

The League's Legacy on Leadership Development

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The League for Innovation has been a national leader for more than three decades in preparing leaders—with an emphasis on women and minorities—for leadership positions in the nation's community colleges. This brief article highlights four of those programs.

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% 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.

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 they managed the program for many years. They also brought a new perspective to leadership that has influenced other leadership programs around the country.

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.

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. Faculty for the institute 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-two percent 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.

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 1989-90 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 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.

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 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.

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.