

July  
2010

# SLPKC

Official Newsletter of the Student Leadership Programs  
Knowledge Community of NASPA

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An informal look at applied critical  
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Letting Student Leaders Lead



# *opening thoughts..*

*A few words from the new senior leaders of the Student Leadership Programs Knowledge Community within NASPA.*

**Jan Lloyd—University of South Florida Polytechnic**

## Welcome to the SLPKC!

As co-chairs of the Student Leadership Programs Knowledge Community ( SLPKC ), we are excited about our new roles. Since the annual conference in March 2010, the SLPKC has made measurable strides. We have restructured the Leadership Team, redesigned our website, administered a membership survey, awarded a \$500 research grant, disseminated four outstanding programs and professional awards, and received a generous donation from Jossey-Bass.

Over the next few years, we hope to further enhance the mission by periodically disseminating practical resources via email, our website, and online webinars. Furthermore, we hope that the SLPKC is a place where student affairs professionals can turn to connect with other colleagues and gain knowledge from the resources provided. This is an exciting time for the KC! We cannot wait to connect with you and hope that you consider getting involved within our community.

Enjoy your summer!

Sincerely,

**Jan Lloyd, Ph.D.**

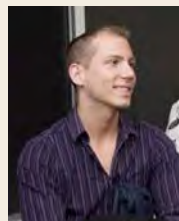
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# Career Leadership Academy: A Unique Enrollment Management Tool

In a global economy and competitive job market leadership is an important enrollment management tool for colleges and universities. Students and parents alike realize that leadership development is an important component of student success, both during and after college. The University of Iowa has created a unique program--the Career Leadership Academy--which attracts students and allows them to be engaged in leadership activities over the course of four semesters. Over a three-year period, the program has grown from 100 students and 12 faculty members to over 800 students and 50 faculty members.

The Career Leadership Academy ( CLA )

focuses on two critical objectives for undergraduates: leadership, and career development. When developing the curriculum for the Academy courses, consideration was given to the sequence of leadership development programs, the recommended steps to be taken by students in the career development planning process, and the results of research conducted on the skills sought by employers in new and recent college graduates.



The primary source for this employer information is the research conducted annually by the National Association of Colleges and Employers ( NACE ). Their *Job Outlook Survey* forecasts hiring intentions related to new college graduates, and assists in projecting the market for new college graduates for the current class by assessing a variety of conditions that may influence that market. For CLA curriculum development and now for revisions, the employers' " wish lists " are used. The Pomerantz Career Center also asks employers who are recruiting on campus to share their " wish lists " . Employers thus

rate the skills and qualities they desire in new college graduates. Every year, communication skills are at the top of the list, regardless of the job market. Other skills and qualities rated very to extremely important include: strong work ethic, initiative, interpersonal skills ( relating well to others ), teamwork skills ( working well with others ), and problem-solving ( NACE Research: Job Outlook

## Get Featured!

We welcome articles that discuss trends, original ideas, and detail best practices in student leadership in higher education. For more information about submitting to our newsletter, please e-mail your inquiry to [SLPKC.NASPA@gmail.com](mailto:SLPKC.NASPA@gmail.com).

Submission Deadline	Issue Date
September 24, 2010	October 8, 2010
December 17, 2010	January 7, 2011
March 25, 2011	April 8, 2011

## Region Reps

Region 1: Brian Quinlan  
*Anna Maria College*

Region 2: Leah Barrett  
*SUNY-Brockport*

Region 3: Leslie Grinage  
*Duke University*

Region 4E: Michael Baumhardt  
*University of Scranton*

Region 4W: Gretta Mincer  
*Metropolitan State College*

Region 5: Eric Alexander  
*Oregon State University*

Region 6: Steven Lerer  
*University of California-Riverside*

## leadership advice >>>

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# Experience Through Empowerment *Letting Student Leaders Lead*

*The Dean of Students and Associate Vice President of Student Affairs at our institution always says, " When well informed, students make good decisions. "*

There is wisdom in this statement. It represents the core of what we seek as student development practitioners and scholars. This article dissects this statement as a foundation for thinking differently about truly empowering our student leaders.

### When Well Informed

Considering the context of higher education today, administrators strive to lead rationally, meaning decision making that is not off of a whim, but informed, empirically based, and with input from key stakeholders ( Bryson, 2004 ) . This should be expected of our students as well. When students walk onto our campuses, the process of well informing our students begins. Orientation staff informs students about navigating the campus culture, academic demands, and social life of the institution. Students then interact with first year experiences staff and other campus partners to set the tone for the beginning of school. This is an important time to inform students about their expectation to lead. Whether students are intending to be positional leaders or not, the attainment of a college degree positions them as leaders in their communities. While setting the expectation is important, providing resources that support students is equally important. Students should be informed about the formal and informal resources specific to your institution that allows them to learn and practice leadership. Challenging and supporting our students early and intentionally is a critical first step in well informing our students.

### Students Make

Too often we forget to let our students make decisions. We give students the illusion of being in control, knowing that we will call the final shot. Ask yourself, when was the last time you let your student ( s ) plan, design, implement and then evaluate a project from start to finish? This should be an easy answer, but it is not. Compare this to learning to drive. If you sit in the driver ' s seat and never touch the steering wheel or put your foot on the

( Continued on page 7 )

# Think, Act, and Lead Critically

*An informal look at applied critical thinking in an undergraduate studies course*

Currently, a problem in colleges and universities nationwide sits at a critical impasse. While higher education emphasizes critical thinking across disciplines, many undergraduates cannot effectively utilize this skill (Burbach, Matkin, & Fritz, 2004). It is clear that critical thinking exists in institutional curriculum, but there is disconnect between what occurs in real world situations and what is taught in the classroom (Sternberg, 1985). Nonetheless, there may be a solution to this problem in a more contemporary field of study. Undergraduate leadership studies, unlike many other disciplines, emphasize building skills such as critical thinking through student-centered experiential learning (Eich, 2008; Allen & Hartman, 2009; Moore, Boyd, & Dooley, 2010). This type of learning is central to helping students develop as leaders and bridges thinking with action.

## Integrating Critical Thinking with Leadership Education

Thinking critically is the first step to leading critically. This is because effective leadership entails understanding oneself and others through critical reflection. According to Burbach et al. (2004), the underlying philosophy of leadership education is to enhance students' interpersonal skills for leadership in an environment that fosters increased self-awareness, increased understanding of others, and learning from life experiences. Thus, leadership education is inherently designed to improve critical thinking by cultivating self-regulatory judgment through the interpretation, analysis, evaluation and inference of a leader's own decisions and actions. Therefore, *leading critically* means leaders must utilize critical thinking skills to make decisions about leadership

actions.

In our experience, teaching undergraduates in a leadership studies course to lead critically requires an emphasis on reflective learning. Other scholars have alluded to practicing critical reflection, a behavior that integrates personal experiences with new learning and understanding to engage and mobilize students to act on new ideas and to challenge conventional thinking in both theory and practice (Jones, Simonetti, & Vielhaber-Hermon, 2000; Reynolds, 1999). In leadership education, deep reflective learning requires students to consider the underlying dynamics of power and to question basic assumptions and practices. For example, students could be required to reassess the power they use in leadership situations to achieve their desired results.

Engaging in critical reflection can create student discomfort and dissonance (Brookfield, 1994; Dewey, 1933; Reynolds, 1999). Yet, as Fink (2003) and others assert, discomfort often means students are really thinking and consequently really learning. Moreover, where reflection is absent, there is the constant risk of making poor decisions and bad judgments (Brookfield, 1995). For example, without reflection, leaders may be convinced by past successes of their invincibility and fail to consider other viewpoints, with possibly disastrous consequences (Densten & Gray, 2001, p. 119). Similarly, leaders may avoid reflecting on a course of action because such reflection might challenge their favorable perceptions of themselves (Conger, 1992).



## Leadership Educators Institute

December 5-7, 2010.

University of South Florida

Leadership education of college and university students is an important and ongoing process within higher education institutions. The Leadership Educators Institute (LEI) is an innovative forum geared toward new to mid-level student affairs professionals and leadership educators. The Institute is coordinated by NASPA, ACPA, and the National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs.

## Student Perspectives

In an upper level Leadership Theories course, students were asked to define the following concepts: read critically, think critically, and finally... lead critically. They were then encouraged to elaborate on how they currently utilized these skills, how they demonstrated them during the semester, and how they planned on applying these skills to their lifelong leadership education. Through very basic qualitative document analysis, the authors found that students defined leading critically as:

- Making decisions based on thoughtful and critical evaluation of the situation and issues
  - Changing and adapting leadership styles to new theories, being able to analyze a situation, and applying an appropriate/effective theory
  - Listening and being open-minded to others opinions on how to make decisions and understanding that there are many different paths to the ultimate goal
  - Using the knowledge gathered from reading, interpreting, judging, and thinking to situations of leadership
- Without any instructor influence, students

*Nominate a program >>>*

**Q:** *Doing something great?*  
**A:** *Nominate your program for the spotlight series!*



Each issue we will spotlight a stellar program from all the nominations we receive. Let us know if you or someone you know is doing an amazing job developing student leaders. Email your nominations to [slpkc.naspa@gmail.com](mailto:slpkc.naspa@gmail.com) by the submission deadlines.

(...continued on page 5)

## 2010 SLP-KC Award Recipients Announced!

### Student Leadership Programs Research:

Dr. John Dugan,  
Loyola University  
Chicago

### Outstanding Student Leadership Program/ Activity:

Pacific Lutheran  
University 's Student  
Leadership Institute

### Outstanding Service:

Dr. Amy Radford-Popp,  
Michigan State University

### Spotlight of the Year:

Multi-Institutional Study of  
Leadership

( Dr. Susan R. Komives,  
Dr. John P. Dugan, & Dr.  
Julie E. Owen)

## SLPKC Awards Leadership Team

### Recognition and Development Team Leader

Janelle Jennings  
Fairfield University

### Awards

Jerrid Kalakay  
Rollins College

### Spotlight Series/Special and Leadership Events

Sherry Early  
Bowling Green State  
University

## Graduate Student Support Network

Michael Baumhardt  
University of Scranton

## Program Review

Kathy Seibold  
University of Oklahoma-



This year the SLPKC awarded its first ever research grant to Jordan Baumgardner. Jordan is a graduate student in student affairs at Eastern Illinois University. Jordan's proposed a project entitled "A Collegiate Definition of Leadership and Leadership Development." Jordan will be provided with \$500 to conduct his research study.

Student affairs professionals are charged with the responsibility of facilitating student leadership as an integral to the development of the whole student. Knowing how students define leadership and leadership skills development are critical to their success in meeting this charge. The present research proposal seeks definitions of leadership and leadership skills as they are conceptualized by undergraduate students. Findings from

the proposed study might help student affairs professionals in their planning and programs that facilitate leadership skills development among students.

Findings from the present study are anticipated to include

student definitions of leadership, perceptions of the ways in which individual students developed their leadership skills, and whether students perceive

their leadership roles as contextually based or identity based.

Since one of the historical goals of higher education has been the development of leaders for all aspects of society, student affairs professionals might best help their

## Inaugural SLPKC Research Grant Awarded

### A Collegiate Definition of Leadership and Leadership Development

" Knowing how students  
define leadership and  
leadership skills  
development are critical to  
their success.. "

institutions facilitate this process when they understand how students themselves view their leadership training and experiences. Komives ( 2006 ) used the theoretical model of leadership identity in conjunction with

Chickering 's personal identity model to ascertain information on leadership from a small group of 13 students. Questions Komives sought to answer included how students defines leadership; what

students perceive as the best ways to develop their leadership abilities; and what are the possibilities for student affairs professionals to be more intentional in the development of programs that facilitate leadership development processes.

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found a common theme in *situational leadership*. According to Northouse (2010), the premise of situational leadership is that different situations demand different kinds of leadership. From this perspective, being an effective leader requires a person to adapt his or her style to the demands of different situations. Therefore, we expanded the definition of leading critically to incorporate the application of critical thinking skills to decisions about leadership actions *in different situations*.

### Implications for Practice

Practitioners can integrate leading critically into their classrooms by:

- Emphasizing active learning and experiential learning techniques that influence critical thinking, specifically

reflective learning

- Probing students to think about how they might apply the leadership theories they learned in your class to real situations
- Pointing out how students' life experiences can be either beneficial or detrimental to influencing their critical thinking
- Inviting speakers to your class, encouraging mentorship, or requiring students to interview other leaders

### Conclusion

Thus, leading critically means applying critical thinking skills to make decisions about leadership actions. Students can apply this concept to variety of situations by utilizing reflection of life experiences and taking actions to think. Most importantly, like critical thinking, leading critically must involve action, not just thought.

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Amanda B. Cutchens, M.Ed.  
University of South Florida





**Resources Chair**

Matt Garrett  
Emory University

**Technology Team Leader**

Dex Tuttle  
Southeast Missouri State  
University

**Literature Review &  
Pre-Conference Workshop**

Joseph Ginese  
Babson College

A.J. Stramaski  
Texas A&M University

**Webinars & Speaker Series**

James Beitzel  
Amy Hecht  
Auburn University



We are adding more online leadership resources so please share your favorite leadership link with Dex Tuttle at [dtuttle@semo.edu](mailto:dtuttle@semo.edu)

**Make sure to join us on  
Facebook!**



## Upcoming Webinar Announced!

### Creating Meaningful Learning Outcomes for Leadership Programs

*Dr. Jimmie Gahagan, Director for Student Engagement,  
University of South Carolina*

**July 28th, 2010, 3:00 p.m. EST**

When working with college students it's important to be able to articulate what they should learn as a result of their participation in specific programs and initiatives. Join us as we discuss how to write meaningful learning outcomes for leadership programs and identify practical ways to assess students' learning.

To register for the July 28 NASPA SLPKC Webinar click here: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LZ6HJZY> . Registration is limited to the first 50 people.

Please address any questions to Amy Hecht at [amy.hecht@auburn.edu](mailto:amy.hecht@auburn.edu) or Ross Beitzel at [beitzjr@auburn.edu](mailto:beitzjr@auburn.edu)

*Thanks  
Jossey-  
Bass!*



The SLPKC would like to thank our 2010 sponsor, Jossey-Bass.

For more information about fundraising for the Student Leadership Programs Knowledge Community , contact Greta Mincer ( Sponsorship and Outreach ) at [mincer@mscd.edu](mailto:mincer@mscd.edu).

## Online Resources for Student Leadership Programs

Student Leadership Programs KC has a variety of resources to assist you in developing, expanding, and assessing your leadership programs.

We have a list of leadership journals and books as well as literature reviews.

There is also a list of leadership

conferences available.

Want to share ideas and get feedback from your leadership colleagues?

You can join the SLP listserv by emailing [jdesanto@naspa.org](mailto:jdesanto@naspa.org) and adding the subject line Join SLP listserv. Already on the listserv? Send an email to [slp@listserv.naspa.org](mailto:slp@listserv.naspa.org)



(Continued from page 3)

pedals, then you will not be a very good driver. Yet, this is tantamount to how we treat our students. We let our students be leaders, but not make any decisions. Therefore, they will never become very good leaders. In various disciplines, leaders take risks, make mistakes, offend people, and do unethical things. Consequently, this is exactly what we are afraid of with our students. Our response is to not let that happen by not letting them truly lead.

Think about that for a second. We don't want someone to get in a car accident, so we don't ever let him or her drive. That may be a logical conclusion, but not a realistic one. Instead, we need to let students lead, and teach them through their leadership (the good and the bad). This is scary and nerve racking for some of us, but we are called to do better by our students. After all, experience is the best teacher. College also serves as one of the safest venues in which to make mistakes. Speaking from experience, we were fortunate to make mistakes as SGA, fraternity, and student organization leaders at our undergraduate alma maters that helped us make better decisions in our current roles as faculty and directors.

### Good Decisions

The final piece of this puzzle relates to the type of decisions students make. Institutions of higher education are called to create citizens that can make a positive contribution to their local communities and beyond. This should be a transparent outcome to students in the process of informing them. Student Affairs can set the example by identifying leadership and decision-making models that support the positive outcomes espoused by your institution. Models such as the Social Change Model of Leadership Development (HERI, 1996), the Relational Leadership Model (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 2007), and other developmental theories can inform how we support students' good decision-making. We should not expect our students to understand what to do with being so well informed, so it is on us to help them think through it. To use the driving analogy from earlier, it is not enough to teach someone to drive in whatever manner they see fit, rather they should drive within tested guidelines established by other drivers, government agencies, and state laws.

In closing, reflect on the following: (a) how (and what) do I inform students from the moment they step foot on campus? (b) Is the process of informing students collaborative across departments, integrated with institutional outcomes, and consistent? (c) Can my students articulate how they have led something from start to finish? and (d) Are the students' decisions guided by sound ethical principles agreed upon at my institution? Answering these questions can help you improve the experience and leadership of the students you serve everyday.

Michael D. Anthony & Fashaad Crawford  
University of Louisville

## Professional Development

How are you developing your staff to be better leadership educators?

Learn something great at a conference or workshop?

We want to hear about it!

## Career Leadership Academy

(Continued from page 3)

2010). All CLA lessons, assignments, selected readings, and activities are aimed at developing one or more of these skills and qualities.

The Career Leadership Academy is focused on the development of leadership and employment skills in undergraduate students. Students participate in weekly seminars, events, and other activities. Graduates of the Academy receive a notation on their academic transcripts.

Students entering the Academy must have at least four remaining undergraduate semesters and have completed 15 credit hours by the beginning of Phase I (the first CLA course).

The Academy faculty uses a variety of tools including course readings, assessments and inventories, classroom discussions and experiential service activities. Students are exposed to exclusive programs and events such as career exploration activities and networking events with recognized leaders and corporate representatives. The course has eight main objectives for students: **Self Awareness** (students gain an understanding of their interests, beliefs, opinions, values and skills); **Skills in Life Maintenance** (students develop skills to manage specific aspects of their personal lives, including finances, health and wellness and independent living); **Knowledge of Leadership Concepts** (students are exposed to and gain an understanding of the main principles, factors, styles, models and processes of leadership); **Employment Readiness** (students develop skills needed to be

successful in the workplace); **Service-Oriented and Community-Based Learning** (students gain an understanding of the importance of community service both on campus and within the community); **Experience in Life and Work** (students are exposed to a variety of life experiences including curricular, co-curricular, career, service and peer leadership opportunities); **Competence in Employment Matters** (students learn how to apply and interview for internships and full-time employment); and **Awareness of Differences and Ability to Work with Others** (students develop awareness of interpersonal differences and develop the skills necessary to be effective team members).

The development of the Career Leadership Academy has produced many positive residual effects. For example, a Department of Leadership Studies was created within University College, as was a 21-credit hour Academic Certificate in Leadership. We have also observed that parents of prospective students are excited that their sons and daughters will have an opportunity to develop leadership skills and to acquire the knowledge to compete in a tough global economy as a part of their college education. Finally, employers are excited to learn that The University of Iowa recognizes the importance of leadership skills in the workplace, and that prospective employees whom they interview on campus will possess leadership abilities and skills that will ultimately benefit their organizations.

For more information, contact the Pomerantz Career Center, [www.careers.uiowa.edu](http://www.careers.uiowa.edu) or call (319) 335-1023.

