

Great Leadership

LEADING THE NEW NORMAL IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES

STRATEGIES FOR LEADING HIGH-PERFORMING COMMUNITY COLLEGES



Table of Contents

[pages two and three]

Community College Leadership from a Faculty Perspective

By Curtis Greene, Ph.D.,
Discipline Facilitator, WCCCD

[pages three and four]

Getting the Right Leaders on the Community College Bus

By Letitia Uduma, Ph.D.,
WCCCD Northwest Campus President

[page five]

Critical Leadership Competencies for the Next Generation of Community College Leaders

By Paige Vanderhyden, M.S., *Associate Provost, Design Center, WCCCD*

[page six]

Leading the Digitally-Advanced Community College

By Ella Davis, Ph.D.,
Humanities Lead Faculty, WCCCD

[page seven]

Leadership Succession in the Community College: Nurturing the Next Generation of Leaders and Assuring Sustainable Excellence

By Furquan Ahmed, B.A.,
District Vice Chancellor for Human Resources and Accountability, WCCCD

The Key to Sustainable Excellence: Preparing the Next Generation of Leaders



Dr. John E. Roueche, *President, Roueche Graduate Center, National American University*
and

Dr. Margaretta B. Mathis, *President, Senior Vice President, and Dean of Master's and Doctoral Programming Roueche Graduate Center, National American University*

Today's community college leaders are struck by the enormity and complexity of the issues with which they must grapple to be responsive to current needs. These seemingly tireless and nimble heroes must be adroit at navigating the winds of change, fostering imagination, and preparing leaders-followers *throughout* the institution to address community and market needs and support students in their respective journeys for success.

It is the astute leader who involves internal and external institutional stakeholders in developing a culture that anticipates and builds toward a desired future, rather than being mired in the many daily operational challenges that arise. A culture of accessibility, accomplishment, quality, accountability, innovation, care, and delivery requires that these noble men and women look beyond "self" and wisely elevate and prepare the next generation to develop and foster a strong foundation

that will sustain, redefine, and redirect in anticipation of economic and societal shifts.

Unfortunately, too few colleges make critical leadership development a strategic priority. Walter Bumphus, president and CEO of the American Association of Community Colleges, is quick to remind of the vast turnover in CEO positions during the past seven years. Community college executive team members and senior faculty are among those also predicted to soon retire. This "sea of change" comes during a time that community and technical colleges are in the national spotlight to deliver on the promise of an educated and skilled workforce. Simultaneously, many states are "disinvesting" and consolidating – thus putting additional pressures on college leaders to be innovative in keeping doors open for all students, being globally competitive, and delivering vital services to local businesses and communities.

continued on page 2

Key to Sustainable Excellence

continued from page 1

Indeed, colleges can ill afford to vest “the key to sustainable excellence” in one or two people at the top. Leaders must anticipate and intentionally create experiences and mentoring opportunities to prepare the next generation to face daunting challenges that require effective communication, organization, innovation, and teamwork to achieve desired outcomes. The need for faculty/leaders who are equipped to help students achieve career/educational goals, and to adapt and respond to change must be woven into the college’s strategic plans. Effective practices include identifying and developing leaders throughout the institution to participate in internal leadership academies or institutes. These institutes can be tailored to reinforce the institution’s mission, vision, values, and goals – and prepare multi-disciplinary and diverse leaders with the skills and wherewithal to work collaboratively and effectively to address complex and changing demands.

The Community College Leadership Program (CCLP), offered by the Roueche Graduate Center of National American University, is drawing upon the many lessons it has gleaned about leading a community college in today’s environment as it provides its doctoral program in seven cohorts located across the United States. The CCLP is a radical innovation specifically designed for aspiring community college leaders, offered where they work. This cohort model brings over 60 nationally-

recognized community college faculty to the college, believing that leadership development must include face-to-face interaction to hone the critical leader and team skills required to be effective in today’s environment. All 15 doctoral courses are community-college focused, and draw upon an institution’s data and needs as course projects and practicum experiences are designed. With the short tenure of many community college leaders, it is imperative that institutions prepare the next generation of leaders. No one person can “do it all” Incoming leaders must acquire an ability to anticipate, be proactive, partner, foster relationships, innovate, and be accountable to the many stakeholders who are dependent on the strength and vitality of the community college to deliver on the promise of America’s future. They must take into account the “human factor” and lead with heart, compassion, respect, and tenacity as they navigate the unanticipated, foresee and prepare for the unknown.

Note about the authors:

John E. Roueche, Ph.D., serves as president of the Roueche Graduate Center (RGC), National American University (NAU). Dr. Roueche is also Professor and Director Emeritus, The University of Texas at Austin (UT-Austin), where he also served as the Sid W. Richardson Regents Chair. Margaretta B. Mathis, Ph.D., serves as senior vice president, and dean of Master’s and Doctoral Programming at the Roueche Graduate Center, NAU. Prior to joining NAU, Dr. Mathis was senior lecturer at UT-Austin, where she also served as Associate Director for UT’s involvement in Achieving the Dream and the Governance Institute for Student Success.

Community College Leadership from a Faculty Perspective

Curtis Greene, Ph.D., *Discipline Facilitator; WCCCD*

As a faculty member and an instructional leader, I have worked with a wide variety of leaders—some great, some very good, and some not so good. What goes into making a great community college leader from the perspective of a faculty member? Karen Ruef provides us with a general answer: A truly great leader is one who is capable of articulating a powerful, positive, and compelling vision for organizational and individual growth, and who can generate the trust and support needed to execute their vision.¹ Gunder Myran provides a more specific answer: community college students, faculty, and staff seek a leader who

creates a spirit within the college of purpose and deep meaning. They hunger for a sense of direction, of exciting and challenging goals, of synergy and unity. They want to be uplifted, inspired, and called together for a common cause that transcends their personal boundaries and, indeed, their lifetimes. Community college faculty and staff respond

“ They want to be uplifted, inspired, and called together for a common cause that transcends their personal boundaries and, indeed, their lifetimes.



with more enthusiasm and dedication when they can give expression to their core beliefs and experience personal fulfillment in their work. ²

A 2003 research project by the Community College Leadership Program of the University of Texas illustrates this point. Researchers studied award-winning community college faculty members and discovered that they value highly the intrinsic rewards of teaching. They mentioned their deep desire to make a difference. They spoke of their love of their students, learning, their subject matter, and teaching. ³

In my daily work with leaders at my college, this is what I look for and appreciate:

- Leaders who “show up” and are approachable—who interact directly with students and faculty members and understand where they are coming from.
- Leaders who are dedicated to the centrality of student success and of teaching and learning in the community college.
- Leaders who understand the complex dynamics of the community college teaching and learning environment and serve as advocates for the faculty in institutional decision-making processes.
- Leaders who are tuned in to the diversity of students served by the college, including sensitivity to the challenges that faculty members face in serving today’s often needy student population.
- Leaders who can manage day-to-day operations well, but also have a grasp of the “big picture”—who can think strategically and have an awareness of the evolving landscape of the community college.
- Leaders who are continuously learning and are adaptable, have a sense of self-awareness and self-evaluation, and are willing to admit mistakes.

Community college leadership is hard and challenging work—it is not for the timid. That is why I appreciate leaders who get the job done, project a compelling vision, partner with the faculty to achieve student success and completion, and are there for faculty members when the going gets tough.

1. <http://www.adp.com/~|media/Reprints/Leadership-Excellence-Karen-Ruef-11-12- Reprint.ashx>
 2. www.moeglennner.com/docs/Leadership-Excellence.pdf
 3. Authored by notable presidents whose institutions are in the forefront of innovation, the 2013-2014 series of *Presidential Perspectives* tackles how higher education is “Elevating Sustainability Through Academic Leadership.”

Getting the Right Leaders on the Community College Bus

Dr. Letitia Uduma,
WCCCD Northwest Campus President



During my tenure as a community college executive, I have had the opportunity to work with many outstanding administrators and leaders. However, there have been rare moments in interacting with a problem employee that I have said to myself, “Why was this person ever hired?” Most community college leaders have experienced such moments. We know how extremely difficult it is to deal with an ordinary or mediocre performer in terms of energy, time, cost, and trauma. This is especially true when the problem employee holds an administrative position. I will posit in this article that decisions about who to hire for administrative positions (who to invite on the community college bus), is more important than the steps that follow once the hiring decision has been made—orientation, position assignments, professional development, performance review, promotion and advancement, etc. Jim Collins, based on his years

Getting the Right Leaders on the Community College Bus

continued from page 3

of research on “good to great” leaders, reached these conclusions that support my position:

- The good-to-great leaders begin by first getting the right people on the bus.
- The “who” questions comes before the “what” decisions—before vision, before strategy, before organizational structure, before tactics.
- When in doubt, don’t hire. An organization’s success is limited according to its ability to attract enough of the right people.
- Whether someone is the “right person” has more to do with character traits and innate capabilities than with specific knowledge, background, and skills.¹

“ Our future leaders must be prepared to shape their colleges in response to rapidly evolving educational, demographic, economic, technological, and cultural change in the communities served.

Over the years, I have hired, supervised, and worked with a large number of administrators. In every case, I hired them with a spirit of confidence that they would make an outstanding contribution to the institution. In spite of my enthusiasm at the point of hiring, I knew from experience that the actual performance of a few of the promising new hires would eventually disappoint me and be below the high standards of my college. In many of these cases, professional development and individual coaching “rescued” them and charted the course to high performance. In rare cases, progressive discipline and termination was the eventual outcome. After having such challenging experiences, I would redouble my efforts to make sure in succeeding hiring decisions that the right people were invited to get on the community college bus.

What have I learned from these experiences? What are the characteristics of candidates for administrative and leadership positions on which I base my hiring recommendations or decisions? First, I am influenced by characteristics that have stood the test of time such as a commitment to the open door philosophy of the community college, successful administrative experience, achievement in teaching and learning environments, outstanding communications and networking skills, demonstration of maturity and good judgement, high moral and ethical standards, and excellent professional credentials.

Beyond these universally accepted characteristics, I am influenced by how candidates have prepared themselves for leadership as change agents in a community college world that is undergoing dramatic change. Our future leaders must be prepared to shape their colleges in response to rapidly evolving educational, demographic, economic, technological, and cultural change in the communities served. As well, they must be able to lead institutional transformations in response to a more diverse student body, student success and completion mandates, public accountability demands, changing learning and information technologies, and heightened knowledge and skill requirements for career education and workforce development programs. Given the imperative to hire future administrators and leaders who are qualified to serve as change agents, I would add these characteristics on which to judge candidates:

- Proven capacity to be adaptive and entrepreneurial
- Temperament to manage conflicts in a positive and productive way
- Successful engagement in student success and completion programs
- Demonstrated cultural competence
- Technology-based digital and web-connected skills
- GRIT to navigate difficult situations—toughness, persistence, stamina, and resilience
- Global awareness
- Team leadership and networking experience and skills
- Healthy lifestyle

Once we get the right leaders on the community college bus, we will be positioned to develop an exemplary leadership team that is qualified to make a positive difference in the lives of students, the future trajectory of the college, and the growth and development of the communities served.

Citation: Collins, Jim. (2001). Good to Great. New York: HarperCollins Publishers. p. 63



Critical Leadership Competencies for the Next Generation of Community College Leaders

Paige Vanderhyden, M.S., *Associate Provost, Design Center, WCCCD*

This article is addressed to the next generation of community college leaders – those who have the motivation, potential, and experience to serve in presidential and other positions of executive leadership. I propose that future leaders must develop and exhibit the four critical leadership competencies as described in *The Leadership Journey* by Gary Burnison: 1) self-reflection; 2) defining and communicating purpose; 3) creating followership; and 4) envisioning the future.

SELF-REFLECTION. Perhaps William Shakespeare stated it best in Hamlet, “To thine own self be true.” To be genuine and authentic as a leader, you must reflect on who you are, what your values are, and what your guiding principles are. Take time to look in the mirror each morning. Touching base with your internal self is not always easy, but it is necessary in order to understand how your work, your crucible, has formed you into the person you are. More importantly, how you form the workplace around you and connect your leadership skills externally. As a leader, you set the tone for the organization. It is your job to inspire and empower people. Realizing your internal values, principles, beliefs and what forms you, sets a strong foundation upon which to form and lead the organization to make a vision a reality.

DEFINING AND COMMUNICATING PURPOSE. As a leader, you cannot move the organization toward a goal if the purpose (the “why” we do what we do) is not identified and clearly communicated to the members of the organization. A sense of purpose must be demonstrated and lived daily, or embodied, by the leader. It defines the culture of an organization, and when people know the “why,” shared interest replaces self-interest. The leader must also shape the “what” (defining the goal) and facilitate the creation of the “how” (strategy to reach the goal).

CREATING FOLLOWERSHIP. A leader cannot lead alone; he or she must have followers. This requires building relationships and committing to the needs of those who follow. Being a great leader is not based on what the leader accomplishes, but rather on the people they coach and

what they achieve. Celebrate and recognize those achievements when they happen. As a leader, be inclusive and use terminology which focuses on the team such as “we” and



“us,” instead of “I” and “me.” Create a safe environment where people feel comfortable in sharing ideas and be a good listener to those ideas. How we handle and cope with failure and forgiveness by our own actions speaks volumes to those who surround us – professionally and personally. Failure is inevitable and without it, there would be no growth or change. Allowing failure in the work environment and using it as a tool for learning sets a tone of safety and empowerment for the organization and opens the door for forgiveness. Forgiveness allows for forward movement and further strengthens relationships. Authentic leaders who positively allow for failure and promote forgiveness will form the work to be productive, engaging, and innovative.

ENVISIONING THE FUTURE. Not only does a leader need to focus on the present, they also need to look to the future and anticipate what is coming up around the corner. Using intuition and intellect, a leader develops a vision that others may not see. The leader must communicate and focus on that vision while also anticipating multiple strategies to reach it. A leader must be observant of history, but also be open-minded and curious about what the future may hold.

The Leadership Journey as it relates to the nurturing of the next generation of community college leaders, requires looking inward to self-reflect, upward to define and communicate purpose, downward to create fellowship, and looking to the horizon to envision the future. Safe travels.

Burnison, G. (2015). The Leadership Journey. Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley.

Leading the Digitally-Advanced Community College

Dr. Ella Davis, *Humanities Lead Faculty, WCCCD*



Today's students are masters of a realm that delivers images and music in an instant, offers immediate access to global networks and allows the spontaneous uploading of audio and video posts. Meeting the needs of this tech-savvy generation is challenging particularly for community colleges that have the complex task of preparing students for the next phase of their academic journey or for career entry and advancement. Community college leaders today must work with faculty members to develop new teaching and learning modalities, learning technology strategies, and curricular designs that respond to the changing attitudes and expectations of a diverse student body preparing to live in a digitally-advanced and globally-connected society.

The next generation of college leaders must develop a greater understanding of the multifaceted the millennial learn and communicate. Millennials are entering community college as what is known as "digital natives" dependent upon mobile devices and plugged in to *Snapchat*, *Instagram*, *Periscope* and other social media outlets.

Meanwhile, educators, most of whom could be called "digital immigrants," are not nearly as adept at technology and tend to rely on instructional methods that fail to spark

student imagination. To stimulate greater intellectual curiosity among millennials, specialized strategies should be engaged. Suggestions include:

HEIGHTENED VISION – According to a study by New York University (NYU) the brains of millennials are wired for multi-tasking and staying connected. Hence, college leaders must be able to provide a wide range of stimuli. This is essential for instructional leaders who are juggling the demands of both the traditional student and the dual enrollment student (high school students on an accelerated path). Heightened vision includes unconventional teaching methods, i.e. the usage of affirmative mantras (positive motivational affirmations that mold self concept), the practice of creative visualization, interactive class sessions and peer mentoring.

ALTERNATIVE TEACHING AND COMMUNICATION – The old classroom milieu of the teacher standing in the front of the room is boring to millennials. In the NYU study, it was noted that retention soared when learning was part of a team effort. When students were placed in a teaching role, retention rates rose as high as 90 percent. Further, it was shown that millennials are non-linear and tend to focus better when offered numerous sources of information. They are turned off by the old style of instruction and prefer "doing" as opposed to "knowing." Guided learning and one-on-one communication sessions are also preferred.

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY – Educators must frequently brush up on skills and come up with ways to apply them in the classroom. Study after study confirms that the computer is such a natural part of the millennials' world they don't consider it technology. They have a "Nintendo" mindset and learn best by seeking information (as in searching the web). They thrive in virtual settings and respond exceedingly well to online instruction whether outside or inside the classroom.

The leaders of today's community college, working with the faculty, are called to spearhead the transformation of the college's learning environments in response to changing student characteristics, educational goals and needs, learning preferences, and digital literacy. The challenges of online and hybrid learning innovations, integration of social media, faculty digital competency growth, work-based learning innovations, changing accreditation requirements, and quality vs. affordability considerations all converse on leaders who are shaping the future of the community college. As a faculty member and instructional leader, I applaud those leaders who are meeting these challenges with rigor and creativeness.



Leadership Succession In The Community College: Nurturing the Next Generation of Leaders and Assuring Sustainable Excellence

Furquan Ahmed, B.A., *District Vice Chancellor for Human Resources and Accountability, WCCCD*

The current executive leadership of community colleges in the nation share the common and daunting challenge of identifying and developing the next generation of leaders. Sustainable excellence is a priority for all institutions. Human resource is undoubtedly the most precious asset that these institutions have, but it is also the most significant challenge in any organization. Next generation leadership is the most visible part of a leader's legacy and ensuring that an institution will continue to accomplish its mission in the coming decades is most critical to sustainability.

GENERAL HUMAN RESOURCES FUNCTIONS THAT RELATE TO LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION

- Staffing master plan: analysis of current staffing data in areas such as hiring patterns, professional development participation, promotion patterns, retirement trends, staff performance review results, personnel policies, leadership succession outlook, etc.; development of a three to five year staffing strategic plan to encompass these and other human resources strategic areas
- Professional development: provision of a comprehensive professional development program for staff
- Diversity and inclusion: strategy for achieving equity in hiring and promotion decisions by race, sexual orientation and identity, age, ethnicity, national origin, and other inclusion factors
- Position budgeting: determination of the budget for staffing and staff professional development over the next three to five years
- Staff promotion: provision of incentives for staff advancement
- Salary administration: compensation and benefits management, periodic update of compensation and benefits guidelines and practices, periodic audit of administrative job descriptions and related salary ranges, etc.
- Individual performance planning and review: Annual performance planning by individual staff members; year

- long coaching and support; year-end performance review
- Staffing controls: establishment of authorized strength by classification, control of vacancy decisions, decisions on new hires, etc.

SPECIFIC ELEMENTS OF LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION

- Critical future leadership skills: identification of the competences needed for critical leadership positions in the future, including the impact of internal and external demographic, educational, economic, workforce, technological, and cultural changes
- Human resources audit: evaluation of the strengths and areas for improvement of the existing staff; determine the leadership capacity and potential of current staff members
- Projected future staffing needs: projection of full-time and part-time staffing needs during the next three to five years by classification, including the strategy for achieving diversity objectives
- Professional development for leadership succession: design of a specific professional development program to cultivate the leadership competencies needed for the future
- Retirement trends analysis: review of trends of likely retirements and other staff attrition during the next three to five years
- Internal and external mix: definition of the best mix of internal and external candidates for leadership positions
- Leadership successful plan: Encompassing these and other components of the leadership succession plan in the staffing master plan

Nurturing the next generation of leaders of a community college is an awesome responsibility. The creation of the leadership team that will serve the college in the years and decades ahead is one of the most impactful legacies of the current leadership of the college. A successful leadership succession program can assure that future students, faculty, and staff, as well as the communities served, have the benefit of continued leadership excellence.

Great Leadership Invites Guest Authors

Do you have an article you've written, the description of a successful work process, or the details of a leadership program that you want read by a broad audience of colleagues? The Great Leadership Newsletter seeks to publish well-written, informative, forward-thinking articles and ideas. The topics we publish deal with leadership and leadership development. We also consider book reviews, reviews of videos and any other relevant leadership content. **Articles submitted should be 200-500 words in length.**

Editorial Director: Ms. Unbreen Amir
Publisher: Dr. Curtis L. Ivery
For more information or to submit articles for consideration, contact:

E-Mail: greatleadership@wcccd.edu
Phone: **(313) 496-2510**

Address:

Great Leadership Newsletter
Wayne County Community College District
801 W. Fort Street
Detroit, MI 48226

Mission Statement

WCCCD's mission is to empower individuals, businesses and communities to achieve their goals through excellent and accessible services, culturally diverse experiences, and globally competitive higher education and career advancement programs.

©2016, Great Leadership, a publication of Wayne County Community College District. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited.

