



# INNOVATION ABSTRACTS

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## GROWING YOUR OWN WORLD-CLASS LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

In recent years, the looming crisis in leadership has heightened focus and increased research on the importance of “shoring-up” the leadership pipeline.

During the past 30 years, community colleges have experienced extraordinary growth and increased national visibility with a stable group of experienced leaders. In the face of impending retirements and aging leadership profiles, it is the duty of community colleges to either “grow their own” leaders or ensure that emerging leaders have ample access to ongoing professional development.

### Three Models that Work

Depending on the structure of the organization, the leadership program may be hosted at one of three levels: state, district, or college. Three successful models have been implemented in Louisiana, Texas, and North Carolina. At the 2008 National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) conference, a panel discussed successful leadership programs offered at these various levels. Each of the programs includes common elements—e.g., mentoring, project completion, and leadership plans—but have noticeable programmatic differences based upon the goals of each institution.

#### 1. A Statewide Initiative: The Louisiana Community & Technical College System

- One-year program; five face-to-face meetings (First meeting extends over one week, and subsequent meetings begin on Wednesday afternoon and end Friday noon.)
- Formal application/nomination which must include supervisor’s support
- 21 employees; faculty participants receive release-time
- Two paths: one for college credit and the other for personal enrichment

- Assessment instrument and team-building (Emergenetics®)
- Leadership plan
- Comprehensive curriculum; national, state-level, and institutional speakers
- Feedback reports submitted 48 hours after on-site meetings
- Monthly mentoring and mentoring reports
- Reading books and book reports
- Team application projects
- Internship; three to five days at another institution
- Evaluations
- Reflective paper

#### 2. A District Initiative: The El Paso Community College Leadership Academy (TX)

- One-year program
- Application/nomination
- Supervisor support statement
- 30 employees
- Two tracks: fundamentals of leadership and advanced leadership; advanced program for employees in leadership positions
- Monthly activities; workshops, four hours
- Comprehensive curriculum
- Evaluations
- Team application projects
- Individual learning and action plans
- Border Learning Conference
- Two-day retreat
- Reflective evaluations online

#### 3. A College Program: The Guilford Technical Community College Model (NC)

- Systematic Succession Plan
- One-week President’s Leadership Seminar
- Leadership Effectiveness and Development Program (LEAD); project teams aligned with college initiatives—10-month process
- Mentoring



## Guidelines to Develop Program or Review Effectiveness

To develop a successful leadership program, the institution first must acknowledge and understand the issues affecting the leadership pipeline—quantity (too many people leaving and not enough entering the pipeline; community college leadership has never been representative of the student or community populations the college serves), and quality (will the incoming leadership have the skills—leadership perspective or management ability—needed to lead an institution?).

In addition, the institution must determine if all of the characteristics/competencies that it believes to be essential to effective leadership are included in the curriculum. While there are many researchers and practitioners that have outlined key characteristics of effective leaders, the most comprehensive work comes from the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). AACC's *Competencies for Community College Leaders* (2005), identifies six primary competencies for successful community college leadership. These competencies, which were articulated through AACC's Leading Forward Initiative, are: organizational strategy, resource management, communication, collaboration, community college advocacy, and professionalism. Not only must program-planning efforts address characteristics and competencies to be included, they must answer the following questions:

- What is the ultimate goal of the initiative?
- How much time must be allocated for the initiative to meet the initiative's goal?
- How will the organization know that the goals have been met?
- What are the anticipated outcomes?

## Other Issues to Consider

- Who will be your program's champion? If the CEO does not support the program and is not heavily involved, the program will not be successful.
- Will you develop a policy to ensure the program's longevity?
- How much will the program cost? How will it be funded? This should be projected for at least three years at a time, and budget should be committed to ensure program longevity.
- How will you encourage employees to participate?
- Will you establish criteria for the program?
- How long will the program continue? What types of activities will be included?
- How will participants receive guidance and feedback?
- How will you know if the program accomplished its goals?

## Lessons Learned

The programs presented as models that work have been in operation for approximately 20 years. Combining all of their time and lessons learned should make the work of those interested in developing programs much easier. These lessons could guide the development process.

- Decide on and stick to a program mission.
- Prior planning prevents poor performance.
- It helps to consult with an external advisor before you begin the process.
- Leadership development is much more than program components—the process is just as important as the content.
- It is not all about the amount of money you spend; it is about the quality of time together.
- Ongoing engagement of the participants after the formal program ends is key to successful professional development.
- Choose an internal evangelist to lead the development and implementation.
- The program coordinator/director must have a fundamental understanding of both the characteristics of successful leaders and the components of successful leadership programs.
- Committed support from all levels of the administration is critical.
- Realize that leadership development can lead to institutional development.

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