



National Clearinghouse
for Leadership Program

CONCEPTS & CONNECTIONS

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Leadership Learning – the Early Days

Dennis C. Roberts, Ph.D

Before launching into reflections on the early days of leadership learning in higher education, I want to thank the National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs (NCLP) for serving leadership educators for all these years. Maintaining records, providing opportunities to connect, and holding steady as new ideas about leadership have emerged over time. Had NCLP not been there, it is quite possible leadership educators might have lost the momentum that has been so important to the thousands of programs and hundreds of thousands of students who we sought to draw more deeply into leadership. Leadership learning has deepened and expanded because there was a home to which we could return to inquire, collaborate, and push forward.

Origins of the Focus on Leadership Learning

Growing leadership capacity is not a new idea, nor was it new in 1976 when a more strategic and coherent approach to it began. Considerable evidence exists that the cultivation of leadership within higher education originated in the early days of colonial colleges (Geiger, 2014). During the pre-revolutionary and colonial times, leadership was of course not viewed as it is today. The initial origins of leadership learning were embedded in colleges' commitment to nurture public servants among the elite men of the early American

colonies. This broadened over time to a more diverse cross-section of students, but these early efforts still maintained an elite focus through select institutions and the exclusive organizations within them.

As the number of colleges and universities expanded in the U.S.A., the number of students increased and the task of managing them grew in complexity. This expansion, and visionary educators' response, fostered the creation of a new role – the student personnel worker. These visionaries defined not only the services they were to provide, but also

crafted language in the 1937 "Student Personnel Point of View" (American Council on Education, 1994) that referenced leadership, community, individual worth, and dignity and recognized each as foundational to what we now understand as leadership efficacy and understanding. These early student personnel staff worked more informally than formally to encourage involvement in academic and campus life, advocating that the holistic experience of students would be transformative.

"The work of the ACPA Commission IV Task Force, the inter-association efforts that followed, and the research undertaken to study leadership and to discern what is most effective in cultivating leadership capacity within and among students, have contributed much to students, institutions, communities, and the common good."

American higher education grew steadily until the explosion of enrollment after World War II, bringing about what many refer to as the golden age where the prominence and support for these institutions seemed unlimited. Student activism soon followed in the 1960s and 1970s and at this time colleges and universi-

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In 1985, I was introduced to the concept of leadership education for all students on the college campus, not just those students in formal leadership roles. During my master's program at Ohio University, I got to sit in the balcony and observe leadership education conversations taking place by what I would now call the founders of our leadership education field. They were sparked by student development professionals attempting to construct the framework for leadership education giving focus, language, and cohesion to their thoughts. I could have never imagined how such fragmented conversation with little focus or depth could have served as the conceptualization of what I now know as comprehensive leadership education.

In the early 1980s a collaborative of student affairs folks like Susan Komives, Denny Roberts, Margaret Anthony-Gonzalez, Pat Brown, Barbie Tootle, Kevin Kruger, Nance Lucas and others embarked on a journey to emerge the first snapshot of a leadership education agenda for higher education. They initially called themselves the inter-association leadership task force. The group emerged over time to be known as the inter-association leadership project and represented many national associations like ACPA, NACA, and NASPA. Through many gatherings the group emerged the beginnings of a national agenda and staked claim on the emergence of the field of leadership education. The group identified four core needs—standards, a leadership education text, professional development, and a clearinghouse for leadership education. Over time, the group committed to addressing each need in an effort to advance the field. Members of the group laid the foundation for the creation of the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education standards for Student Leadership Programs. Furthermore, to enhance students' conceptualizations of leadership, there was a need for a leadership education text aimed at college students' practical and theoretical understanding of leadership, ushering in *Exploring Leadership* in its 3rd edition. Additionally, the group recognized a void of national professional development offerings for leadership educators and, thus, emerged the National Leadership Symposium, which is still gathering after 29 years, in mid-July. To further support leadership educators' professional development, the group identified a need for a clearinghouse to facilitate ongoing collaboration and resource sharing amongst student development professionals. This identified need resulted in the creation of the National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs, still housed at The University of Maryland 27 years later. The lasting change a group of visionaries can have on advancing an emerging professional field is astounding and inspiring.

In keeping with the spirit of the original group of pioneers, 30 years later The Inter-Association Leadership Education Collaborative (ILEC) was formed to promote trans-organizational strategic thinking to advance the field of leadership education. ILEC represents membership-based associations in higher education dedicated to the work of leadership education. The Collaborative has been engaged in a four-year process to develop and promote a holistic understanding of leadership education among the member associations; foster meaningful dialogue and collaborations among the organizations; identify, synthesize, and advance quality resources for leadership educators; and track trends and address voids in professional programs, services, and resources. One of many tangible outcomes of our work is the report titled, *Collaborative Priorities and Critical Considerations for Leadership Education*. The report is an "invitation to all who engage in the work of leadership education to consider: What is required of us to collectively build capacity of leadership learners to resoundingly answer the question, 'Leadership for what purpose?'" (ILEC, 2016, p. 4).

Go to www.nclp.umd.edu to read the report!

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ties turned to the student personnel staff, who had been embraced as deans and developmental educators, to intervene through advising, education, and control. However, history confirms the lack of a cogent and purposeful understanding of leadership and how to foster it was a vulnerability for most institutions at this important time.

A simultaneous growing interest in student development emerged as an outcome of the collegiate experience in the 1960s and 1970s. ACPA created a study group to look at the emergence of student development ideas and one of its members, Clyde Parker, convened the May 1976 University of Minnesota conference that included such student development luminaries as William Perry, Doug Heath, Roy Heath, Arthur Chickering, Jane Loevinger, James Hurst, and Ursula Delworth. These early student development innovators engaged in conversation with those who were beginning to see themselves as developmental educators (Parker, 1977). These and other conversations between theorists and practitioners spawned a rich body of literature and further research designed to improve educational outcomes through in- and out-of-class intervention.

The 1960s set the stage for student empowerment; students had protested for greater relevance in their study at the same time women's and civil rights issues were being raised. Having been involved as student leaders themselves and beginning to be involved in student leadership development in ad hoc ways, student affairs educators were attempting to harness this new energy and direct it in ways that would contribute to improved campuses and conditions in society at large (Roberts, 2007).

From a personal perspective, 40+ years of distance has surfaced realizations I had previously taken for granted. My background as a paraprofessional at Colorado State University resulted in my seeing substantive student involvement in very different ways than many others in higher education in 1973 when I graduated with my master's degree. I had to fight to gain approval to start the peer advisor staff in

the University of Maryland orientation programs even though my own experience at Colorado State convinced me relying on students was not only possible, but preferable to the advising students had previously been offered. The student leadership we were able to cultivate in the Maryland orientation programs and through other organizations on campus led Dr. William L. Thomas and Dr. Drury Bagwell to start the leadership programs. Providence placed me at Maryland at that time with a set of experiences and perspectives about student empowerment that resulted in my taking on the responsibility to create the first student leadership programs at Maryland. And it was a volunteer student group named the Student Leadership Program Team that would help make it happen since few resources were available.

ACPA Commission IV Leadership Task Force

Once I had accepted the charge to establish the University of Maryland leadership program, I began looking for others who shared the same questions and interests. I connected with the American College Personnel Association's (ACPA) Commission IV at its 1976 convention and started asking questions. This meeting quickly turned into an enthusiastic endorsement for a group to be formed to compare notes and bring cohesion to what many in the association were doing; I was asked to serve as the chair. The Task Force efforts began with an open call for campuses to submit examples of what they did to support and foster leadership. We established these as a set of files that cumulatively helped us see patterns of what was being done and what was left incomplete. The Task Force met several times a year from 1976 through 1979, brainstorming, researching, compiling, and conceptualizing a model that reflected the best of what we had seen in the submissions to the Task Force and pushing further into a more comprehensive idea of leadership learning. The ACPA Commission IV Task Force offered a number of regional and national training programs in the late 1970s based on the comprehensive leadership program concept. These included Task Force Reports at the 1977, '78, and '79

ACPA Conventions, a report to the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) titled "Leadership Education, What Priority, and Value in Contemporary Higher Education?" in 1979, and publications such as "Leadership Development Models: Clues for working with students in developmental programming," in *Chrysalis*, University of Maryland Division of Student Affairs publication. There were a number of early regional conferences where the core ideas of the emerging leadership model were presented: Northern Virginia Community Colleges Activity Conference – 1975; ACPA Commission IV East Coast Activities Directors' Conference – 1977; ACUI Region IV – 1978; University of Maryland Student Affairs Conference – 1978 and 1979; and, Texas Association of College and University Student Personnel Administrators – 1980. Reactions to these early efforts helped to shape the eventual model published in 1981 – *Student Leadership Programs in Higher Education* (Roberts, 1981).

It is very important to recognize the ACPA Leadership Task Force was not only looking at how to devise programs to encourage leadership learning, it also thought deeply about what leadership was, who was involved in it, and how the reach of leadership learning initiatives could be expanded. Student Leadership Programs in Higher Education included in the introduction a quote from William Overholdt's 1970 unpublished article, "Towards a Modern Concept of Leadership": "The times cry out for a shared concept of social responsibility and a concept of shared leadership which supports and gives validity to it. A responsible, shared leadership can unify instead of atomize; it can create excellence instead of slipping into vulgarity; it can face important questions rather than divert to triviality; it can confront reality instead of ducking into escapism; it can grow in maturity and power rather than shrink into cowardice and negativism." Overholdt's views perfectly captured the sentiment of the Task Force in its desire to move from positional and authoritative leading to leadership as a process in which all are involved. Overholdt's views were new and his statement was among the first examples when inclusive leader-

ship was advocated, a perspective the ACPA Commission IV Leadership Task Force began to advocate. Other authors whose names are more widely recognized would reinforce this idea of shared leadership focused on transformational change later in the 1970s, 1980s, and beyond.

With Overholdt's expanded view of leadership as a foundation, the Task Force advocated the only way to reach broader numbers of students in various leadership environments was through providing multiple programs to multiple populations with multiple purposes of training, education, and development. The training, education, and development framework was based on Leonard Nadler's (1970) model, which at the time was being used in human resources literature. The Leadership Task Force members contributed major chapters to Student Leadership Programs in Higher Education and sought numerous other contributions from those known to be doing substantive work in leadership learning at the time. The last chapter in the book, "Leadership development – a challenge for the future," (Roberts, 1981) integrated the most widely recognized research and theories related to leadership effectiveness at the time with William Perry's theory of intellectual and ethical development. This integration was captured in the "Framework for Leadership Development," offered as a way of thinking about the progression of experience and the developmental maturity characteristic of effective leadership.

The ACPA Commission IV Leadership Task Force work was complemented by other associations exploring ideas about leadership learning. As those working in parallel projects found each other, early inter-association efforts began as a way to foster consensus and complementary efforts in leadership learning. Multiple associations and individuals contributed expertise and legitimacy to the unfolding idea of comprehensive leadership programming, which eventually led to a broader consensus around the training, education, and development model (Roberts & Ullom, 1989). Attempting to bridge to academic groups proved to be

more challenging, especially the three early Association of American Colleges (AAC now AAC&U) conferences funded by the Luce Foundation. John Gardner, Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare during Lyndon Johnson's U.S.A. Presidency and founder of Common Cause, was very influential in the AAC meetings; speeches he gave and the pamphlets he distributed eventually became the text of *On Leadership* (1990), a book that embraced many of the ideas proposed by the ACPA Commission IV Leadership Task Force. Bridging to the scholars of leadership attempted in the 1970s and 1980s was not realized until the creation of the International Leadership Association (ILA) in 1998. The openness of ILA to student affairs and development perspectives was key at that time.

The Path Ahead for Leadership Learning

It is nothing short of stunning to realize leadership learning, a fledgling, poorly researched, and minimally understood commitment of higher education in 1976, has now become a major focus for many institutions of higher education in the U.S.A. and around the world. The work of the ACPA Commission IV Task Force, the inter-association efforts that followed, and the research undertaken to study leadership and to discern what is most effective in cultivating leadership capacity within and among students, have contributed much to students, institutions, communities, and the common good. With the continued efforts of scholars, advocates, and educators, the challenges of 21st century contemporary life will be met with effective and humane solutions. ■

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Learning By Design: Using the ILEC recommendations with Social Justice Leadership Teaching and Learning

Bill Smedick, Ph.D and Abigail Lewis, Ph.D

We have been involved with ILEC for four years as representatives of our professional organizations, but also as leadership educators at our home institutions. Bill is a Senior Lecturer in the Center for Leadership Education at Johns Hopkins University, and Abigail is the Vice President of Campus Leadership Programs at the American Association of University Women. Bill has worked at Johns Hopkins University since 1989 as the Director of Student Activities (1989-2001) and Director of Leadership Programs and Assessment (2001 - 2014). He has developed courses and experiential programs using social entrepreneurship principles domestically and internationally. Abigail was the Associate Dean for Pre-Professional Advising at Barnard College (2015-2016) and served as the Associate Director of the Athena Center for Leadership Studies at Barnard (2010-2015) managing the Athena Scholars Program, a women's leadership program serving over 200 students from all class years. There, she taught both the Women and Leadership course, as well as the senior practicum. This piece will look more closely at how we have imbued the ILEC recommendations in our teaching and research within the social justice leadership realm.

What are the connections between social justice learning and inclusivity? How do social entrepreneurship and women's leadership fall under this umbrella?

Bill: Inclusive leadership from a social entrepreneurial lens means immersion into the communities we hope to impact by partnering with the members of the neighborhoods, cities, and communi-

ties for the identification of strategies and implementation of those strategies to meet needs of those communities. The work of ILEC clearly demonstrated leadership education is imperative to allow our students and community members to meet identified social justice issues. The skills and knowledge needed to scan and assess communities' challenges and strengths, as well as skills related to communication, emotional intelligence, team-based leadership, leading change, and business-related competencies are components the ILEC either confirmed or encouraged including in leadership programs for students who want to make a difference.

Abigail: Women's leadership sits at the nexus of feminist and leadership education theories and pedagogies. Both of these disciplines offer critical analyses of power structures, as well as actionable ways to make positive change locally and globally. When drafting the ILEC recommendations, we saw "inclusivity" through various lenses, including the types of texts we use as well as the voices that needed amplification within our communications. Case in point, we were in small discussion groups, at an early ILEC meeting, sharing curriculum ideas, and two of my group members never even thought of using feminist texts as leadership theory, nor did they even know where to start. Too often, faculty

and staff put themselves into knowledge/research silos – the opposite of what we teach our students to do within higher education. As educators, we need to move beyond our disciplines and use the wealth of knowledge that exists in finding new ways to communicate social justice in and outside of the classroom. By looking to different fields for foundational texts on leadership and identity, we open up the ways students see themselves (and others) both as individuals and as groups within particular social and political constructs. This allows for better understanding on whose leadership is valued, fostered, and/or ignored.

Beyond being a "best practice," what role does assessment and evaluation play within our curriculums and activities?

By making professional and personal development a priority for ILEC, we are recognizing we don't stop being leadership educators when we leave our classroom, office, or campus. We need to live our ideals, role model to all, and check ourselves to not becoming complacent within society.

Bill: One of the ILEC findings is related to the ways in which co-curricular leadership development student learning outcomes are assessed and evaluated differently from curricular offerings, many times at the same institution. There were exceptions found in the benchmarking research conducted by ILEC, where institutions that purposefully collaborated with leadership programs from both academic and co-curricular divisions. Those

academic and co-curricular partnerships that collaborated and reached agreement on student leadership learning outcomes constituted “best practices” in regard to assessment and evaluation.

Abigail: All educators know the importance of assessment and evaluation within their teaching and research. This priority is about thinking of the new ways data can inform us about leadership skill development and retention through longitudinal study and impact. Too often we focus solely on the student experience, thereby missing out the challenges our students face once they graduate. Teaching leadership theory and skills within women-centered spaces can be very empowering for all those involved, but we do not live in those spaces. Therefore, I need to assess beyond the program: do these skills hold up in the larger world? Do these initiatives truly best equip my students to keep fulfilling their leadership potential personally and professionally once they graduate? This can be hard to remember when trying to make sure our students are meeting our immediate learning outcomes and goals, but it’s imperative if students (and alumni) are to be true social change agents.

How do we encourage leadership development among our professional circles?

Bill: Sharing the results of the ILEC report with colleagues in all student affairs functional areas as well as academic disciplines will hopefully make the case that leadership development is everyone’s responsibility. Much as the National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs serves as a conduit for leadership educators across the world, leadership programs and centers on college campuses can serve the same role for their institutions. The compelling findings of the ILEC can make the case in many circumstances for a wide scope of responsibility for leadership education. For instance, we know “leading in teams” is a fundamental student learning outcome that enhances our students’ ability to succeed in co-curricular experiences, their team-based academic projects, and ultimately their future professional

endeavors. Colleagues across universities divisions and departments should work to agree on what learning outcomes are related to those team-based experiences.

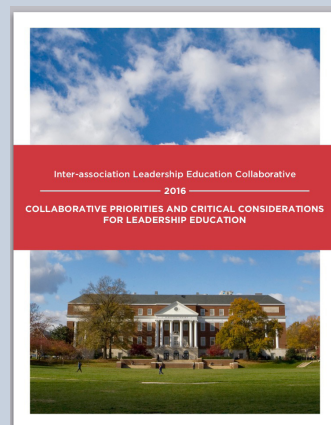
Abigail: The third priority of ILEC really speaks to why ILEC was created, which was getting our various professional organizations to better cross-promote events and resources, engage across disciplines, and to encourage our members to seek out opportunities at our different associations. We also work as leadership educators within our home institutions, and we have an obligation to move beyond our student work to working with our colleagues in developing all of our leadership potential. I work with men and women fighting for gender equity and women’s advancement, and we all need to be more aware of how our communication and leadership styles and skills have been gendered. While we can and should all learn from each other when it comes to leadership styles, we unfortunately also live in a world where we penalize people who do not conform to societal leadership norms. This is especially tricky in leadership development where certain traits are a value added for some; for example: anger helps men, not women. Or, taken for granted for women and thereby unique to men; for example: men who show empathy are considered to be great leaders, but it’s par for the course for women to be empathic. By making professional and personal development a priority for ILEC, we are recognizing we don’t stop being leadership educators when we leave our classroom, office, or campus. We need to live our ideals, role model to all, and check ourselves to not becoming complacent within society. 📌

ACUI & the ILEC Provocations

Missy Burgess and Brian Magee

The Inter-association Leadership Education Collaborative (ILEC) brought eight higher education associations together in hopes of furthering the future of leadership education. This collaborative, formed in 2012, has finally reached a critical moment in its history. During the summer of 2016 ILEC produced a white paper titled *Collabora-*

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tive Priorities and Critical Considerations for Leadership Education. This white paper will be imperative for leadership educators, as it provides three priorities to incorporate into their daily practice and future planning. The work of this collaborative “is necessary to address the gap between our aspirations for a better society and evidence of real and lasting change” (ILEC, 2016, p. 2).

Over the past four years, the Association of College Unions International (ACUI) has been on the forefront of this conversation. ACUI was imperative in bringing the co-curricular perspective to this conversation. While the faculty and research side is crucial, one must not forget those who bring the theory to use in daily practice. ACUI’s general membership consists of student affairs professionals who work in the college unions and student activities profession. In any college and university, these professionals are responsible for conducting and infusing leadership education into their programs and campus climate. Leadership education is a major component of the educational plan within the Association. ACUI deemed Leadership a core competency for the college union and activities professional, as the Association’s professionals are developing students who will become the change agents to better society. ACUI’s commitment to leadership can be seen throughout the Association’s program offerings and is woven into almost every program the Association offers.

In looking at the application of the ILEC Collaborative Priorities, the authors will offer examples of and suggestions for implementation at the association and campus levels, with the primary lenses being co-curricular practice for ACUI.

ILEC’s First Priority

The first priority, “Building Inclusive Leadership Learning Communities” includes the elevation of underrepresented voices in the conversation as well as preparing both leadership educators and students for future work in addressing shared societal problems. This is a very relevant topic, as many of our campuses have become an epicenter for debates on racial injustices, human rights inequalities, and

many other social justice topics. Many of our campuses and co-curricular programs are often referred to as “learning laboratories.” Now is the time for leadership educators to step-up and assist our students in learning about and executing effective leadership practices, developing competence in having meaningful dialogue about social concerns, and developing the capacity to influence positive social change. In these moments, we are frequently challenged by students in our roles as leadership educators and campus administrators to “practice what we preach.” How are we modeling effective leadership practice for the students we are expecting to do the same?

From an Association standpoint, creating competencies in the areas of inclusive excellence and leadership have been long-standing priorities, but this priority calls us to look at the intersection of these two areas. As such, ACUI will engage in continued examination of how topics and examples of social justice and current events are infused in the curriculum of the Institute for Leadership Education & Development (I-LEAD®), the Association’s premier student leadership program. ACUI will also continue the implementation of a communications strategy for Association leadership to respond to national events, in a way that both challenges and supports its members to learn and grow, yet remains congruent with the Association’s values. Finally, it will be the continued willingness of the Association to recognize, look for, and confront any biases or privileges in processes, materials, or other businesses through initiatives such as its Council for Diversity & Inclusion.

ILEC’s Second Priority

The second priority, “Expanding Evidence-Based Practice through Assessment & Evaluation,” calls on leadership educators and Associations to ensure we are measuring the outcomes of leadership education on more than just anecdotal evidence and ensuring the work we are doing is grounded in theory and research/data. On the campus level, this is a call for professionals to incorporate more scholarship into curriculum and program planning. The second priority pushes

leadership educators to dust off the skills gained in graduate programs and apply them to our everyday work. Furthermore, this priority is the ever-present need to support individual and programmatic outcome accomplishments with assessment and evaluation. In times of limited resources, it is no longer as acceptable to do things the way they have always been done. We have to be able to support our work and demonstrate how we are applying the data to future programs. Finally, professionals must continue to share knowledge through publications and presentations of the data we have collected. Although not a natural skill for student affairs professionals, we must pull our own weight in the work we do to contribute to leadership education.

For our Associations, this means continuing to educate members on areas like leadership theory, relevant leadership education research, and assessment practice. This can be done as a complement to or in conjunction with existing programs. In an Association like ACUI, where some professionals may identify as “leadership educators”, many others are educating about leadership through practical experiences. Thus, the communication of these materials in Association publications so they are seen as approachable to those without a leadership education background and enhancing to those with this preparation is of critical importance. We must not assume our members all have common and sufficient training in these areas. Associations need to model the way for campuses, and ensure leadership programs like ACUI’s I-LEAD® has a curriculum grounded in theory and up-to-date research. Associations and institutions should ensure programmatic offerings have data to support the claims of effectiveness.

ILEC’s Third Priority

The third priority, “Enhancing our Community of Practice through Professional Development & Resources” calls for leadership educators to work to continually educate and build their capacity for leadership education through professional development opportunities. For campus-based professionals, this can be

as simple as setting a reading goal to read one article a week to keep up on current trends and research or as broad as the infusion of leadership theory coursework into student affairs graduate programs. Finally, the third priority is the push to access the many resources offered by our Associations. With the expansion of technology, these resources have become lower cost and more widely-accessible to all professionals.

For our Associations, this priority reflects a need to make leadership education an ongoing priority, while harnessing our collective strengths across

Associations and streamlining to become most effective in times of reducing resources. This can be through initiatives like ACUI's new Leadership and Service Education Community of Practice, which highlights the recognition of leadership education as a field, the collaboration of groups like ACUI and the National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs (NCLP) on a variety of online learning opportunities or the virtual leadership conferences. Finally, associations like ACUI need to facilitate the capacity creation for, and ongoing publication of, research and program evaluation that contributes to the knowledge of the field as a whole.

Moving Forward

These three priorities collectively provide direction for our campuses and Associations to move forward in the area of leadership education. Developed by a collective group of our Associations, the priorities allow us to move forward in a common direction, but in ways that make the most sense for our individual characteristics. As we review current and future potential initiatives, these priorities ground us in a thoughtful and proactive way. 🏠

Program Spotlight:

NASPA Student Leadership Programs Knowledge Community (SLPKC): Advancing Leadership Education through the Inter-Association Leadership Education Collaborative (ILEC)

Kim Kushner, Student Leadership Programs Knowledge Community (SLPKC) Co-Chair

In *Considerations of Student Learning in Leadership* (2011), Julie Owen writes, “leadership can and should be learned...and that leadership educators can purposefully foster learning that helps students integrate knowledge, skills, and experiences in meaningful ways” (p. 109). Since its inception, the Student Leadership Programs Knowledge Community (SLPKC) has sought to be a resource for higher education professionals interested in creating meaningful learning environments that foster leadership capabilities for our diverse college student populations. One of 30 Knowledge Communities within NASPA-Student Affairs in Higher Education, the SLPKC aspires to meet its 3,000+ members’ needs through finding opportunities to cultivate the higher education leadership education field. In working to achieve this goal, the SLPKC has joined seven other professional associations dedicated to the work of college student leadership education for shared initiatives, research, and resource development. Over the past four years, SLPKC

and NASPA office representatives have united with liaisons from these associations, working collaboratively to better serve their members in advancing the leadership education field. Over multiple phone meetings and yearly in-person meetings, the Inter-Association Leadership Education Collaborative (ILEC) formed, aiming to support, promote, and advance leadership education and professional development opportunities for its membership associations, while also aspiring to “...defin[e] the significant priorities for the advancement of the field of leadership education and the communities they impacted” (ILEC, 2016, p. 2).

This article examines the evolution of the ILEC’s objectives, focusing on the SLPKC’s desire to link its strategic goals and mission to the ILEC priorities defined in *Collaborative Priorities and Critical Considerations for Leadership Education* (2016), a document aimed to provoke conversation among leadership education communities of practice. Through outlining how ILEC priority areas hope

to evolve the leadership education field, this article highlights manners where the SLPKC’s current initiatives map directly to the ILEC priorities. This article also analyzes how the SLPKC can better connect to challenges and gaps outlined in this priorities document.

The NASPA Student Leadership Programs Knowledge Community

The NASPA Student Leadership Programs Knowledge Community (SLPKC) serves as a resource for higher education professionals who have professional interest in leadership training, education, and development for college students. This community’s mission includes sharing best practices, providing critical evaluation of the leadership education field, examining standards for leadership programs, supporting national and regional efforts to develop student leadership programs, making contributions to literature, recognizing exemplary programs, and cultivating a forum for the presentation of new ideas. To meet this

mission, the SLPKC's current strategic goals include: (1) Increasing SLPKC's online presence through the use of social media and interactive features on the NASPA website; (2) Finding opportunities for members to have face-to-face interactions, both at the regional level and during the NASPA Annual Conference; (3) Strengthening relationships between the SLPKC and other Knowledge Communities, reaching a broader professional audience; (4) Strengthening NASPA regional connections, finding opportunities for the regional representatives to serve as resources for best practices and current research related to student leadership training and development; and (5) Creating scholarly research opportunities for leadership educators in all aspects of leadership development and assessment.

The SLPKC strives to achieve its mission and goals through the work of its volunteer leadership team, consisting of two co-chairs, three team leads, and thirty-six leadership team volunteers split into work areas related to regional representation, outside collaborations, communications, sponsorship, and NASPA Annual Conference events. These volunteers support NASPA's overall mission and vision to be the principal source of leadership, scholarship, professional development, and advocacy for student affairs, and to become a leading voice for the student affairs profession.

In thinking about the SLPKC's work and its relationship to the ILEC's *Collaborative Priorities and Critical Considerations for Leadership Education*, it is important to first examine the primary assumptions framing the ILEC group's overall inquiry. They include: (1) Leadership educators balance multiple roles and professional identities (e.g., teacher, practitioner, scholar), and (2) To advance Leadership Education we must expand traditional paradigms of research and practice and engage in forms of scholarly inquiry that promote integrative thinking, boundary-spanning experiences, and collective meaning-making. These lenses closely match how the SLPKC aspires to enact the ILEC priorities. This article aims to further the conversation surrounding these lenses, linking them to the ILEC priorities, thereby beginning

to critically analyze and question why the SLPKC offers what it offers and what processes hinder its ability to advance the priorities this document champions.

The ILEC Priority Areas

Three priority areas identified within the ILEC document include: (1) Building inclusive learning communities; (2) Expanding evidence-based practice through assessment and evaluation; and (3) Enhancing our community of practice through professional development and resources. Within the SLPKC, these priorities build on its mission and strategic goals.

For the priority related to building inclusive learning communities, the SLPKC attempts to "utilize technology to increase access to leadership learning for all students and educators" (ILEC, 2016, p. 6). This effort has been most recently put into practice through the SLPKC Leadership Podcast (2016), where the Knowledge Community has featured NASPA President Kevin Kruger, Dr. John Dugan, Dr. Susan Komives, and highlights from influential and well-structured leadership programs worldwide. Through dialoguing with leadership education experts and sharing best practices of innovative leadership education trainings/programs, the SLPKC hopes to "[i]nvite and include multiple perspectives on leadership concepts, theories, and models" (ILEC, 2016, p. 6).

Moreover, the first priority is also addressed through SLPKC NASPA Annual Conference work, exemplified through pre-conference efforts and abilities to sponsor a diversity of programs to create inclusive learning communities for all NASPA conference attendees. Over the past few years, the SLPKC has focused pre-conference efforts on topics ranging from building college student resiliency through leadership development, to how to effectively use leadership competencies in

co-curricular environments, to constructing partnerships to create cultures of leadership within college campuses. The SLPKC has sponsored programming on topics addressed by this priority, including, but not limited to, examining identity intersectionality, ethics, and culture within leadership education, and how to effectively build "capacities for community and social change" (ILEC, 2016, p. 6). In reviewing this priority area, the SLPKC recognizes there are many ways it has yet to achieve this priority. One action to support this priority area includes sharing more resources on our website, social media, and through our communications methods that complement this priority's themes of privilege, social justice, equity, intersectionality, and exploring the underrepresented voices that "engage transdisciplinary resources, research, and pedagogies" (ILEC, 2016, p. 6). Reflecting on how the SLPKC can partner with other Knowledge Com-

munities or professional associations working closely with these topics is essential to "cultivating collective capacities for community and social change" (ILEC, 2016, p. 6); bringing ideas and identities to the forefront that may not have paired with leadership education trends and topics in the past is essential to continue the creation of cross-cultural and global leadership competencies in an ever-evolving learning environment.

Bringing ideas and identities to the forefront that may not have paired with leadership education trends and topics in the past is essential to continue the creation of cross-cultural and global leadership competencies in an ever-evolving learning environment.

Priority 2 involves expanding evidence-based practice through assessment and evaluation. The SLPKC has attempted several membership-based assessments, most recently with the NASPA SLPKC Membership Feedback Survey (2013). This survey's primary outcomes included gaining a better understanding of whether the organization is reaching its membership effectively and to assess overall satisfaction with what the SLPKC provided its membership and the student leadership community at large. Overall, the survey indicated more outreach was needed to ensure

members felt a strong connection to the community. Members also stated the SLPKC leadership team needed to be “more intentional with its approach to professional development, particularly when it [came] to promoting the various opportunities that exist[ed] for members of the community...[r]ather than trying to focus on constantly generating new knowledge, the team need[ed] to utilize and promote already existing resources” (Clifford, Kushner, & Piatt, 2013, p. 11). Although the SLPKC implemented this survey three years ago, these findings are a reminder of the work the SLPKC still has within this ILEC priority area. The SLPKC must work to share opportunities to educate professionals about how to effectively “understand the outcome of leadership over time” using diverse methods of data collection, longitudinal studies, and assessment methods focused on learning outcomes (ILEC, 2016, p. 7). It must also focus on “what about” leadership initiatives fosters learning, instead of merely sharing best practices through spotlight series, blogs, and newsletter articles. Thus, the SLPKC can continue to work with peer associations to create accessible opportunities for professional development surrounding topics of assessment and learning outcome development. Translating this information to current practitioners is essential, so they can then utilize this information to show the value of their work to stakeholders both within and outside higher education who may not have a background in leadership education (ILEC, 2016, p. 7).

ILEC’s Priority 3 asserts that enhancing the communities of practice through professional development and resources is essential in leadership education. The SLPKC is a professional development network for its membership. In building this network, it hopes to “[c]reate meaningful professional development that is appropriately sequenced, of high-quality, and provides extended learning opportunities” (ILEC, 2016, p. 8). With over 3,000 members of various professional backgrounds, education levels, and ways they choose to engage with NASPA and the SLPKC, the definitions of “appropriately sequenced” “high-quality” and “extended learning opportunities” is challenging to measure and achieve;

a graduate student’s professional development needs may differ from a senior student affairs officer’s needs, which also may differ from a faculty member’s research interests. Thus, inclusivity towards helping close the gap between levels and addressing the scholar/practitioner divide is needed to continue to prepare “to be flexible and nimble in response to emerging topics and trends” (ILEC, 2016, p. 8). Moreover, the SLPKC can continue to create “more inclusive and accessible pathways to ensure leadership educators are reflective of the populations [they] serve” (ILEC, 2016, p. 8). This inclusivity may look like increased mentorship opportunities at regional and national conferences, continuing to build technology sharing opportunities, and truly listening to members’ needs through “forums for dialogue across formal and informal learning experiences” (ILEC, 2016, p. 8). The SLPKC is proud of the mentorship program is has established at the NASPA Annual Conference; each year, it hosts graduate student and new professional mentees paired with leadership education professionals from diverse student affairs functional areas. Continuing to create accessible outlets for in-person networking for leadership educators will help achieve this priority, especially during NASPA Regional Conferences, Leadership Educators Institute (LEI), and other leadership education-related conferences and drive-ins. Lastly, professional development is also about doing self-work to better support students. Facilitating training opportunities on topics such as leadership assessments, offering reading lists to help professionals create effective curriculum, and supporting professionals throughout their own leadership journeys can only help to better services students.

Conclusion

This article highlights ways the NASPA SLPKC champions the ILEC *Collaborative Priorities and Critical Conversations for Leadership Education* document. The SLPKC works closely with NASPA and other Knowledge Communities, who also recognize leadership education professionals and implement effective leadership education programming; however, this article aims to highlight SLPKC-specific accomplishments and challenges, since its

membership is most closely identified as those interested in college student leadership education. This ILEC document espouses that it hopes to become a “co-created and ever-evolving conversation within and among leadership education communities of practice” (ILEC, 2016, p. 5); similarly, the SLPKC strives to be a dynamic and collaborative organization who values and hears its members’ needs. Through taking this document and evaluating its impact with members at 2016 NASPA Regional Conferences, the 2016 LEI Conference, and the 2017 NASPA Annual Conference, the SLPKC leadership team hopes to continue to critically examine and reflect upon its work, engaging membership in conversations as to how the organization can develop a greater community of educators and seek to provide ongoing and innovative professional development opportunities for all educators regardless of their professional identity. ■

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Future topics of Concepts & Connections:

- Critical Leadership Education
- Inclusive Leadership
- Courageous Leadership
- Student Activism
- Mindfulness
- Design Thinking

A Critical Eye on Our Practices: Reflections on ACPA's Commission for Student Involvement and the ILEC Priorities

Melissa L. Rocco and Ana Maia, ACPA Commission for Student Involvement

As representatives of the leadership education work in ACPA's Commission for Student Involvement (CSI), we want to express our gratitude for being included amongst the group of professional associations that came together to produce the ILEC Collaborative Priorities and Critical Considerations for Leadership Education. The work of the ILEC volunteers to represent their respective associations while creating and maintaining a collective focus on the needs of the field of leadership education is admirable.

At the writing of this article, the *Collaborative Priorities and Critical Considerations* document is just being circulated to association governing boards, staff, volunteers, and members. You may or may not have seen it in full yet. Here in the CSI, we are beginning to sort through how the challenges made to our associations by the ILEC connect to and inform the work we do to help prepare leadership educators in largely student affairs roles. None of us, nor our associations, are doing any of this perfectly; the ILEC would not exist if we were. What we share here is the CSI's initial process of examining our current practices based on the work of the ILEC, priority by priority as listed in the *Collaborative Priorities and Critical Considerations* document. We are taking care to share examples of current practices and philosophies that align with the ILEC priorities, as well as some of the opportunities we have to rethink and improve based on the challenges posed by the ILEC to all of its member associations.

What we share here is by no means an exhaustive description. Rather, it represents our thoughts at this early stage.

We will continue to think critically about how we can improve as a Commission within ACPA and as a larger association based on ILEC's work. We also hope what we share here may inspire others, no matter your role or your association affiliation(s), to do some critical reflection on your leadership education pursuits. Without it, we cannot move our field forward.

About the Commission for Student Involvement

The Commission for Student Involvement (CSI) is one of 20 professional development interest groups within ACPA College Student Educators International. Commissions within ACPA focus on particular functional areas and professional practices within higher education institutions. As the CSI name indicates, our focus is on supporting scholars and practitioners interested in any type of campus activity that promotes student engagement and community building. This includes, but is not limited to, those working with leadership education and development programs. The CSI Directorate Governing Board provides strategic oversight of the Commission, while CSI's programs and initiatives are planned and implemented by vice chairs and functional area chairs on the Commission's Leadership Team. These functional areas include Fraternity/Sorority Life, Leadership Education and Development, Student Organizations & Activities, and Community Service & Service-Learning. While the CSI is not solely a place for leadership educators, we firmly believe we have a responsibility to develop the leadership educator in all student involvement professionals. This responsibility remains a centering philosophy in the annual action plans developed by the CSI's leadership education chairpersons over the past five

years in particular (Maia 2015, 2016; Rocco, 2013, 2014; Torrez, 2012).

ILEC Priority 1: Building Inclusive Leadership Learning Communities

The CSI strategic planning and yearly action planning processes are driven by our seven core values, five of which center on diversity, inclusion, and access for leadership educators as well as college students. Those five values include:

- Education and development of the total student.
- Diversity, multicultural competence, and human dignity.
- Inclusiveness in and access to association-wide involvement and decision-making.
- Free and open exchange of ideas in a context of mutual respect.
- Outreach and advocacy on issues of concern to students, student affairs professionals, and the higher education community, including affirmative action and other policy issues.

Two of the most tangible examples of these values in action are our CSI-sponsored program selection process for ACPA's Annual Convention and our CSI webinar planning process. In both examples, we seek out thought leaders on identity development, social change leadership, and social justice to design and facilitate professional development experiences on how these important topics connect to and inform the daily work leadership educators do across student affairs functions. For example, at the past two ACPA Annual Conventions, the CSI has selected to sponsor and promote peer-reviewed programs on topics such as:

- Privileged perspectives of leadership found throughout student affairs practice
- Intersections of college student leadership development and identity development (e.g. gender, race, ethnicity)
- Power and privilege in community service-learning programs
- Intersections of student activism and leadership development

CSI also encourages inclusive leadership practice via our quarterly research newsletter, *The Interchange*. Recent articles include insight into global and intercultural

leadership competency, power dynamics in the leadership studies classroom, and critical perspectives on leadership theory and practice (see Maia, 2013; Rocco, 2014).

Still, we do struggle to establish and foster connections with scholars and practitioners outside of traditional student involvement functions who are likely also providing leadership education experiences to college students. The Commission structure within ACPA, like similar structures in other ILEC member associations, includes separate groups for professional areas such as academic affairs, housing and residence life, recreation and athletics, commuter students and adult learners, and social justice education. As leadership educators, we know any campus experience is prime for fostering leadership learning. While those with primary interest in leadership theory and leadership programs may find a home with the CSI, we know there is more to what we can do to help and learn from those doing important leadership work in other parts of the campus environment. This becomes especially important when considering the need for building collaborative, compassionate, values-based leaders who can help raise awareness and fight injustice regarding the current social and political climate on and beyond campus. We need more than just the students attending our official/formal leadership programs to develop their leadership capacity and efficacy for engaging in advocacy, social change, and collaboration across difference. This work goes beyond the student involvement realm.

ILEC Priority 2: Expanding Evidence-Based Practice through Assessment & Evaluation

The first objective in the 2016 CSI Leadership Education Action Plan challenges the CSI to “provide professionals with well-researched and innovative initiatives” (Maia, 2016, p. 1). CSI shares with its members both successful research-based practices and examples of transformative pedagogy in various ways. Scholars and practitioners share the most up-to-date research and high impact practices within the student

involvement realm, including leadership education, in the Interchange research publication mentioned above. These same experts host free, public webinars for the CSI and facilitate programs at the ACPA Annual Convention. We also partner with national/international organizations outside of ACPA to help share the latest research throughout the extended leadership educator community.

For example, CSI and the National Association for Campus Activities (NACA) co-hosted a webinar through which social change leadership scholars Susan Komives and Wendy Wagner shared new ways to modify existing student leadership programs and experiences to fit with the most recent Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership (MSL) findings. CSI also recently hosted a webinar with Corey Seemiller, who shared her extensive research on student leadership competencies and a corresponding assessment tool to help provide competency-based leadership experiences for all students (Seemiller, 2016). Research on Leadership Identity Development and its applications to the design and facilitation of leadership education experiences has also been a popular topic for CSI webinars and Annual Convention programs (see Barnes, Chapman, Owen, & Rocco, 2015; Rocco, Barnes, Komives, & Owen, 2014; Rocco & Barnes, 2016)

Though CSI is consistently producing innovative content, we need to do more to connect leadership educators with the latest research. Most importantly, we need to improve the way in which we use technology to make this content accessible to all our members at any time. Some considerations include an online content library and publishing webinar content in the ACPA’s central “OnDemand” platform or on the CSI YouTube channel.

ILEC Priority 3: Enhancing our Community of Practice through Professional Development and Resources

For the past five years, CSI leadership education chairpersons and volunteers have maintained a vision of the CSI as a place for leadership educators to meet, exchange ideas, challenge each other, and unite to advance leadership education as a legitimate discipline within higher education

(Maia, 2015, 2016; Rocco, 2013, 2014; Torrez, 2012). While the CSI functions administratively with leadership development as a specific area of professional focus, the CSI chairpersons from all four of the aforementioned areas (Fraternity/Sorority Life, Leadership Development, Student Organizations & Activities, and Community Service & Service-Learning) understand leadership education and development happens across all contexts of student involvement, whether in a formal “leadership program” or through any number of transformative co-curricular learning experiences. This understanding has led CSI chairpersons to focus on leadership educator preparation for student involvement professionals from diverse functional areas, not just those with “leadership” in their title or with “leadership programs” as their main responsibility.

With this focus on leadership education across contexts, CSI aims to cast a wide net with our programs and resources. We do so through a variety of efforts. For example, the CSI Interchange publication contains timely content for leadership educators across diverse functional areas and, in recent years, has featured articles that discuss leadership education in the context of CSI’s other functional areas or for widespread use in any student involvement initiative. Paul Pyrz (2016) wrote about “Creating Space for Conversations” in response to recent conversations about trigger warnings on course syllabi. A topic translatable to any student learning experience, Pyrz describes the responsibility of leadership educators to provide space for students to have difficult and productive dialogue. He also advises professionals “to take care of yourself in order to be present in spaces of comfort, safety, challenges, and argument” (p.4). Other Interchange and webinar topics applicable across contexts include social-perspective taking in student organizations, global perspectives on leadership, leadership development outcomes from extracurricular experiences, and emphasizing socially responsible leadership across student activities (See Dean, 2014; Rocco, 2015; Kilpack, 2016; Roberts, 2016).

High-quality, in-person professional development is also an aim of the CSI. For the past decade, CSI along with the NASPA Student Leadership Programs Knowledge Community (SLPKC) and the National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs (NCLP) have coordinated the Leadership Educators Institute (LEI). LEI is a multi-day institute designed for new to mid-level leadership educators across student affairs functions. Among conference planning and program selection responsibilities, the CSI Leadership Education Chair also helps to facilitate a pre-conference program on student leadership development approaches. Another high-touch professional development experience is CSI's Leadership Educator Community Conversation, a roundtable session at ACPA's Annual Convention. The conversation brings together well-known scholars and practitioners with ACPA's leadership education professionals in a more intimate and unscripted environment. Participants learn about research updates

discuss challenges and best practices in leadership education, and have a chance to connect with the scholars and other educators. Lastly, the attendees leave the session with information on upcoming professional development opportunities from all ILEC organizations. While we are proud of the professional development offerings for leadership educators, we know advancing leadership education requires thinking beyond traditional programs and association boundaries. As ILEC challenges us, the CSI needs to "continue to identify trends and voids in leadership education" (ILEC, 2016, p.7). We hope to do that through further collaboration with ILEC associations to help reduce redundancy in our efforts and combine our knowledge and resources to better serve the leadership educator community.

Final Thoughts

It is tempting to say all we do already aligns with the three ILEC priorities to

create more inclusive leadership experiences, well-researched practice, and meaningful professional development opportunities for our members. Yet, we know we have room for growth in these efforts. Still, we can confidently state we strive to be the type of partner in leadership education of which our individual members and peer associations can be proud. We firmly believe pushing leadership education toward the vision set by ILEC requires acknowledging and building upon our current successes while also challenging present association norms and measures. We also know we cannot evolve without the insight from ILEC, the support and collaboration of our peer associations, and the knowledge and experience of the leadership educators who are members of ACPA and the CSI. We look forward to kicking off our next action planning cycle, knowing the ILEC *Collaborative Priorities and Critical Considerations* will help us design more forward-thinking, relevant, and intentional efforts to advance leadership education in higher education. 🏠

We firmly believe pushing leadership education toward the vision set by ILEC requires acknowledging and building upon our current successes while also challenging present association norms and measures.

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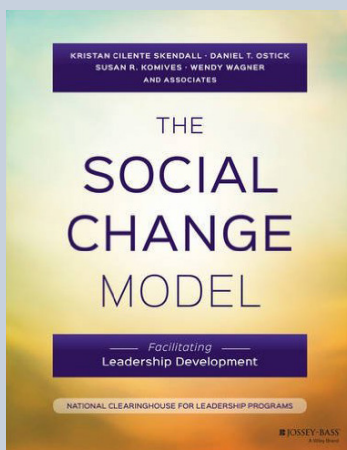
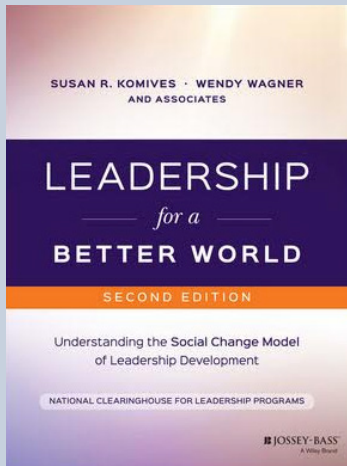
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LeaderShape To Lead, Live.

By: *Vernon Wall*

What began as a leadership development program for the men of Alpha Tau Omega fraternity in 1986 has blossomed into a not-for-profit entity committed to creating a “just, caring, and thriving world where all lead with integrity and a healthy disregard for the impossible.” To date, over 65,000 students have participated in a LeaderShape experience. LeaderShape offers two signature programs for undergraduate students, The Institute and Catalyst. The Institute – a six-day immersion experience challenges participants to lead with integrity while working towards a vision grounded in their deepest values. Participants explore not only what they want to do but also, who they want to be. Dynamic, challenging, and exciting, the week is intended to produce a breakthrough in the leadership capacity of participants—benefiting them individually, as well as their respective communities and the organizations they will go on to lead and serve in the future. Catalyst – a one-day experience where participants are focused on learning to develop one’s authentic path, connect to groups and causes they care about, and commit to a plan to be a catalyst for themselves and the groups of which they are part. Catalyst participants consider powerful questions that move them towards action: Am I on the right path? Who do I want to be? How can I connect with other like-minded individuals? In small-group dialogue, large group interaction, and personal reflection, students learn alongside others who also want to start something extraordinary.

The Inter-association Leadership Education Collaborative (ILEC) shared three priority areas for the advancement of the field of leadership education.

Building Inclusive Leadership Learning Communities

The themes of equity and inclusion are woven throughout the Catalyst and Institute curriculum. Students are given

an opportunity to “unpack” their identities and connect with others through storytelling, reflection, and simulations. They are challenged to confront biases and examine ways in which they may be unintentionally silencing and marginalizing others. For many students, these are the first conversations they may have had regarding privilege, prejudice, and discrimination. For others, these conversations are daily occurrences. The learning happens when participants begin to understand who they are in terms of their identity groups (both privileged and marginalized) and how their identities affect all they do. In privilege, students typically focus on themselves as individuals: “I’m a good person.” “I have good intent.” However, we must also see ourselves as members of “groups” that have historically marginalized other identity groups. Students from marginalized identity groups tend to have “unpacked” their own marginalized identity group, but have done little work to understand the experiences of other marginalized groups or to understand their own privileged groups. While there is often struggle and discomfort, allowing this dialogue to happen in an intentional space increases the chances the dialogue will continue when the students return to their campuses.

Expanding Evidence - Based Practice through Assessment and Evaluation

While a basic program satisfaction survey has been administered at the end of each program over the years, LeaderShape has always felt additional assessment is needed to fully understand the impact of our programs and the ways in which we can improve quality and delivery. In 2012, LeaderShape partnered with Dr. David M. Rosch at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign to conduct a multi-year study on one of our programs: the six-day Institute. Our intent was to advance the state of our understanding of how young adults develop as leaders in conjunction with their participation in structured leadership initiatives. While the study is still on-going, three themes have emerged:

- Student gains last long beyond the end

of the Institute;

- Overall development is relatively similar across social identities;
- Mentors matter in making development stick.

We look forward to examining and interpreting additional data as the study continues.

Enhancing our Community of Practice through Professional Development and Resources

LeaderShape is fortunate to have over 300 individuals who deliver the curriculum of our programs to students. These Co-Lead facilitators come from higher education, corporate, and non-profit

fields. While they each bring an incredible amount, of energy, passion, and knowledge to our community, we also recognize the importance of ongoing professional development. Each year, we bring our facilitators together for our Co-Lead Learning and Renewal Weekend to share revisions and updates to our curriculum and to provide opportunities for their growth and development as facilitators. Various social media platforms are also used to share resources that could enhance the delivery of the curriculum and the participant experience.

Conclusion

The priority areas and the potential actions allow for leadership educators to pause

and reflect on where they have been, where they are, and where they would like to go in relation to leadership programs. ILEC hopes the *Collaborative Priorities and Critical Considerations for Leadership Education* document will “inspire a desire for leadership educators to engage in reflection and learning with the ultimate outcome of moving the field of leadership education forward” (ILEC, 2016, p. 9). LeaderShape is proud to partner with ILEC on this project, and we look forward to continuing the conversation. 🏠

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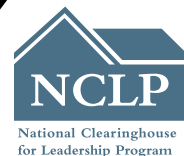
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