

Leadership Development Is All About Collaboration



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Leadership Development for League Colleges

Founded in 1968 by B. Lamar Johnson, director of the Community College Leadership Program at the University of California at Los Angeles, the League for Innovation in the Community College (League) has always made leadership development a priority. In its early years, League programs served primarily its member colleges—12 charter colleges with many campuses that were among the most innovative colleges of their time. Three special programs designed for leaders of League colleges helped the League stay on the cutting edge of innovation.

From the beginning, the League sponsored a summer conference for presidents that brought together the chancellors and presidents of League colleges to identify issues and share ideas about how to address those issues. In these conferences, some of the greatest leaders in the community college movement, such as Bill Priest, Bob McCabe, Paul Elsner, Nolen Ellison, Tom Fryer, John Dunne, Norman Watson, and others, passed on their wisdom and experience to new and aspiring leaders in the League.

Two more specific leadership networks organized in the early years created a foundation that ensured the League would live up to its name as an organization committed to innovation. The Coast Community College District (CA) was a charter member of the League and was the first community college in the nation to use computers in teaching and learning. Bernie Luskin was a key administrator in the Coast District who had created a significant link to IBM and the U. S. Office of Education. With funding from IBM and the Educational Personnel Development Act, Bernie arranged for IBM to offer a special institute for leaders in the League. The institute was the first faculty training program in computers, and faculty who attended were the pioneers of the computer science programs of today. The institute operated for League members for five years, and that experience helped League colleges become the most technology-savvy colleges in the nation. It also provided the foundation for the League's long-running project, "The Community College and the Computer." Today, the League has over 150 corporate partners, many of whom are technology-related companies that joined the original project.

In these early years, League colleges were also key players in workforce training, especially as it was expressed in contract training. Larry Warford, League representative from Lane Community College (OR), helped create in 1990 the Business and Industry Services Network (BISNET) for League members that operated until 1999. The network brought together workforce development administrators from all the League colleges and provided basic training in how to organize and operate contract training programs. In addition, the network led the League to conduct the first national study on contract training and to sponsor a national conference titled *Workforce 2000*, both of which benefited not only League colleges but all community colleges interested in contract training.

The conference for presidents, the IBM institutes, and BISNET were focused in the early years primarily on League Board colleges. As the League matured and grew into a national and international organization with a League Alliance of over 700 community colleges around the world, its programs also expanded to serve all community colleges. Primary among these new programs were programs in leadership development that have been among the most substantive and have had more impact on preparing leaders—with an emphasis on women and minorities—than most other programs in the nation, with the exception of the Community College Leadership Program at The University of Texas at Austin, which through John Roueche has long been a key partner with the League in the preparation of leaders.

Leadership Development for the Nation's Community Colleges

National Institute for Leadership Development

In 1981, the League created, with funding from FIPSE, a project to help prepare women for leadership positions in the nation's community colleges. The project was titled Leaders for the 80s and later became the National Institute for Leadership Development (NILD). In 1981 there were approximately 50 women serving as presidents or chancellors of community colleges; today, 332 women serve as CEOs of community colleges or 34 percent of all presidents in the country. The majority of these women have participated in NILD, making it the program that has had the most impact in the history of community colleges on preparing women leaders.

In the late 1970s, I was invited, as president of the League for Innovation, to serve as a consultant in a week-long institute sponsored by the American Council on Education to identify and prepare women leaders in higher education. The institute was part of the women's program at ACE led by Emily Taylor and Donna Shavlik. During the institute, I visited with Emily and Donna about sponsoring a similar institute for aspiring women leaders in community colleges, to be co-sponsored by the League. That institute took place in 1980 and was attended by women from about 25 community colleges. One participant was Mildred Bulpitt, from the Maricopa Community Colleges, who was also the CEO of the American Association of Women in Community and Junior Colleges. Mildred and I were friends and had worked on a number of League projects together, and we saw the potential of this institute for the League. We worked with other women leaders to write a proposal for FIPSE funding, and the grant to the League provided very modest funding for a number of years in the 1980s. The program survived the early years because Paul Elsner, chancellor of the Maricopa Community Colleges, provided a home base in the Maricopa district, and institute sessions were hosted on League campuses where presidents supported the activities with generous resources.

NILD has been going strong for 34 years and is probably the oldest program of its kind ever created. It has been successful primarily because of two outstanding women leaders—Mildred Bulpitt and Carolyn Desjardins—both from the Maricopa district, who are now deceased. Mildred was the founding CEO of NILD, soon joined by Carolyn, who served the longest as CEO. They created the activities of the program, and managed it for many years. They also brought a new perspective to leadership that has influenced other leadership programs around the country. They have both been honored for their seminal work: The Association of Women in Community Colleges recognizes outstanding leaders during the AACC conference with the Carolyn Desjardins CEO of the Year Award and the Mildred Bulpitt Woman of the Year Award. The League for Innovation also established the Carolyn

Desjardins Fellowship awarded annually to an aspiring woman leader to support participation in NILD.

Although data on participants and their progress have not always been up to date, in 1996 program directors indicated there had been over 3,500 graduates of NILD, of which 150 had become presidents and 953 had become deans or vice presidents. Leaders close to the program today estimate that approximately 6,000 women have participated in activities sponsored by NILD.

NILD continued for many years as a self-supporting organization with base support from the Maricopa County Community College District. In recent years, the support from Maricopa ran out, and the Advisory Board determined that NILD should move to a new location. President Sandra Kurtinitis of the Community College of Baltimore County hosted the program for three years; Presidents Cynthia Bioteau and Deneece Huftalin of Salt Lake Community College hosted it for three years; and the program is now hosted by Brookdale Community College under the leadership of President Maureen Murphy. Today, the program is referred to as the AAWCC Leaders Institute, and the board of the American Association of Women in Community Colleges provides oversight. It is a remarkable legacy of NILD that established women leaders continue to support and sponsor this very special program, illustrating that leadership is all about collaboration.

Constance Carroll, Chancellor of the San Diego Community College District and member of the League for Innovation Board of Directors, has long been an avid supporter of NILD. Her comments are an apt conclusion to this section on NILD:

Propelled by two visionary women, Carolyn Desjardins and Mildred Bulpitt, the National Institute for Leadership Development captured the leading edge nationally in leadership training for women who aspired to advance to the upper levels of community college leadership, especially the presidency. In addition, NILD, through its workshops and publications, helped change the entire national perspective about what constitutes effective leadership in general. Initiated in an era when discrimination against women was overt, the NILD helped develop women leaders and helped transform institutions into broader, more inclusive organizations. The NILD is as relevant today as it was in the 1980s, and many women leaders owe their advancement to its progressive program.

Executive Leadership Institute

Launched in 1988, the Executive Leadership Institute (ELI) has continued for 27 years as one of the oldest institutes in the nation to prepare aspiring leaders for the presidency. ELI was a program in a leadership suite of programs created by a collaborative partnership between the League and John Roueche, who directed the Community College Leadership Program at The University of Texas at Austin. Other programs in the suite included a national conference on Leadership 2000, the Expanding Leadership Diversity program, and *Leadership Abstracts*. John Roueche and I designed and managed the Executive Leadership Institute in its initial years. The institute accepted an average of 30 participants a year for a week-long experience designed to immerse them in issues and challenges presidents face. Admission into ELI was competitive and required applicants to hold a doctorate or equivalent and to submit letters of recommendation from established leaders noting the applicant's qualifications for the presidency. Faculty for ELI included 15 or so leading presidents, most of whom in the early years were from League colleges.

Through 2015, 865 aspiring presidents have participated in the Executive Leadership Institute. Forty-seven percent have been women, and twenty-four percent have been minorities. Forty-three percent of ELI graduates and as many as seventy percent of some graduating classes have become presidents of community colleges. At one point in the program, ten percent of all minority presidents in the nation had participated in ELI. By far the most substantial recruiting source for ELI is consistently from its graduates.

The success of the program is due in great part to the continuing support of the presidents of the League who served as faculty, but success is due primarily to the leadership of Brenda Beckman (former Acting President of Pima College, AZ) who joined the League in 1990 to direct ELI. At various times during ELI, Brenda was assisted by Bill Wenrich (former Chancellor of the Dallas Community Colleges—deceased) and Mary Kay Kickels (former President of Paradise Valley Community College, AZ). Brenda enriched the program by including representatives from search firms who taped interviews with participants and who provided feedback on resumes and the application/interview process. Each year, participants are surveyed regarding the value of the institute, and their feedback is used to improve the program. Graduates now serving in presidencies are also surveyed periodically, and their responses contribute greatly to shaping the evolving curriculum in order to prepare institute participants for the ever-changing role of community college presidents. The shift in emphasis from student access to student learning outcomes, completion, and success; effective use of data to inform decision-making; and fund-raising are examples of more recent additions to the program.

Mark Milliron and Gerardo de los Santos, past presidents of the League, provided substantial support for ELI. Brenda retired after her last sessions with ELI in December 2015, but her legacy will live on for decades through the hundreds of presidents she has mentored and trained. And under new leadership, ELI will continue to provide the nation with exceptional community college presidents.

Expanding Leadership Diversity

Building on the success of the Executive Leadership Institute, John Roueche and I worked with the W. K. Kellogg Foundation to create a new program—Expanding Leadership Diversity (ELD). This year-long program was initiated in the 1989-1990 academic year for approximately 20 faculty members and mid-managers who aspired to senior-level leadership positions. The program included two intensive week-long seminars held on community college campuses; a third seminar was held in conjunction with the Leadership 2000 conference. In addition to the seminars, participants worked with a mentor, prepared a long-range professional development plan, held an internship in a community college, conducted research on a community college issue, and expanded their professional networks.

The program was funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation for 9 years. Of the 202 participants in ELD, 29 have become presidents, and the others became vice presidents, deans, or program officers. ELD was a resource-intensive program that could not be continued without foundation funding. The League continued its strong commitment to women and minorities by referring them to NILD and ELI.

ELD was successful, again, because of the formidable leadership of Brenda Beckman and her colleague, Portia Taylor, then a provost at Santa Fe Community College, a League member college in Florida.

Leadership Abstracts

Leadership Abstracts was launched by the League and The University of Texas in 1988 as a twice monthly report distributed free to all community college CEOs. 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 attempts to achieve a balance between scholarship and experience-based writing. Topics range from practical advice on management practices that work to new developments in leadership and motivational theory; they include commentary on current social and educational issues, as well as research findings related to leadership and community colleges.

John Roueche and I co-authored the very first *Leadership Abstract* in January of 1988, and, with some sense of what loomed ahead for community colleges, said:

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.

The League has published and distributed 335 *Leadership Abstracts* to presidents and other community college leaders since this inaugural issue in 1988. *Leadership Abstracts* continues to be published and distributed today under the able leadership of Editor in Chief Cynthia Wilson.

Conclusion

- National Institute for Leadership Development—6,000 aspiring women leaders—1981 to the present
- Executive Leadership Institute—865 aspiring presidents—1988 to the present
- Expanding Leadership Diversity—202 aspiring leaders—1989 to 1999
- *Leadership Abstracts*—335 issues—1988 to the present

The list above represents a significant legacy of the League for Innovation in the Community College and for the key players who made and continue to make these programs possible: Mildred Bulpitt, Carolyn Desjardins, Constance Carroll, Brenda Beckman, Portia Taylor, Bill Wenrich, Mary Kay Kickels, Mark Milliron, Gerardo de los Santos, Cynthia Wilson, and John Roueche. It was my great pleasure to assist and work with these extraordinary leaders in these efforts—leadership development is all about collaboration.

The next phase of leadership development for the League holds great promise because the new CEO of the League beginning March 2016 is Rufus Glasper, former chancellor of the

Maricopa County Community College District, and a graduate of the charter class of the Expanding Leadership Diversity program.