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Quintessential Leadership: Leading by Design

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Abstract

This paper discusses the benefits and drawbacks of shared governance models and the ramifications of shared governance on the environment and morale of faculty, staff, and students. Effective leadership teams can be developed in all settings. With clarity of purpose and mission, communication, and sincere motivations to transition, all sites have potential to govern themselves effectively and efficiently. Included in this paper is the presentation of the 3C model of leadership which stresses communication, compassion, and character, and the benefits of implementation not only to faculty and staff, but most importantly, students.

We have become such a society of clichés and redundancy that there often is no power in a label. How often do we hear an athlete or performer referred to as "legendary?" How common is to hear an old product has become "new and improved?" Many times such manipulations of verbiage constitute distaste among the recipients of the message who understandably assess it with great skepticism. Unfortunately, such has become the case for most educators when they hear administrators refer to "team efforts." Sadly, many educators have reconciled themselves to stoically accepting orders from the top, resigning themselves to implement policies and procedures with an overwhelming feeling of helplessness, as though they are paid messengers who are never relied upon for their own expertise. This common mode of forced hierarchy frequently relinquishes the passion that draws many educators into the field and prompts a cycle of despondency that extinguishes the flames of creativity and innovation. For this reason, many educational organizations, from public schools and universities to private colleges, do not deliver the high-level of education excellence that students must derive in today's demanding social climate. Consequently, unmotivated faculty members prune students into dispassionate workers who fail to understand their endless potentials to contribute to society. Therefore, in the interest of not only faculty members and school officials, but also of tomorrow's leaders, it is incumbent upon educational organizations to implement a team-based management style that utilizes the talents of the staff and includes faculty in management making-decisions, thereby fostering an educational environment of optimal efficiency that empowers faculty and administrators through diversified representation in a rewarding work atmosphere.

Perhaps the pervading reason that team-management based leadership is not properly utilized in education is because we really do not understand its nature. Marie McKendall, a business professor from Grand Valley State University in Allendale Michigan, asserts that schools fail at teaching what it means to be a part of a team. "Business schools that should be teaching young men and women how to work in teams give lip service to the process but do not know how to teach these skills to prospective organizational managers and workers," McKendall notes in an article she published in the Journal of Education for Business. Further, she points out in data borrowed from Moran, Musselwhite, and Zenger, that "despite the growing use and importance of work teams, 50% of all workplace team initiatives fail." Just as McKendall's business students get "plenty of experience working in groups, but no class focused on how to do effective group work," such is the case with today's educators.

We often hear that an organization can only be as strong as its leadership. Therefore, before a team-based educational leadership approach may be developed, it is necessary to examine the makings of a good leadership. Perhaps the most important issue for administrators to realize is that harboring power does not constitute competent leadership. Karlene Kerfoot, who holds a PhD in Nursing and serves as Vice President for Nursing and Patient Care Services and Chief Nurse Executive at Clarian Health in Indianapolis, Indiana, in addition to her duties as an Associate Dean at the Indiana School of Nursing, believes the appropriate administrative route for leaders is not through intimidation or threats. Kerfoot notes, "In addition to positive rewards that motivate, we can also motivate by fear and punishment. But people are often left without a sense of passion for what they do, and cannot sustain their performance when the external rewards or fears or not there. Inspirational leaders instill an intrinsic drive that is fueled by a higher purpose." When fear tactics and heavy-handedness are utilized by administrators, educators lose their sense of purpose to the ever-looming cloud of doubt and fear, and ultimately, students suffer because such an atmosphere prohibits faculty from giving all of themselves in the classroom. Integral lines of communication are destroyed and broken down, causing major problems among the staff as well as within the administration. Single-headed administrations of yesteryear are no more, with the convergence of new paradigms in and out of the administrative offices. Faculties have changed both in construction and philosophy. Therefore, the administration and its tactical style must make this metamorphosis.

Sergiovanni lends his favor to "leadership by outrage," which turns leadership into a position of moral authority. This style of leadership, though perceived by some as effective, undermines and debases competent faculty members. In turn, this becomes an issue of totalitarianism and hostility. Fullan suggests that leaders only lead because they are chosen by the masses, and that "...the prince always needs the favor of his people." It is easier to dictate than to lead a democratic faculty. Democracies, by nature, are subject to

debate and introspection. This truth reveals why democracies facilitate successful leadership approaches. Blasé and Blasé assert that debate is healthy. We must realize that view points differ and should be valued. There are, after all, many effective methods to achieve the same goals.

Undoubtedly, critics will contend that there are faculty members that should be silenced. However, leaders must consciously respect the person whom they wish to silence. This is key when attempting to defer to the judgment of faculty members, as inevitable differences in philosophy and style are imminent. As administrators, some decisions should be reserved for the administrative team, and some should be reserved for faculty input. This is where the lines of communication that were discussed earlier are inherently essential to the success of shared governance on the college campus. Leaders must establish their roles early in the process of transitioning from an autocratic to a democratic leadership style. As this role is established, clear boundaries and goals must be established. Clarity is key to maintaining the balance between sharing power and abdicating decision-making responsibilities.

Leadership, in its quintessential form, implies that it is the responsibility of the leader to be the driving force behind all operations on campus. Administrators must be stewards and inspirational leaders. Kerfoot suggests that passion must be returned to the masses in order to yield and sustain the performance level that is desired from a competent and well-trained faculty. This passion must be driven by a sense of "...mission, higher purpose, and commitment to a vast array of possibilities. Inspiring leadership unleashes creativity, enthusiasm, and passion that motivational leadership cannot."

Effective leadership teams can be developed in all settings. With clarity of purpose and mission, communication, and sincere motivations to transition, all sites have potential to govern themselves effectively and efficiently.

Team-based approaches do not preclude individual contributions in the workplace. As a matter of fact, it becomes essential to have self-motivated team members who are able to be independently creative and apply their expertise to the larger collegial society. Teams, by nature, are comprised of individuals (Yeager and Beck) and leaders must understand that team-based efforts are not on the opposite end of the professional spectrum from individual assignments. Beck and Yeager suggest that a mistaken premise that many leaders embrace is that team work only effectively happens when all members of the team are present, functioning as a cog that turns the whole. However, this ideology is mythical.

All teams do not require a high level of structural guidance. Many academic organizations can be paralleled to sports teams. According to Beck and Yeager, just as golf and tennis teams are

comprised of players who make individual contributions to the good of the whole, so should ideal leadership function within colleges. In such instances team members require a limited amount of interaction with the group as a whole, but concentrate individual attention on means of attaining the overall goal of winning (Beck and Yeager). In the case of the educational institution, winning is finding a shared balance of power that matriculates into an effectively-run organization that boosts faculty morale, and thereby, enhances the educational experience of students. In academia, many of our contributions are made a similar manner to those of players on sports teams. Individual faculty members determine the most appropriate manner of reaching an educational destination. Administration should only intrude should the process prove blatantly ineffective or lacking compliance with state and local policies. Promotion of autonomy among faculty is important and maximizes each individuals feeling of usefulness.

Within an instructional setting, faculty needs to be free to determine what educational course they are going to set for students. The administration should be supportive of new and innovative methods of instruction. Support must be provided not verbally, but more importantly, financially. Administrations who say they strive for the inclusion of new technology in the classroom should work diligently to secure funding to make the equipment available to faculty members. In turn, faculty who are free of fear and criticism are more likely to include new techniques and methodologies in their instructional repertoire. The autonomy that faculty experiences directly translates into improved job performance and high levels of job satisfaction. As faculty members feel secure as educators, they will appreciate curricular freedoms afforded them and express more satisfaction in their work environment. A happier faculty becomes better teachers, and the difference manifests in classrooms where the enthusiasm is contagious to students who become eager to learn from dynamic and energized teachers. (Blasé and Blasé).

Shared governance is by no means an easy goal. Many attempts have been made to discern the perfect approach to its execution. Sometimes, educators and administrators have to grope blindly for solutions to conflicts that inevitably arise from new policies instituted to initiate team-based organizations. What constitutes an ideal approach to team-based leadership with an educational system? The question is still widely debated among educators in California, more than a decade since the passage of a bill that was widely-touted to offer inclusion for faculty members and teachers in the governance of policy-making decisions (Collins). The initiative, known as AB1725, promised radical reform for the state's higher education system. The bill extended probation periods for new faculty hires, toughened minimum qualifications for faculty, but at the same time promised more faculty control in decisions and encouraged faculty enrichment by pledging to make more money available for professional development. The delegation of power fell back to the faculty members in that "new personnel policies gave faculty responsibility for

hiring, evaluation, tenure review, and professional development and established an orderly system for layoffs" (Collins). Further, faculty members were provided a voice in determining degree and certificate academic requirements and grading procedures for students.

While the bill sounds good on paper, California higher education faculty soon noticed some pitfalls. For example, while the bill sought to foster professional development, funding for such pursuits was deficient. While AB1725 did offer faculty members more of say in governing the system, at the same time, it took away some of their power. Collins remarks that "management reorganizations have undermined shared governance in the name of efficiency. In college after college, faculty-elected division and department chairs have been replaced by full-time managers, who claim, remarkably, that this new structure will make colleges more 'student centered.'" Despite protests over such occurrences, professors from California's colleges often have been defeated. Collins reflects that California's vision of shared academic government still has far to go, but given success experienced in some areas since AB1725's inception, educators remain optimistic the future will abate the wrinkles in the system.

The growing pains experienced by California's community colleges are being felt around the nation. Carol A. Lucey, president of Western Nevada Community College, points out that "growing numbers of traditional-age students today elect to begin their education at a community college." As such, it is more important than ever for community colleges to redefine their missions and objectives. Lucey, being the apex of power in her community college, asserts that team-based management is the best approach. Her method of stimulating a productive work environment could be surmised in two words: faculty empowerment. Lucey believes those in the trenches know better than anyone what needs to occur in the classrooms. Therefore, she says "faculty should maintain primary authority over matters related to curriculum, methods of student instruction, standards of faculty competence and conduct, and faculty appointments and status." Given these broad and sweepingly inclusive roles she affords her faculty members, how does she define the roles of administrators? Lucey feels "matters related to institutional mission, strategic planning, program review, and resource allocation are generally recognized as matters for the governing board and its administrative delegates."

Leadership is an eclectic approach to maintaining order and efficiency. Many times a leader, especially an instructional leader, will become overwhelmed with responsibilities. Additionally, leaders often feel apprehension relating to sharing power. They work about relinquishing power. Leaders who exemplify the characteristics integral to effective shared governance models are practicing a constructivist approach to leadership. They are doing so by acting as a guide rather than a leadership force of intimidation. The constructivist approach to leadership merges with the principals of

shared governance. The visionary leaders of organizations must exemplify the characteristics they would like for their organizations to personify, and be the facilitators that guide their armada along the appropriate administrative courses. Leadership is not simply establishing a role as the commander of a great educational fleet; rather, it is being servant to those in a leader's charge. Though Sergiovanni was credited with leadership by outrage, he also postulated that leaders must be examples. They should be involved in all aspects of their organizations. The following model of leadership, the 3C approach, exemplifies the qualities that a servant-leader must emulate to achieve the highest level of productivity from an autonomous faculty. These three essential qualities are character, communication, and compassion.

Character

Leaders in today's society are misinformed about the nature of their role as examples to their staff. In one philosophy taken from Denis J Reimer, a military leadership analyst, leaders should revert to the "Golden Rule," that states to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you." From a leadership standpoint this makes a tremendous amount of sense. Servant leadership, in this instance, would include treating your faculty with respect and dignity. Great leaders must make faculty aware that the leaders recognize faculty members' competency levels and trust them to make decisions based on their experience and education.

Students reflect the environment from which they come (Terry). This presents a challenge to leaders to know what new skills need to be adapted to cope with an ever- changing environment. The character of the administrator in this instance will be tested and challenged on many levels. There are several standards which leaders must embrace to meet the academic needs of an ever changing campus and facilitate its operation.

First, the leader must lead with a vision while being a visionary leader. Imperative to the function and operation of the campus is the ability of the leader to communicate his or her vision and deliver the support and tools needed to effectively carry out that vision. This can be done by enacting new policy and transitioning to a more team-based approach to leadership.

Secondly, leaders must develop an organizational plan. The leadership team must divide decision making authority into segments. One segment that is purely administrative, and one that is for faculty consideration. The lines between these two segments must be clearly drawn and specific responsibilities created which are group specific. For example, tenure review and instructional or curricular decisions, as well as staff development could easily be left to your competent staff to manage. Matters of organizational policy or structure would be better suited in the hands of experienced administrators.

Lastly, the leader must be a leader that has values and ethics in management. The leader must establish trust with his staff. The relationship between faculty and administrators can become strained and hostile when the faculty feels disenfranchised from the administrative process. A lack of trust could also lead to the development of a break down in communication which would interfere with one of the essential premises of being a visionary leader...the ability to anticipate and meet future needs of the organization. In modern times, we have witnessed a breakdown in moral leadership even in the highest offices of our country. Visionary leaders understand the need for true visionary leadership, the need to reinstitute integrity into the basic elements of leadership, regardless of their positions.

Communication

Faculty must see leaders as trusting individuals whom they can admire and respect when high-level administrative decisions must be made. Trust is integral to the successful establishment of communication lines between administration and faculty, and to this same degree, unbroken communication must be maintained. Communication is not just an idea, it is the crux of any successful organization. A visionary leader communicates his vision with those whom he leads. Not only does he communicate his vision, he communicates the manner in which it must be accomplished.

In keeping true to the philosophy of shared governance and empowerment, communication is not always a direct or verbal exchange. A leader must communicate through actions as well as words. Should the administration feel the need to encourage more faculty participation in campus events, administrators need to participate in those very events. This sends a clear message that the leaders are willing to practice what they preach and are not requiring anything of faculty that they themselves are unwilling to commence. Along those lines, leaders should make it a priority to communicate enthusiasm, optimism, caring, honesty, and friendliness (Blasé and Blasé). Leadership by example communicates the goals and missions of the community college while inspiring faculty and staff.

The vitality of an organization depends on the level of communication that exists within its ranks. For example, if we were to compare the communication structures of the typical educational organization to an Army infantry division, the premises would be similar. If the communication of the roving division and their base is destroyed for any reason, the result is still the same--a group of people who do not understand their missions, fail to recognize structured changes, and lack direction in how to proceed effectively. The ramifications would extend past the obvious. Participants would be feeling blindly in the night, attempting to accomplish a mission as they see it, regardless of the leadership objectives. A campus is much like that an army division. The faculty needs guidance, feedback, and the opportunity to express concerns and opinions without fear of

retaliation. Without a channel of communication that flows freely from both sides, the battle to reach our most important goal--educating eager minds--has been lost before it has begun.

Compassion

Typically, compassion is viewed as a weakness. This especially holds true in the corporate world. Some managers believe that to be nice is to be weak. However, compassion should be viewed more as a strength. To effectively meet the needs of faculty and fellow leaders, it is necessary to present sincere and earnest interests in them as individuals. Leadership in its purest form is based on actions or deeds, not words. Faculty and staff must understand that leaders are caring and open humans who are concerned about their academic advancements, professional developments, scholarly achievements, and their lives away from campus.

Leading a complex organization can at times be frustrating. It is imperative that administrators not neglect the personal aspects of working with and for people (Terry). Leaders must balance rationality and emotion. We as humans are emotional creatures, and when events occur in our personal lives, it could be difficult to keep details from affecting job performance. Leaders must strive to lead rationally, reserving personal emotion in professional atmospheres. An effective visionary leader must establish a balance between the passion of his position and his ability to see the larger picture. That is not to say leaders should lose hope, or fail to fight the good fight, but in many instances, leaders must establish which battle to fight, and which to reserve for another day (Gardner).

Once lines of communication have been opened, faculty becomes autonomous, and shared governance adaptations begin to reap noticeable rewards. Several things will begin to occur, within the ranks of the educational organization once this happens, that benefit the whole structure. Once power has been distributed and input is being not only sought, but investigated and instituted, faculty will begin to feel appreciated. Blasé and Blasé assert that in order for faculty members to contribute their entire persons to educating, they must have their basic motivational needs met. The authors described three basic categories of motivational needs: competence, autonomy, and relatedness. By creating an environment where all motivational needs are met, administration curtails dissatisfaction within the ranks. Leaders encourage autonomy, which benefits both the faculty member as well as the students. Faculty feels that they are in control of the instructional and curricular designs of courses, which in some areas may mean more intrinsic challenges to develop deeper and more thought provoking courses.

More importantly, one common issue among faculty administrative sessions recently is the constraint of continually-tightening budgets. When leadership powers, and in many cases, the responsibility that is associated with that power, are distributed among

colleagues, awareness is raised. The importance of a higher level of awareness brings us back to examining the larger picture. An organization is made up of many parts, but one commonality between all parts is the need for fiscal guidance. In the present budget-cutting frenzy that many organizations are venturing through, many requests must be denied. When input is given by the appropriate committee to whom power was distributed, the results yield a more understanding and less hostile organization. This is partly because faculty was an integral part of the decision-making process that led to the current state in which educational facility is operating. Members of the organization are more receptive to denials, and more inclined to assist in creatively coping with financial or legal restrictions.

Ideally, the process would begin with an examination of current resources, past patterns of leadership and their respective rates of success, as well as future goals. The administrative team must understand that shared governance is not a metamorphosis that will take place in a short amount of time. Therefore, introspection and reflection are crucial to the success of the transformation to a more democratic existence.

As we have discussed before, the role of the administrative hierarchy needs to be in place from the beginning of the transformation. As the organizational leader, it is your responsibility to determine who is able to retain what powers and the ensuing responsibilities, and to what extent those powers reach. For example, faculty typically controls instructional design, curricular methods, faculty tenure and review, and competence. Therefore, would a faculty committee be created and used when searching for new personnel? Would those faculty members also interview, recommend, or even hire the person in question? Would the faculty also be responsible for terminations? Though the solution to this scenario may seem obvious to the experienced administrators, the parameters for participation in specific special committees and any other sub group must be clear to all members from the beginning.

Prior to any appointments, the leadership core needs to assess the future goals of the organization. A good rule of thumb is to keep a five-year plan. Using this five-year plan that consists of educational goals, capital projects, fundraising efforts, financial preparation, and growth management, the administrative team will have a clearer picture of what issues should be priorities. Once the plan is developed, the administrative team must create a list of goals that are in line with the organization's vision. A mission statement should be developed to support the organization's vision and guide the process of creating achievable goals.

Once goals have been created, the mission is clear, and the vision has been communicated, division of power must occur. This can prove to be more difficult than anticipated. It is very difficult to maintain a balance between relinquishing power and being disconnected from the situation altogether. Many times leaders

become anxious at the thought of delegating control over certain items. Important to the premise of shared governance is the concept that there is more than one method to achieving a common goal. Leaders hire people they deem are competent. Therefore, leaders must allow them to prove their worth to the organization. Visionary leaders understand the necessity to observe while resisting the urge to encroach.

With the new acquisition of power that members of organizations claim, come added responsibilities. Those responsibilities include accountability for the decisions and policies that are enacted under their judgment. An accountability process must be devised for each sub group of the organization. The accountability process should include measures to praise, reward, or redirect members in a subgroup based on their decisions.

As the leadership paradigm shifts from autocratic to democratic the fruits of labor will become apparent. Increased job satisfaction leads to increased job performance. In turn, this leads to more productivity among staff in many areas, including academic research, introspection, and reflection on individual levels. The transformation process should not dissuade leaders. New ideas will yield resistance for some, but the overwhelming benefits will come.

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