

*Employee Leadership Development:
Moving Community Colleges from Success to Significance*

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This study investigated the depth of inclusive employee leadership development in community and technical colleges to appraise the progress community colleges have made in identifying, assessing, promoting, sustaining, and advancing institutional significance as an outcome of employee leadership development practices. Findings of the study indicated that community colleges are nominally progressive in their overall approach to developing comprehensive employee leadership to promote institutional significance. The data indicated that there was no statistically significant difference between faculty members and staff in their perceptions of employee leadership development, whereas qualitative input suggested a variation in the approach to employee leadership development methodologies.

Why Study Employee Leadership Development Activities in the Community College?

In *The Yale Report of 1828*, students who were defective in their college-readiness preparation for college success were shunned from enrolling in college. However, Charles W. Eliot, in his 1869 presidential inaugural address to the faculty and staff at Harvard University, disagreed with this report. He took the opposing view when he openly suggested that “the American College is obliged to supplement the American school. Whatever elementary instruction the schools fail to give, the college must supply” (Spann, 2000, p. 2). Eliot’s opposition to *The Yale Report* was a significantly bold act of leadership impacting the educational paradigm of the day. This type of leadership still exists today in many colleges and universities throughout the nation; however, employee leadership development in the community college has the potential to promote status-quo, success, or significance (VanWagoner, Bowman, & Spraggs, 2005).

Webster (2009) provided the following definitions: (a) status-quo is an existing state of affairs; (b) success is a favorable or desired outcome; and, (c) significance is having or being likely to have influence or effect. For this study, status-quo is assumed to be *nolo contendere*. In contrast, community college success may be measured by graduation rates, contributions to the foundation, increased enrollment, limited student complaints, community involvement or comfortable facilities. If the goals of the college have been achieved, it can be said that this is a

successful institution. For example, if the goal is to have 100% of a cohort group of students graduate, success is achieved if all members of the cohort group graduate. In other words, the goal has been met, and we applaud these student and institutional successes.

Conversely, how many of the students in the cohort group graduated with enhanced leadership or character skills? What percentage of these students look with favor and honor at the institution, its faculty members, student services, distance education offerings, and other institutional practices or services? Do these graduates go out and unequivocally tell their friends that the college changed their lives, impacted their communities, or positively influenced their personal perceptions, motivations, and life-long educational goals? Although success *must* exceed status quo, significance is above-and-beyond the call of educational success. As suggested by VanWagoner, Bowman and Spraggs (2005, p. 50), “the move from success to significance will not be easy. Community college leaders will have to think differently, act differently, and respond differently to their environments. Community colleges have long attracted leaders within their organizations who want to make a difference, who rise above the traditional culture, and who share a vision for the future.” Moreover, institutional significance is explicitly dependent upon administrators who value and promote employee leadership development within the framework of longitudinal and current trends in leadership research and applications (Cohen, 2005; Romero, Purdy, Rodriquez, & Richards, 2005). As noted by Miller (2009, p. 28), a “strong, committed leadership is critical to the process of institutional transformation” and positive institutional transformation is synonymous with significance.

For example, Komives, Lucas and McMahon (2007, pp. 38-39) identified several *truths* about leadership which were derived from “collective research, years of study and teaching, and...our own experiences as leaders.” They suggested the following: (a) leaders are made, not

born; (b) in today's fluid organizations, leadership occurs at all levels; (c) having a charismatic personality is not a prerequisite for leadership; (d) there is not one identifiable right way to lead an organization or group; (e) some leaders and scholars believe it is important to make a distinction between the process of management and leadership; and, (f) leadership is a discipline that is reachable. For this study, employee leadership development is characterized by these truths across departments, divisions, colleges, communities, and domains of practice. The application of these truths is a critical-mass consideration in the development of employee leadership at all levels in the institution. Another way to view this implementation of employee leadership development is to consider the outcome of the process as a "force-multiplier idea generator." In other words, how many life-altering ideas never became reality because they were never identified, assessed, promoted, sustained or advanced—or encouraged, accepted, and applied in institutional practice? Ideas are the bridge by which institutions cross the boundary of success to reach institutional significance.

Consequently, the purpose of this study was to explore the perceived and actual level of employee leadership development activities within a random sample of community and technical colleges in the Southeast. To better inform community college leaders and employees of the extent to which leadership development is being deployed in the two-year college system, this study will address two essential research questions: (1) How widespread is employee participation in existing leadership development programs, and how are these experiences correlated between faculty members and staff?; (2) What are the perceptions of faculty and staff about employee leadership development? The determining factor for this investigation is that there is a lack of material in the professional knowledge-base on employee leadership development in community and technical colleges. Hopefully, this study will provide

information useful to employee leadership development decision-makers, as well as benchmark existing or planned leadership programs in terms of characteristics, perceptions, and the practices and outcomes of these programs.

The Extended Influence of Employee Leadership Development Programs

According to the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) (2009), there were 1,177 two-year colleges (public, independent, and tribal), with a total enrollment of approximately 11.7 million students; moreover, Snyder, Dillow and Hoffman (2009, Table 243) identified 662,503 professional and nonprofessional staff in the 1,177 colleges, including faculty members (Digest of Education Statistics, 2008, Table 233 identified 648,614). Hull and Keim (2007) conducted a study in which nearly 70% (286 respondents of 389 randomly selected) of the community college presidents surveyed stated the need to *expand* in-house leadership development programs. Assuming that employee leadership development programs in the 1,177 colleges have minimal positive outcomes, the potential impact for the community college system is national and global in scope. Stated differently, if every employee from president to facility maintenance engineer were to be exposed to leadership development activities or research/applications, a host of potential ideas are more likely to surface than if individuals are never included in this significant aspect of community college practice and advancement (Romero, Purdy, Rodriquez, & Richards, 2005).

Strategic (long-term) employee leadership is the type of practice in which the longevity of local communities, community colleges and the workforce are best served. Strategic leadership includes the institutional practice of local leadership programs, or what has been termed *in-house* leadership development. To reiterate then, why study local leadership development programs in community colleges? There are two important issues that provide the

answer. First, succession planning argues an immediate and on-going leadership void resulting from retirements of baby-boomers (Cooper & Pagotto, 2003; Hull & Keim, 2007; Scott & Johnson, 2008, 2009; Wallin, 2006). According to Murcar, Love, and Vickers (2009), the nation faces a demographic revolution as 78 million baby boomers are within retirement age, with a boomer turning 50 every 7.5 seconds.

Second, if this leadership void is validated in actual practice or institutional outcomes, a negative influence is possible across a vast domain of students, communities, businesses, education, faculty and staff members, deans, and presidents. As noted by Fitzgerald (2008), “Unless today’s CIOs [educational administrators] take the time now to invest in tomorrow’s leaders, what looms ahead is a potential leadership void that threatens the value proposition of IT [education], the legacy of the profession and the very health of business [and education] and the overall economy” (p. 38). There are a number of studies and publications which support Fitzgerald’s concern (Berke, 2005; Blackmore & Blackwell, 2006; Bossink, 2007; Brandel, 2008; Campbell, 2002; Cohen, 2005; Ebbers, Gallisath, Rockel, & Conyan, 2000; Hull & Keim, 2007; Hopkins, O’Neil, Passarelli & Bilimoria, 2008; Romero, Purdy, Rodriquez & Richards, 2005). The outcome of widespread employee leadership development should logically and positively enhance student success, institutional effectiveness, and a *host* of other organizational functions (Crosson, Douglas, O’Meara & Sperlin, 2005; Wallin, 2006).

In the context of this study, promoting employee leadership development is intended to maximize leadership practice vertically (top-to-bottom) within the organization, e.g. the positive influence of leadership practice on institutional effectiveness or significance. Additionally, employee leadership development is suggested as a direct influence horizontally across the entire student body and peripherally throughout the college’s service area and community. For this

research, data were specific to vertical leadership analysis. We are also conducting on-going studies that are addressing the horizontal and peripheral leadership development aspects within the community college in terms of moving an institution from success to significance.

Although this study is not advocating a military structure for the community college system of education, Cannon and Cannon (2003) noted that the guiding principles included in a U. S. Navy SEAL's makeup are technical expertise, organizational integrity, strong leadership drive, and superb physical conditioning. These characteristics are the basis for 'inspiring extraordinary results' in the practices of U. S. Navy SEALs. For educational institutions to move from success to significance, employee leadership development has the potential to inspire extraordinary results. The principles of success are carried to the next level of practice. Consequently, employee leadership development throughout the community college system is one of the fundamental principles by which inspiring extraordinary results may be achieved.

Purpose and Methodology

The purpose of this study was to answer two important community college leadership questions:

- 1) How widespread is employee participation in existing leadership development programs, and how are these experiences correlated among faculty members and staff?
- 2) What are the perceptions of faculty and staff about employee leadership development?

To obtain data for analysis, the methodology used in this study was an online, self-reporting survey which included scaled responses and open-ended questions. The survey included a section which measured the participation experiences of individuals who had completed an employee leadership program and a section which measured perceptions of all individuals in the sample. A total of nine community or technical colleges were randomly selected from Alabama, Florida, and Georgia. Upon approval from the Office of Institutional

Research at the sponsoring institution, college presidents were contacted to facilitate distribution of the web-portal link for access by faculty and staff.

As part of this methodology, individual colleges were not identified in the study. Due to the sensitive nature of the responses, the researchers felt that this was important to respondents as they would provide input about leadership development perceptions and practices, as well as actual leader characteristics within their respective colleges. Therefore, to maintain the highest degree of anonymity and confidentiality, response rates were compiled from each individual response as a composite of the total responses from participants who voluntarily agreed to complete the survey.

Results

From the nine colleges contacted for inclusion in this study, a total of 144 respondents began the survey, with 117 (81%) completing the survey. The variance in this statistic was a result of those who began the survey and exited or stopped responding prior to completing the process (no exit information was gathered in this preliminary study). Of the respondents, 50 (35%) noted that their respective college had a leadership program, with 26 of the 50 participating in employee leadership training; 93 (65%) individuals had not participated due to the absence of an employee leadership program within the college. The delimiting factor in those who “had or had not” participated in a leadership program was twofold: (1) such programs “did or did not” exist in the college at the time of this study, and (2) individuals had not participated in the leadership program for various reasons. The reasons why individuals did not participate in existing programs were not investigated in this study. Further investigation is currently being conducted which measures why individuals do not participate, ranging from “I have no interest in a leadership program” to “I have a terminal degree.”

Two groups were identified in this investigation (independent variables): faculty members (40%) and staff (60%). A separate and extensive data collection process is underway for administrators, students, and college service areas. There were 54 males (41%), 79 females (59%), 72 Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964) (56%), 43 Gen Xers (born 1965-1979) (34%), and 14 Millennials (born 1980-2000) (10%). The level of experience among the respondents included 33 (31%) with less than 7 years on the job, while 73 (69%) had 7 or more years in education. Of the respondents, 61 (46%) were employed at colleges with a student population of less than 5,000, whereas 73 (54%) had student bodies greater than 5,000. In terms of the employee pool, 50 (53%) were at a community or technical college with less than 500 employees, while 46 (47%) were at institutions with 500 or more employees. (Note: Responses per section may not equal the total respondents as each section varies by number of individuals who completed the survey or sections of the survey compared to those who began the survey.)

Two critical leadership *benchmark* questions were asked of the participants. First, “In your opinion, who should be allowed professional development to attend leadership workshops, conferences or in-house leadership programs?” Ninety-four percent of the participants identified *all employees* as individuals to be afforded leadership development—whether in workshops, conferences, or in-house programs. The second question presented to participants was: “Who is MOST responsible for actively promoting employee leadership development in the community college?” Seventy-five percent identified the president and administration as the primary responsible parties. An additional 20% identified all employees as the responsible group to promote employee leadership. Of significant value to decision-makers is the reported information that faculty and staff members overwhelmingly believe that all employees should be afforded leadership training; moreover, there is a strong relationship between staff and faculty in

terms of who is *most* responsible for actively promoting employee leadership development in the community college. Community and technical college presidents and administrators may find this data as a valuable resource in considering professional development activities within the infrastructure of the college.

To respond to the first research question identified in this study, a series of questions were posed to faculty and staff members who had participated in a specific employee leadership development program at their respective institution. The questions noted in *Table 1* include constructs which identify, assess, promote, sustain, and advance institutional significance as an outcome of employee leadership development *participation practices, expectations, and outcomes*. There was no statistically significant difference between the responses of faculty members and staff in the submitted scores ($p = .277$), which indicated that both groups of participants reported similar outcomes, expectations, and experiences. The data also provided a benchmark for further study and analysis, including factor analysis, to facilitate a reduced set of constructs to improve the assessment of employee leadership development in the community or technical college.

Within the data reported in *Table 1*, respondents strongly indicated that faculty members and staff were encouraged to participate in the leadership program, including non-tenured individuals, and they would recommend the program to other employees. The data also suggested that teamwork was included, but that these teams may not have addressed actual college problems as a fundamental outcome of the leadership program. Of concern here is that addressing actual problems in the institution is the best progressive approach to achieve organizational significance. One final key element of the data reported indicated that leadership participants were less likely to apply their new leadership skills on the job than expected.

Table 1. (about here)

Participation in an In-House Employee Leadership Development Program (IELDP)

<i>Q#</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std. Dev.</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>p*</i>
20	Staff were encouraged to participate in the program	3.292	0.806	24	0.807
2	Faculty were encouraged to participate in the program	3.280	0.614	25	0.464
1	I would recommend the program to other faculty/staff	3.269	0.667	26	0.887
21	Guest speakers were included as part of the IELDP	3.125	0.680	24	0.679
10	The program was well organized	3.083	0.654	24	0.679
7	College operations were presented to participants	3.080	0.759	25	0.374
9	I achieved my goals as a participant of the program	3.042	0.550	24	0.223
15	I think the program will positively impact the college	3.042	0.751	24	0.307
6	The goals of the leadership program were clearly stated	3.000	0.816	25	0.168
11	A variety of leadership development materials were used	3.000	0.659	24	1.000
12	Teamwork was practiced throughout the program	3.000	0.722	24	0.568
14	The leadership team project was formally presented	2.875	0.797	24	0.922
17	I expect to practice my new skills in my job	2.792	0.884	24	0.216
16	My leadership style is clearer to me now	2.750	0.847	24	0.813
13	A discussion of leadership theories was beneficial	2.708	0.806	24	0.469
19	A “steering or other committee” had oversight for the program	2.708	0.859	24	0.240
4	External mentors were assigned to the leadership teams	2.652	0.832	23	0.699
8	Leadership teams developed solutions for actual problems	2.625	0.875	24	0.575
18	“Job shadowing” activities were part of the program	2.500	0.780	24	0.244
5	Participants were selected via a nomination process	2.480	0.872	25	0.073
3	Non-tenured employees were exempt from participation	2.080	0.862	25	0.209

Notes:

- a) Scale: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Agree, (4) Strongly Agree
- b) There is no option for NA/Neutral as actual participation characteristics were being measured.
- c) Cronbach’s Reliability Coefficient = .904; $p = .277$ (No significant difference between faculty members/staff)
- d) * Indicates statistical significance at the .05 level
- e) Male/Female, $p = .197$; Boomer, GenX, & Millennials, $p = .084$; (No significant differences)

To respond to the second research question posed in this study, a series of questions were presented to faculty and staff members about their respective perceptions of employee leadership development programs in the community college in toto. *Table 2* includes constructs which identify, assess, promote, sustain and advance institutional significance *as a perceptual measurement related to employee leadership development practices and outcomes*. There was no statistically significant difference between the responses of faculty members and staff in the reported scores ($p = .678$), which indicated that the *perceptions* of both groups regarding employee leadership development programs were similar, with variances as noted by the standard deviations specific to each item.

A crucial factor in the reported data was the agreement by faculty members and staff that administrators are not exempt from leadership development (themselves and others); moreover, respondents significantly agreed that leaders should understand the power of motivation to lead their respective organization—not by proxy—but by direct methods of leadership, e.g., motivating faculty members and staff, supporting their ideas, etc. Additionally, respondents indicated that employee leadership development is highly dependent upon collaboration among employees to address organizational concerns and goals, including student achievement, accreditation standards, actual institutional issues or problems, and to establish trust as a key component in employee leadership development programs.

Within the context of this study, a specific construct was measured in terms of employee support for employee leadership development programs. Question #4, a reverse-coded question, indicated very strong agreement between faculty members and staff ($M = 1.845$). The question, “Developing leaders in-house is too complex a task”, intended to measure the level of perception among and between employees as related to acceptance of leadership development programs. In other words, as decision-makers view this data, it suggests that employees *favor* such a program due to the significant responses that these programs are not “too complex a task.” Consequently, for institutions to consider moving from success to significance, employee leadership development programs are identified as not beyond the purview of community or technical college operations and practices. This investigation is not about *leaders running amuck* in community or technical colleges; rather, this study is about adding significant value to the outcomes of all community and technical colleges across this nation. Employee leadership development programs are suggested as one of the primary support mechanisms by which community and technical colleges can move from success to significance—for the purpose of

“having or being likely to have influence or effect” (Webster, 2009). Influence or effect on what? Student outcomes, learning, teaching, online courses, community impact, national and global innovations, professional development—this list is perpetual in nature and scope.

Table 2. (about here)

Perceptions of Employee Leadership Development Programs (ELD)

Q#	Context	Mean	Std. Dev.	N	P*
21	Good leaders understand the power of motivation	4.378	0.727	111	0.137
4	Faculty AND staff are critical leadership assets	4.351	0.782	111	0.402
7	ELD programs build collaborative relationships	4.207	0.728	111	0.538
19	Employee trust is a key element in effective ELD programs	4.157	0.629	108	0.463
6	ELD programs should investigate real college problems	4.144	0.784	111	0.611
8	ELD program outcomes impact student achievement	4.100	0.834	110	0.292
11	All community colleges should include an ELD program	4.072	0.839	111	0.755
2	ELD supports accreditation standards	3.955	0.759	110	0.376
15	Two-year colleges should participate in National Leadership Initiatives	3.954	0.786	109	0.277
5	New employees should also be eligible for ELD	3.883	0.828	111	0.550
12	Every employee has leadership potential	3.464	1.131	110	0.723
18	ELD must not interfere with other duties	3.391	0.930	110	0.708
1	ELD should be required for all employees	3.324	1.230	111	0.618
17	ELD graduates should be offered committee chair assignments	3.082	0.847	110	0.271
9	Too many ‘leaders’ in the organization are unwise	2.847	1.146	111	0.396
16	Leaders and managers perform the same job	2.297	0.940	111	0.291
10	Employee leadership development is highly overrated	2.248	0.973	109	0.400
3	Teamwork and ELD are incompatible	2.209	1.166	110	0.650
20	Leadership research has no practical application in ELD programs	2.009	0.938	109	0.602
14	Developing leaders in-house is too complex a task	1.845	0.869	110	0.369
13	Administrators are exempt from leadership development	1.800	0.965	110	0.991

Notes:

- a) Scale: (1) Strongly Disagree, (2) Disagree, (3) Neutral, (4) Agree, (5) Strongly Agree
- b) Neutral was included in the scale to indicate “undecided” or “prefer not to respond
- c) Cronbach’s Reliability Coefficient = .732; $p = .678$ (No significant difference between faculty members/staff)
- d) * Indicates statistical significance at the .05 level
- e) M/F, $p = .897$; Boomer, GenX, Millennials, $p = .098$; (No significant differences)

The Voices of Faculty Members and Staff

As indicated in *Table 1* and *Table 2*, the data suggested that faculty members and staff agree that employee leadership development is a viable function within the community or technical college. Furthermore, the data also indicated that leadership development is less inclusive in this sample than was assumed by the researchers. Nevertheless, the following open-ended responses provide insight on how individuals perceive leadership development, at what

levels these programs should be implemented, what outcomes should be expected, and how these outcomes should be implemented within community and technical colleges.

We should seek and mentor young leaders in deanship positions and above who have demonstrated an interest in furthering their professional careers. Current leaders should empower and motivate those they deem having 'leadership potential'. Not everyone with a high-ranking position title is a leader, nor should they be placed in a box and labeled "a good leader" because of their title. Additional suggestions: start with a one-on-one mentorship program, meet bimonthly, promote community partnerships, include hands-on meetings and debriefs with all the administrative units of the College, teach College budgeting (how funds are allocated, creating a budget for upcoming FY, how to obtain Federal (Grants), State, local funds and how they are to be used, budget lines, etc.), and overall fiscal responsibility and consequences. (R5)

We need to institute employee leadership development within the colleges in order to emphasize employee ownership of institutional processes and student achievement. Currently, this is sorely lacking and I believe that student achievement is suffering greatly as a result. The current system of executive micro-management is disabling the colleges and leaving the employees feeling disconnected and demoralized. (R13)

In house leadership development is one way and I applaud it. The idea I would encourage would be valuing each employee having potential to lead along the lines of what Stephen Covey outlines in his work. I would encourage, NOT MANDATE, and develop the expectation that each employee works on leadership skills. Some employees can and should work on those skills outside the campus and bring the benefit of other programs to the campus. Board membership and training, volunteering, community leadership, leadership conferences, even leadership book clubs, running for office, could be ideas for some employees to work on leadership skills. All of it is valuable and will bring vitality to the college. A "You are a Leader!" initiative could be started to nurture leaders, let employees know that they are highly valued and needed as leaders; that their ideas and participation in creating and implementing the vision for the college is critical. Offer up different paths to learn leadership skills. Define leadership in the context of this paradigm. (R15)

That an effort to illustrate the intention that it, employee leadership development, is not meant to explicitly develop leaders, but more broadly, leadership, within an organization, be of primary focus in presenting it to faculty and staff. By defining and expanding the awareness of leadership and its operation to both sides, they should better be able to express their needs to one another to the benefit of the entire organization. (R24)

The Leadership [program] is an outstanding program that strengthens the institution's capacity to serve society through teaching and public service. (R87)

I think that it is an excellent idea to provide in-house leadership training for all employees. The reason is that for leaders to be effective, they must be able to establish and maintain good communication among employees and stakeholders. (R72)

Leadership training or education can come in many forms. On campus leadership initiatives are only one of those forms. To mandate leadership training would be a big mistake. It could become stagnant at best, propaganda at worst, and resented. To encourage, support, and expect all employees to work on leadership skills is important to the vitality of the organization and the individual. To mandate only one form of that undermines trust in the organization and vibrancy and robust nature of the goal or outcome of strong leadership potential in the organization that then influences the community. (R41)

As indicated by these comments, variances exist in how to approach employee leadership development, the level of the practice, and the outcomes expected. However, the value of employee leadership development programs is a common theme. Although not reported extensively in this article, respondents indicated a significant number of leadership characteristics based on their first-hand experiences with leaders at all levels within and throughout the two-year college system. These characteristics are noted in a forthcoming article.

Implications and Recommendations

Several implications and recommendations have surfaced from the feedback of faculty members and staff. These include, but are not limited, to:

1. College presidents and administrators should look at in-house leadership development programs as a highly regarded institutional resource. To ignore or consider this organizational function of little value omits a potential volume of viable ideas which may lead the college beyond success—a highly prized objective, to significance—an opportunity to positively and substantially impact lives and communities within the sphere of influence of the two-year college system;
2. Recognize and reward the contributions of employees at all levels within the institution as though the very survival of the institution depended upon each and every single person, from switchboard operator to design engineer. Stated differently, every employee has leadership potential in whatever contribution they may make to the college. A failure to consider each employee as having leadership potential limits the scope of ideas and practices to transition from success to significance. Many times, a simple and sincere thanks or recognition is the catalyst to generate momentum for significant change. Moreover, employee leadership

development is not about training an *army of presidential candidates or a division of deans*, but about the permeation of leadership across all facets of function; it is the employee asset which supports a myriad of college functions;

3. Equate employee leadership development programs to improved levels of student outcomes. For example, understand how employee leadership practices across the campus might impact students. Leadership is not about being a leader for the sake of title; rather, leadership is about awareness of the educational environment and influencing practices that mitigate negative student or institutional outcomes, whatever those outcomes may be. Based on this preliminary investigation, the jury is still out on the longitudinal value of these programs; nevertheless, based on this initial dataset, it is clear that the majority of participants perceive employee leadership development programs as valuable assets to the community or technical college, including the impact on student achievement;
4. Within the structure of the employee leadership program, create a forum for open exchange of ideas and information. This recommendation has far reaching implications, the least of which is to create viable trust between employees. Without trust, employee leadership programs are pre-determined to be a function which will not support the institution in its move from success to significance; rather, without trust, leadership outcomes among employees become isolated islands of success, not a continent upon which to institute significance. Without trust, employee leadership development is a perfunctory activity ending in a plaque for participation. Institutional significance is achieved when employees trust one another to a level of forward progress, never retreating to what has worked in the past when options exist

for improvement. Employee leadership development assumes that college presidents and administrators *de facto* trust employees and value their work; and,

5. As one respondent noted, “Effective leaders are only as good as the people they surround themselves with.” Employee leadership development programs have the real potential to significantly enhance the support of those surrounding the leader. In the absence of developing leadership within employees, community colleges have identified success as the new status quo. And in today’s state of flux, simply being successful may no longer be the acceptable or viable order of the day.

Conclusion

To best support employee leadership development programs, it is crucial to establish an institutional ideology. Such an ideology should not be a written set of ideals in the goals and objectives of an institution, but it should be a set of daily practices which seek to identify success and consider how these successes might be improved—logically, methodically, and intentionally. Moving from success to significance is less likely to be sustainable if only a few take the challenge. Therefore, a united community or technical college is the best hope to achieve significance to impact and influence lives and communities. In terms of holistic employee leadership development to identify, assess, promote, sustain, and advance institutional significance, the following ideology is offered for consideration:

A popular sentiment wisely reminds us that all of us are smarter than one of us. The wisdom, common purpose, inclusivity, sense of community, and personal empowerment embedded in that statement are profound. Leadership is not something possessed by only a select few people in high positions. We are all involved in the leadership process, and we are all capable of being effective leaders. Through collaboration with others, you can make a difference from any place within the organization, whether as the titled leader or as an active member. (Komives, Lucas and McMahan, 2007, p. x)

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