workshop met my expectations. *</i>					
Change Leadership	95.9	97.5	83.3	82.1	84.6
Managing Stress	76.5	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Intergenerational Leadership	96.7	80.9	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Conflict Resolution	95.0	95.0	71.9	86.8	83.7
Action Planning	90.5	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Personality Type	91.5	92.8	94.2	92.4	92.9
Active Collaboration	n.a.	n.a.	78.8	86.8	95.0
Inclusive Leadership	n.a.	n.a.	81.8	79.5	84.2
Number of respondents	45	42	39	39	36

*Likert scale 1-5: 1=extremely effective to 5=entirely ineffective.

Table 3
Five-Year Data of Distribution of Institute Participants by College or Unit: Number and Percentage

College/Unit	August 2004		May 2005		August 2006		May 2007		August 2008		Five-Year Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
College of Agriculture	5	11.11	3	10.90	2	5.10	3	7.6	3	8.33	16	7.96
College of Architecture, Planning and Design	1	2.22	1	2.20	2	5.10	0	0	1	2.78	5	2.49
College of Arts and Sciences	3	6.67	3	6.50	3	7.70	2	5.13	3	8.33	14	6.97
College of Business Administration	1	2.22	2	4.30	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1.49
College of Education	0	0	2	2.20	2	5.10	0	0	0	0	4	1.99
College of Engineering	2	4.44	3	6.50	1	2.60	2	5.13	2	5.56	10	4.98
College of Human Ecology	3	6.67	1	4.30	4	10.30	1	2.56	3	8.33	12	5.97
College of Technology and Aviation	2	4.44	5	2.20	2	5.10	5	12.82	2	5.56	16	7.96
College of Veterinary Medicine	2	4.44	2	4.30	2	5.10	0	0	0	0	6	2.99
Academic Services and Technology	2	4.44	1	4.3	2	5.10	2	5.13	1	2.78	8	3.98
Administration and Finance	0	0	2	8.70	7	17.90	3	7.69	5	13.89	17	8.46
Institutional Advancement	8	17.78	10	17.40	7	17.90	9	23.08	3	8.33	37	18.41
Provost/President	7	15.56	4	10.90	1	2.60	2	5.13	6	16.67	20	9.95
Other	9	20.00	3	15.20	4	10.30	10	25.64	7	19.44	33	16.42
Total	45	100.00	42	100.00	39	100.00	39	100.00	36	100.00	201	100.00

faculty and staff participants rated the experience as “effective to highly effective.”

In a time when higher education is changing more rapidly than ever with leadership needs continuing to be greater and more dispersed, who is teaching faculty and staff how to confidently welcome these roles? After five extensively evaluated and highly rated institutes, the Coffman residential leadership development experience for faculty and staff provides that answer through empowered individuals, enhanced institutions.

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