

## REVITALIZING LEADERSHIP FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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With this first issue, the League for Innovation in the Community College and The University of Texas at Austin are pleased to announce a new publication, *Leadership Abstracts*. To be published twice monthly, *Leadership Abstracts* will be sent without charge to all two-year college chief executive officers in the United States and Canada. Each will receive two copies in hopes that one copy will be duplicated and distributed to board members, key administrators and faculty, other campus leaders, and selected educational policymakers.

The purpose of *Leadership Abstracts* is to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and practical advice and for the discussion of issues of concern to the leadership of community colleges in North America. The series will attempt to achieve a balance between scholarship and experience-based writing. Topics will range from practical advice on management practices that work to new developments in leadership and motivational theory; they will include commentary on current social and educational issues, as well as research findings related to leadership and community colleges. Contributors will include experienced community college administrators, faculty, and board members; scholars and researchers; and prominent national figures both in and out of the field of education. Those interested in preparing an abstract for consideration are encouraged to write the editor of the series, Don Doucette, for guidelines.

This issue of *Leadership Abstracts* heralds the beginning of a five-year project on leadership development coordinated by the League for Innovation and The University of Texas at Austin with a special grant of \$1.7 million from the W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

In addition to publishing *Leadership Abstracts*, other purposes of the collaborative project include identifying and assisting in the preparation for leadership of at least fifty exceptionally talented and committed individuals who are capable of serving as community college presidents in the next five to ten years. Individuals selected will receive Kellogg fellowship support to pursue studies at the Community College Leadership Program at The University of Texas, either as doctoral or post-doctoral students. They will also participate in a paid, semester-long internship with a chief executive officer of a League member institution, who will serve as a professional mentor. Fellowship candidates will be selected from across the United States and Canada, and nominations are invited from current CEO's.

Also as part of the project, eight seminars, workshops, and conferences will be conducted each year that provide leadership development for current community college presidents,

vice presidents, deans, faculty, and others with leadership potential. These meetings will be sponsored by the League for Innovation and The University of Texas at Austin; a number will be held in cooperation with other community college organizations that promote and provide leadership development, including AACJC's Presidents' Academy, National Council for Student Development, American Association of Women in Community and Junior Colleges, National Council on Black American Affairs, and National Community College Hispanic Council.

One example of the kind of workshop to be offered is *The Executive Leadership Seminar*, the first of which will be offered June 19-24, 1988, in Newport Beach, California. The purpose of the seminar is to provide an opportunity for potential community college presidents to review their abilities and interests, to refine their skills, and to participate in discussions on leadership with outstanding community college leaders from throughout North America. Through the seminar, the League and its Board of Directors aim to assist in providing continuity in executive leadership as community colleges move into the 21st century.

The seminar, conducted by the League for Innovation in the Community College in collaboration with The University of Texas at Austin and the University of California at Berkeley, is designed as an intensive, week-long session with format varying by topic and purpose. Each seminar will be limited to thirty participants selected on a competitive basis from community colleges throughout North America. The faculty of the seminar will include nationally recognized community college presidents and other leaders who will design a special curriculum to help potential presidents make the final preparation for their move to the presidency.

*Leadership Abstracts*, and the other activities of the five-year project, come at a very important time in the continuing development of the community college movement. The community college is going through a major period of transition as it moves into the 1990's, and a new concept of community college leadership will be required to direct this transition.

Vaughan's 1986 study of the community college presidency concluded that current presidents are no longer the founders and architects of colleges—a common quality of community college presidents in the 1960's. Just as the early movement required builders, political strategists, organizers, and master plan developers, today's community colleges need strong internal leaders to "help make good on the promise of the open door."

No institution of higher education has ever undertaken a more challenging and difficult educational mission than the open-door college. That open-admissions policy admits the most heterogeneous and diverse student body to be found in any educational setting in the world. Providing quality educational programs and excellent instruction to students who need the most structured support, while at the same time maintaining strong academic programs for well-qualified students and responding effectively to the needs of local communities, is the leadership challenge of the 1990's for community college executives.

Our colleges require leaders who care equally about quality and access. Such leaders must be able to instill and inspire this concern in all faculty and staff members, if community colleges are to see dramatic improvement in student persistence and graduation rates in the years ahead. Such presidents will seek to identify, recruit, and select faculty and staff who truly believe in the mission of the community college—individuals who want to make a difference in the lives of the students they teach. These presidents will lead their institutions in adopting sound educational policies and practices to end the unacceptable attrition rates so common in today's community colleges. They will hasten an end to irresponsible "right to fail" policies in favor of policies that promote and provide students with the right to succeed. These leaders will collaborate with faculty and staff to create campus cultures that value learners and the teaching-learning process. They will care about the numbers of entering freshmen who persist to graduation, and they will be able to answer the basic questions concerning educational quality in their colleges.

Just as the teacher is the key to student success in the classroom, so is the president the key to quality and excellence in the community college. Strong and positive educational leadership is needed for the challenges facing this continent's community colleges. It is our belief that, with a renewed focus and interest in leadership, we will see the emergence of leaders who can lead these colleges to insure that they are truly superior teaching and learning institutions, and who can document that claim.

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