A Message from the Chancellor

Welcome to the inaugural edition of the Great Leadership newsletter!

I have spent a lot of time recently thinking about the future, particularly the future of community colleges and their continuing challenge to develop new leaders. What tools are we providing to help prepare them? How do we develop and support a legacy that is going to carry community colleges meaningfully into the next generation?

I’ve been struck by Thomas Friedman’s book *The world is flat; A brief history of the twenty-first century*. In it he describes the emerging global economy as a “flat world,” meaning the world’s economies compete and communicate on an even playing field. This reiterates the critical need for developing new leaders in community colleges who can prepare students for the “flat world” in which they will complete.

We offer this Great Leadership newsletter to those who choose excellence as their daily pursuit. It contains cutting-edge topics from thought leaders and experts within WCCCD and the rest of the nation. The intent of this newsletter is to provide meaningful insights, thought-provoking articles and practical strategies that are applicable in personal development and daily work life. Dynamic tools are presented along with the latest research to enhance professional effectiveness and the ability to respond to a changing environment.

With the launch of this newsletter, Wayne County Community College District celebrates our journey to excellence and our continuous transformation.

**Dr. Curtis L. Ivery, Chancellor,**

Wayne County Community College District

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**Reflections on Great Leadership**

_by Dr. Gunder Myran_

_Senior Consultant to the Chancellor, WCCCD_

As I reflect on the dimensions of great leadership, I think first of the spiritual dimension. A president or chancellor who is a great leader is driven by a sense of high calling and is committed to the “open door” philosophy of the community college. Great community college leaders express their deepest spiritual and ethical convictions through

*continued on back page*
GreatLeadership

10/30 Rules: 10 Lessons Learned in over 30 Years in Higher Education

By Dr. Walter G. Bumphus, Professor, University of Texas at Austin, and Dr. Angel M. Royal, Executive Assistant to the President and Vice President for External Affairs, Louisiana Community and Technical College System

There is no secret to leadership, but there are lessons learned that can ensure that as a leader one is effective. These ten simple rules, if followed, can provide a great source of guidance on any leadership journey.

[1] It is easier to identify a leader from his/her back than to see him/her coming. Many individuals earlier in their careers might not have looked like the leaders that they have become. Give everyone a fair chance and do not pre-judge them. The least likely people can surprise you.

[2] Be wary of “initiatives du jour.” Good leaders must be astute enough to differentiate a fad from a bonafide winner. Much time can be wasted chasing the perceived “next best thing.”

[3] Don’t tackle your teammates. Celebrate accomplishments. It doesn’t take much to have an impromptu celebration or to write a note of thanks for a job well-done. If there is a need to criticize or disagree with a teammate do it in private.

[4] Don’t try the same programs and expect new results. The research has proven that it does not work. Effective leaders understand that the use of data leads to good decision-making.

[5] Listen, listen, listen. Learn to keep an open-mind and let others share their opinions. Don’t think about your response while the other person is talking because it clearly means that you are not listening.

[6] Continue to make communication a priority. When people feel like they are a part of the “information highway” because they know the game plan, they will function as a vital part of the team.

[7] Have courage. One of the most important characteristics for great leadership is courage at the helm. Courage means standing up for what is right, and accepting blame when something goes wrong.

[8] Don’t make expedient decisions that have long-term effects. A wise leader listens, weighs the options, and thinks about them before he/she speaks.

[9] Hire great people and support professional development. You are only as good as the team with which you surround yourself. As the saying goes, first rate people hire first rate people.

[10] Minimize your number of enemies. Don’t make enemies if you don’t have to. You may miss out on another good opportunity because of the troubled relationships you have accumulated.

While these lessons learned are primarily administrative in nature, in our opinion, they can be easily applied across all areas of the institution.
“Re-invention,” that’s a word you hear frequently when the subject of Wayne County Community College District comes up. Over the past 35 years, WCCCD has re-invented itself into a globally competitive institution of higher education; and the journey is not over.

As I reflect on the journey thus far, I see one element that is a consistent component of continuing success; Leadership. That one word embodies much of what works at WCCCD. It speaks to character, dedication, self-sacrifice, model behavior, high regard for truth and dignity, many of the common elements that make WCCCD what it is today. In the process I have come to understand these things about leadership.

Leadership is a decision. I do not believe a person is a “natural born leader.” I believe an individual makes a conscious decision to take on the mantle of leadership. One decides to take on the burden of making the hard decisions, to invest the personal time it takes to model excellence, and to inspire others with a common vision.

Leadership is about people. I am reminded of the quote: “No one cares how much you know until they know how much you care.” Leaders understand that. They care enough to learn about the people who work with them. They want to know what another’s dreams are, what their challenges are, what makes them special and unique; then they honor that in their day-to-day interactions. Understanding that people are motivated by their own needs, leaders work to build a vision that unites a team for the common good of all.

Leaders are life-time learners. Leaders have a hunger to learn. They invest to make themselves the best they can be. They read, attend seminars, and engage in lively discussions. They constantly seek new ideas or approaches that can help the group achieve, know, excel, and experience profound success.

Leadership is not a job title. Leadership is not determined by one’s job title. It is a mindset, a lifestyle. One can exhibit leadership in any sphere. Regardless of one’s job title, one can be a leader to his or her peers, in his or her home, or community.

It is this quality of leadership throughout the District that has brought WCCCD to its current level of excellence. It is our commitment to continued improvement that keeps us moving forward.

"Leadership is not determined by one's job title. It is a mindset, a lifestyle.”
In his book *Micromessaging: Why Great Leadership is Beyond Words*, Stephen Young identifies hidden, perhaps even subconscious, communication habits that can have a significant impact on an organization’s success. Based on research from MIT and many years of first-hand implementation, Young presents solutions that help individuals interpret and alter ingrained behaviors and their effects. In a recent interview with Dr. Stephanie Bulger, Vice Chancellor at Wayne County Community College District, Mr. Young discussed these “micromessages” and how learning to address these behaviors can bring about positive change.

**I’d like to start with some background on why you wrote the book, Micromessaging; why was it important to do it now?**

My plan was for the seminars that had been going on for four years to be the principal way of getting this message out, and it has been actually most effective. When people can have a face-to-face, interactive experience, feeling micromessages, which I put people through in the seminar, they feel what it is like. People have asked for something to give it some sustainability, something they can refer to after they leave the seminars. The book provides that. We’re working on the next release that will incorporate a host of additional tools that we’ve developed since the first book was released.

**How does this differ from diversity training?**

Micromessaging has nothing to do with race, or gender, or diversity. Instead, it has to do with how messages are sent. It’s “comfort” versus “competence.” When there is comfort, messages can create micro-advantages. When there isn’t, they can create microinequities.

**For people who are not familiar with micromessages, what are they, and why are they important?**

Micromessages really are – and not to play off on an old TV show – the “final frontier” of communication. If you’ve read the book – I talk about the elephants and the ants. We have laws, and policies, and procedures, and all sorts of things that control the big, visible, obvious behaviors relative to exclusion in the workplace or in the classroom. Those are under control. What we haven’t focused on are the ants – the very small things, the subtle things that are infinitely more powerful in driving the essence of a message. Whatever I say to you, the words, quite frankly, mean very little. It’s how I deliver the message, my body positioning, my tone of voice – any number of things, particularly as it compares to how I send a similar message to someone else, that really reveals what’s going on.

**You call this the DNA of leadership. Tell us why.**

Sending a message distinguishes a leader in terms of excellence. Leaders are typically defined as people who motivate, who inspire, who get people to live up to their potential, to get them to work effectively across borders. It’s not so important what I say. It’s more important what you hear. I can believe I’m sending the same message to two people. But because of the nature of our relationship and how I feel about Bob versus Jim, I may send messages differently without being aware of it. The subtlety of what I’m doing sends the message that says I admire, respect, and I’m comfortable with you. That influences how an individual’s self-esteem is determined, how he or she chooses to participate and over time, how the person actually develops. So one’s performance over time, not just one’s feelings, is influenced entirely by how the leader is sending these subtle messages. It may seem like hyperbole, but there is nothing more important for a real leader to do than to understand how to motivate people by sending them the most effective messages.

**How can those subtle messages hamper or enhance performance?**

In many ways. One of the classics has to do with something as simple as eye contact during a meeting. By the way, power plays a major role
in how micromessaging influences performance. Suppose we’re sitting in a team meeting, and I’m the senior person. There is a direct correlation between that lack of eye contact and a person’s interest and motivation to participate in that meeting. If I simply do something as minor as turn and focus on you while I’m talking, you are going to be motivated to get engaged. So participation is connected directly to something as simple as where the leader focuses. We see that happening in classrooms all the time. Kids connect with this in an incredibly fast way. As it relates to performance in the classroom micromessages are powerful. Those ants we discussed earlier have a tremendous impact on how a student performs for the rest of that class, the class after it, and for the balance of the year. Over time, we believe that this is the cause of the performance achievement gap that we see so prevalent in our schools today. Students of color tend to get these messages early on, and as a result, they play into, play down to, or live up to expectations. After two, or three, or five years, the pattern is set. The student no longer has an interest in learning, they have no idea why, but that’s where they are.

There was something in your book that I really appreciated. You were talking about paying attention to your language, your gestures, and that you must be equitable. Would you expand on that?

You want to be equitable in your treatment of everyone. People sometimes think, “Does this mean I have to do the same thing with everyone?” The answer is “absolutely not.” What we’re saying is, whether one is in the workplace, or a teacher with students, it’s important to do things in an equitable fashion so that everyone feels equally motivated to be heard and to participate.

So what can leaders do to recognize and manage micromessages within their own organization, not just the messages that they send, but the messages that they see sent around them?

There are a number of things that we suggest, and one of them starts with just looking at five key areas: facial expressions, tone of voice, hand gestures, choice of words, and eye contact. These are the key elements that people use to read the micromessages. If we think about those [elements] as we send messages, we’re likely to send them in a way that we want – not in a pretentious way, but in a way that does what we are supposed to do as educators, as leaders, as parents, as colleagues, and that’s to encourage people to perform at their peak levels.

You have mentioned that the burden is on the sender. But I believe you also said that the receiver can gain credibility, and then talk to the sender about the messages that they’re sending. Would you clarify that?

Yes. The sender has the principal role of filtering his or her own messages. The receiver has the primary role of action when something has occurred, because it has happened to him or her. The receiver of the message has the responsibility to decipher what is really being communicated and to let the sender know how the message is being interpreted. So the real responsibility falls on the receiver for putting it on the table, and then on the sender and the receiver jointly to come to an understanding of what the message is really all about and how to act on it. It’s very difficult to talk to somebody about this unless there’s some credibility on both sides regarding the power and the impact of micromessages. So there’s an additional element which is establishing the credibility of these messages. This has to do with the Marshall McLuhan world of communication formulas, patterns, and responsibilities. You actually have three key players. You have the sender, the receiver, and the observer. We consider the observer, frankly, the most critical in the process as it relates to change, because the observer has the greatest credibility when an issue is surfaced – and also the greatest impact in terms of breadth.

Is that because, since the observer is neutral, he or she can actually speak up and help diffuse the situation for the sender and the receiver?

You have hit the point, as we see it, on the bull’s eye. The observer is the most powerful person, and has the greatest responsibility for

“ The observer is the most powerful person, and has the greatest responsibility for change.”

continued on page six
It has long been accepted that a person with a high Intelligence Quotient (IQ) is exceptionally smart and better able to perform than someone with a lower IQ. But smarter in every way? And always a better employee? You decide.

EQ (emotional quotient), or emotional intelligence, challenges the belief that a high IQ alone is a complete representation of an individual’s overall intelligence. EQ measures one’s ability to use both emotions and cognitive skills. It is described as the ability to recognize and understand one’s own emotions and those of others, characterized by the ability to self-regulate our moods, control impulses and motivate others. While the term emotional intelligence may be relatively new, its value in the workplace has long been recognized. Performance evaluations assess an employee’s knowledge and skills as they relate to their job; however, the assessments do not isolate cognitive skills as the only skills necessary for effective job performance. Areas such as the ability to cope with stressful situations, cooperate with others and communicate ideas effectively are valued as much, if not more than, intelligence. Susan Dunn, an executive coach, explains this in much simpler terms. “IQ gets you through school. EQ gets you through life.”

Emotional intelligence is especially important in large organizations, such as WCCCD, that utilize the matrix management model. Employees must manage emotions within themselves, their relationships with peers, and relationships with multiple supervisors.

More recently, even professors are relying less on traditional forms of assessment in favor of authentic learning experiences that require students to work cooperatively in solving realistic problems. Like IQ, EQ can be measured with professionally administered assessments. Unlike IQ, EQ can be improved - by working toward improving our ability to empathize, build consensus, and make emotional connections with others.

“IQ gets you through school. EQ gets you through life.”

Micromessages continued from page five

change. The observer is not the person being accused, nor the person receiving the microinequity. As an objective third party his or her observation tends to be seen with greater credibility than those who are intimately involved in the process. For example, if I were to say, “Jeff, I noticed during the meetings, whenever Jane says something, you always turn your head to the side. And then you put your head up and sort of rest your head in your hands like this, but you don’t do that for most of the other people on the team when they speak. I don’t know if you’ve ever noticed that.” Now if I have a relationship where I can talk to Jeff, and I say that, he’s bound to see it differently and be less defensive than if Jane were to come to him and say, “You know, Jeff you do this to me.” My role as an observer brings credibility to the microinequity. By the way, if multiple observers make the comment, you can take it to the bank that that person is going to be motivated to change. It is impossible that Jeff could ever sit in a meeting again and look at Jane and not think about how he’s sending messages. That observer has such a powerful role.

I will say one closing comment, that once people experience this, many take it beyond the workplace. You will find, aside from what we’ve been primarily talking about as it applies to the workplace, that this will have a profound effect on people’s relationship with their spouse, partner, their children, and friends, and will do wonders to moving those relationships in the directions that they may need to go.

That is excellent. Thank you for wrapping it up that way.
Leadership for Organizational Transformation

by Dr. Richard Alfred, Associate Professor of Education, University of Michigan

In all too many institutions, leading has turned into managing. Tactical short-term concerns like tending the board, balancing the budget, upgrading a dysfunctional IT system, and conflict resolution crowd out longer-term strategic issues. Leaders today can perhaps be appropriately pictured as institutional stewards rather than architects of the future.

Yet community colleges are experiencing the winds of change as never before with faster and cheaper technology; an environment shifting from local to global; quantum changes in institutional finance and accountability; and aggressive new competitors. When added to demographic and economic transformation and students’ changing interests, lifestyles and priorities, it should be easy to grasp the importance of big picture thinking about the future. More sharply put, it is sheer folly to think that institutions can remain static in the pursuit of change and that the focus of leaders can be limited to stewardship.

The first and foremost task of leaders is transformation of institutions and staff for success in a fast changing global environment. This will involve a capacity to think strategically about the future, to envision and pursue opportunity, and to create and work in networks. Above all, it will involve an ability to see beyond current boundaries of the institution and reposition it in new and fresh ways.

For leaders – be they academic leaders at any level, or be they members of governing and policy-making bodies – guiding and leading transformation is what really matters. Systemic change guided by an architect of the future trumps operational efficiency managed by a steward of the present. This newsletter offers a timely invitation to participate in a journey beyond the horizon of what our colleges are today to what they can become tomorrow.

Appreciative Inquiry in the Workplace: Leaders Appreciate the Past while They Work toward the Future

by Dr. Stephanie Bulger, Vice Chancellor, WCCCD

Can the belief that the glass is half full rather than half empty actually have practical benefits in the workplace? If you are familiar with the concept of appreciative inquiry then you know that focusing on the best of one’s job and one’s company can ignite endless possibilities.

Here’s why: There is untapped potential everywhere. For example, the need at WCCCD to create more distance learning offerings with a small pool of distance learning faculty caused the distance learning department to ask how more faculty could be prepared to use technology in their teaching. After researching industry standards and best practices, an in-house process was developed to train and certify faculty to teach online courses. By focusing on accessing the strengths and distinctive competencies of our existing faculty, the distance learning program has grown significantly in the past few years.

Constructive questioning helps leaders heighten creativity in both individuals and the organization as a whole. By linking an individual’s strengths or other positive attributes to a project, a new direction is pursued for creating enthusiasm, confidence and increased productivity throughout the organization. Elevated thoughts, shared values, and traditions enliven an organization’s spirit and create the impetus for design, development, and innovation.

Focusing on team strengths helps to bring a union between past and present capabilities. All too often in the workplace, the focus is on what can’t be done or what is not possible. Appreciative Inquiry embraces reality and asks what we do well, how we achieved past successes and how we can leverage that experience today. This line of thought puts possibility at the forefront and reaffirms positive traits. The organization becomes a living system prepared to anticipate and embrace continuous change.

The 8 Assumptions of Appreciative Inquiry

1. In every society, organization, or group, something works.
2. What we focus on becomes our reality.
3. Reality is created in the moment, and there are multiple realities.
4. The act of asking questions of an organization or group influences the group in some way.
5. People have more confidence and comfort to journey to the future (the unknown) when they carry forward parts of the past (the known).
6. If we carry parts of the past forward, they should be what is best about the past.
7. It is important to value differences.
8. The language we use creates our reality.
Reflections on Great Leadership  continued from page one

modeling integrity, empathy, generosity, patience, and compassion in their work.

The values and highest ideals of a great leader are reflected in all aspects of the community colleges that they lead. Great community college leaders have the ability to conceptualize and articulate a compelling vision of the college to which others will commit themselves and devote their talents and energies to achieve. Driven by a sense of common cause, great leaders have an extraordinary capacity to nurture relationships with internal and community constituencies and to enlist them in achieving a shared vision.

In a college with a great leader, there is a sense of collegiality, high purpose, teamwork, and unity. Great community college leaders empower others to develop their leadership capacities by encouraging them and by giving them zones of freedom to take risks and learn how to get important things done. Great leaders are resolute in executing the college’s mission and vision; they leap over barriers that others may have thought impossible to overcome. Generally, over time, the personality of a great leader becomes the personality of the college itself.

WCCCD Vision 2011 Statement

By 2011, WCCCD will be recognized as an institution that has achieved national and international recognition for enduring excellence as a comprehensive multi-campus community college district. WCCCD will focus on continuous self-evaluation and improvement; preparation of a highly skilled workforce in support of the Wayne County economy; student academic and career success, and leadership in strengthening the open door philosophy of educational opportunity.