

ABSTRACT OF CAPSTONE

Karol A. D. Johansen

The Graduate School

Morehead State University

March 31, 2023

EXAMINING SERVANT LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS IN HIGHER
EDUCATION: EXPLORATION OF A COMPASSION-BASED LEADERSHIP
MODEL THROUGH THE LENS OF UNIVERSITY LEADERS

Abstract of Capstone

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in the Ernst and Sara Lane Volgenau College of Education
At Morehead State University

By

Karol A. D. Johansen

Lakewood, California

Committee Chair: Dr. Daryl R. Privott, Associate Professor

Morehead, Kentucky

March 31, 2023

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This qualitative research study examined the servant leadership model in a university setting. The study focused on specific enumerated behaviors of 10 leaders who practice servant leadership within a specific university. The results of this study were used as foundational information in developing a guide entitled: *Developing and Implementing a Servant Leadership Training Program*.

The study took an expansive look at servant leader behaviors as well as external factors affecting the university and its leadership. This qualitative study specifically examined how servant leaders (of staff) lead. The study identified and explored leader-specific behaviors that contribute to creating a compassion-based, servant leadership culture, as well as those servant leader-oriented behaviors which may pose a challenge to exhibit in a leadership capacity. Through the words and direct experiences of 10 university leaders, the research seeks to clarify how servant leaders act and interact with those they lead. Both the advantages and the disadvantages of the servant leadership model, and its application in higher education were explored.

The product of the capstone research study is a Servant Leadership Training Guide – a toolkit for leaders in higher education to create healthy, positive, and productive work cultures where staff are not only retained, but where they can grow, develop, and thrive, carrying forward the practice of servant leadership.

KEYWORDS: Servant Leadership, Servant Leader Behaviors, Higher Education,
Compassion-Based Leadership, Staff Retention

Candidate Signature

Date

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By

Karol A. D. Johansen

Approved by

Johnathan Nelson, PhD
Committee Member Date

Joon Kim, EdD
Committee Member Date

Daryl R. Privott, PhD
Committee Chair Date

Timothy Simpson, PhD
Department Chair Date

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DEDICATION

“The most important thing in the world is family and love.”

John Wooden (Impelman, 2016, para. 3).

I dedicate this capstone to my magnificent family in every sense of the word.

My late parents grew up in the 1920s during the Great Depression with limited finances and faced many hardships. I am profoundly grateful to my late father, Charles William DeGraffenreid, who worked well into his 80s and instilled an iron clad work ethic in his daughters. His deep enduring kindness was just as robust as his dedication to work and family. My father, as well as my late mother, Susanne Frostenson DeGraffenreid, gave me boundless love and made higher education one of the highest priorities in our family. The road to education was not paved seamlessly for my parents, yet they selflessly and tirelessly ensured that both my sister and I could attain advanced degrees.

My mother (a re-entry student in her 70s) came very close to achieving a bachelor's degree in women's studies before she passed away in 2018. As your daughter, Mom, you were a shining example of perseverance, and your trail blazing kept me motivated as I pursued a doctorate as a re-entry student in my late 50s.

I am infinitely fortunate to have a life partner who has an unwavering belief in me and has helped me make my big picture dream of becoming Dr. Johansen, a concrete reality. My highly accomplished husband, Kjehl T. Johansen, has been a steadfast partner and always stepped in to keep our busy household with two

children and four pets (Lenny, Charlie, Clayton and PJ), running smoothly, especially when my research and writing extended late into the night and sometimes into the wee early morning hours. Kjehl, I promise you, you will have your wife back after this capstone is finalized.

Both teenagers when I started this process, my two daughters Linnea and Lucia have flourished into remarkably creative, accomplished, and beautiful young women who continue to inspire and make me immensely proud. As savvy digital natives, Linnea (23) and Lucia (18) helped their (Boomer/Xer cusp) technology challenged mother navigate through the Blackboard platform. Linnea, in particular, provided essential IT interventions when it was critical, and nail-biting, during the COVID lockdown transition to Zoom/WebEx and, for example, when a paper was due by midnight and our internet was “unstable” at 11:57 pm.

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Pets are family members in my mind. Thank you to Lennon/Lenny

(Australian Shepherd). Charlie (Wauzer Terrier), Clayton (Tuxedo Cat) and PJ/Squeak (Tortoiseshell Tabby) for the endless love, snuggling, and companionship during the long nights of studying and researching/writing this doctoral capstone.

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To quote George Eliot (n.d): *“It is never too late to be what you might have been.”*

Engaging in a doctoral program at any time (and particularly mid-life) takes monumental time, energy, patience, and dedication, sprinkled with a healthy dose audacity and fortitude. One does not fully understand or comprehend this until they begin the process. The daunting reality of the depth and scope of the EdD undertaking starts to take shape during the first all-nighter spent frantically searching to find a specific yet elusive formatting rule in the APA manual after putting in a full and exhausting day at work.

Connectivity is in our DNA and, without my circle of support, this capstone would remain an abstract idea that would simply not have come to fruition. I will be forever indebted to those who have provided inspiration, support, guidance, and encouragement particularly during times of uncertainty and challenge with bouts of self-doubt. In the words of my former UCLA colleague Sheila Benko (one of my many mentors): “Keep your eyes on the prize, Karol.”

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incorporate music at meetings while leading my own work team.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

“Ego can’t sleep. It micro-manages. It disempowers. It reduces our capability. It excels in control,” wrote Robert K. Greenleaf (2002, p. 20), in his seminal work on the nature and importance of servant leadership.

Overview of Study: Capstone Research on Servant Leadership

This study focuses on the philosophy of servant leadership within the context of higher education. “To many, servant-leadership may take a back seat in the field of higher education. It is often overlooked and may be deemed unimportant” (AlShammari et al., 2019, p. 257). Specifically, this study examines leader-specific behaviors of ten university leaders who identify, and have been confirmed, as servant leaders in a R-1 university setting on the West Coast of the United States. The interviews with university leaders were initiated in Spring 2022, and extended into Winter 2023, concluding in February 2023. The researcher interviewed each of the 10 leaders for two non-consecutive 30 minutes interviews regarding their leadership behaviors.

Confirmation of Study Participants: Servant Leadership Orientation

The 10 university leaders interviewed were confirmed as having an orientation towards servant leadership after receiving a confirming score on the 62 question Servant Leadership Profile-Revised (SLP-R) instrument (Wong and Page, 2003).

Statement of the Issue

This qualitative study examined how servant leaders actually lead. Further, the

study identified and explored leader-specific behaviors that contribute to fostering a compassion-based, servant leadership culture, as well as those servant leader-oriented behaviors which may pose a challenge to exhibit in a leadership capacity. The research will clarify how servant leaders practice servant leadership, specifically how they act and interact with those they lead.

Overview of Action Research

Action research is a type of highly interactive research methodology (first coined as a phrase in 1944 by Kurt Lewin, a professor at MIT) that aims to both engage in formal systematic inquiry while also actively finding solutions to issues (George, 2023). “Action research” as George (2023) submits, “conducts research and takes action at the same time” (para. 1). In essence, action research “prioritizes reflection and bridges the gap between theory and practice” (George, 2023, para. 2).

Rooted in tradition, higher education is also a complex, evolving, multi-faceted and transformative construct with competing priorities and goals.

According to LeGeros (2016),

This complexity means that large-scale education research has limited applicability on a day-to-day basis. There are just too many contextual factors affecting the implementation of any generalized approach.....top-down policies and large-scale research are not detailed or nuanced enough to be useful. (para. 3)

Action Research Ignites Collaboration

As LeGeros (2016) submits, “The systematic nature of action research promotes purposeful collaboration” (para. 9). Through action research, educational leaders can collaborate with team members and educators from other units to discuss approaches and methods to achieve the most meaningful results (LeGeros, 2016).

Action Research Facilitates Improvements

“In the rapidly shifting world of education,” states LeGeros (2016), “action research helps prioritize which changes are worthy of extra attention” (para. 8). McNiff (1995) implores researchers in education to consider the importance of action research and, in starting a research project, begin with the fundamental question: “How do I improve my work?” (McNiff 1995, as cited in LeGeros 2016, para. 4). Researchers who focus on action research are committed to providing professional support to peers and colleagues through research that can be actively and pragmatically applied in real world educational settings.

Action Research Product: Servant Leadership Training Guide

There is no better time to use an action research approach in examining and potentially implementing compassion-based ‘servant leadership’ oriented models in higher education. Given the cataclysmic events of a Triple Pandemic (COVID- 19 with subsequent economic distress and systemic racism with the nation’s racial reckoning) compounded by the Great Resignation in Higher Education (Egede et al., 2020). With inspiration from the research of Roark and Beuthin (2014), the product for this doctoral capstone is a training guide focusing on the leadership construct of

servant leadership.

Inspiration from Roark and Buethin (2014)

Roark and Buethin (2014) interviewed directors at two organizations about their servant leadership training programs. At the first organization, the training and development goals focused on “building character and virtue in associates to build a better society” (p. 255). At this organization, the off-site retreat curriculum included a concentration on dialoguing about emotional intelligence.

The in-house training program at the second organization was perhaps the most instrumental in terms of informing my capstone work by providing distinct categories to organize the training sections. As Roark and Beuthin (2014) explain, the second organization in the study had three levels of in-house servant leadership training:

- 1) Understanding Servant Leadership
- 2) How to Practice Servant Leadership
- 3) The Actual Practice of Servant Leadership

Based on my own research in the field of servant leadership, using the framework provided by the Greenleaf Center and other sources, along with the “lived experiences” of the 10 leaders interviewed in this study, the following historical and conceptual content is included in the Servant Leadership Training Guide (Johansen, 2023):

Master Plan for Servant Leadership Training Guide

I have developed a master plan for the Servant Leadership Training Guide

incorporating information from my literature review and research conducted as well as through speaking directly to the 10 servant leaders featured in this study.

Section 1: Understanding Servant Leadership

Defining Servant Leadership

- a) History, Ancient Leadership Style, Connection to Christianity
- b) The Nature, Mission, and Purpose of Servant Leadership
- c) Robert K. Greenleaf modernizes the notion of Servant Leadership
- d) Myths and Misconceptions about Servant Leadership

Presenting the 10 Characteristics of a Servant Leader

- a) Spears (2002) identified ten characteristics from Greenleaf's writing
- b) Featured leaders of historical importance who embody servant leadership
- c) Showcase current thought leaders who embrace Servant Leadership
(Brené Brown and Simon Sinek).

Section 2: Building the Practice of Servant Leadership

Assessing Servant-Leadership Characteristics Present

- a) Present the Benefits of the Servant Leadership Profile Instrument (SLP-R)
(Wong and Page, 2003).
- b) The Connection Between Emotional Intelligence and Servant Leadership

Section 3: The Actual Practice of Servant Leadership

Beginning the Practice of Servant-Leadership

- a) Developing a Psychological Safety Playbook
- b) Present Case Study of Starbucks: Building and Instilling a Servant Led

Culture

Section 4: Straight Talk from University Leaders

Commentary about the Practice of Servant-Leadership

- a) Quotes from University Leaders are Interwoven into Guide about the Practice of Servant Leadership

Purpose of the Servant Leadership Guide

This instructional guide is intended to demystify the construct of servant leadership. By transforming research into action, this guide provides step-by-step guidelines to increase servant leadership related practices in higher education settings and create a psychologically safe work culture of trust and compassion where the primary focus is the well-being of staff.

Significance of the Research Issue

A New Era of Accountability in Higher Education

As of 2023, we are fully entrenched in the era of accountability within higher education (Mallory, 2023; Kelchen et al., 2021). There has been a rise in outward-facing measures of performance for instruction and research, rebranding university students as “consumers,” and higher education leaders adopting top-down corporate management styles (Ginsber, 2011; Kallio et al., 2015; Kallio et al., 2017; Marginson and Considine, 2000; Tuchman, 2009).

According to Mallory (2023):

It is no longer enough for institutions to measure the effectiveness of what they do... they must now be purposeful, aligning department goals with

institutional goals, and institutional goals with state and federal goals. They must also share the information they have collected with a range of constituents (p. 99)

The Corporatization of Higher Education

The decrease of public support coupled with a push for heightened accountability has led to a growing trend known as the “corporatization of higher education” (Mills, 2012, p. 6). The corporatization of higher education refers to a movement toward implementing a for-profit management style that focuses on maximizing budgetary expenditures, streamlining services, and redeploying or downsizing staff, while seeking revenue-generating opportunities (Hendry et al., 2023; Dean, 2014). This transition began to take shape in the 1990s, and accelerated after the Great Recession of 2008 (Hendry et al., 2023). As colleges and universities faced severe budget cuts, there was a solidification of the audit university coupled with the college efficiency movement (Hendry et al., 2023). For example, many universities now require quantitative data to justify institutional programs and their value both to the institution and society at large (Hendry et al., 2023).

Corporate Attitudes and Datafication in Higher Education

In the current environment, the most important measures in higher education are assessments, learning outcomes, metrics, data analysis, and key performance indicators (Hendry et al., 2023). Colleges and universities have responded by implementing private sector leadership models along with cost cutting and revenue generating measures (Hendry et al., 2023; Dean, 2014). As Dean (2014) laments,

“Corporate attitudes and practices, many ill-fitting, have encroached on colleges and universities. Calls for greater accountability, efficiency, and productivity in higher education have never been greater” (p. 274). In stark contrast to authoritarian, top-down metrics-driven private sector leadership models, this qualitative study examined the value of servant leader behaviors that focus on staff well-being.

The Migration of Talent in Higher Education

Diminished work/life balance and an increased workload due to the global pandemic pushed many educators to consider leaving higher education entirely or take early retirement (Schmiedehaus et al., 2023). The migration of talent from higher education coupled with the growing number of leaders retiring from the college and university system makes this a critical time to examine participatory and compassion-centered leadership models that could promote retention (Whitford, 2020).

COVID-19 Causes Disruption in Higher Education

The COVID-19 pandemic abruptly disrupted every sector of work, including higher education. Faculty at colleges and universities were forced to demonstrate agility (Schmiedehaus et al., 2023). With a shift in instructional content delivery and work environment, many faculty and staff expressed difficulty coping with the layers of change thrust upon them, citing burnout (Winfield & Paris, 2022).

Winfield and Paris (2022) examined the experiences of 1,080 higher education professionals (both staff and faculty) in a variety of roles during the COVID-19 pandemic from 830 institutions of higher education in the United States. The 2021 study uncovered increased job demands and workload due to diminished

staffing, lack of institutional support, and residual burnout as a result. As one survey respondent proclaimed, “We have broken the backs of the staff who were the last line of defense” (Winfield & Paris, 2022, p. 2).

Unhealthy Work Cultures as a Driving Force

According to Schmiedehaus et al. (2023), unhealthy work cultures at institutions of higher education are a driving force behind the great resignation in that sector which took off between April and September of 2021 and has been steadfast into 2023. A podcast entitled, The Great Resignation in Higher Education, focused on the mass departure and hemorrhaging of talent from higher education and its multi-layered causes were analyzed (Tyler, 2021).

Chief among the causes, according to Myers (2021), is a lack of empathy among higher education leaders towards their staff:

I think it’s almost a lack of empathy from higher ed leadership. And I think that’s because the individuals in those positions today are used to the ‘I’m employing you, you’re welcome,’ kind of take on employees.’ Where we are flipping that. (Tyler, 2021,12:10)

Schmiedehaus et al. (2023), further identified key predictors motivating mass departures from higher education, including a perceived lack of institutional and organizational support, high level of fatigue, and burnout along with a low rate of compassion satisfaction.

A Bold Survey at the UC: Great Resignation

In 2023, in direct response to the Great Resignation, the Council of University

of California (UC) Staff Assemblies (CUCSA) distributed a confidential work culture-related survey to UC staff. It opened with the following statement, inviting UC staff to share how they have been impacted by staff attrition and increased workloads within the UC system:

UC staff have been doing “more with less” for too long, and it is no longer sustainable. Employee retention has proven to be challenging particularly as a result of The Great Resignation in recent years. There are an estimated 5,000 job vacancies in UC system wide. This challenge with retention has serious implications for the UC as it can negatively impact productivity levels, employee engagement, and the overarching psychological well-being of our community. As a result, staff are overworked, which leads to burnout, medical issues, mistakes, and lower productivity (CUCSA, 2023).

UC staff were invited to complete the survey anonymously and describe the impact these challenges have had on both them and their departments.

A Triple Pandemic Impacting People Across the Globe

The United States as a nation, and higher education as a system, has faced a Triple Pandemic Threat. The global pandemic resulted in a distressed economy compounded by both the Great Resignation and systemic racism (Harper-Anderson et al., 2023). Since the start of COVID-19, racist and xenophobic incidents have occurred in the United States and globally targeting people of East Asian descent (Abidin and Zeng, 2020). Many studies have focused on people of color and the emotional turmoil endured during COVID-19 by Black, Latino and Asian people.

Melaku and Beeman (2022) noted that, “The COVID-19 pandemic halted our daily practices, personally and professionally, especially those disproportionately impacted by systemic racial and economic disparities” (p. 1).

The years 2020 and 2021 were particularly chaotic and distressing, with this converging trio of pandemics disrupting people’s lives in the US and the world. The racial awakening caused by the continuous killings of Black people in America created a perfect storm of social, economic, and political unrest that led to nationwide conversations about inequality in American institutions. COVID-19 and racial violence have amplified historic inequalities prevalent both in the workplace and at home (Melaku & Beeman, 2022, p. 2).

With mounting pressure on college presidents to avoid empty rhetoric and focus on providing leadership rooted in understanding and action, many higher education leaders called for change in response to the killing of George Floyd (McKenzie, 2020). As Bigman (2021) implores, “After such a traumatic event, leaders have had to attend to the emotional life of the organization and decide what they were going to do and how they were going to make people feel whole again” (para. 10).

During this time of navigation, pivoting, and healing, with a heightened concentration on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) issues in the workplace, it is a critical time to explore the positives and challenges of a more compassion-based leadership model (Forester & McGibbon, 2020). However, in order to fully examine humanistic based leadership, one must face head-on the

discourse and behaviors that dilute its effectiveness. “In this time of COVID-19, we must confront the foes of compassion: fear-mongering, the politics of blame, and willful dis- information” (Forester & McGibbon, 2020, p. 2).

Servant leadership is a humanistic practice that extends beyond a philosophy into a set of regular practices with specific behaviors. Servant leaders build relationships with staff through active listening while asking incisive and insightful questions (Lumpkin and Achen, 2018). The servant leadership model is the antithesis of the traditional leadership model, inverting the top-down approach to management by diffusing the leader-driven power base. Instead, servant leaders “use their power as a personal responsibility [emphasis added] to serve and influence others” (Stahel et al., 2022). As Visvizi (2023) concludes, “the enduring legacy of humanistic leadership is pivotal in this new era of global and individual humanistic transformation amid change” (p. 8).

Toxic Leadership Behaviors

Leaders can cause considerable damage by employing behaviors that divert sharply from the principles of servant leadership. According to Rasool et al. (2019) the following are symptomatic of toxic leadership:

- Erosion of trust and respect
- Disempowering employees
- Operating in a vacuum, isolation from campus and community partners
- Lack of integrity and transparency
- Constantly shifting goals, priorities, and benchmarks

- Favoritism, disparate treatment, invalidation, gossiping, and bullying
- Not recognizing and/or taking credit for others' work

A toxic work environment characterized by harassment, bullying, ostracism and incivility has severe emotional consequences for employees. The fall out for workers in toxic workplaces with poor leadership is often anxiety and depression which can negatively impact productivity (Rasool et al., 2019). Employees have suffered through this damage and, as a result, toxicity in the workplace can cause high rates of staff turnover (Rasool et al., 2019).

Psychological Distress: Outcome of Toxic Leadership

According to Arun (2022), persistent exposure to toxic leaders, both daily and longitudinally, has a negative effect on the psychological well-being of subordinates. Arun (2022) also reported decreased self-efficacy and reduced self-worth among staff who reported to toxic leaders for long periods of time. Toxic leaders erode the self-confidence of staff through actions such as criticizing, marginalizing, ridiculing, and yelling (Harvey et al., 2014). A study by Abugabel et al. (2023) revealed that “all dimensions of toxic leadership (self-promotion, abusive supervision, unpredictability, narcissism, authoritarian leadership) have a statistically significant positive direct impact on counterproductive work” (p. 208).

According to Hughes (2022), the perceptions that subordinates have of mistreatment from toxic leaders can lead to negative psychological effects such as anxiety, depression, and hostility. As Gravili et al. (2022) submit, emotional exhaustion of subordinates is often the byproduct of toxic leadership. Toxic

leadership, according to Carlson et al. (2012), is also positively aligned with high levels of withdrawal among employees. The study by Carlson et al. (2012) found that employees reporting to toxic leaders reported high levels of detachment (both within themselves and related to the work environment), and overall hopelessness. In summary, the three major outcomes related to psychological distress rooted in toxic leadership are the erosion of self-worth and self-esteem coupled with withdrawal (Bhandarker et al., 2019).

A study by Ho and Chan (2022) found that perceived organizational support (POS) is a critical contributor to employee well-being. The researchers advise organizations to implement, employee-oriented practices that value the contributions of staff, acknowledge their accomplishments, recognize their personal goals and values, encourage them to voice out their opinions and concerns, provide assistance in times of need, show concern for their well-being, and foster a sense of belonging at work. (para. 24). A servant leadership environment with positive organizational support provides predictability, recognition, and promotes a sense of self-worth (Ye et al. (2019).

Servant Leadership: A Remedy for the Toxic Work Culture

Studies on servant leadership show that this style has a positive impact on followers and organizations in areas such as overall job satisfaction (Guillaume et al., 2013), collaboration and team effectiveness (Mahembe et al., 2013), and reduction of employee turnover (Ng et al., 2016). At the heart of servant leadership is putting

employee well-being as a priority while focusing on the personal and professional growth of followers (Laub, 2018; Mayer, 2010).

Emotional Intelligence: A Critical Competency

During times of intense disruption and distress, support from leaders is critical. Roark and Beuthin (2014) have established a predictive relationship between emotional intelligence and servant leadership. In their seminal research, the term “emotional intelligence” was coined by Salovey and Mayer (1990), along with a corresponding framework. In 1997, Salovey and Mayer updated the framework and redefined social intelligence as “the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotion so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth” (1997, p. 5). Emotional intelligence is further defined as self-awareness coupled with self-management. When a leader demonstrates emotional intelligence, they exhibit an understanding of their own of emotions and reactions along with the emotions and reactions of the people they lead. Emotional intelligence sharpens one’s ability to lead groups effectively because they can recognize and interpret information about themselves and those they lead (Roe & Anderson, 2023).

This capstone delves into the specific behaviors, including the components of emotional intelligence, that are used by servant leaders in higher education and analyzes the feasibility of the leadership model along with the inherent challenges.

Emerging from Isolation and Disconnection

In 2020, during the unprecedented global pandemic, millions of college

students were required to transition to fully online instruction, with faculty teaching virtually and staff/ administrators working remotely (DeBruyn & Van Eekert, 2023). College students reported feeling increasingly isolated, with a sense of disconnection from faculty, staff, and the institutions at large because of the decreased levels of interaction (DeBruyn & Van Eekert, 2023).

Higher education is undergoing a period of re-imagining focused on best post-pandemic practices (Neuwirth et al., 2021). With the planet recovering from disruptions caused by the pandemic, Lehr and Vaughan (2023) raise a critical question:

As the world is at a unique crossroads, how can leaders in higher education institutions prioritize holistic human needs and maximize interpersonal and collegial human connection, while continuing to guide and grow successful learning communities both in-person and virtually? (p. 1)

Understanding specific servant leadership behaviors (both positive and those which pose a challenge to implement within higher education) is critical to examining the utility of implementing compassion-based humanistic leadership within the academy. For example, while being a staff-centered servant leader can promote well-being, it can also be exhausting and time intensive (Liao et al., 2021). In addition, servant leaders may not garner the same respect as more authoritarian leaders.

Action Research: Servant Leader Training Guide

Research for this capstone will be synthesized into content for leadership training programs in higher education based on the study conducted at a research-

intensive university on the West Coast of the United States. Deliverables include a training guide (with accompanying resources) focusing on servant leadership, also known as compassion-based leadership.

Based on research in the field, the lived experiences of the 10 university servant leaders interviewed for this study, and using the framework provided by the Greenleaf Center (2023), research conducted by Roark and Beuthin (2014) and other sources, the guide focuses on understanding, practicing, and the implementation of a servant leadership program in higher education.

Servant leadership puts employees first, focusing on the personal and professional growth of team members (Laub, 2018; Mayer, 2010). The Servant Leadership Training Guide (Johansen, 2023) will serve as a toolkit to university leaders who aspire to invert the traditional leadership power structure. The guide will provide content to assist leaders in providing support to each individual team member (and set them up for success) while fostering a healthy, productive and psychologically safe work environment where trust is engendered and the well-being of staff is the highest priority. While the guide is integrated into this doctoral capstone, accompanying Powerpoints and worksheets may be obtained by contacting the researcher via email: m1185160@moreheadstate.edu.

Background on Servant Leadership

The Nature of Servant Leadership

Eleanor Roosevelt once famously proclaimed, “For our own success to be real, it must contribute to the success of others” (Goodreads, 2023). In keeping with

Roosevelt's philosophy of empowering others, servant leadership focuses on lifting people up in an organization by placing the needs of others within the organization at a higher priority than their own. Through leading by example, servant leaders unlock the potential for others to thrive. They realize that the happiness of employees has a direct impact on developing a positive work culture. As Flood (2019) contends, servant leaders not only lead by example, but also "are careful listeners, are encouraging, remove barriers for others, and equip others with the tools necessary for success" (para. 1).

Greenleaf Coins the Term Servant Leadership

While servant leadership is not a new concept, the modern version of the phrase "servant leadership" was coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in *The Servant as Leader*, an essay first published in 1970:

The servant-leader is servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions (p. 6).

For Greenleaf (1970), servant leadership was the antithesis of autocratic management. Instead, it focused on the individual and how they can flourish and meet their full potential.

Greenleaf's Background and the Birth of Servant Leadership

In analyzing the driving force behind Greenleaf's preoccupation with servant

leadership, one must consider his professional background. Greenleaf started his career at American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T) in 1929. He quickly rose up the ranks by participating in the company's first management training program. According to Frick (2019), as an executive with AT&T, Greenleaf was, "traveling for five years as a troubleshooter for the more than 200 "Ma Bells" and other companies associated with the communications giant" (Robert K. Greenleaf Center, 2023, para. 3).

From serving as a management consultant visiting scores of thriving companies, as well as those on the brink of dissolving, Greenleaf observed that successful organizations tended to have supportive leaders who acted as coaches, considering the needs of the employee as well as the organization. As a result, Greenleaf began touting what turned out to be an unpopular idea at the time when he espoused employee-centered leadership, "The organization exists for the person as much as the person exists for the organization" (Greenleaf as cited in Frick, 2016, para. 3).

Servant Leadership Characteristics: Definition of Terms

Servant leadership is non-autocratic and aspires to engage team members in decision making, has a strong foundation rooted in ethical and caring behavior while enhancing the growth and development of staff and engendering a positive and healthy work culture (Spears, 2010). Spears (2010) has identified a set of ten characteristics of the servant leader that are of critical importance: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship,

commitment to the growth of people, and building community (p. 27):

1. **Listening.** Acknowledging the viewpoint of followers and validating these perspectives.
2. **Empathy.** “Standing in the shoes” of another person and attempting to see the world from that person’s point of view.
3. **Healing.** In helping followers become whole, servant leaders are themselves healed.
4. **Awareness.** Understanding oneself and the impact one has on others.
5. **Persuasion.** Creates change through gentle, nonjudgmental argument.
6. **Conceptualization.** The ability to be a visionary for an organization.
7. **Foresight.** The ability to predict what is coming based on what is occurring in the present and what has happened in the past.
8. **Stewardship.** Carefully managing the people and organization one has been given to lead. Holding the organization in trust for the greater good of society.
9. **Commitment to the Growth of People.** Treating each follower as a unique person with intrinsic value beyond what her/she contributes to the organization.
10. **Building Community.** Allowing followers to identify with something greater than themselves that they value.

After years of conducting research on Greenleaf's original writings, Spears (2010) identified a set of 10 behaviors of the servant leader that he viewed as being core to the development and critical to the practice of servant-leadership. These 10 behaviors include:

Servant Leadership Behaviors

1. **Conceptualization.** The servant leaders' ability (by understanding the organization including its purpose and mission) to anticipate problems and plan for optimal responses to future issues.
 2. **Emotional Healing.** The servant leader is sensitive to and concerned with the well-being of others.
 3. **Putting Followers First.** The servant leader puts the welfare of his followers before his own.
 4. **Helping Others Grow and Succeed.** The servant leader by understanding the goals of his followers promotes the personal and professional development of the individual.
 5. **Behaving Ethically.** The servant leaders does the correct thing in the correct way and has a moral center.
 6. **Empowering.** The servant leader allows followers the freedom to make decisions and be self-sufficient.
 7. **Creating Values for the Community.** By giving back to the community the servant leader creates values, purpose, and goals for the community.
- (Northouse, 2016, p. 239)

Summary

Thriving in the global marketplace requires organizations (both private and public sector, as well as institutions of higher education) to foster a staff-centered culture by replacing the old rules of traditional leadership with more progressive compassion-centered ideologies about leading people (AlShammari, 2019). By focusing on the growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong, servant-leadership appears as a promising model in higher educational to both solve problems and promote personal development (AlShammari, 2019).

This study involves interviewing university leaders and looks at specific behaviors servant leaders use in higher education settings. There is an assessment of the leadership model and its potential impact on the higher education institutional culture as well as probing the downside and challenges inherent in servant leadership.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

The concept of servant leadership has many references in the New Testament, yet the modern servant leadership movement was inspired and constructed by Robert K. Greenleaf. “Servant Leadership is a non-traditional leadership philosophy, embedded in a set of behaviors and practices that place the primary emphasis on the well-being of those being served” (Robert K. Greenleaf Center, 2023, para. 1).

According to Bush (2021), authoritarian leaders are consumed with accumulating power as a means of exercising control within an organization (Blanchard & Broadwell, 2021). Employees are held to strict standards and have little opportunity to have freedom of decision-making (Saptura et al., 2023). As Saptura et al. (2023) expounds, “Authoritarian leadership is measured through centralized decisions, detailed assignments, leader subjectivity, opinion only, lip service, and close supervision” (p.128). Contrary to traditional leaders, the servant leader is not interested in wielding power as a means of achieving results. In contrast, servant leadership subscribes to decentralized power (Blanchard & Broadwell, 2021). The highest goal for a servant leader is considering the needs of others and prioritizing employees personal and professional growth and development.

Servant leadership can yield many positive results for organizations (Blanchard & Broadwell, 2021, Chapter 7). Research indicates that working for a servant leader can elevate organizational commitment and increases followers’ trust,

loyalty, and satisfaction with the leader (Ghayas et al., 2023; Yukl, 2010). Ultimately, servant leadership can increase employee work engagement, overall well-being, and have an impact on employee retention (Kaltiainen & Hakanen, 2022; Grunhaus et al., 2022).

Biblical Origins of Servant Leadership

The term “servant” is defined as “one who is under obligation to work for the benefit of a superior and to obey his or her commands” (Oxford English Dictionary, 1933, p. 1643). The term “servant leader” has been used for centuries and is accredited to the ancient teachings of Jesus and Christianity. In the Biblical text, Jesus gives instruction on the qualities of a leader, the role of the leader and the issue of power or (authority) which emulate servant leadership (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). From the Christian perspective, Jesus is the model servant leader.

According to Cook and Azcona (2016), Jesus embodies servant leadership because “Jesus submitted his own life to sacrificial service under the will of God (Luke 22:42), and he sacrificed his life freely out of service for others (John 10:30)” (p. 169). In analyzing the exercise of power in humanity, the leader and the servant are at polar opposites on a large behavioral spectrum and between these extremes are the nuances that exist in leading others.

Servant Leadership as an Oxymoron

As Sendjaya and Sarros (2002) concede, “the very notion of ‘servant as leader’ is an oxymoron” (p. 57). It is confounding and somewhat counterintuitive to consider that someone in a leadership capacity could act as a servant who also leads

(Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). Despite the seemingly implausible nature of the concept, there is ample representation in scholarly literature regarding servant leadership. Academic literature demonstrates that thought leaders, practitioners, and scholars have explored the relationship between servanthood and leadership from a multitude of angles for decades (Najam & Mustamil, 2020). In the last decade, servant leadership emerged as a pivotal research topic generating more research, adding to the already substantial body of literature (Bavik, 2020).

Researchers McQuade et al. (2020) provide a holistic overview of the literature pertaining to servant leadership. In terms of major findings McQuade et al. (2020) uncovered that “the most prominent themes in the servant leadership literature are values, literature reviews, behavior, assessments, performance, characteristics and antecedents” (p. 1). McQuade et al. (2020) also offer that there is a shortage of qualitative research on servant leadership. There is a much smaller body of research as to the role of servant leadership in higher education and minimal literature examining non-faculty servant leader behaviors (leaders of staff) in a university setting. This study intends to fill the existing gap in the literature by examining servant leader behaviors (of those who lead staff) in higher education through qualitative research.

Greenleaf is the Patriarch of Servant Leadership

While servant leadership has been in existence since biblical times, the contemporary and corporatized use of the term “servant leadership” is attributed to thought leader Robert K. Greenleaf. As noted by the Robert K. Greenleaf Center for

Servant Leadership (2023), servant leadership is not a theoretical managerial construct but rather it is a pragmatic philosophy that champions leaders who choose to serve first and lead second. For Greenleaf (1970), servant leadership was the antithesis of autocratic management and instead focused on the individual and how they can flourish and meet their full potential.

According to Greenleaf (1977), servant leaders are leaders who prioritize other's individual needs above their own. The servant leader makes an intentional decision to be of service to others. The primary motivation of the servant leader is actually to serve which takes precedence above leading (Greenleaf, 1977). The servant leader is the one who transcends beyond self-interest beyond affirmation and power (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). Servant leaders aspire to help followers achieve a sort of metamorphosis and to exceed their own internal expectations of self-development.

Rising Against Authoritarian Leadership in Higher Education

The leadership literature (Wang et al., 2013; Zhang & Xie, 2017) indicates that leaders who rate high on the authoritarian scale push their followers to deliver excellence and unilaterally make critical decisions for the entire team. While authoritarian leadership allows for quick decision making in high stress situations and offers a concrete chain of command model, it can also be highly invalidating. Autocratic leadership tends to have a clear separation between leader and follower, and the work leans towards being highly structured, overly rigid, and lacking in original thought. In contrast to authoritarian leadership, Wheeler (2012) advocates

that compassion-based models such as servant leadership should be explored as a substitution for autocratic leadership models within higher education. Andrade (2023) builds on the work of Wheeler (2012) by addressing how servant leadership encourages leadership development within organizations, particularly for women, and combats both the lack of early career promotion and the glass ceiling in terms of career advancement.

Servant Leadership: Positive Impact within Organizations

Jit et al. (2016) capture and examine life experiences within the framework of interpretative phenomenological analysis. Their study illuminates that servant leaders employ management strategies that are less autocratic while leaning towards participatory and humanistic leadership. These insights guide both academicians and private sector leaders to lead in a more thoughtful, staff-centered and participatory manner. The study by Jit et al. (2016) fills an important gap in literature pertaining servant leadership through their personal narratives. Additional studies looking at servant leadership through personal narrative include Brown (2022) which examines servant leader attributes and motivation in veteran serving organizations.

The study by Thacker et al. (2019) indicates that servant leadership decreases employee turnover because those reporting to a servant leader have higher levels of job satisfaction. Servant leadership was found to have a positive impact on the lives of the participants. Based on data analysis, the researchers identified multiple themes including culture, accountability, support, and commitment. The study by Thacker et al. (2019) will add to the growing works of literature signifying the increased

importance of servant leadership within organizations and adds new research about the cost of employee turnover due to poor leadership.

The Case for Servant Leadership in Higher Education

Wheeler (2012) has conducted extensive research on servant leadership as it relates to college and university settings. He has conducted interviews with servant leaders, examined the research of other scholars, and has worked in higher education for over forty years. Wheeler (2012) has purported that servant leadership as a practice is complementary with the overarching goals and tenants of higher education. Wheeler (2012) postulates that servant leadership, with its “emphasis on the common good, empowerment, involvement, and service to individuals and society offers a better way of leading colleges and universities” (Wheeler, 2012; Dean, 2014, p. 274). In the recovery phase from the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been increased workloads and expectations for employees. Turner (2022) offers that servant leadership is an effective model of leadership in higher education to support well-being during times of disruption and change.

Servant Leadership in Higher Education

Wheeler (2012) cites servant leadership research from academic literature specific to colleges and universities which supports the assertion that this leadership model is positively aligned with the goals, needs, and mission of higher education. (Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Boice, 1992; Crookston, 2010; Farnsworth, 2007; Gmelch, 1999; Hecht et al., 1999; Henegar et al., 2009; Keith, 2008; Kidder, 2005; Mackeachie, 1992; Wheeler et al., 2008; Wulff et al., 2004).

Case Studies of Servant Leadership Model in Higher Education

The servant leader model of service in higher education has been the subject of researchers. With its emphasis on social responsibility, higher education is a value driven multidimensional environment requiring a unique, empathic, values-driven, and highly intentional leadership style rooted in personal integrity (Adda et al., 2020).

As Adda et al. (2020) submit, the servant leadership style is well suited for higher education:

Higher education institutions are expected to adapt to the needs and demands of the environment by applying a leadership style that gives more attention to the transformative progress of organization members. Leaders in the university must actively listen to its stakeholders to pursue organizational changes that fit with the need of wider publics.... while maintaining institutional values. (p. 1)

The following are two examples of colleges and universities that have adopted the servant leadership philosophy as the cornerstone of their institutional mission.

Kaskaskia Community College in Southern Illinois

Kaskaskia Community College in Southern Illinois re-imagined the leadership philosophy of the institution adopting the core servant leadership values gleaned from Rusworth Kidder's books *Moral Courage* (2005) and *How Good People Make Tough Choices* (1995). As Wheeler (2012) explains, "the values incorporated into the college's philosophy were respect, personal and institutional responsibility, honesty, compassion, and fairness" (p. 106).

Chaminade University in Honolulu, Hawaii

Chaminade University was founded in 1955 by the Society of Mary, a Catholic organization started by Father William Joseph Chaminade in 1817. One of the major purposes of the Society of Mary is to educate leaders, and both the society and the university emphasize the concept of servant leadership in the educational programs (Keith, 1994). The university exalts the servant leadership philosophy which is based on love and demonstrating care for fellow human beings and the desire to help them, not the accumulation of power or prestige. (Keith, 1994).

Servant leaders are focused on helping others and on helping society. Examples of servant leaders and servant leadership are drawn from religious and philosophical writings, history, and business. Chaminade University founded the Chaminade Leadership Institute in 1989 to provide servant leadership workshops to students, and since then the institute has grown into a program that offers workshops, academic courses, and community service projects. (Chaminade University, 2023).

Servant Leader Behaviors

Investment in Staff. In the late 1960s, management guru Drucker (1967) wrote about time as a crucial tool and resource for leaders, “Of the other major resources, money is actually quite plentiful. People one can hire, though one can rarely hire enough good people. But one cannot rent, hire, buy, or otherwise obtain more time.” Former CEO Cheryl Bachelder also speaks to the revolutionary aspect of time and how investing time in coaching and developing staff can make employees feel empowered and turn around organizations, even those that are failing. As a former

executive and servant leader, Bachelder devoted one-third of her time, as a busy C-suite member, mentoring her direct reports and saw the return on her investment with both productivity and profits (Miller, 2023).

Mentoring and Creating Psychological Safety. Mentoring has emerged as a critical way for organizations to meet the needs of staff seeking personal and professional development and enhancement of skills. As Pearson (2013) asserts, “Mentoring plays a key role in the servant-leader’s ability to serve the next generation” (p. 353). Mentoring is generally defined as “a learning relationship, involving the sharing of skills, knowledge, and expertise between a mentor and mentee through developmental conversations, experience sharing, and role modelling” (EEMC, 2023, para. 1). Further a servant leader is adept at uncovering the gifts and talents of those they lead and is invested in making certain that staff feel supported, mentored, and can flourish in the workplace.

There are high-quality and low-quality relationships. Low-quality relationships are transactional and may be short lived. In contrast, high-quality relationships have a foundation of trust and go beyond pleasantries as they are rooted in reciprocity (Meuser & Smallfield, 2023).

Servant leaders provide an environment rooted in trust where employees enjoy a positive work climate focused on both well-being and productivity (Meuser & Smallfield, 2023). Servant leaders invest socially and emotionally in those they lead as well as provide concrete resources to support their development (Meuser & Smallfield, 2023).

An integral part of the mentoring process is creating a psychologically safe environment where staff feel comfortable to make errors and be their authentic selves so they effectively use their voice and ultimately can learn and grow (Edmonson, 2018). Edmondson (2018) tackles psychological safety head-on by using behavioral research and multiple case studies. Edmonson, who coined the term “psychological safety” in 1999, conducted team and field-based research in schools, hospitals, factories, and governmental agencies. According to Edmonson (2018), psychological safety is the overriding factor that explained differences in team performances across industries:

People must be allowed to voice half-finished thoughts, ask questions from left field, and brainstorm out loud; it creates a culture in which a minor flub or momentary lapse is no big deal, and where actual mistakes are owned and corrected, and where the next left- field idea could be the next big thing.

(p. 343)

Inspiring Others, Walking the Walk. In terms of ethically rooted practices in servant leadership, Wong and Davey (2007) purport that this leadership philosophy is rooted in “inspiring others to serve a higher purpose” (p. 8). To that end, Wong and Davey (2007) proclaim that it is important that servant leaders model the core values on a daily basis, including “making compassionate acts a regular routing of life that others learn how to express kindness to one another” (p. 8).

A core tenant of servant leadership is operating in the character zone of authenticity, honesty, and integrity which could be described as: “Walking the talk

regardless of the costs and daring to stand up for what one believes in” (Wong & Davey, 2007, p. 8).

According to Page and Wong (2000), “The world is crying out for ethical and effective leadership that serves others, invests in their development and fulfills a shared vision” (p. 1). Servant leadership embodies the ideals of collaborative team building, supportive and participatory management, along with a collective vision for moving the organization forward (Page & Wong, 2000). The Robert F. Greenleaf Center for Servant-Leadership (1997) emphasizes that this philosophy of leadership accentuates “increased service to others; a holistic approach to work; promoting a sense of community; and the sharing of power in decision making” (p. 4).

Training and Development of Staff. The servant leader serves as a mentor to staff and inherent in the mentoring relationship is a desire to facilitate the personal and professional development necessary to develop and nurture leadership skills. (Mathew, 2020). Mathew (2020) speaks to the bond that exists between servant leader and staff member rooted in a mutual dedication to learning and growing.

The Feminist Perspective, Opposing Views. Servant leadership model is not exempt from criticism. Numerous scholars have conducted research on servant leadership, yet there is a discernible gap in literature regarding the role of gender in servant leadership and examining the feminist perspective (Barbuto & Gifford, 2010). The rigor of the model has been challenged due to the shortage of empirical research about the long-term application of servant leadership within organizations. Eicher-Catt (2005) criticizes the servant leadership model for having gender bias in its

theoretical perspectives:

By carefully reviewing its rhetorical language. I expose its gendered connotations. We find that the apposition of “servant” with “leader” instantiates paradoxical language games that do not neutralize gender bias but accentuate it. (p. 17)

Reynolds (2011) suggests that management development programs should challenge gender role stereotyping in leadership: “Leadership students and educators can benefit from the integration of feminist and gender-conscious perspectives in teaching about servant-leadership and leadership in general” (p. 164).

Given the systematic preponderance of gender bias in leadership (Andrade, 2023), operating within a patriarchal paradigm, the feminization of servant leadership may extend the legacy of putting women at a disadvantage in terms of achieving high-level leadership status” (Brescoll, 2016; Lammers & Gast, 2017).

In spite of the growing base of servant leadership literature since Eicher-Catt (2005) and Reynolds (2011) conducted research on gender bias, there is still a lack of holistic understanding of the role that gender differences may play in servant leadership and how this impacts women’s advancement in leadership. (Song et al., 2022).

Conclusion

Servant leadership is often linked with Christianity as there are many references in the Bible to this philosophy of leading others. The central tenants of servant leadership can be found in Philippians 2:3-5: “Do nothing out of selfish

ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves... the very nature of a servant” (The Holy Bible, 2016, Philippians 2:3-5). In a corporate context, unlike autocratic leaders in business and industry who have a command presence, a servant leader practices heart-centered leadership placing the focus on team members above the leaders own aspirations. The growth, development, and well-being of team members take the highest priority.

Servant leaders are adept at welcoming all perspectives thereby creating a trusting environment where staff feel validated. Given that staff have a voice and a seat at the table, they often are more committed to the organization under the leadership of a servant leader. Servant leaders also invest in professional development, staff training, and are highly attuned to issues pertaining to work life balance and potential employee burnout. The return on this investment is that staff demonstrate more loyalty and there is less attrition under a servant leader.

The construct of servant leadership is not without detractors who question the gender neutrality of the leadership philosophy. The construct of servant leadership has been criticized for celebrating characteristics that are stereotypically feminine which could lead to gendered assumptions potentially blocking women’s ascension to the top of the leadership pyramid. (Song et al., 2022).

Chapter 3

Methodology, Procedures Instruments, Respondent Profiles

Given that servant leadership and leader behavior is a multi-faceted and nuanced construct, conducting research utilizing a qualitative approach elicited robust and leader-centered data that is directly aligned with the research objectives. This study employed a qualitative approach to examine eight questions regarding servant leadership (see Appendix C). The eight questions were developed by the researcher/interviewer to gain a better understanding of the nuances of servant leader behaviors and bring to life the “lived leadership experiences” of the 10 university leaders. Two of the questions for leaders interviewed incorporate the servant leadership related models of Northouse (2016) and Goleman (2006).

Qualitative Research Study

Qualitative research “is a broad umbrella term for research methodologies that describe and explain persons’ experiences, behaviors, interactions and social context” (Razafsha et al., 2012, Abstract). In addition, qualitative research “aims to give privilege to the perspectives of research participants” and to “illuminate the subjective meaning, actions and context of those being researched” (Fossey et al., 2002, Abstract). It can also be used to gain an in-depth understanding of an issue and generate new potential ideas for research (Bhandari, 2020).

Descriptive Phenomenology Methodology

As a qualitative study, Examining Servant Leader Behaviors uses descriptive phenomenology methodology as the qualitative study design to describe how leaders

experience servant leadership and how they exhibit servant leader behaviors. The researcher has attempted to relinquish biases and preconceived assumptions about servant leadership and servant leader behaviors (Deakin University, 2022). Analysis includes identifying both specific and overarching themes in relation to how servant leadership is expressed both comprehensively and specifically in terms of specific leader behaviors.

Research Setting for the Study

Research was conducted with 10 leaders employed at a major R1 university on the West Coast of the United States with 37,000 plus students, more than 6,000 staff members, and offering more than 200 degree programs. The university is a minority serving institution (MSI) that has been named by the U.S. Department of Education as a Hispanic-serving institution (HSI). As defined in Title V, Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) are defined as higher education institutions with full-time undergraduate student enrollment that is at least 25 percent Hispanic (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). The university is also designated as an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving institution (AANAPISI). AANAPISI institutions are defined under the Higher Education Act (HEA) as “colleges or universities with an undergraduate enrollment that is at least 10 percent Asian American and Native American/ Pacific Islander” (U.S. Department of Education, 2023).

Target Sample

The purely qualitative study highlights the responses of ten university leaders (with five to 20-plus years of service in higher education) who had a confirming score on an assessment by Wong and Page (2003) demonstrating that they practice and subscribe to the servant leadership model and philosophy. The leaders were selected to take the screening assessment because they had a reputation of practicing servant leadership on campus and in some cases were recommended by researcher's circle of contacts.

Instrumentation***Self-Assessment Instrument for Leaders***

The researcher (Johansen, 2023) sent the Servant Leadership Profile Revised Instrument (SLP-R), a 62-question survey developed from the research of Wong and Page (2003), via Survey Monkey to ten selected leaders to self-assess their level of servant leadership (see Appendix A). Wong and Page (2003) extended Greenleaf's work by creating a multidimensional model that recognizes 12 servant leadership attributes. These attributes are both a result of conducting a literature review and their own experiences in leadership. Leaders (10) identified for the study, who scored consistent with servant leadership on the SLP-R self-assessment, and completed the Pre-Interview Reading Assignment were invited to participate in two 30-minute qualitative interviews.

Factors on the SLP-R

The following factors are examined on the SLP-R self-assessment for leaders.

(Wong & Page, 2003):

Factor 1: Empowering and Developing Others

Factor 2: Power and Pride

Factor 3: Authentic Leadership

Factor 4: Open, Participatory Leadership Factor 5: Inspiring Leadership

Factor 6: Visionary Leadership

Factor 7: Courageous Leadership

Scoring of the SLP-R

Scoring of the individual leaders SLP-R scores was completed by the researcher/ interviewer using the scoring key developed by Wong and Page (2003) (see last page of Appendix A). The confirming scores for each of the 10 leaders can be found in High Mean Scores (5.4 or above) on Factors 1 and 3 through 7 which indicate a Servant Leadership Orientation (see Table 1). Low Mean Scores (2.3 or below) on Factor 2 indicate Servant Leadership Orientation (see Table 1). High mean scores on Factor 2 suggest behaviors (such as arrogance) that are contrary to servant leadership.

Selected Figures of Collective Responses***Ten Higher Education Leaders Interviewed***

Of the 10 leaders' holistic answers to the assessment questions, selected collective responses to the SLP-R are graphically represented which showcase their

commitment to the servant leadership model (see Figure 1 and Figure 2). The leaders' collective answers and agreement/disagreement response percentages are displayed graphically (see Figures 1 and 2) and include: "I seek to serve rather than be served." "I am willing to share my power and authority." "My leadership effectiveness is improved through empowering others." and "My leadership contributes to my employees/colleagues' personal growth."

Figure 1

Selected Figures of Collective Responses: Ten Higher Education Leaders Interviewed

Servant Leadership Profile-Revised (SLP-R) Assessment

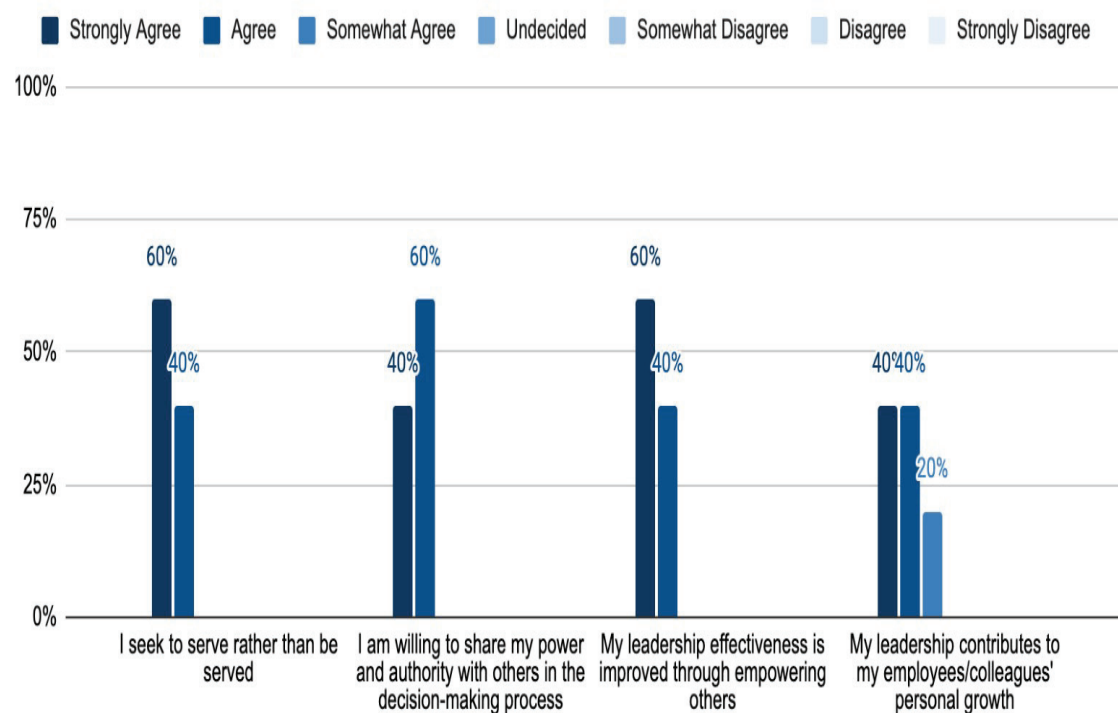
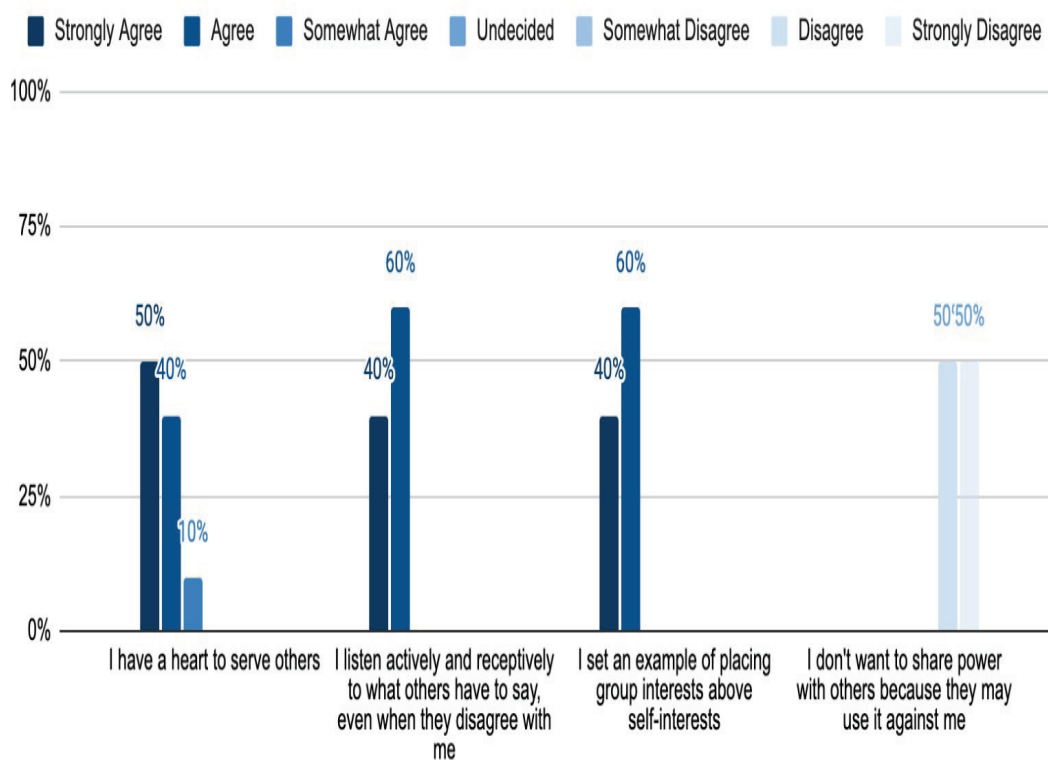


Figure 2*Collective Responses of Leaders: Orientation to Servant Leadership***Servant Leadership Profile-Revised (SLP-R) Assessment*****Pre-Interview Reading Assignment for Leaders***

Prior to each of the two interviews, the 10 leaders in the study were provided the following Pre-Interview Reading Assignment (see Appendix B) to provide context on the servant leadership model and background information so they could give informed answers to questions posed by the researcher. The interview questions were also outlined in the pre-interview reading assignment. This assignment was sent to each university leader in the study before the first interview and also before the second interview to read, as a refresher.

Profile of University Leaders in Study and Pseudonyms

The 10 university leaders interviewed are from the following functional areas of the selected university and each has a reputation (confirmed through SLP-R survey) of practicing servant leadership on campus:

- Auxiliary Services and Business (Housing, Student Affairs, and Other Units)
- Division of Undergraduate Education (Transfer Student Center, Student Success Initiatives and Other Units)
- Wellness, Health, and Counseling Services (Counseling Center, Disability Services)
- Student Life & Leadership, Dean of Students (LGBT Center, Latinx Center, Womxn's Hub Resource Center, Veteran's Center, Campus Orgs. and Volunteer Programs and Other Units)
- Division of Continuing Education (DCE)
- School of Education (Center for Educational Partnerships, SAGE Scholars, and Other Units)
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (Office of Inclusive Excellence, Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships)
- Division of Equal Opportunity and Compliance (Title IX, Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity and Other Units)

Pseudonyms for Leaders #1 through #10 were used in this study to protect the identity of the servant leaders interviewed.

Research Participants

Years of Experience. Ten university leaders who have a reputation for servant leadership (confirmed through the SLP-R self-assessment) were selected for the study. The participants' years of experience in higher education span the ranges of (0-5 years) to (over 20 years) of university service (see Table 1).

Demographics of Leader Participants (Gender and Ethnicity). There were five participants who identified as female and five participants who identified as male with a range of ethnicities represented (see Figure 3).

Data Collection and Interviews

The data for analysis was provided from the two sets of interviews with the 10 university leaders.

Interview Scheduling

Interview I and Interview II. After leader participants had a confirming score on the SLP-R and completed the Pre-Interview Reading Assignment, virtual interviews were scheduled with the ten university leaders. Interviews I and II with university leaders took place between May 2022 and March 2023 via the Zoom platform. Potential study participants were asked to take the SLP-R. The virtual interviews were each 30 minutes in duration and leaders were provided with a pre-reading assignment on servant leadership prior to the actual interviews.

Interviews. The researcher conducted two 30-minute structured interviews via Zoom technology with each of the university leaders in two phases (Interview I and interview II). All 10 leaders were asked the same four questions in the same

sequence for Interview I and the same four questions in the same sequence for Interview II (eight questions total). One leader was unable to participate in Interview II due to scheduling issues.

Interview Transcription. Interviews were recorded (with participant permission) and transcribed using Zoom's transcription feature. In addition, for more complete transcription, the researcher/interviewer used an online transcription service by the name of Happy Scribe. In rare cases where the Zoom and online transcription service was difficult to decipher, the researcher/interviewer listened to the audio recording for clarity.

Data Analysis

The researcher used Nvivo software program for the data analysis/coding of the audio interviews. This program provided support in finding themes, patterns, and connections within the data on the interview transcriptions.

Coding Themes for Interviews I and II

Themes were established around the questions posed to participants that contributed to developing a coding system for the study. Categories regarding the behavioral exploration, analysis, and potential implementation of servant leadership as a model in higher education include:

Coding Themes: Interview I (30 Minutes)

- Specific servant leadership practices
- Training and professional development initiatives
- Servant Leadership practices posing challenges and those implemented

with ease

- Advantages and disadvantages of the servant leadership model
- Behaviors inherent in servant leadership
- Leadership components of emotional intelligence

Coding Themes: Interview II (30 Minutes)

- Servant leadership model and its alignment with the leaders higher education units
- Specific times when leaders provided support to a direct report.
- How past and current reports describe participants leadership style
- The global pandemic and the impact on participants ability to practice servant leadership

Using both top down and bottom-up approaches, many themes and patterns emerged during the interviews.

Threats to Validity

Qualitative

Reliability in qualitative studies is primarily a function of “being thorough, careful and honest in carrying out the research” (Robson, 2002, p. 176). In qualitative interviews, there are potential threats related to the interview protocols including the way questions are worded, establishing a connection with the participants, and keeping in mind the balance of power between interview and interviewee (Silverman, 2011).

Given that this study is purely qualitative, attention was paid to potential

researcher bias. As a researcher, I took precautions so that my perspectives, knowledge, assumptions, and methods of sampling would not sway the results. The participants were interviewed on two separate times (30-minute meetings) via Zoom technology platform. In addition to researcher bias, there is a potential for respondent bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It is critical that participants realize their charge is to provide authentic answers and not what the interviewer wants to hear. To combat this, it was communicated to participants that honest answers regarding the pros and cons of servant leadership are critical and there is no judgment or expectations around responses. For example, participants were asked about both the strengths and challenges of the servant leadership model in higher education. Checks and balances were put forth to ensure that interview protocols and sampling methods along with data analysis did not pose a validity threat. Open communication and regular check ins with my chair at Morehead State University, and university study site research sponsor, throughout the capstone process was imperative.

Triangulation

To increase validity, triangulation of different data sources was used to further validate the existing themes and those which emerge.

Member Checking

The leaders (within student-facing departments) were asked to review the research findings and specific quotes for accuracy.

Survey Tool: Servant Leadership Profile - Revised (SLP-R)

The Servant Leadership Profile-Revised was designed by Wong and Page (2003)

to measure both positive and negative leadership characteristics (Appendix A).

Leadership matters a great deal in the success or failure of any organization.

Respondents were provided the instruction to use the scale provided to indicate their agreement or disagreement with each of the statements when describing their own attitudes and practices as a leader. The respondents were also informed there were no right or wrong answers.

Debriefing on Scoring SLP-R

Servant leadership is defined by both the presence of certain positive qualities, and the absence of certain negative qualities. The positive qualities include: (a) servanthood, (b) leadership, (c) visioning, (d) developing others, (e) empowering others, (f) team building, (g) shared decision-making, and (h) integrity. The negative qualities include: (a) abuse of power and control, and (b) pride and narcissism. These negatively worded statements can also be scored in the positive direction; by reversing the scoring, Abuse of Power becomes Vulnerability, and Pride becomes Humility (Wong & Page, 2003).

A simple way to determine whether one is a servant leader is to see whether one scores high on Servanthood and Leadership, but low on Abuse of Power and Pride. Thus, scoring high on Abuse of Power and Pride automatically disqualifies one as a servant leader, regardless of high scores on the other subscales. That is why the inclusion of these two negative subscales is important in the revised Servant Leadership Profile (Wong & Page, 2003).

The scoring code is on the last page of the survey in Appendix A. Table 1 provides a summary of the scores for each of the seven factors: Factor 1: Empowering and Developing Others; Factor 2: Power and Pride; Factor 3: Authentic Leadership; Factor 4: Open, Participatory Leadership; Factor 5: Inspiring Leadership; Factor 6: Visionary Leadership; Factor 7: Courageous Leadership.

Table 1

SLP-R Scores of 10 Leaders Interviewed

Leader	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Overall Mean
Factor 1	5.9	6.6	6.8	6.4	5.6	5.9	6.6	5.8	6.7	5.7	6.2
Factor 2	2.3	*2.8	1.1	1.6	1.6	2.3	1.4	2.2	1.6	1.6	1.9
Factor 3	6.2	6.5	5.8	6.4	5.7	5.4	6.7	5.6	6.7	5.8	6.0
Factor 4	6.6	7.0	6.0	6.7	6.5	6.2	6.6	6.4	6.9	6.0	6.5
Factor 5	6.1	6.3	6.1	5.9	*5.3	*5.1	6.7	5.7	6.4	5.4	5.9
Factor 6	6.4	6.4	5.8	6.6	*5.0	5.4	6.0	*5.2	6.6	5.8	5.9
Factor 7	6.2	7.0	6.8	6.0	6.0	5.6	6.4	5.8	7.0	6.0	6.3
Mean Overall	5.7	6.1	5.5	5.7	5.1	5.1	5.8	5.3	6.0	5.2	5.5

Note. High Mean Scores (5.4 or above) on Factors 1 and 3 through 7 indicates Servant Leadership Orientation. *Indicates that (slight) development needed toward Servant Leadership in this area as 5.4 is the baseline for servant leadership orientation. Low Mean Scores (2.3 or below) on Factor 2 (Power and Pride) indicate Servant Leadership Orientation. High mean scores suggest behaviors that are contrary to servant leadership (e.g. arrogance).

Chapter 4

Findings, Question 1 (Part I and II) through Question 8

Demographics

There were 10 leaders who were the focus of this study. Table 1 provides a summary of the leaders' demographics. As noted, there was an equal distribution of male and female leaders who participated in completing the SLP-R and the interviews. All 10 were employed at a 4-year public institution in Southern California. One has 0-5 years of experience, one leader had 5-10 years, four with 10-20 years, and the final four had over 20 years of experience in higher education. As presented in Figure 3, as to race, there were six leaders who answered white or Caucasian, three who answered Asian or Asian American, two who answered Hispanic or Latino, and one who declined to state. Some of the leaders indicated they belonged to more than one racial group.

Table 1

Leader Demographics

Participants' Gender, Number of Years in Higher Ed, and Institution Type

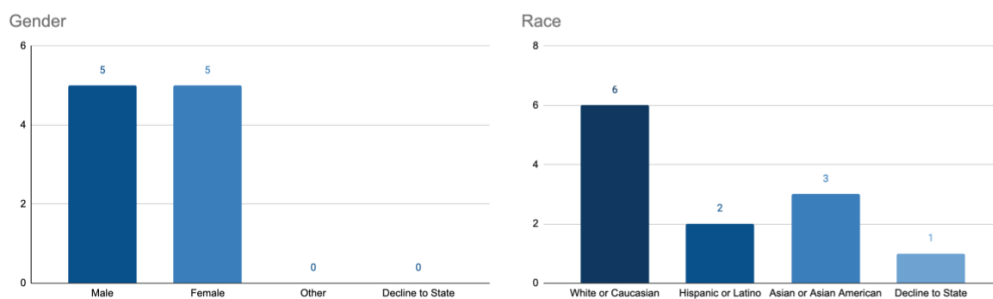
Participants' Pseudonym	Gender	Number of Years in Higher Education	Institution Type / State
Leader 1	Male	0-5	Large 4-year Public (CA)
Leader 2	Male	Over 20	Large 4-year Public (CA)
Leader 3	Male	Over 20	Large 4-year Public (CA)
Leader 4	Male	Over 20	Large 4-year Public (CA)
Leader 5	Female	Over 20	Large 4-year Public (CA)
Leader 6	Female	10-20	Large 4-year Public (CA)
Leader 7	Female	5-10	Large 4-year Public (CA)
Leader 8	Female	10-20	Large 4-year Public (CA)
Leader 9	Female	10-20	Large 4-year Public (CA)
Leader 10	Male	10-20	Large 4-year Public (CA)

Note. Ten university leaders who have a reputation for servant leadership were selected for the study. The leader participants' years of experience in higher education span the ranges of (0-5 years) to (over 20 years) of university service.

Figure 3

Leader Demographics: Gender & Race

Gender & Race



Interviews

Following the completion of the survey, the 10 leaders participated in a two-part interview. Prior to the interview, each individual was provided with a Pre-Interview Reading Assignment as an orientation or a refresher to the Servant Leadership Model. The reading assignment is provided in Appendix B. The actual interview questions are listed in Appendix C.

Findings: Selected Leader Responses from First Interview

Interview I, Question 1 (Part I) asked leaders : In your work as a servant leader at the university, what are three (3) specific practices that you implemented and what has been the impact? The majority of leaders cited the following three practices as impactful in practicing servant leadership in higher education and provided commentary (see Table 2):

- 1) Investing Time in Staff
- 2) Mentoring and Modeling Integrity and Kindness
- 3) Building a Strong Team through Collaboration, Providing Support,
and Developing a Shared Vision

Table 2

Findings: Three Shared Practices of Servant Leadership

Practice	Leader Commentary
1. Investing time in staff	1a) Open door policy 1b) Making formal scheduled one-on-one meetings with staff a priority 1c) Adding meeting during times of challenge (i.e., COVID Enhanced Connectivity) 1d) Remaining accessible to staff 1e) Maintaining a physical (on-site) presence 1f) Regular all staff meetings
2. Mentoring and modeling integrity, kindness, and participation	2a) creating psychological safety in the workplace 2b) Modeling goodwill, patience, and being participatory 2c) Leading with ethics and integrity 2d) Role modeling the concept of involvement
3. Building a strong team through collaboration, providing support, and developing a shared vision	3a) Creating opportunities for collaboration 3b) Providing support in goal setting and managing workflow 3c) building and communicating a shared organizational vision

Note. The 10 university leaders have collectively cited three specific practices of servant leadership and provided supporting commentary on each practice area.

1. Investment of Time

All 10 leaders interviewed shared the importance of investing and spending quality time with staff, although the way they accomplish this investment of time with staff may vary.

1a) Investment of Time: Open Door Policy

Some leaders create a comfortable environment for employees to casually connect and share on a daily basis. Leader #1 revealed, “I do spend time with everybody when I have those opportunities to do so, I have an open-door policy” (Interview 1).

1b) Investment of Time: Formal Scheduled Regular Meetings

The majority of leaders have formal meetings with staff to stay connected, as exemplified by the following leader statements. Leader #8 reported, “My willingness to really be there and serve, if I’m really serving, then I will prioritize and make a way to put the human first” (Interview 1).

Similarly, Leader #1 said:

I formally will meet with individuals on a fairly regular basis and make sure that I’m checking in with them to see how they’re doing, both personally and professionally. I think it goes a long way to establish those relationships with people... I can ask about their family, I can ask about their pets, I can ask about their weekends. That goes a long way with trust and establishing a positive work environment. (Interview 1)

1c) Investment of Time: Adding Meetings During COVID for Increased

Connectivity

During lockdown, Leader #9 noted the need to elevate check-ins with staff to decrease feelings of isolation and fragmentation while demonstrating a sincere interest in getting to know staff:

During COVID, I set up appointments with every single person on our team and made a phone call for 30 minutes. It took three weeks to do, which is a lot of time planning. But I wanted to hear how they were doing. I wanted to be able to advocate for them with what they needed. But for me, it's rare to have somebody care about those parts of you when you (as a staff member) feel so removed from leaders because they're in a position that's higher up. Right? But if you never have a person who you can look to in that way, then it feels like a daunting task to do your job every day, almost, right?

(Interview 1)

1d) Investment of Time: Remaining Accessible to Staff

Multiple leaders expressed a strong desire and commitment to remain accessible and to avoid canceling or rescheduling one-on-one meetings with staff. As Leader #8 submits:

I want to be accessible; I never want staff or students to think "oh she's too busy." Whether it's a half hour or an hour, I don't ever cancel unless it's a family emergency. I do not reschedule those unless it's like something that's a 'super on fire' directive from administration, I do not cancel those because I think it's really important to honor the space.

(Interview 1)

1e) Investment of Time: Maintaining a Physical On-Site Presence.

In terms of time investment, not all of the leaders opted for scheduled meetings to maintain a connection with staff. For example, Leader #3 communicated the need to stay physically present in the absence of formalized meetings:

I visit the various buildings and walk around the campus all the time, it builds relationships. My supervisor years ago was amazed that I don't have scheduled one-on-ones with my staff. I stopped doing that a long time ago as I did not find them to be to be very productive and not a good use of their time. Instead, I have frequent informal one-on-one daily visits. They (staff) can explain challenges they may have and how I can help them. I can physically help them at the time or help them by understanding better what they're doing so that I can get the resources that they need to succeed.

Walking around is really important to me. (Interview 1)

1f) Investment of Time: Beyond the One-on-One Meeting; All Staff Meetings and Staff Retreats

Servant leaders extend their attention beyond one-on-one meetings to prioritize all-staff meetings in addition to individual connectivity time, as Leader #4 shared, "I make sure that we're touching base individually in our weekly check in meetings and then I also create staff retreats and all staff planning meetings as well" (Interview 1).

2. Mentoring and Modeling Integrity, Kindness, and Participation

2a) Mentoring and Modeling: Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace

Leading by example is a core tenant of servant leadership, expressed in a number of ways by the university leaders interviewed. Leader #8 espoused the importance of encouraging staff to be their authentic selves at work and create a culture rooted in psychological safety:

You know making the time to connect for me is really important, because that's the first thing I did when I started working with (one of my direct reports). I made sure that she knew right away that she was safe to be herself, she was safe to make mistakes. (Interview 1)

The university leaders also repeatedly mentioned providing support to staff (and, in some cases, students) in the form of mentoring. In the words of Leader #7, "I am always open to collaborating with them, listening to their ideas, and supporting their projects and/or events" (Interview 1)

2b) Mentoring and Modeling: The Concept of Modeling Goodwill, Patience in the Face of Negativity, and Being Participatory

Several of the 10 university leaders specifically mention the role of kindness as part of their behavioral and emotional approach to mentorship within servant leadership. Leader #7 shared, "I treat them (staff members) with kindness, compassion, and understanding and make it a goal to inspire them along the way." Leader #4 observed, "The staff recognize the power of being treated with kindness.

Kindness really makes a difference when you're working with people."

Leader #1 noted that mentoring incorporates both the perspective of kindness and digging deep to find patience when negativity surfaces from staff:

We published a strategic plan within 90 days when I first started at the university. Having a way forward and creating a vision was important. If you have people sitting there and being negative...I ask myself, How do we get this person to understand? It's not their fault they don't understand. They haven't been trained. It's up to us (leaders) to start bringing people along with us and showing them the way while helping followers grow and succeed. Mentorship within leadership is so important. (Interview 1)

2c) Mentoring and Modeling: Leading with Ethics and Integrity

Leaders discussed the concept of leading by example as well as summoning the courage (as a leader) to empower team members to become confident ethical leaders. Leader #4 articulated:

Role modeling integrity and ethical behaviors is something I do. I hope that everybody follows me, but even if they don't, my hope is that they they're seeing what I do and how I behave and how I act and how I treat other people. I hope that's an example (for my staff) of how to lead others both ethically and effectively. (Interview 1)

In a similar vein, Leader #8 proclaimed:

I will tell the truth, even when it's uncomfortable even when it is at a staff meeting and the senior leader is not happy with the survey results. I

will step forward in that discomforteven if I am the lone voice. I would still do the right thing and tell the truth in that moment, even though it wasn't well received. I try to just lead by example. I love the mission and vision of the university plus I love what we do here, I believe in what we do and so, if I don't believe in it, how can my team believe in it? (Interview 1)

Leader #9 commented on the connection between confidence and ethics: I think empowering others also means leading by example. Even though I know that the definition of empowerment includes being independent and (helping staff) making their own decisions and being self-sufficient.... I think there's something about empowerment that also suggests telling staff "I know you can do this and I will provide help along the way for you to be able to feel confident," because to me, it's about confidence. Right? When you have that confidence because you're empowered, then you behave ethically. (Interview 1)

2d) Mentoring and Modeling: Role Modeling the Concept of Involvement

The leaders interviewed see a correlation between servant leadership, specifically leader-centered role modeling behaviors, and employee engagement.

Leader #3 voiced the importance of modeling campus engagement to staff:

I role model involvement on campus by getting involved myself. I am on Staff Assembly, I teach CPR and Mental Health First Aid classes, I work helping to facilitate HR classes...so my staff sees me get involved and sees that this

benefits our organization and benefits the campus. So, if I want my staff to get involved on campus, I need to lead the way. (Interview 1)

3. Building a Strong Team through Collaboration, Providing Support, and Developing a Shared Vision

3a) Building a Strong Team: Creating Opportunities for Collaboration

Leader #6 spoke of collaborative decision-making as a core function and one that is highly characteristic of her leadership style within the university:

I believe in empowering our team to take the lead on specific programs or initiatives and I support them along the way. Contribution amongst the team is key, I always see it (leadership) as a shared responsibility versus everything should just come from me as a Campus Director. (Interview 1)

3b) Building a Strong Team: Providing Support in Goal Setting

Offering guidance in goal setting and managing workload was cited by leaders as an important behavior, as encapsulated by the comments of Leader #5, who asks the following questions when directly checking in with her direct reports, “How can we work together?... what can I do to support you so that you can better manage your time and how can I support you in setting priorities?” (Interview 1).

3c) Building a Strong Team: Enhancing Communication and Building a Shared Organizational Vision

Leader #8 emphasized the critical nature of having a vision, creating a mental picture of where the unit is headed, and making sure staff are actively

engaged and contributory in moving the overarching goals forward:

Serving the organization and serving my colleagues and the students created this beautiful foundation for great things to happen. It would not have come to fruition if the trust wasn't there or the compassion and empathy wasn't there. I said to my Assistant Director, "This is my vision and where I would like to take the organization. What are your thoughts? What are your ideas? What's something you wanted to do in the past, but we're told you couldn't do because there wasn't enough funding?" We were able to execute and bring to life so many things (that didn't work in the past) because a leader didn't believe in it or did not create a shared vision. (Interview 1)

Q1. Part Two

Interview I, Question 1 (Part II) asked leaders: What training initiatives and/or professional development have you implemented that reinforce the practices of servant leadership? Responses to this question are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3

Implemented Training and Professional Development

Leader Responses: Servant Leadership Practices: Training and Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest Speakers: Incorporating the work of Paulo Freire • Using Strengths Related Assessments with Staff • Giving Release Time for Professional Development and Training • Encouraging Staff to Participate in University Sponsored Series Offered to Staff on Leadership Development • Inviting Guest Speakers who are Subject Matter Experts to Present to Staff

- Provide Training and Development Around Diversity, Equity Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) Issues in General and Specific to the Workplace

Leader #3 spoke of incorporating the philosophy of the Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire, (who was a leading advocate of critical pedagogy) into the staff training program:

We instituted the use of Popular Education facilitation and did training with an expert in Paulo Freire’s work to train both student and pro staff. She has done the training the past two years and will be doing it again for this year’s staff. It has changed the way we supervise both professional and student staff, run meetings, and deliver educational programs to our residents. “Everyone is a teacher and everyone can learn” is what we base our work on. We try to be less hierarchical, less static in the delivery of content, and more interactive using creative methods like art, dance, videos, journaling, and discussion. It has been a huge success and resonates with all of our staff. (Interview 1)

DEIB/Implicit Bias

In the aftermath of George Floyd’s murder, Leader #5 shared that the staff was engaged in training around diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) issues, “We completed implicit bias training in 2020 (as a team) as a result of the George Floyd incident and the racial reckoning that occurred” (Interview 1).

Breaking Boundaries through Courageous Leadership Exercises

One university leader (Leader #6) launched a reflective exercise where staff presented on leaders who challenge the status quo and demonstrated courage in leadership. The staff were asked to bring in quotes or other content that exemplifies leading with courage and conviction. According to Leader #6:

As a team, we've had courageous leadership and breaking boundaries reflective sessions. Team members are encouraged to share (on this topic) whether it's an article, a book, or a quote or a story, whatever method, they want to take or whatever form they wish to use to communicate about leaders with courage. (Interview 1)

Reflections on Courageous Leadership Exercise

From the perspective of university leader #6, incorporating a "Courageous Leader" exercise supports her own leadership development and strengthens her ability to be a compassionate leader. The session helps determine staff interests, for example, if a staff member is passionate about DEIB issues, this interest will emerge. Leader #6 reported:

This exercise (courageous leadership) allows me to learn about what their (staff) interests are and figure out ways to discover what they are really passionate about, for example, social justice. Based on their interests, can they create a program or a workshop? How do we take what their interests are related to their role and their job and help them grow and develop? (Interview 1)

Question 2, Part I Asks Leaders: As a higher education leader, in looking at enacting servant leadership practices, which behaviors have you been able to implement with ease and which have presented the greatest challenges?

Developmental psychologist Gilligan (1982), Kohlberg (1969) (1976) have identified three levels of moral reasoning. The third and highest (post-conventional level) requires “the utilization of self-chosen universal ethical principles that serve the common good while respecting individual rights of all interested parties (Graham, 1995, p. 46). In terms of ethics, Graham (1995) categorizes servant leadership as post-conventional and elevating in nature as it is committed to the personal development of followers.

Behaviors Demonstrated with Ease: Operating with a Ethical Compass

Servant leadership’s core philosophy to serve others influences their moral behavior (Graham, 1995). A servant leader commits to moral and ethical integrity as well as virtuous character and behaviors (Roberts, 2015). Servant leaders’ identity is oriented towards serving followers and the community at large, which in turn raises their team’s moral behavior. (Roberts, 2015). According to Keith (2014),

Leadership scholars have concluded that one of the elements that distinguishes servant leadership from other leadership theories is the moral element. Servant-leaders demonstrate personal morality and integrity and encourage enhanced moral reasoning among their colleagues. (para. 6)

Leader # 5 compared behaving ethically with some of the other servant leader behaviors:

“Of the behaviors that are listed in the question, one of the easiest for me is probably behaving ethically” (Interview 1).

For a number of the leaders, behaving ethically is a behavior exercised with ease, as Leaders # 2 and # 9 offered, and it is often connected back to their upbringing, personal faith, and/or being a role model to their children and those they supervise.

Leader #2 shared:

I have very strong value system, I was raised with very strong values, I believe that my Catholic education has contributed to my strong value system. I’ve never really had any challenges with that area of leadership. I hope I never have any challenges with those things, so it’s something that has been fairly easy and has been helpful for me as a servant leader. (Interview 1)

Leader #9 acknowledged that while having a moral compass is effortless for her, she realizes other leaders may grapple with ethical dilemmas:

I think I am at ease with being ethical. That’s what I can say for me, but for some, it’s not easy. Right? I think because I want to not have heavy things on my conscience. I want to be able to sleep at night. I want to be a good role model for my children and my staff. (Interview 1)

Behaviors that Pose a Challenge: Putting Followers First

In terms of the challenges, leaders universally found that putting team members first (which is rudimentary to the practice of servant leadership) could be difficult and depleting and, at times, even heart wrenching. Particularly during times of social unrest, having to lead while you yourself as an individual are struggling can be both agonizing and isolating:

Leader # 4 revealed:

The one behavior that is most difficult, and may be because of COVID times, is giving of yourself and sacrificing to make others succeed. I find it difficult to “pour from an empty pitcher” and harder to make those sacrifices for others especially now. I think we all need to be mindful of self-care and not always giving to others but to yourself as well. (Interview 1)

Leader # 9 disclosed that she felt she was expected to be superhuman:

With Breonna Taylor’s murder and all the mass shootings.... there was a point, after George Floyd’s murder.... Staff were really upset and students were upset that we didn’t (as the cluster leads for my division) send out a message, an email to show support. We didn’t reach out. And a student sent me a really long email about how disappointed she was in me because she saw me there at every event supporting students. But this really tragic thing happened, and I wasn’t there. And I had to say to her, “I’m so sorry.” And I still have the email too. I said something like, “I’m so sorry that I disappointed you. I’m also suffering. I’m also trying to heal and trying to make sense of this and explain to my kids why we should still move forward and how we can move on.” And

I took them (my kids) to a protest. And this is, I think, by virtue of being a leader on campus or anywhere, nobody thinks of you as a human being anymore. (Interview 1)

Advantages and Disadvantages

In terms of the advantages and disadvantages of servant leadership, the leaders shared a number of strengths and perceived lesser strengths of the model. Interview I:

Question 2 Part II asked leaders: As a servant leader, what are the advantages and disadvantages of this type of leadership? Table 4 provides a summary of the responses to this prompt.

Table 4

Advantages and Disadvantages of Servant Leadership

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows for maximum growth and development of others • Leadership by example • Builds a positive work environment • Encourages others to be leaders • Creates a culture of belonging, trust and loyalty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time intensive • Lack of productivity and longer decision-making processes • Leader can be perceived as weak • Trying to please everyone • Sometimes does not fit with traditional HR rules and regulations particularly with progressive discipline issues

Advantages

Allows for Maximum Growth and Development of Others. Regarding growth and development, Leader #8 asserted, “You create an environment, whether it’s for your team or for your students, where they’re safe to show up and do good work there, they feel nurtured, and they’re able to flourish” (Interview 1).

Leadership by Example. Regarding leading by example, Leader #3 shared:

I think the one of the advantages is leadership by example. I can show how things work. I can offer my own efforts, my labor, my knowledge, my experience to show why things can work. And that can sometimes overcome some of the obstacles. It can certainly show the way for my small team. It's not just that I'm telling you how to do something, it's that I'm going to show you how to do something. (Interview 1)

Positive Work Environment. Leader #2 shared, "In terms of the advantages, I certainly think it (servant leadership) instills a very positive work, culture and climate if you do the things that a servant leader would do" (Interview 1).

Encourages Others to be Leaders. Leader #4 reported, "I think servant leadership fosters leadership in everyone" (Interview 1).

Creates a Culture of Belonging, Trust, and Loyalty. Leader #7 observed, "Leading with compassion, honesty, hard work, kindness, and praise are advantageous as they promote trust, teamwork, understanding, job satisfaction, and overall success" (Interview 1).

Similarly, Leader #5 shared, "When you have a high rate of empathy, then you know there's more connection to the work and trust that is hopefully built up, so the employee feels more valued" (Interview 1).

Disadvantages

The leaders provided commentary regarding the disadvantages of servant leadership. While Leader #6 acknowledged this style of leadership as time intensive,

Leader #1 and Leader #8 refuted the perceived disadvantages. One servant leader found that giving individualized attention and following a selfless leadership model can be taxing.

Time Intensive. According to Leader #6:

I enjoy spending time and coaching our team and getting the buy-in as well.

Yet, sometimes it just takes a lot of time and that could be exhausting. It takes time trying to assess individual needs and meet each individual where they are in regard to how they like to work and their working style.

(Interview 1)

One leader had to deal with staff members who were not devotees and found himself having to defend this leadership model to those who felt it left leaders in a powerless position and detracted from a command presence.

Leader Can Be Perceived as Weak. Leader #1 observed:

So sometimes those that don't have the experience or young leaders feel that servant leadership is a weakness. Sometimes they look at it as, Oh, you're being taken advantage of. And what they don't realize is that there's a bigger overall strategy. Everyone talks about strategic thinking. I've been tested a lot. I'm very strategic thinker and I look at the bigger picture. What is the overall vision and how are we going to get there? And if we get lost in the weeds on some of these things, that's not good either. So trying to develop younger leaders by saying, "no, can you see why this would be an advantage? You may lose a couple of battles up front, but you're going to

win the whole vision if, you know, if you learn servant leadership and remove your ego and move forward that way”..... I finally kind of unlocked the code, not only with goodwill but through collaboration but by getting all these entities and egos to work together. (Interview 1)

While servant leadership is not always viewed as being a model that incites productivity, one leader strongly refutes this characterization.

Lack of Productivity. Leader #8 reported:

Defectors or the detractors feel as though servant leadership is a weak leadership style where things don't get done. I would, I would say no... hold the phone a minute. Because I will pull the track record of sheer success for the last four years that I have experienced with my team... where we could have been full of excuses, full of “I can't” “I don't know how”... or “What ifs...” or “We are already strapped.” I am here to serve and I said that on my first day as a leader. Serving means I am serving my colleagues and serving the students. This type of leadership provides a beautiful foundation for great things to happen, it could not happen if the trust wasn't there or the compassion and empathy weren't there. (Interview 1)

Another downside to servant leadership is the expectation that the leader will be all things to all people. This can result in compassion fatigue and the feeling that the leader is abandoning everyone including themselves as a human being.

Trying to Please Everyone. Leader #4 offered:

An inherent possible problem with servant leadership is you're trying to

listen to everybody. You're trying to meet everybody's needs, and sometimes you meet no one's needs or you get stuck because sometimes you do have to be the boss. And I think that's where I struggle sometimes. If I make a decision, it's going to please one or two people, and then some other people are not going to be happy because they'll feel they weren't heard or I didn't take their side of things. (Interview 1)

Interview I: Question 3 Asks Leaders: As a university leader, of the seven *behaviors* inherent in servant leadership (conceptualizing, emotional healing, putting followers first, helping followers grow and succeed, behaving ethically, empowering, and creating value for the community) (Northouse, 2016) which do you find to be the top three for leaders in higher education and what is your rationale? The top three servant behaviors cited by the leaders are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Servant Behaviors

Behavior	Leader Commentary
1. Empowerment	1a) Spurring Innovation 1b) Providing Validation 1c) Instilling Confidence
2. Helping Followers Grow and Succeed	2a) Creating a Culture of Psychological Safety 2b) Mentorship 2c) Identifying Growth Opportunities 2d) Long Term Career Development Coaching to Set Staff Up for Success

3. Conceptualizing

- 3a) Strategic Planning
- 3b) Overarching Vision
- 3c) Ease of Implementation

1. Empowerment.

Empowerment is one of the most important characteristics of servant leadership. Greenleaf has often been revered as “the father of the empowerment movement” (Buchen, 1998; Russell & Stone, 2002). According to Northouse (2016) “empowerment is the process of enabling individuals to take control for themselves of the factors surrounding their circumstances” (p. 702). Servant leadership puts team members first, empowering them to become the best they can be. (Northouse, 2016).

Of the 10 leaders interviewed, empowerment was one of the top three behaviors and, in terms of the leaders, each had their own interpretation of the meaning behind empowering others. Leaders #4, #2 and #9 each used a different lens to discuss the concept of empowerment of staff.

1a) Spurring Innovation. Leader #4 shared:

I enjoy allowing my supervisees to have close to full authority to run their areas...I provide general guidelines but I love to see them run with their ideas and use their skills and expertise...many times in ways I would not have thought of myself. (Interview 1)

1b) Providing Validation. Leader #2 voiced:

I think an important part of a leader’s job in higher education, in general, is empowering others, I mean that’s part of the motivating, trying to do things

that individuals will respond to, so that they feel good. So that they feel like they do good work.....so that they go home and they feel like they've used their strengths and they feel like they're valued in the workforce. (Interview 1)

1c) Instilling Confidence. Leader #9 observed:

Empowerment.... Even though I know that the definition includes, you know, being independent and making their own decisions and being self-sufficient, I think there's something about empowering and empowerment that includes: "I know you can do this and I'll provide help along the way for you to be able to feel confident." To me, empowerment is about confidence. Right? (Interview 1)

2. Helping Followers Grow and Succeed.

Helping followers grow and succeed calls upon a servant leader to support the professional and personal goals of those they lead (Northouse 2022). Northouse (2022) clarifies that "helping followers grow and succeed is about aiding these individuals to become self-actualized, reaching their fullest human potential" (p. 262).

The leaders in this study are committed to fostering the growth and development of staff in a number of ways from environmental to developmental. Leaders #7, #1, and #8 demonstrate their commitment to their respective teams growth in the following ways:

2a) Creating a Culture of Psychological Safety. Leader #7 stated:

“Regarding psychological safety.....Creating an environment of safety, trust, and transparency is critical to people feeling secure, enthusiastic, and motivated” (Interview 1).

2b) Mentorship. Leader #1 imparted:

“It’s up to us to start bringing people along with us and showing them the way.....helping followers grow and succeed. Developing staff is so important. Mentorship through leadership” (Interview 1).

2c) Identifying Growth Opportunities. Leader #8 shared:

The first conversation I had with “Elena” (my direct report) was around professional development where I said, “You are so talented and you’re not going to get stuck here.” It was about a month into the job as a leader, and I was still trying to figure everything out with Elena’s help. I had taken the time to get to know Elena and what matters to her and what she wants to do in the future. Elena is from Oakland and has always wanted to give back to her community. I saw a Director position come up in Oakland so, of course, I forwarded it to her. I said “you are going to apply, right?” She said “no I am not ready.” This is the first example that comes to my mind..... wanting more for Elena even at a potential loss for me (as a leader) and the program.

(Interview 1)

2d) Long Term Career Development Coaching to Set Staff Up for Success.

Leader #9 shared:

Well, I always ask people about what job they want to retire in? If they want

to be a Vice Chancellor, then there's a lot of different paths that they can take to get there. Right? So instead of thinking about what's the next job you want, because that's a shorter and less opportunity for growth and development path, I want them to think about the next one, the next and the next one, because then they can also start talking to those people (in those positions) now to understand, is this something I really want to do?

(Interview 1)

3. Conceptualizing.

Servant leaders are intent on manifesting, nurturing, and sustaining the ability to dream expansive dreams. Conceptualizing, through the lens of servant leadership, is explained as, "The ability to look at a problem (or an organization) from a conceptualizing perspective means that one must think beyond day-to-day realities. For many leaders this is a characteristic that requires discipline and practice" (Spears, 2012, p. 15). Additionally, "The traditional leader is driven to accomplish short-term and immediate operational goals. The leader who subscribes to the servant leader philosophy must expand their leadership orientation to include "broader-based conceptual thinking" (Ross, 2006).

3a) Strategic Planning. Leader #1 observed:

Okay, so this was one of the tougher questions because they're all great, they're all important, right? They're all important. But you know what I found lately? And maybe it's just because of where I am right now in my leadership, which is a constant state of change and a constant state of

learning, conceptualizing, the current state and the ways and means is a priority. And that vision, having that vision, it amazes me how many people don't start out with their vision, where we want to be, and then understanding where we are and what we have to do to get there and what do we need?... So the first 90 days that I took the position at the university, I executed a strategic planning session, with the steering committee, that no one had ever done before. We needed to get operationally and as an organization... where we were going... first. (Interview 1)

3b) Overarching Vision.

According to Leader #8, "The overarching vision for the organization is important. I don't know that I would have been able to create the things I would have if we didn't have that shared understanding of the conceptualization, right?" (Interview 1)

3c) Ease of Implementation.

Leader #5 revealed, "Of the behaviors of servant leadership, the easiest for me is probably conceptualizing a plan of action" (Interview 1).

Interview I: Question 4 Asks Leaders: Goleman (2006) contends there are five components of emotional intelligence. Can you offer an example of how you have demonstrated each in a leadership capacity? 1) Self-awareness 2) Self-regulation 3) Motivation 4) Empathy 5) Social Skills

Inspiring and effective leaders must not only be concerned with their technical and operational competencies but also the emotional component of the

role. As Landry (2019) explains about the mechanics of emotional intelligence, “It’s what helps you successfully coach teams, manage stress, deliver feedback, and collaborate with others” (para. 1).

Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence is defined as having the aptitude to comprehend and be in charge of your own emotions, as well as understand and have an impact on the emotions of those who are in your circle of influence (Landry, 2019).

Psychologist Daniel Goleman popularized the concept and emphasized how critical it is to leadership. “The most effective leaders are all alike in one crucial way: They all have a high degree of what has come to be known as emotional intelligence” (Landry, 2019, para. 4). According to Goleman (1998), the five components of emotional intelligence are defined in Figure 4.

As George (2000) submits, emotional intelligence and self-awareness are rudimentary to servant leadership. Emotional intelligence is deeply embedded in the framework of compassion-based leadership and is believed to be “both theoretically and practically relevant to servant leadership” Emotional intelligence is a predictor of servant leadership, so it is an integral dimension in addressing this topic. (Roark & Beuthin, 2014).

Leaders who are emotionally intelligent are better equipped to navigate complex dynamics that can occur in the workplace. As Roark and Beuthin (2014) contend, leaders who analyze how their own perceptions of servant leadership behaviors compare to the assessments of their followers can have an enhanced

relationship with those they supervise. Awareness of followers' perceptions is not just for consolation of a job well done, or good interpersonal relationships, but as Greenleaf (1977) offers, awareness leads to "an awakening of an individual" with the goal of working towards a highly developed "moral, interpersonal relationship" with those they lead. (p. 250).

Figure 4

The Five Components of Emotional Intelligence at Work

	Definition	Hallmarks
Self-Awareness	the ability to recognize and understand your moods, emotions, and drives, as well as their effect on others	self-confidence realistic self-assessment self-deprecating sense of humor
Self-Regulation	the ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods the propensity to suspend judgment—to think before acting	trustworthiness and integrity comfort with ambiguity openness to change
Motivation	a passion to work for reasons that go beyond money or status a propensity to pursue goals with energy and persistence	strong drive to achieve optimism, even in the face of failure organizational commitment
Empathy	the ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people skill in treating people according to their emotional reactions	expertise in building and retaining talent cross-cultural sensitivity service to clients and customers
Social Skill	proficiency in managing relationships and building networks an ability to find common ground and build rapport	effectiveness in leading change persuasiveness expertise in building and leading teams

Note. Goleman, D. (1998a).

Table 6

Emotional Intelligence Domains and Leader Commentary Themes

1. Self-Awareness	2. Self-Regulation	3. Motivation	4. Social Skills
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a) Spending time in self-reflection	a) Using one's voice strategically	a) Mission and purpose as a driving force	a) Creating relationships
b) Engaging the whole person approach	b) Thoughtful and discerning Communication	b) Focus on manageable parts	b) Facilitating change
c) Avoiding over-staying in a leadership role	c) Being cognizant of workplace triggers	c) Democratizing access to opportunities	c) Modeling the way to react
d) Soliciting feedback for growth			

The leaders shared their perspectives on Goleman's (2006) components of emotional intelligence which resulted in the following themes represented in Table 6.

1. Emotional Intelligence: Self-Awareness.

1a) Self-Awareness: Spending Time in Self-Reflection.

Leader #7 reported reliance on observation of her own cognitive, emotional, behavioral processes in reaching a state of reflective awareness:

As a leader and just personally, I often spend time in self-reflection. As someone who is generally too hard on myself, I am learning to practice grace and self-compassion as I find it easy to give both to others. (Interview 1)

1b) Self-Awareness: Engaging the Whole Person Approach.

With an emphasis on using a holistic lens, promoting the 'meeting the whole person approach' and Psychological Safety is of the utmost importance Leader #8:

I am rooted in self-awareness in my daily approach. I think being self-reflective and making sure that even when I have an admin intern or a student that's going through the program, I want them to see how this little

piece fits into the big picture of their life, as well as the mission that we serve within the university and the work we do. So for me, it's really that holistic approach of meeting the whole person. Whether it's my team or my students, it's meeting them where they are, making sure that I create that safe environment. Right now, it's all about creating a culture rooted in psychological safety. (Interview 1)

1c) Self-Awareness: Avoiding Overstaying in a Leadership Role.

Leader #3 provided the example of having the self-awareness of knowing when it is time to make a transition from positions at different junctures in his long career at the university:

I show self-awareness by knowing when it's time for me to move on. I don't overstay my welcome in my career. I've been on campus for almost 34 years... I have had 19 different jobs. So, I think some of the jobs I had for a very short period of time, one year or less, because I recognize I come in, I set goals with my supervisor. When I start a job, I set goals with my team. And when I accomplish those goals, I look for new goals. But when I get to the point where there are no new goals that are important to me, that I can set my passion behind, it's time to move on. And I have. And I do. That's leadership by example, but it's also having the self-awareness to know that I need someone else to come in, to follow me, and to then lead the team. (Interview 1)

1d) Self-Awareness: Soliciting Feedback for Growth.

Having the self-awareness to ask and incorporate feedback from staff is of utmost importance to Leader #7:

As leaders and/or mentors, we need to let others share their ideas, give space for those who may not be as vocal, and listen to understand. This is especially important when we are dealing with an issue or sensitive topic. I also ask people I trust to give me feedback and suggestions for growth as I trust them to be honest with me, but kind also. (Interview 1)

2. Emotional Intelligence: Self-Regulation.

2a) Self-Regulation: Using One's Voice Strategically.

Leader #9 shared a story about her leadership journey and exhibiting courage by taking a stand to advocate for others. As a young administrator, she was advocating for a more inclusive policy that involved student groups on campus. The leader made a bold but, (in the leader's mind), necessary statement in a space filled with older, more seasoned administrators and the room became very still. The young leader's recommendation was eventually well received but she was grappling (in the moment) with how she would use her voice and how she would use confident and courageous self-regulation to carefully choose her words to effect change. Leader #9 reflected:

Exercising both self-awareness and particularly self-regulation shows up almost every day in the spaces that I'm in because I realize I am privileged to be able to have a seat at the table. I was in a certain space and I was the youngest leader. At this meeting, there were Vice Chancellors and Chiefs of

Staff and all these people in the room...so I had to also think about how I was going to say what I was going to say, because it could have been taken in many different ways... but also be aware that if I don't say it, nobody's going to advocate for these students. (Interview 1)

2b) Self-Regulation: Thoughtful and Discerning Communication (Written and Verbal).

Another aspect of self-awareness and self-regulation is looking closely at modalities of communication. Two leaders (Leader #7 and # 5) spoke about these concepts in the context of being mindful of the nuances of thoughtful communication, taking a step back before sending electronic communication, regrouping, and being very selective about how to word emails for maximum effect while choosing language carefully when speaking. As Leader #7 related:

I often take time to read an email and re-read a response to one to make sure I am clear, concise, and kind. I am also learning to pause before speaking so that I am careful not to overshadow someone, misspeak, or talk too much. (Interview 1)

Similarly, Leader #5 expressed:

I want to respond one way but often I write it down and then I hold up and I don't actually send an email. I come back and I revamp the email before sending. I end up changing my approach on the email so hopefully it is more effective. (Interview 1)

2c) Self-Regulation: Being Cognizant of Triggers in the Workplace.

Leaders who are adept at self-regulation exercise flexibility and adaptability to change. They are centered in times of conflict and put energy toward diffusing (and not escalating) circumstances that could provoke tensions. Leaders with strong self-regulation skills take responsibility for their actions and take appropriate measures to make sure they do not become emotionally flooded and lose composure (Mind Tools, 2022).

As Leader #7, who has well-developed self-regulation skills, disclosed, “I am able to work independently, hold myself accountable, and check myself when I am starting to feel overwhelmed” (Interview 1).

3. Emotional Intelligence: Motivation.

Categories of Leader Responses.

Table 7

Leader Responses: Motivation

Motivation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission and purpose as a driving force • Focus on manageable parts • Democratizing access to opportunities

Motivation is a driver to help push towards goal completion and increased fulfillment and overall quality of life. Leader response themes are captured in table 7.

3a) Motivation: Mission and Purpose as a Driving Force.

In terms of motivation, Leader #6 described motivation as rooted in making sure all team members feel a sense of purpose and that their work connects back to

the overarching goals and guiding principles of the unit and division:

We start out our year (or even throughout the year) by bringing our discussion back to our purpose and our goals of why we're doing something, so it doesn't feel that it's just a routine. Making sure that it really is connected to either larger goals in our department or connecting it back to what drives us as a unit. Ultimately, relaying how it connects to the goals of the larger division's goals and our strategic plan. (Interview 1)

3b) Motivation: Focus on Manageable Parts.

Leader #5 motivates team members by infusing positivity and breaking down tasks into smaller pieces that are easier to manage:

In motivating my staff... I point out the good work that they've done and their accomplishments. Even if there's a high performer, the high performer also has their own high expectations and may feel like maybe they're not getting everything done because there's just so much to do... So it's helping them (my team) realize you don't have to accomplish everything all at once. (Interview 1)

3c) Motivation: Democratizing Access to Opportunities.

For Leader #10, family background and experiences with discrimination shapes his perception of the concept and meaning of motivation as it pertains to educational access and servant leadership, as he shared:

My parents were born prior to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and their lives were shaped by discrimination and exclusion was normalized as a part of

education. So, when I was born after that, and my parents always talked about the possibilities that affirmative action could bring for changing lives and being able to go to school motivation comes from a historical perspective on rethinking democratizing access to higher education, democratizing access to life changing opportunities.

(Interview 1)

4. Emotional Intelligence: Social Skills.

4a) *Creating Relationships.* As Leader #1 noted:

Social skills, a lot of people don't have well refined social skills. They don't know how to draw on them or they feel insecure. They may say "I'm not going to go talk to that person..... I'm not going to go introduce myself." I can tell you that when I was younger, I was afraid of doing this because of lack of confidence. And then you realize that, no, everybody else wants to connect and make things move forward. And this all goes to relationship creation and being able to work with others. So social skills are very important. And can you teach those? You can if somebody is willing to learn and wants to learn. (Interview 1)

4b) *Facilitating Change.* Leader #6 observed:

Social skills help one to focus on adaptability and bridge communication. We had switched over to a new platform for campus organization registration, for on campus groups. And I think that my social skills played a large role in supporting the team as we made the successful

transition. Adopting a new philosophy moving forward, so we wouldn't hold onto just doing things like we did this before but seeing this transition as an opportunity for us to also see things in a different way. To go through the challenges as well and the obstacles while maneuvering those together as a team. (Interview 1)

4c) *Modeling the Way to React.* Leader #8 professed:

With the social skills piece, it involves modeling the way forward, right? For me, social skills show my adaptability in motion. The first question I ask when someone does make a mistake is... did anybody die? Is the house on fire? It can be remedied where, sure, we had one mistake that ultimately cost us \$40,000. And it's yes, it's a big deal, but am I going to berate somebody over this? No I am not. (Interview 1)

Empathy

Empathy represents the foundational skill for all the social competencies important for work (Goleman 2011). The leader responses can be categorized through Goleman's Five Elements of Empathy (Table 8).

Elements of Empathy.

Table 8

The Five Elements of Empathy

Element	Categories of Leader Responses
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1	Understanding Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing the Emotional Temperature of the Space • Looking Beyond the Work Role • Sharing Our Own Missteps • Understanding and Recognizing the Day-to-Day Work of your Team
2	Developing Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping the Team Realize their Potential
3	Having a Service Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remaining Student-Centered and Staff-Centered
4	Leveraging Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilizing Empathy: Undocumented Students
5	Political Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using The Lens of Social Responsibility

Note. Goleman (1995).

The university leaders shared myriad examples of how they exhibit empathy in their work:

1. Empathy: Understanding Others.

1a) Assessing the Emotional Temperature of the Space. Leader #4 noted:

When I enter a space, whether it's a meeting or a social event or something I try to gauge the feel of the room. I always think of myself, what's that character from Star trek the empathy empath? You know, the original Star Trek character Nicole, where she can tell people's feelings and stuff? I can do that fairly well if I enter a room, I can tell if there's tension, or if there's yuck going on. Then I can judge about how I want to enter that space as a leader. (Interview 1)

1b) Looking Beyond the Work Role. Leader #6 disclosed:

I think empathy for me is wanting to get to know people beyond just their roles, so I could understand a little bit more about where they're coming from, why they're reacting the way they may be reacting, or their preferred

working styles. I think that's how my empathy shows up. (Interview 1)

1c) Sharing Our Own Missteps. Regarding missteps, Leader #5 shared:

As for empathy, I use the example of apologizing. If we can share where we think we had some missteps then it helps others to be okay... leadership is human. But also, it will hopefully build trust and they will be able to communicate with me when they have a concern. (Interview 1)

1d) Understanding and Recognizing the Day-to-Day Work of your Team.

Leader #1 communicated:

I would say empathy is critically important because people look at you as a leader and (the question is) are you going to understand their situation?

Have you been in their shoes? Sometimes it's really easy to get lost in other avenues of leadership, in the mission, and not think of those people who are actually getting the work done. (Interview 1)

2. Empathy: Developing Others.

2a) Helping a Team Realize Its Potential. Leader #8 observed:

My top strength, empathy, is always there. So, I think something that really shows up for me in Servant leadership is my ability to be able to connect with my team, to be able to connect with my students and meet them where they are, rather than having an agenda that I need to fulfill. I really enjoy and thrive in getting people to where they need to be..... to realize their full potential. (Interview 1)

3. Having a Service Orientation.

3a) Remaining Student and Staff Centered. Leader #7 imparted:

I regularly check in with my colleagues and students to see how they are doing personally, and in their jobs or academics. I encourage them to talk when they need help or just someone to listen. While we are in a work environment, personal issues clearly impact the way we function and can often create barriers in our day to day lives. Empathy is the heart listening and the soul caring. Not only is this a key leadership skill, but a personal one. (Interview1)

4. Leveraging Diversity.

4a) Diversity Issues and Utilizing Empathy: Undocumented Students.

Leader #10 shared:

In working empathetically with undocumented students, I grew up with relatives with different kinds of status. I saw what difficulties it presented for them in general. On the undocumented student front, I think some things now probably can be said to be better, but other things can be said to be worse. But I believe that the students are working with what they have and doing their best, and it's important (as a leader) to try to support and validate. (Interview 1)

5. Political Awareness.

5a) Using The Lens of Social Responsibility. Leader #9 defined empathy in terms of social responsibility and ensuring that there is an empathetic push toward equity in representation on campus:

I think empathy is a really big piece that I try really hard every day to think about, okay, well, I'm at the table, but who built the table? Who decided who gets to sit at the table and who made the rules for the table? Right? Thinking about the ways that institutions and spaces have allowed us to be who we are or not, I think if we sit and question it and interrogate it and for me, it's about this whole idea of imposter syndrome. And people often say, "I don't want to be an imposter because I feel so uncomfortable." But I actually embrace the notion of being an imposter. I'm like, yes, if I'm an imposter, I can ask the hard questions, and nobody's going to be mad at me. Right? And in the same vein, think that, okay, if I'm an imposter, I can look at this from the lens of how can it be better? How can it be changed to be accommodating to the changing student population? We can't look at a policy and say, that's just policy. We have to say, well, that was policy back in 2001. It's not like that anymore. Right? So, I think to be able to have the empathy towards others and where they're at means that we have to be able to interrogate and change the things that don't make sense anymore. (Interview 1)

Interview II

This is an era of questioning the purpose and processes of higher education, in terms of the institutional goals, mission, operations and leadership (Dean, 2014). This is also an interesting time to consider various leadership models within the academy (Dean, 2014).

In servant leadership desired values and characteristics include "a strong

service ethos, integrity, humility, morality, empathy, and trustworthiness. One leads by serving others and by inspiring and enabling others to exercise leadership responsibilities” (Dean, 2014, para. 8).

Interview II: Question 5 Asks Leaders: To what extent is servant leadership a model that would be positively aligned with the goals, mission, values, and work culture inherent in your work setting?

The leaders responded to this question covering the following areas:

- Overall Alignment with Higher Education
- Alignment with Compliance Based Units on Campus
- A View through the lens of the University’s Strategic Plan
- Implementation with External Groups

Servant Leadership: Overall Alignment with Higher Education.

The comments from Leaders #3, #7, and #4 are representative of the majority of the leaders in terms of servant leadership being a strong fit for a university setting. However, the responses to this question are quite layered and nuanced. This question is rooted in complexity as well as subjectivity in terms of the lens of the leaders and depending on the mission as well as the purpose of the leader’s immediate work group and overall unit.

Leader #4 expressed:

I think it fits very well in most cases. So, for instance, our four values in housing are inclusion, learning, integrity, and respect. And so when I think

of servant leadership, I think of listening to folks, having some humility about things, about putting people first, supporting folks, caring about them. And I think those four values in housing align pretty well with servant leadership. Our vision is to create places where people can thrive and connect. And that is for both students and our staff. And so, I think my job as a leader is to build an environment where people can succeed and do their best work and also connect with each other as humans and as fellow workers and learn and help each other. I think those are some things which are a match in terms of servant leadership. (Interview II)

Another leader is convinced that Servant Leadership is a great fit for her unit as the tenants of the leadership model align closely with the core values of her work group.

Leader #7 affirmed:

Servant leadership is ideally the best form of leadership to practice (in higher education) when working in the public health education, prevention, and promotion field. Bringing awareness and education to people about health and wellness behaviors, lifestyle, risks, and so forth requires a lot of patience, good listening and communication, persuasiveness, and empowering of others. It is important to show empathy and compassion, and to be resourceful and creative. It can also be frustrating and exhausting as changing behaviors is difficult. It requires time, motivation, and commitment on the part of the health educator and the client. The mission and values of our

Center reflect servant leadership. (Interview II)

One leader acknowledges that servant leadership is aligned with her work group and division but has some reservations about the overall fit with the institution at large.

Leader # 6 echoed this sentiment:

I will look at it (servant leadership) through our unit as well as thinking about alignment in the larger scheme of the division. Our Dean of Students is showing us that in practice, it's about the team and getting input...even though it is going to take longer to hear feedback from everybody. Our leaders often say... we need to have a conversation. I think it is emulated in our unit and division. However, when it comes to the larger university as a whole, sometimes it is hard to see the alignment of servant leadership (with specific units) on a big campus. (Interview II)

While Leader #3, conceded that although servant leadership is aligned with the mission, purpose, vision, and operation in higher education, it has been a challenge to demonstrate this style in the post-pandemic return to campus and while it is complementary with his specific work group (who are non-hybrid and fully reporting to campus), it does not work seamlessly with the overall unit/division. The hyperfocus on staff needs has some adverse implications on a student serving unit, particularly during the post-COVID return to work, as Leader #3 divulged:

So, I think it works really well yet if I expand it to the larger model of the

unit, I'm not sure if it (servant leadership) is quite as a as effective just because my unit is in a different place right now. Staff are still working very hybrid. There's a lot of resistance to returning to campus. There's even some resistance in terms of worrying about supporting students. There is the focus on the individual staff member more than on the services that we provide to our students. (Interview II)

Servant Leadership: Marginal Alignment with Compliance Based Units on Campus.

Leader #5 is somewhat conflicted by this question. Although Servant Leadership is aligned with the culture of her office, it is not necessarily in alignment philosophically with the overarching mission of her unit which is compliance oriented and based on resolving complaints through progressive discipline as opposed to leading by example. However, they are also charged with working with the disempowered staff members who register complaints, so from that vantage point there is alignment, as Leader #5 revealed:

The office that I'm in is in alignment with servant leadership and the work culture generally. There's a lot of support within the organization, a lot of opportunity for independent decision making including supporting people to advance in their own profession, in their work. In terms of the goals and mission of the larger unit itself, it's a charge mandate, right? Overall, I would say, it is in alignment, yet it's a compliance area. So in some ways yes yet in others ways no. In terms of

compliance, that doesn't necessarily sound like it lends itself to kind of more of a servant type leadership model. Right? But then again, we are not like the authorities, like the decision makers on certain things, so we track it, we have responsibility for getting the information out and having people be compliant. But if they aren't, then it's not us that provides any ramifications related to that. Right? Generally, it's someone else or a supervisor of a unit or an individual or other entities. We also try to support those who come to our office with a complaint. (Interview II)

Servant Leadership: A View Through the Lens of the University's Strategic Plan.

Leader #10 used a DEIB-focused lens when answering this question and believes that servant leadership (with its focus on inclusion and empathy) would be in alignment with the university's strategic plan yet carrying out the mission of the strategic plan (day to day) may pose a misalignment and, to some extent, the outcomes remain to be seen. Leader #10 imparted:

I'm essentially implementing the university's strategic plan. And as I understand it, leadership is evaluated to some extent on the achievements in fulfilling the strategic plan. So, I would say, to answer the question, I think that servant leadership, in my current context, I'll say servant leadership, defined as something that I attribute as an empathetic understanding of campus culture, is aligned with the institutional commitments. Right now, the institutional commitments are not always the same as the daily practice

and culture of an institution. So, there can be some misalignment there. And that's where having such things written into a strategic plan can be useful, because I'm just implementing the strategic plan. And so the question arises as to whether or not other people are on board or not. (Interview II)

Servant Leadership: Implementation with External Groups.

Leader #1's work is both campus and externally facing, as he works with constituents and stakeholders both inside and outside the university and finds that servant leadership is useful in interfacing with non-profit organization. As Leader #1 explained:

I'm a military commander on one side and then (a university leader) on the other. And it (servant leadership) is in practice today working with over 130 now nonprofits and government agencies in order to reach our end state of our five-year strategic plan for veterans and their families. So, I can tell you that I work with volunteers (because all of these leaders that come together and help lead the collaborative are all leaders within their own agencies), but volunteer their time to come together and collaborate for veterans and their families so they have a smooth process. So, when you talk about servant leadership, these are people that don't *have* to show up. I lead them on the executive committee along with three others. And I can tell you that servant leadership is really kind of the way it goes with nonprofits. I think a lot of times, before five years ago, they were all competing against each other, and now they're collaborating and

I'm showing them that removing your ego and being of service is the way forward. (Interview II)

Interview II: Question 6 Asks Leaders: Tell me about a specific time when you provided support to a direct report.

Table 9

Leaders Providing Support to Direct Reports in a Multitude of Ways

Providing Daily Support and Emergency Interventions	Troubleshooting, Preventing Burnout and Advocating for Staff Resources	Training and Development of Staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day to Day Support • Emergency Interventions • Support During Employee Health Crises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting Work Life Balance • Preventing Burn Out • Advocating for Improved Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Employee On-boarding Support • Identifying and Encouraging (DEIB) Professional Development Opportunities

The literature and empirical studies show that servant leadership nurtures the emotional well-being of employees due to the creation of a positive and psychologically safe work environment created (Jit et al., 2017; Black, 2010; Jaramillo et al., 2009; Neubert et al., 2008).

Each leader in this study was able to recall a specific instance where they provided emotional support to direct reports. The answers ranged from stepping in to provide day-to-day support to intervening in sensitive situations to mitigating emergencies to advocating for training and resources for staff. (See Table 9).

Providing Daily Support and Emergency Interventions.

Some leaders shared a time when they offered support to staff with the day-to-day responsibilities (despite their elevated status in the leadership hierarchy) and completed tasks without being asked. Others referenced an emergency intervention with a team member while being cautionary about developing a dependent relationship.

Day to Day Support. Leader #3 revealed:

I do this every day, it's just what I do. Yesterday, it was helping to set up the big classroom that we had to turn over. The university had their new faculty orientation in the morning, followed (a half-hour later) by the law school doing a class in the same room. And the faculty had round tables because they had breakfast sessions. And then the law school was doing a lecture style, so we had to take out the tables and put in all the chairs. My staff would have done it without me, but I believe that is what servant leadership is, to me, servant leadership is to be in there and help. (Interview II)

Leader #6 reflected about providing long needed support and upgrades for equipment that is used daily by staff members:

I noticed that a staff member had been using their personal computer at work for different things. Even though she had equipment in the office, she was using her own laptop. I finally said, "Do we need to get you something that works better or what do you prefer?" It is important to ask staff what

they need so they feel valued and can get the job done. (Interview II)

Some leaders spoke about providing support to staff members during times of great distress and periods of intense difficulty lacking immediate solutions.

Emergency Interventions. Leader #1 shared:

So recently we were trying to do a study for veterans in the county, and the university was behind it and a professor, but unfortunately we found that the professor wasn't going to help us continue with the ways and means to get it done, but out of that, I have a direct report....his name was "Julian." And Julien is a Navy veteran. I needed somebody that was capable to help run this county wide study. And I always believe in people first. That's one of my things. People first and then mission... Julien, a young veteran, recently transitioned, but I find out he's just on the brink of becoming homeless. I find out that his apartment was flooded with sewage and the apartment management in the county was refusing to do any cleanup and it wasn't his (Julien's) fault. It was a plumbing failure. He is desperately looking for a way forward and still trying to find himself, to be quite honest with you. I said, hey, look, you know what, fellow veteran? I said, I have people that can help you out. I said, let's get these things handled. And that's looking after your people, because that's part of servant leadership, is looking after your people and helping them, but not helping them to the point that they are dependent but helping them and advocating for them to the point that they are self-governing and sufficient. So that's about just getting the basics

of life. What is it called Maslow's hierarchy? (Interview II)

Support During Employee Health Crises.

Some leaders spoke of offering support and providing reassurance when staff were in their most vulnerable state, for example, during a health diagnosis or crisis. As Leader #4 professed:

My associate director was having major health problems and she needed to take an extended leave of absence for an operation. And so that left a big gaping hole in our organization because she oversees a major functional area... And so she was very worried about taking that time off. I sat her down and said, "absolutely do not worry about the work. The work will always be there. Your health is number one. So, I don't want you to put this off. I don't want you to rush back, nor do I want you to answer emails or do anything while you're recuperating." Right, I got it. So, I said, "I will take on your direct reports. Everything will come to me, I will work through it. And then when you come back, I'll ease you into it and I'll give you a smooth landing to take over again." (Interview II)

A serious unexpected health diagnosis for a staff member can be challenging for leaders to navigate.

Leader #2 shared about providing support during a health crisis:

We had someone who was diagnosed with cancer and has a family and has kids and has grandkids... We're a university that's supposed to be about supporting individuals. Yes, we educate individuals. Yes, our main focus is

to retain students and have them as high achieving as possible. But as a servant leader, you care for everybody that's helping you as a part of the team... And again, in this instance, for me, it was more about showing that care and concern and listening to what her needs were at the moment. Being able to bring in my own expertise around the human resources side of things so that she knew all of her options and how we were going to set her up in a way where if she's taking time off, then she can do it in a way that is going to be helpful for her. And I can assure her that when she comes back that she's going to be able to jump right back in and do her work. And we're going to support her as much as possible and she was out for a while and the entire staff rallied. And I feel like I was able to lead through this process... we regularly visited her at home and sent things to her on her birthdays and things like that... And the great news, I could tell you is that she got through it... And the individual has been back to work for a while, doing well and is now back thriving in her role. I think it was the help of all of us supporting her. But again, I think that's part of being that servant leader is so that when those troubled times come, that you can work through it and that everybody takes a part in helping that individual, given the circumstances. (Interview II)

Troubleshooting, Preventing Burnout and Advocating for Staff

Resources.

Suggesting time off and interfacing and troubleshooting to avoid burn out

were other ways individual leaders provided support. In one instance, a leader advocated for equipment on behalf of their direct report.

Promoting Work Life Balance. Leader #3 voiced:

I try to encourage my staff to take time off when they need it to balance their schedules. I do believe strongly in work life balance, and some of my staff who are on campus put their whole lives into the job and I don't think you should do that. So, I had encourage my staff to take time off. (Interview II)

Preventing Burn Out. Leader #5 revealed:

I have an employee on my team who is part-time. And we went through our first cycle of one of the reports that we have to get out, which is pretty intensive and kind of a short time frame to get through... And I learned after the fact (a couple of months later) that the employee was kind of getting burned out because they had put in a lot of time beyond the hours for which they were getting paid. The plan was to be able to increase the employee's time to make it more in alignment with the amount of time that it takes for this kind of role. I also then put in a request for a Star Award for that person to get recognized, to recognize that extra 'above and beyond' work that the employee completed in order to get the project done.

(Interview II)

Advocating for Improved Resources. Leader #9 reported:

One of my direct reports is graphic designer who was using a seven-year-old computer... we were working on a PowerPoint together, and the Mac

spinning ball just spun and spun. And I was just standing next to her desk, and I asked, “how often do you have to wait for things?” She said, “oh, this probably will render in, like, seven or eight minutes.” I said, “I’m not standing here for seven or eight minutes.” I said, “I might get you a new computer.” She’s said “no. I’ve asked for years, and they’ve said no.” And so I told her, “let’s work together to calculate the amount of time that you’re waiting for the computer to respond.” We did the math based on her hourly wage and ascertained that for the past year, she’d been waiting 12 hours, let’s say times, X. And so I took it for our Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and I said, “Listen, we need a new computer. It’s going to cost \$4,000 and my direct report waited for \$8,000 worth of time. Can we please get her a new computer? The new computer was approved, and it improved the employee’s productivity and was a morale boost. (Interview II)

Training and Development of Staff.

Some of the leaders interpreted the question as a time when they provided training and development support for new and existing staff. Others shared about providing support during a time of high stress for individual staff members.

New Employee Onboarding Support. Leader #7 asserted:

Every time we have a new staff member, which has been a lot due to turnover, I’ve really taken it upon myself to work with them right away, to introduce them to partners on campus, to show them where the information is on the computer, and to encourage them to make the job

their own. I tell them to feel free to change any documents or PowerPoints available, but also to say, hey, if you can work with and use some of this stuff, that's okay too. We're not expecting you to redo everything. Just, here's what we have, and I emphasize an open-door policy. Just come in and check with me and ask me questions. (Interview II)

Identifying and Encouraging Professional Development Opportunities.

Advocating for staff to attend conferences or receive training and development is yet another way that leaders demonstrate support for those they lead.

Leader #10 shared:

There's an individual in our office who's doing a lot of administrative work, and they have expressed an interest in a HSI (Hispanic Serving Institution) related training opportunity. I've seen job descriptions where they list this as a preferred qualification: an individual who has worked at a Hispanic Serving Institution. And that's the interesting thing, because everybody at our university is working at an HSI, and everybody has an opportunity to participate in that in a variety of ways, no matter who they are. Right? It's not just for Hispanic or Latinx students. Everybody and anybody exposed to that type of environment can benefit... So I asked the staff member if they wanted to participate in a number of system wide and campus based HSI initiatives. And what's interesting again is that this started as a campus-based thing but since has evolved into a system wide initiative and so system wide networks, system wide networking is very important and

- Approachability
- Providing Support
- Producing Results
- Taking In Too Much
- Not Matching the Stereotype of a Leader
- Follow Through
- Communication
- Building Positive Relationships
- Letting Staff Shine

Approachability. Leader #5 reflected:

I would say generally they would probably say that they can talk with me about things, bring things up with me. I have someone who we engage in conversations and sometimes we don't agree (and we're a little bit back and forth), but we respect each other and it's about how we approach different things. (Interview II)

Providing Support. Leader #3 disclosed:

Supportive, I think, would be one of the very first words and fair. I think there's another word that they would use, encouraging. I would like to think they would think my leadership is inspirational, and I think some of them would. It's interesting that whenever I apply for a job, you submit a list of references. One of my references is always a subordinate. I always give

them the opportunity to talk to a subordinate, too, when I'm applying for leadership positions. Obviously, they can learn how I am as a supervisor, too. And I have nothing to hide because I have heard firsthand they (my staff) tell me that I am a strong supervisor. They're better employees because they work for me... I send them job postings when I see that they are ready for growth. I'm not trying to encourage them to leave. I want them to know that there are other opportunities out there and that I support them considering those, because I can't provide for their growth beyond what's available in our dept. And if there are other opportunities, go for it!

(Interview II)

Producing Results. Leader #8 revealed:

I think people might say that I am compassionate and caring and all of those things, but I have been intense at times because things have to give 100% and you often get caught up in the moment and you're under a certain amount of pressure. (Interview II)

Taking on Too Much. Leader #7 reflected:

I think they would say I was a fair, empathetic, compassionate, and resourceful leader. They might also say I am a good teammate who likes others to feel good about themselves and their work. They may also describe me as an intense leader at times as I push myself hard and sometimes take on too much. However, I have learned not to expect the same work ethic from others and to dial back a little myself. And finally, they would describe me

as someone who leads by example and works hard and is encouraging and caring of others. I'm encouraging people to sort of go outside their comfort zones and grow and learn as much as they can. (Interview II)

Not Matching the Stereotype of a Leader. Leader #10 disclosed:

It's very interesting because I think the stereotype, maybe a popular stereotype of a leader is just like a strong, masculine type image. At the same time, I did grow up in a very patriarchal culture and household, but I don't think that... well, in fact, I know I did not subscribe to that because I was told that and I was reminded that I wasn't fulfilling those norms. So, when people tell me that they will miss my leadership... I'm often wondering, what do they mean? In what ways have I been leading? Only because there's a disconnect there, I think, between that stereotype and whatever it is I'm doing that people are recognizing. I recently accepted another role, which I can share the announcement with you. And so a lot of people have said that they will miss my leadership or that I did all these things and what they are referring to is that I do like to set a high bar,... not for somebody else, but for myself. (Interview II)

Follow Through. Leader #9 (whose photo happened to be featured on the side of a university bus) shared a story about a current direct report who was not a fan and how she turned that relationship around:

My direct report said to me: "You are (Leader #9) the student affairs queen. "Everyone knows you. You're on the side of a bus." And I answered,

“because I do good work, I think, right?” And then I started supervising her. After a month, she’s like, “I used to hate you so much.” And then I said, “why?” She relayed all of these reasons. And then she said, “but now I get it. I totally get it. I see why people think of you these ways and why you’re on a bus, because you don’t just say you’re going to do something. You follow through with it.” (Interview II)

Communication. Leader #2 divulged:

I think they know that I’m a very good communicator... I communicate often. I want them to understand what my expectations are, and I want them to understand what I’m doing on a day to day, too... I’m not somebody that’s going to ask them to do things that I’m not willing to do myself. They know I take my job very seriously. I think sometimes they think (Leader #2) is very serious about his job. He works hard. One of these things I’m doing right now, I have an option if I wanted to work from home at least a day, I could. But, I don’t do that. (Interview II)

Building Positive Relationships. Leader #1 reflected:

“I think I am viewed as collaborative, kind, effective, open to new ideas if it supports the overall mission. I produce relationships. Positive working relationships and I develop others” (Interview II).

Letting Staff Shine. Leader #4 revealed:

I think they would say that my leadership style is one that’s flexible, one that’s supportive, one that I don’t have to take the kudos. I’m pretty good, I

think, at pushing my staff and letting them shine because I don't need that for myself. My joy is in watching them do great stuff and then I can brag about them... Whenever my staff does something, I always make sure I email my supervisor and then "Cameron" who's our Assistant Vice Chancellor, and I say, hey, I want to highlight what so and so did because this is how it contributed to our department. So, I think my staff knows that that's how I operate. (Interview II)

Interview II: Question 8 Asks Leaders: Do you think the global pandemic has impacted your ability to practice servant leadership? If it has, please provide specific examples.

Higher education will never be the same after the global pandemic. During this period of post-COVID reflection and recovery, university leaders are facing many layers of ambiguity and scores of questions from university staff, many without concrete answers. They are grappling with how to pivot, adjust, and move forward, maintaining necessary institutional operations, while inspiring a movement towards future resilience (Thompson et al., 2023).

Higher education leadership is left to untangle how to coordinate staffing (remote versus in person and/or hybrid work models) at destination campuses. There has been varying levels of resistance from universities and higher education leaders accustomed to pre-COVID times when staff worked in the office daily, as Thompson et al. (2023) submits:

It stands to reason that new hiring and telecommuting policies should be on

the horizon for these institutions, but many resist the change. Unfortunately, most higher education institutions have not demonstrated agility in offering permanent remote work options for faculty and staff, some of whom discovered a preference for the flexibility that hybrid and remote work provides. (p. 1).

For the leaders that participated in this study, navigating this post-lockdown world means facing many challenges and unprecedented areas of uncertainty. Determining work schedules after the return to campus seems to provide the greatest challenge for leaders working to respond to the needs and desires of staff, which can vary greatly. In addition, the type of schedule granted for each department (and their staff) often depends on chain of command and higher-level decision makers when considering the degree of student-facing work. In re-imagining higher education, issues of scheduling equity within departments and looking at the campus as a whole have come to the surface.

Departments have varying degrees of hybrid work and that causes university staff and faculty to compare and contrast, which causes further negotiations with leaders. In addition, although rare, not every staff member enjoys remote work, so the question of balancing staff needs, scheduling coordination, and equity have come to the forefront. The leaders often have to navigate within their supervisory ladder regarding the degree their department can work remotely, which can cause some tensions within the department and on the campus as a whole. There are some silver linings, as related by Leader #7 who

used the time of the pandemic to refine her leadership skills.

Pandemic-Inspired Leadership Growth and Development.

Leader #7 shared that the pandemic helped her grow as a leader:

I think the pandemic has enhanced my ability to practice servant leadership as there has never been a time to show more empathy, to listen, to motivate, and to commit to the well-being of others. Students, family, colleagues, and friends all needed people to pull together and support one another. We needed to more aware of each other and to be more resourceful as the pandemic continued. I believe the pandemic truly brought out those who are natural servant leaders and gave them an even greater purpose. At the core, it is a servant leader's mission to serve others by taking care of them especially those in the greatest need. Life is hard and unfair at times and the desire to make a difference in people's lives resonates with those who believe in servant leadership. Even when we want to give up and hide, we find a way to rally back as we believe it is our purpose and that giving up is not an option. (Interview II)

Assessing One's Own Leadership Style and Consider Ways to Improve.

Leader #8 revealed that the period of COVID (during lockdown and return to work) was a transformational time where she engaged in self-assessment of her leadership strengths and lesser strengths:

I think that it just fit right into what a natural servant leader would do, which would be to just step up and say, okay, people have needs. Even if I'm

feeling overwhelmed at times, I need to get back up and make sure that I hold space for all these people. And I think that it gave me even more motivation and purpose than I had even before because we didn't expect to live through a pandemic any more than someone expects to live through a war or some other really traumatic event. So, I think that it actually just added a bigger piece and I think it also made me look more deeply at my leadership style ...there were things, where I said, I could work on that. So, it also gave me time to reflect and say, yes, I probably could work on that and be a little bit better listener because I tend to get really excited and talk too much. So, I was trying to really sit back and listen more and really assess my strengths and weaknesses as a leader. (Interview II)

Pandemic and Hybrid Work-Induced Isolation.

Leader #4 recalled that returning to campus (with a hybrid scheduled) left him feeling a sense of disconnection from his team and, at times, a heightened feeling of isolation:

I could go an entire week without seeing my staff in person. Now, I'm not a terribly social person, but at work, I do like to be social with people because I don't do that in my personal life. I'm very selective in my personal life. So, when I'm here (at the university), I don't mind talking to a lot of people and interacting, going to lunch, doing all that stuff. When I don't have that at work, and I also don't have it at home, then I start to feel a little bit isolated. I think not doing one-on-one, in person, increases a sense of isolation.

(Interview II)

Forced Adaptability to Retain Staff.

Each of the leaders has their own personal journey with the decision making and execution of hybrid staffing schedules during the COVID-19 return to work and for many it is still a work in progress. In some cases, the leader found themselves advocating for more remote time (for their staff) with senior leadership. In other instances, they themselves were conflicted with the concept of remote or hybrid work and how that would impact operations as well as productivity.

Leader #9 acknowledged that we will never rebound to the destination university of pre-COVID days. In addition, universities, once coveted places to work, now have recruitment woes:

In terms of the Pandemic and its impacts, I think as far as leadership in general, in this place and space, we have to learn different ways. Right? We can't just do what we used to do. And for me, in the past, that would mean showing up in offices and the people would be there on the premises. For the time we were remote, 100% remote, I took all my one-on-one calls over the phone versus on Zoom so that folks could get up and walk, and so I would always be walking. They'd hear the trash down the street and dogs barking. I don't think it's going to go back to the way it was again. It won't ever be that same vein because we can't recruit people who want to work 100% on campus. We also can't recruit people with the salaries that they want, with the expectation also that they're 100% on campus and pay for

parking and all that stuff. Right? (Interview II)

Tensions and Finding Balance: Negotiating In-Person Versus Remote Work with Staff.

Leader #3 reflected that staff have become very comfortable with remote work, so the return to campus was somewhat jarring:

It's exacerbated (my ability to practice servant leadership), without a doubt... COVID has just made it more pronounced because staff had been working from home, and for a year and a half, we required staff to work from home. So, they got very comfortable in that setting. And now that we are returning to campus... we have students who are coming back. We had our first orientation yesterday for a group of international students, and we have another one next week and one the following week. And we'll have 350 students on campus every day taking classes. That's different than when we were remote during the time when everybody was remote. From 2020 to 2021, there was no opportunity for students to be on campuses. There was a less pronounced need to focus on providing that hands-on, in-person service to students. And I think staff got very comfortable. We can do everything on Zoom. And to some degree, it's very effective. Right. I mean, there's some things that have generated greater attendance when you can offer remote or hybrid opportunities. (Interview II)

Leader #2 advocated for more remote work based on the needs and desires of

staff:

Well, the team is very appreciative of having the one day, and I think a lot of them would appreciate having another day if they could have another day. I have not been the person who has ultimately made those decisions. Right? Our Vice Provost has kind of driven the decision of how much our entire office is working in-person. Right? So, I can say there was a point where we were just back.... Everyone was back 100% of the time, and I was advocating for a little bit more leeway for our team. They definitely wanted it. (Interview II)

For Leader #5, scheduling staff (with the return to campus and difference needs of staff) is a work-in-progress and a time when she had to face her own bias against remote work:

I think because of the pandemic, though, we had to do a re-set to some extent. I mean, going fully remote, transitioning to hybrid and then listening to what people expect out of the workforce now, too? Right? I have somebody, one of my team members, he wants to be here five days a week. Instead, we went one day a week at home. Everybody has different schedules, but we as a unit said, okay, on Friday we're going to have everybody work remotely. So, I was a little resistant. And then for last month, our division head, said okay, how about Mondays as well? With the Workforce Re-imagined Program, the university has reconsidered how we are going to do things. Even after a year of going

remote during COVID, it really helped me to see what can be done. And so one of the things, recently, I was talking with my supervisor and said I could see pretty much my whole team working remotely. The one member of our staff who likes to be in all the time, would need to come in sometimes because that position needs to see some things on campus like the actual physical layout of certain things. But aside from that, the work can all be done remotely. (Interview II)

Maintaining Leadership Presence on Campus.

Leadership presence on campus is a priority for Leader #2, who has opted out of remote work in order to have a daily presence on campus:

I'm going to work every day. And part of that is because I think leadership should have presence on campus. Would I like to have a work a day from home? Yes, I probably do. I think it helps that I am here every day. I do. So, I'm doing that. Right? And I think they notice that. Right? Sometimes they tell me.....you should take a day off. I don't see you taking a day off.

(Interview II)

Chapter Five

Limitations, Summary of Behaviors/Insights, Future Implications

There are three limitations associated with this study examining servant leader behaviors in a higher education setting.

Size of Study and Generalizability

In terms of the study's limitations, the subject pool was small (10 leaders) and restricted to leaders at one large RI West Coast research campus. The results cannot necessarily be generalized to other types of institutions within higher education. However, Creswell and Creswell (2018) espouse that generalizability is not a goal of qualitative research.

Data Analysis and Transcription of Interviews

The interviews were in-depth (two 30 minutes recorded interviews) for 10 leaders and the sheer volume of data (audio and reviewing transcriptions) presented time challenges to the researcher in terms of the data analysis phase of the research. At times the transcriptions were difficult to decipher, so the researcher would need to review the Zoom audio interviews for accuracy in an attempt to find poignant quotes as well as those which were representative of the leaders' responses. While the researcher attempted to remain unbiased about the topic (servant leadership) at all times, the researcher's presence (as a higher education professional and also practicing servant leadership at a major university) could have an impact on how the leaders answered the questions.

Self-Assessment (SLP-R)

The use of a Servant Leadership self-assessment for the 10 leaders in this

study has some potential limitations. Wong and Page's (2003) Servant Leadership Profile-Revised (SLP-R) is designed to measure both positive and negative leadership characteristics.

Pronin et al. (2002) speaks to self-assessment bias:

Together, biased recall, self-serving reasoning, and biased hypothesis testing allow individuals to believe that their self-assessments are objective: They are based on memories; alternatives have been considered; they can rationally link their traits to positive outcomes; any deficits can be easily explained away. Armed with the impression of objectivity, individuals have little reason to adjust their self-assessments. (p. 369).

Given it is a self-reporting instrument as to how they respond, leaders could potentially inflate their servant leader qualities and diminish those that are not complimentary with servant leadership. Leaders were, however, selected as they had a reputation on campus as being strong servant leaders and, in some cases, recommended by others as a participant.

Summary of Servant Leader Behaviors and Insights of Participants

In terms of behaviors that rise to the top for the servant leaders in this study they include investment of time, mentoring, and modeling behaviors while leveraging collaboration, support, and a shared vision to build a strong team.

Time

The servant leaders in this study prioritize time and proactively plan out their schedules to provide support for their respective teams. It is important for these

leaders to be consistently available for their staff and not let e-mails, meetings, projects, and other work obligations get in the way of meeting staff where they are. The leaders in this study make themselves available to meet one-on-one and also as a team. They have scheduled meetings but are also open to impromptu meetings. In one case, the leader makes attempts to physically connect with his team each day. Given these leaders consistently connect with their staff, they increase the level of connectivity to make their team members feel valued and supported.

Mentoring and Modeling Behaviors

The servant leaders interviewed in this study follow an ethical approach to leadership whereby doing the right thing and being a role model to staff is of the highest priority and does not require ample effort. With a values-driven approach, they aspire to create a psychologically safe workplace and lead by example. They show their staff by doing and thereby encourage greater participation and enhanced involvement.

Building a Strong Team

The leaders actively build their teams through fostering a collaborative work environment, supporting with individual and group goal setting, and effectively managing workflow while developing a shared vision.

Effortless and Challenging Servant Leader Behaviors Leading Ethically

(Effortless)

In prioritizing the well-being of others and serving as positive role models for staff, the leaders in this study are dedicated to fostering ethical work climates. Leading ethically comes naturally for the leaders in this study.

Putting Others First (Important yet Challenging)

Being a selfless leader and putting the priorities of others first can lead to compassion burnout. The leaders reported side effects including exhaustion and, at the extreme, for one senior executive level leader, feeling devalued and dehumanized.

Leaders Evaluate the Seven Servant Leader Behaviors

The seven servant leader behaviors in the Liden et al. (2008) model are: conceptualizing, emotional healing, putting followers first, helping followers grow and succeed, behaving ethically, empowering, and creating value for the community. The leaders in this study prioritized the following top three of the seven behaviors of the Liden et al. (2008) servant leadership model:

Empowering Others

The leaders in this study promoted empowerment: independent decision making, and the opportunity to create and innovate. They validate their team members giving them the confidence to exercise autonomy.

Helping Followers Grow and Succeed

Through continuous mentoring, the leaders are adept at identifying immediate and long-term growth opportunities for staff, supporting their career development advancement and setting team members up for current and future success.

Conceptualizing

The leaders in the study look beyond their daily responsibilities and

incorporate broader, more expansive conceptual “big picture” thinking. For some, this includes developing a strategic plan for their unit which extends outside of operational tasks and provides a comprehensive blueprint for moving forward.

Self-Awareness Behaviors Aligned with Goleman’s (2006) Model

Demonstrating self-awareness for the leaders’ is manifested in a number of ways. A few practices include spending time in self-reflection, treating staff as holistic professionals with lives outside of work, as well as soliciting feedback from team members to refine one’s growth and development as a team leader.

Self-Regulation

The leaders in the study strive to stay centered in terms of their emotions as well as how they respond to others, remaining calm during situations in which they have no control. They demonstrate self-regulation by pausing before sending emails, particularly in potentially contentious situations, and opt instead for thoughtful discerning communication. These leaders recognize stress triggers in the workplace and put strategies in place to minimize the negative repercussions.

Motivation

In the midst of challenging projects, the leaders in the study motivate their teams by continually connecting the team back to the mission and purpose of the work unit. Another strategy is to help the team focus on the manageable parts of a project to reduce the possibility of becoming overwhelmed by the entirety of the assignment at hand. One leader (whose position has a DEIB focus) is motivated by

being part of the solution to democratizing access to professional development opportunities for staff.

Social Skills

Emotionally intelligent servant leaders in this study leverage social skills to communicate effectively with staff members as well as internal and external campus partners. They rely on refined social skills to build and sustain relationships, facilitate change, and model positive behaviors.

Empathy

Leaders in the study demonstrate empathy by gaining an understanding of and developing their team members, starting with a service focused orientation, and continually using the lens of social responsibility. They look beyond the work roles of their staff members. The leaders strive to understand and recognize the day-to-day work of their teams while also looking beyond work roles recognizing that employees are also human beings with lives outside of work.

Leader Insights

Advantages and Disadvantages of Servant Leadership

While all of the leaders acknowledged that servant leadership is time intensive, they holistically disagreed with the assumption that this model leads to a lack of productivity. The leaders believe that this model promotes a positive work culture and a spirit of collaboration. Once again, the leaders felt that it can be exhausting to be a servant leader as you are often “pouring from an empty cup.”

Servant Leadership: Alignment with Higher Education

Each of the leaders is affirmative that servant leadership is aligned with the mission, purpose, vision, and operations in higher education, nevertheless, it has been a challenge to demonstrate this style in the post-pandemic return to campus. According to one of the leaders, many university staff members (who have experienced long term remote work) are resistant to in-person work. While servant leadership is complementary with most work units, it is not aligned with work that is rules-oriented or compliance based.

Providing Support to Direct Reports

Guidance was provided by leaders in this study (to direct reports) ranging from offering daily support and professional development opportunities to intervening in emergency situations. Leaders spoke about working with direct reports experiencing serious health challenges and providing reassurance from diagnosis to recovery. A focus on wellness and promoting work/life balance practices to prevent burnout was reported.

Self-Assessment of Staff Perception of Leaders

The leaders in this study intuited that their team members would describe them as approachable, supportive, communicative, fostering a positive work climate, and providing recognition/accolades to staff members. In terms of work style, the leaders mentioned that they would be perceived as reliable, results-oriented with strong follow through abilities. One participant shared that they would be described as an atypical, non-hierarchical leader.

The Global Pandemic's Impact on Practicing Servant leadership

The Global Pandemic provided a time for the leaders to engage in self-reflection about their strengths and challenges regarding team leadership. Some leaders reported feeling isolated (during and after lockdown) while others shared about forced adaptability to retain staff during the post-COVID Great Resignation. New tensions have emerged in the workplace regarding remote versus on site work and many leaders have strived to both advocate for their team and find a balance as this is a destination university.

Implications for the Future in Higher Education

The implications of the study are important for two reasons. First, the qualitative interviews provided insights into specific behaviors that servant leaders exhibit to build servant-led cultures. The leaders are those who lead university staff members which is a topic that is underrepresented in academic literature. Most of the scholarly research regarding servant leadership in higher education focuses on faculty or students, with leaders of staff being the missing link.

Secondly, the information and leader insights gleaned from the qualitative interviews was used to assemble the Servant Leader Training Guide which is a resource manual for current and future leaders in higher education who wish to move towards a more compassion-based leadership style.

The testimony of “lived leadership experiences” from the 10 leaders in this study will be interwoven and the following components of the servant leadership model are explored in the guide:

- 1) Understanding Servant Leadership
- 2) How to Practice Servant Leadership
- 3) The Actual Practice of Servant Leadership
- 4) Servant Leader Behaviors: Highlights from Interviews with
Servant Leaders. The guide will serve as a toolkit for higher
education leaders to create healthy, positive, and productive work
cultures where university staff members can grow, develop, and
ultimately thrive.

Conclusion

The servant leader, according to Greenleaf (2002) ensures that people's "highest priority needs are being served" (p. 151). This conscious choice to serve then guides a leader to aspire to lead (Greenleaf, 2008, p.15). Greenleaf proclaims that team members reporting to a servant leader should "grow as persons... become healthier, wiser, freer, and more autonomous" (p. 15).

The findings of this study show that there are specific behaviors that contribute to servant leadership in a university setting. Many leaders interviewed were authentic servant leaders. For others, it was a longer journey which evolved into slowly adopting a compassion-based leadership style.

Some of the leaders interviewed were natural servant leaders and adopted this model instinctively and effortlessly like Leader # 9:

Until this idea of service leadership came out, I didn't realize that there was a name to just the way that I kind of naturally do things, which is to try

really hard to put others first....my relationship with my direct reports are not ever transactional. Like, here's your job. Do your job. The first question I have is, how are you? How's the family? How are the kids? When are you going to take a vacation? Right? Like, put those things first and then go, okay, what are the big issues that are happening in your work right now?

Others went through a period of evolution and modified their style, over time, away from more directive leadership towards a more compassionate servant leadership orientation. Leader #5 recalled:

When I first started, my staff might have said I was a bit hands-off. Back then, I would say more directive, maybe more focused on the things that weren't being done correctly. So, the feedback being received was more about things that were wrong rather than anything that was right. I would say, in the last few years, the people currently on my team probably would see me as more supportive in terms of investing time in them, encouraging them, sending them information about professional development opportunities or information that may be helpful for their jobs.

In the United States, the cataclysmic events of a global pandemic have demanded that we look at how we are operating, in every area, as a society at large (Ziarek, 2020). On one hand, we are grappling with the with the economic, political, social, health, and educational ramifications of COVID-19. (Ziarek, 2020). At the same time, we are reeling from the malignant effects of systemic racism. (Ziarek, 2020). The recent monumental shifts in the labor market have

compounded the effects of the pandemic. As Almhdawi et al. (2021) submits, an ever-expanding number of higher education professionals are rethinking their career aspirations and re-examining the concept of well-being as it aligns with work. “The rising number of resignations in education services has continued to trend upwards, as evidenced by the 68,000 resignations recorded in April 2022, an increase of nearly 26% from the previous year,” (Schmiedehaus et al., 2023, p. 1).

The global pandemic has changed the way we look at and operate within higher education. It demanded that the university, its staff, and its faculty undergo a complete transformation in terms of service delivery. “The pandemic forced higher education professionals to learn new technologies, to transform into remote teaching, and to adapt quickly to new realities by adapting pedagogical practices” (Lemon et al., 2023).

Scholarly literature shows (more than 300 peer reviewed articles to-date) that servant leadership has a positive effect in the workplace, from enhancing employee well-being to increasing productivity (Eva et al., 2019). The employee-centered behaviors of servant leadership that foster development of staff include emphasizing a culture of growth and empowerment while being sensitive to personal issues that may emerge. The net result is increased trust between leaders and team members, providing bonding between the leader and staff as well as between colleagues. Team members in turn, collaborate in teams with robust levels of trust and psychological safety, which heightens team interactions, communication, and information and results in smoother operations and enhanced work flow. The impact of servant

leadership is shown in a rise in overall team morale and performance.

To come full circle, those being led by servant leaders will acquire the skill set for adopting a compassion-based servant leadership philosophy themselves should they themselves be in a position to lead others (Greenleaf, 2008).

The leaders in this study identified many positive behavioral characteristics during their practice of servant leadership in higher education. Focusing on individual growth and diffusing the top-down power structure creates a more democratic workplace with bonded relationships between leadership and team members. The leaders interviewed also acknowledged the strong moral compass that servant leaders possess. According to the leaders in this study, servant leadership ignites creativity, collaboration, enhanced communication, trust, and an overall positive workplace where staff have a strong sense of well-being.

Servant leadership has its challenges and for the leaders in this study, although they touted the benefits, they also were candid that it is time intensive and even isolating (at the extreme dehumanizing) being a selfless leader who gives and gives while being viewed as superhuman.

Despite its downside, Leader #1 perfectly synthesized the purpose behind the most salient behaviors of the servant leadership model and its complementary alignment with higher education:

Putting followers first is probably one of the largest things you can do as a leader. They always say leaders eat last... Others come before I do, period. Because leadership is a sacrifice. A lot of people don't realize that it is a life

of service, and, not about you. And a lot of people that don't understand leadership think it's bossing people around. And it's so not that, it is an art form. It's something you constantly have to have to grow. But I would say that your people come before you and you know you're a decent leader when they come back to you and they tell you in front of others. I've been in front of a whole room (of leaders and subordinates) and I've had people I lead stand up and say, this is one of the best leaders I've ever dealt with, to each other. So, you know it's working when people are positive, and things are getting done, and they want to follow. (Interview II)

Servant Leadership: An Awakened Conscious Leader

It is essential that the servant leader is also an awakened holistic leader who strives to be a whole person and not self-sacrificing to the point where they lose their identity (Sisodia, 2018). According to Sisodia (2018), "Servant leaders must also take time to celebrate and nurture their individuality and well-being." (Sisodia as cited in Fox, 2018, para. 20). In *Servant Leadership in Action* (2018), Sisodia details the qualities of a conscious servant leader (who is also attuned to self-care) using the easy to remember acronym S.E.L.F.L.E.S.S.:

Strength

Enthusiasm

Love

Flexibility

Long-term Orientation

Emotional Intelligence

Systems Intelligence

Spiritual Intelligence

(Sisodia, 2018, p. 27).

Selfless does not mean abandoning one's ego as that is an impossibility.

Rather it is about "harnessing the ego in healthy ways" (Sisodia, 2018, p. 27).

Servant leaders, as Sisodia (2018) proclaims, draw energy from the collective strength of their teams and "they tap into the moral power of the universe-which is available to anyone who engages in genuinely "right" action" (p. 28).

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Appendices

Appendix A

Survey Tool: Servant Leadership Profile – Revised (SLP-R)

Servant Leadership Profile-Revised (SLP-R)

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Leadership matters a great deal in the success or failure of any organization. This instrument was designed to measure both positive and negative leadership characteristics.

Please use the following scale to indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements in describing your own attitudes and practices as a leader. If you have not held any leadership position in an organization, then answer the questions as if you were in a position of authority and responsibility. There are no right or wrong answers. Simply rate each question in terms of what you really believe or normally do in leadership situations.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree (SD)			Undecided			Strongly Agree (SA)

For example, if you strongly agree, you may circle 7, if you mildly disagree, you may circle 3. If you are undecided, circle 4, but use this category sparingly.

- | | | |
|----|--|---------------|
| 1. | To inspire team spirit, I communicate enthusiasm and confidence. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 2. | I listen actively and receptively to what others have to say, even when they disagree with me. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 3. | I practice plain talking—I mean what I say and say what I mean. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 4. | I always keep my promises and commitments to others. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 5. | I grant all my workers a fair amount of responsibility and latitude in carrying out their tasks. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 6. | I am genuine and honest with people, even when such transparency is politically unwise. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 7. | I am willing to accept other people's ideas, whenever they are better than mine. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 8. | I promote tolerance, kindness, and honesty in the workplace. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |

- | | | |
|-----|---|---------------|
| 9. | To be a leader, I should be front and centre in every function in which I am involved. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 10. | I create a climate of trust and openness to facilitate participation in decision-making. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 11. | My leadership effectiveness is improved through empowering others. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 12. | I want to build trust through honesty and empathy. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 13. | I am able to bring out the best in others. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 14. | I want to make sure that everyone follows orders without questioning my authority. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 15. | As a leader, my name must be associated with every initiative. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 16. | I consistently delegate responsibility to others and empower them to do their job. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 17. | I seek to serve rather than be served. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 18. | To be a strong leader, I need to have the power to do whatever I want without being questioned. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 19. | I am able to inspire others with my enthusiasm and confidence in what can be accomplished. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 20. | I am able to transform an ordinary group of individuals into a winning team. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 21. | I try to remove all organizational barriers so that others can freely participate in decision-making. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 22. | I devote a lot of energy to promoting trust, mutual understanding, and team spirit. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 23. | I derive a great deal of satisfaction in helping others succeed. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 24. | I have the moral courage to do the right thing, even when it hurts me politically. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 25. | I am able to rally people around me and inspire them to achieve a common goal. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 26. | I am able to present a vision that is readily and enthusiastically embraced by others. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 27. I invest considerable time and energy in helping others overcome their weaknesses and develop their potential. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 28. I want to have the final say on everything, even areas where I don't have the competence. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 29. I don't want to share power with others, because they may use it against me. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 30. I practice what I preach. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 31. I am willing to risk mistakes by empowering others to "carry the ball." | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 32. I have the courage to assume full responsibility for my mistakes and acknowledge my own limitations. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 33. I have the courage and determination to do what is right in spite of difficulty or opposition. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 34. Whenever possible, I give credits to others. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 35. I am willing to share my power and authority with others in the decision-making process. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 36. I genuinely care about the welfare of people working with me. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 37. I invest considerable time and energy equipping others. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 38. I make it a high priority to cultivate good relationships among group members. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 39. I am always looking for hidden talents in my workers. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 40. My leadership is based on a strong sense of mission. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 41. I am able to articulate a clear sense of purpose and direction for my organization's future. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 42. My leadership contributes to my employees/colleagues' personal growth. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 43. I have a good understanding of what is happening inside the organization. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 44. I set an example of placing group interests above self-interests. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 45. I work for the best interests of others rather than self. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 46. I consistently appreciate, recognize, and encourage the work of others. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 47. I always place team success above personal success. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 48. I willingly share my power with others, but I do not abdicate my authority and responsibility. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 49. I consistently appreciate and validate others for their contributions. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 50. When I serve others, I do not expect any return. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 51. I am willing to make personal sacrifices in serving others. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 52. I regularly celebrate special occasions and events to foster a group spirit. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 53. I consistently encourage others to take initiative. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 54. I am usually dissatisfied with the status quo and know how things can be improved. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 55. I take proactive actions rather than waiting for events to happen to me. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 56. To be a strong leader, I need to keep all my subordinates under control. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 57. I find enjoyment in serving others in whatever role or capacity. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 58. I have a heart to serve others. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 59. I have great satisfaction in bringing out the best in others. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 60. It is important that I am seen as superior to my subordinates in everything. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 61. I often identify talented people and give them opportunities to grow and shine. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |
| 62. My ambition focuses on finding better ways of serving others and making them successful. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 |

Servant Leadership Profile-Revised: Coding Key1: Developing and Empowering Others (16 items):

16, 21, 23, 27, 31, 37, 38, 39, 42, 46, 48, 49, 53, 59, 61, 62

2. Power and Pride (Vulnerability and Humility) (8 items):

9, 14, 15, 18, 28, 29, 56, 60

3. Authentic Leadership (11 items):

6, 17, 30, 44, 45, 47, 50, 51, 52, 57, 58

4. Open, Participatory Leadership (10 items):

2, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 34, 35, 36

5. Inspiring Leadership (7 items):

1, 13, 19, 20, 22, 25, 26

6. Visionary Leadership (5 items):

40, 41, 43, 54, 55

7. Courageous Leadership (5 items):

3, 4, 24, 32, 33

Note: Factor 2 is a negative trait that can be converted to a positive one by scoring in reverse (i.e., 1 to 7, 2 to 6, etc.).

Debriefing

Servant leadership is defined by both the *presence* of certain positive qualities, and the *absence* of certain negative qualities.

The positive qualities include: (a) servanthood, (b) leadership, (c) visioning, (d) developing others, (e) empowering others, (f) team-building, (g) shared decision-making, and (h) integrity.

The negative qualities include: (a) abuse of power and control, and (b) pride and narcissism. These negatively-worded statements can also be scored in the positive direction; by reversing the scoring, *Abuse of Power* becomes *Vulnerability*, and *Pride* becomes *Humility*.

A simple way to determine whether one is a servant leader is to see whether one scores high on *Servanthood* and *Leadership*, but low on *Abuse of Power* and *Pride*. Thus, scoring high on *Abuse of Power* and *Pride* automatically disqualifies one as a servant leader, regardless of high scores on the other subscales. That is why the inclusion of these two negative subscales is important in the revised Servant Leadership Profile.

Appendix B

Pre-Interview Reading Assignment for Leaders

PRE-INTERVIEW READING ASSIGNMENT FOR LEADERS

The Nature of Servant Leadership

The core of servant-leadership is the notion of caring as a genuine concern for people. (Greenleaf, 1970; 2003; Spears, 2002). Eleanor Roosevelt once famously proclaimed, “For our own success to be real, it must contribute to the success of others” (Roosevelt, n.d.). In keeping with Roosevelt’s philosophy of empowering others, servant leadership focuses on the concept of “lifting people up” within an organization. Servant leaders place the needs of others within the organization at a higher priority above their own.

By leading by example, servant leaders unlock the potential for others to thrive. They realize that the happiness of employees has a direct impact on developing a positive work culture. As Flood (2019) contends, servant leaders not only by example, but also “are careful listeners, are encouraging, remove barriers for others, and equip others with the tools necessary for success” (para. 1).

Greenleaf Coins the Term Servant Leadership

While servant leadership has been in existence since ancient times, the modern version of the phrase “servant leadership” was coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in *The Servant as Leader*, an essay that Greenleaf first published in 1970. In that essay, Greenleaf (1970) said:

The servant-leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions (p. 6).

For Greenleaf, servant leadership focused on the individual and how they can flourish and meet their full potential.

What are the Characteristics of Servant Leadership?

It is a leadership style characterized by humility.

- This type of leader recognizes they have much to learn from those whom they lead.
- This type of leader uses what they learn from others to make everyone in their charge better at what they do.

- This type of leader sacrifices and gives of themselves to make others succeed.
- This type of leader models the behavior they want to see in others. (Cable, 2018).

Cable (2018) wrote: “...servant-leaders have the humility, courage, and insight to admit that they can benefit from the expertise of others who have less power than them. They actively seek the ideas and unique contributions of the employees that they serve. This is how servant leaders create a culture of learning, and an atmosphere that encourages followers to become the very best they can.” (Cable, 2018, para 7).

Appendix C

Interview Questions

Interview I (30 minutes)

- 1) In your work as a servant leader at the university, what are three (3) specific practices that you implemented and what has been the impact? What training initiatives and/or professional development have you implemented that reinforce the practices of servant leadership?
- 2) As a higher education leader, in looking at enacting servant leadership practices, which behaviors have you been able to implement with ease and which have presented the greatest challenges? As a servant leader, what are the advantages and disadvantages of this type of leadership?
- 3) As a university leader, of the seven behaviors inherent in servant leadership (conceptualizing, emotional healing, putting followers first, helping followers grow and succeed, behaving ethically, empowering, and creating value for the community) (Northouse, 2016) which do you find to be the top three for leaders in higher education and what is your rationale?
- 4) Goleman (2006) contends there are five components of emotional intelligence. Can you offer an example of how you have demonstrated each in a leadership capacity? 1) Self-awareness. 2) Self-regulation 3) Motivation 4) Empathy 5) Social skills.

Interview II (30 Minutes)

- 5) To what extent is servant leadership a model that would be positively aligned with the goals, mission, values, and work culture inherent in your work setting
- 6) Tell me about a specific time when you provided support to a direct report.
- 7) If I spoke with past and current direct reports, how would they describe your leadership style?
- 8) Do you think the global pandemic has impacted your ability to practice servant leadership? If it has, please provide specific examples.

Appendix D

Servant Leader Behaviors: Definitions (Preparation for Question #3)

Northouse (2018) maintains that to understand servant leadership it is critical to understand the seven servant leader behaviors that are at the core of the leadership process (p. 222). The following are definitions of the seven core behaviors of servant leadership.

Conceptualizing

Conceptualizing is defined as the understanding of the vision, mission, and complications that may arise in the organization (Northouse, 2018, p. 223).

Emotional Healing and Putting Followers First

The second and third behaviors which are identifiers of servant leadership are “emotional healing and putting followers first” (Northouse, 2018, p. 223). As Northouse (2018) advises, emotional healing “involves being sensitive to the personal concerns and well- being of others” (p. 234).

Helping Followers Grow and Succeed

Northouse (2018) describes “helping followers grow and succeed” as “knowing followers’ professional or personal goals and helping them to accomplish those aspirations” (p. 234).

Behaving Ethically

Northouse (2018) defines behaving ethically as “doing the right thing in the right way. It is holding to strong ethical standards, including being open, honest, and fair with followers” (p. 235).

Empowering

Northouse (2018) describes empowering leadership behavior as “allowing followers the freedom to be independent, make decisions on their own, and be self-sufficient” (p. 235).

Appendix E

Defining Emotional Intelligence (Preparation for Question #4)

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is often defined as the ability to monitor your own emotions as well as others. Additionally, it is the ability to decipher emotions and group them effectively so you can use that knowledge to guide your thinking.

The following article (Pivac, 2020) provides a summary of the attributes of Emotional Intelligence (mentioned in Question #4) and discusses why it is key to becoming a strong Servant Leader.

<https://medium.com/agile-adapt/enhancing-servant-leadership-through-emotional-intelligence-56f4f4708a8d>

Appendix F



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Servant leadership is a humanistic practice that extends beyond a philosophy into a set of regular practices with specific behaviors. Servant leaders build relationships with staff through active listening while asking incisive and insightful questions (Lumpkin and Achen, 2018). The servant leadership model is the antithesis of the traditional leadership approach, inverting the top-down approach to management by diffusing the leader-driven power base. Instead, servant leaders "use their power as a personal responsibility to serve and influence others" (Stahel et al., 2022).

There is no better time to examine compassion-based leadership models in university settings given the cataclysmic events of a Triple Pandemic (COVID 19, systemic racism, and economic distress) compounded by the Great Resignation in Higher Education. As Visvizi et al., (2023) emphasizes "the enduring legacy of humanistic leadership is pivotal in this new era of global and individual humanistic transformation amid change." (p. 8).

As a countermeasure to authoritarian and other leadership models lacking in compassion that are practiced at colleges and universities, Wheeler (2012) exalts servant leadership as a model that aligns with the goals, mission, and purpose of higher education.

While not a perfect fit, based on the interviews of the 10 university servant leaders in my study *Examining Servant Leader Behaviors* (Johansen, 2023), this model of compassion based leadership is complementary with the mission, vision, and practices inherent in higher education.

The information gathered in this study was used to create the *Servant Leadership Training Guide*, a Toolkit to support in the training and development of current and future leaders in higher education.

This instructional guide is intended to demystify the construct of servant leadership. By transforming research into action, this guide provides step-by-step guidelines to increase servant leadership related practices in higher education settings and create work cultures rooted in trust and compassion where the primary focus is the well-being of staff.

Karol Johansen, EdD

Morehead State University, Adult and Higher Education



THE ERA OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION: INTENSIFIED BY COVID-19 LOSSES

“

*Corporate attitudes and practices,
many ill-fitting, have encroached
on colleges and universities.*

*Calls for greater accountability,
efficiency, and productivity in higher
education have never been greater.*

”

- Dean, 2014



From Genetic Literacy Project, July 16, 2020, <https://geneticliteracyproject.org/2020/07/16/who-is-most-vulnerable-by-age-and-race-to-dying-from-covid-19>



From Institute for Human Rights and Business - IHRB, June 15, 2020, By Scott Jerbi, Senior Advisor, Policy & Outreach, <https://www.ihrb.org/focus-areas/non-discrimination/commentary-black-lives-matter-a-moral-moment>



From Arkansas Times, March 4 2021, <https://arktimes.com/columns/ernest-dumas/2021/03/04/the-origins-of-the-jan-6-insurrection>

**“ In the United States, we are currently
confronting three crises: Pandemic,
Racial Reckoning, and Political Violence. ”**
- Brubaker, 2021

In establishing the context for creating a Servant Leadership Training program it is important to view the current state of higher education. In the second decade of the 21st century, we are fully entrenched in the era of accountability within higher education in the United States. With the decrease of public support coupled with a push for heightened accountability, there has been a growing trend known as the corporatization of higher education. A global pandemic put unprecedented pressure on an already stretched higher educational system. In the United States, we have been currently confronting three crises: Pandemic, Racial Reckoning, and Political Violence (Brubaker, 2021).

According to Friga (2021), pandemic related cuts and losses for higher education are estimated as follows: “\$85 billion in lost revenues, \$24 billion for COVID-related expenses, and \$74 billion in anticipated future decreases in state funding. That adds up to a whopping \$183 billion” (Friga, 2021, para. 4). Many colleges and universities are responding (even prior to COVID) by implementing private sector leadership models along with other cost cutting and revenue generating measures. As Dean (2014) asserts, “Corporate attitudes and practices, many ill-fitting, have encroached on colleges and universities. Calls for greater accountability, efficiency, and productivity in higher education have never been greater” (p. 274).



PROVIDING THE CONTEXT: THE CASE FOR SERVANT LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION

“Studies have shown that the servant leadership model produces more engaged employees and less turnover.”
- Wheeler, 2012

There is a strong case for servant leadership in higher education. As a countermeasure to authoritarian and other leadership models, lacking in compassion, practiced at colleges and universities, Wheeler (2012) exalts servant leadership as a model that aligns with the goals, mission, and purpose of higher education. Servant leaders employ leadership strategies that are less autocratic while leaning towards participatory and humanistic interactions with team members. Studies have shown that the servant leadership model produces more engaged employees and less turnover. (Wheeler, 2012).

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT



THE FUTURE OF COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY LEADERSHIP



MASS EXODUS: HIGHER EDUCATION

As the COVID crisis is winding down, this is a critically important time to examine leadership models for future leaders in higher education. For a myriad of reasons, there has been a wide scale departure (often referred to as a Mass Exodus) in higher education. According to Ralston (2022), “Relatively successful faculty and staff are leaving higher education institutions in droves, seeking employment opportunities in other sectors of the economy” (para. 1).

The reasons behind the wide scale departure in higher education include (but are not limited to):

- Search for higher compensation
 - Desire for greater flexibility in remote work arrangements
 - Seeking institutional policies that promote greater work-life balance
 - Reaction to reduced or reimagined college/university benefit packages
- (Ralston, 2022).

TOXIC LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS



From Poets and Quants, May 3, 2022, <https://poetsandquants.com/2022/05/03/moshe-porat-denied-bail-will-begin-prison-sentence-on-may-9/>

In recent years, the work force (in the private sector and higher education) has had high profile leaders who did considerable damage by employing leadership behaviors that diverted sharply from the principles of servant leadership. In higher education in 2021, a jury convicted former Fox School of Business Dean Moshe Porat of blatant dishonesty to *US News and World Report* in order to inflate the performance of the Temple University business school in its online and part-time MBA rankings. In the first business school rankings scandal to be prosecuted in a criminal court, Porat was sentenced by a judge to 14 months in federal prison. (Roebuck and Snyder, 2022).

In the private sector, Elizabeth Holmes, the ex-founder and chief executive of the now defunct health technology company Theranos (once worth 10 billion dollars) was exalted as the next Steve Jobs. In 2021, Theranos was valued at zero and Holmes was staring point blank at a dozen federal fraud charges over allegations that she knowingly misled investors. (Hartmans et al., 2021, para.3).

In 2022, former Theranos CEO Elizabeth Holmes was convicted on four counts of fraud, Holmes was sentenced to more than 11 years in prison for misleading investors who funded her start-up focusing on blood testing. (Lerman, 2023).



From The Telegraph, August 20, 2021, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2021/08/20/theranos-founder-elizabeth-holmes-right-hand-man-brace-court/>

FALL OUT FOR WORKERS IN FALL OUT FOR WORKERS IN TOXIC WORKPLACES

“ A toxic work environment with harassment, bullying, ostracism, and incivility has severe emotional consequences for employees. ”
- Rasool, 2019

As a result of unfit leadership, employees have suffered greatly, and the result is the diminishing trust in leaders, decreasing loyalty, and high rates of staff turnover. The following are symptomatic of toxic leadership:

- Erosion of Trust and Respect
- Disempowering Employees
- Operating in a Vacuum, Isolation from Campus and Community Partners
- Lack of Integrity and Transparency
- Constantly Shifting Goals and Priorities
- Favoritism, Disparate Treatment, Invalidation, Gossiping, and Bullying
- Not Recognizing and/or Taking Credit for Others Work

(Rasool et al., 2019).

A toxic work environment with harassment, bullying, ostracism, and incivility has severe emotional consequences for employees. The fall out for workers in toxic workplaces with poor leadership is often anxiety and depression which can negatively impact productivity. (Rasool et al., 2019).



From MIT Management Sloan School, April 29, 2019,
<https://mitsloan.mit.edu/ideas-made-to-matter/fixing-a-toxic-work-culture-guarding-against-dark-triad>

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS: OUTCOME OF TOXIC LEADERSHIP

“ Persistent exposure to toxic leaders, both daily and longitudinally had a negative effect on the psychological well-being of subordinates. **”**
- Hobman, 2009

According to Hobman et al., (2009) persistent exposure to toxic leaders, both daily and longitudinally had a negative effect on the psychological well-being of subordinates. Kusy and Holloway (2009) also reported decreased self-efficacy and reduced self-



worth among staff who reported to toxic leaders for long periods of time. Toxic leaders



erode the self-confidence of staff through actions such as criticizing, marginalizing, ridiculing, and yelling. (Harvey et al., 2014). According to Richman et al., (1992), the perceptions that

subordinates have of mistreatment from toxic leaders can lead to negative psychological effects such as anxiety, depression, and hostility.





SERVANT LEADERSHIP: A REMEDY FOR THE TOXIC WORK CULTURE

“ *At the heart of servant leadership is putting employee well-being as a priority while focusing on the personal and professional growth of followers.* ”
- Laub, 2018; Mayer, 2010

Servant leadership studies show that this leadership style has a positive impact on followers and organizations, on areas such as overall job satisfaction (Guillaume, Honeycutt & Savage-Austin, 2013), collaboration and team effectiveness (Mahembe et al., 2013), and reduction of employee turnover (Ng et al., 2016). At the heart of servant leadership is putting employee well-being as a priority while focusing on the personal and professional growth of followers. (Laub, 2018; Mayer, 2010).



MASTER PLAN FOR SERVANT LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

Using the framework provided by the Greenleaf Center and other sources, the following historical, conceptual, and applied content supports a comprehensive servant leadership training program. The following is an outline for the core sections for the Servant Leadership Training Program.



Defining Servant-Leadership

- a) History, Ancient Leadership Style, Connection to Christianity
- b) The Nature, Mission and Purpose of Servant Leadership
- c) Robert K Greenleaf Modernizes the Notion of Servant Leadership
- d) Myths, Misconceptions, and Critical Assessments about Servant Leadership

Characteristics and Historical Profiles of a Servant-Leader

- a) Spears (2002) identified ten characteristics from Greenleaf's writing
- b) Spotlight on leaders of historical importance who embody servant leadership
- c) Showcasing current thought leaders who embrace Servant Leadership (Brené Brown and Simon Sinek).





Assessing Servant-Leadership characteristics already present in the leaders' own practice of leadership along with areas of potential development

- a) Presenting the Benefits of the Servant Leadership Profile Instrument (SLP-R)
- b) The Connection Between Emotional Intelligence and Servant Leadership
- c) Addressing the Challenges of the Servant Leadership Model and Implementation of this Leadership Style.



Beginning the Practice of Servant-Leadership

- a) Developing a Psychological Safety Playbook
- b) Presenting the Case Study of Starbucks: Building and Instilling a Servant Led Culture



Quotes from University Leaders about the Practice of Servant Leadership

Featured Commentary from 10 Servant Leaders in Higher Education



EXPANDED DETAILED CURRICULUM: MASTER PLAN FOR **SERVANT LEADERSHIP** TRAINING PROGRAM



PART 1

Leadership

- a) History, Ancient Leadership Style, Connection to Christianity
- b) The Nature, Mission, and Purpose of Servant Leadership
- c) Robert K. Greenleaf Modernizes the Notion of Servant Leadership
- d) Myths , Misconceptions, and Critical Assessments about Servant Leadership

“ *The constructs and teachings of Servant Leadership can be traced back to the Zhou dynasty and align with the teachings of Confucius and the leadership of ancient Arabic cultures.* ”
- Sendjaya, 2002



From China Highlights, November 2, 2021, <https://www.chinahighlights.com/map/ancient-china-map/eastern-zhou-dynasty-map.htm>

PART 1A: DEFINING SERVANT-LEADERSHIP

The concept of servant leadership dates back to ancient history. Ancient monarchies practiced leadership which was in service of their people and country. The constructs and teachings of servant leadership can be traced back to the Zhou dynasty and align with the teachings of Confucius and the leadership of ancient Arabic cultures. (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002; Winston and Ryan, 2008; Hirschy, Gomez, Patterson, & Winston, 2012). The term “servant leader” has been used for centuries and is accredited to the ancient teachings of Christianity. (Gandolfi and Stone, 2017).

PART 1B

THE NATURE, MISSION AND PURPOSE OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP

“ *For our own success to be real, it must contribute to the success of others.* ”
- Roosevelt, n.d.



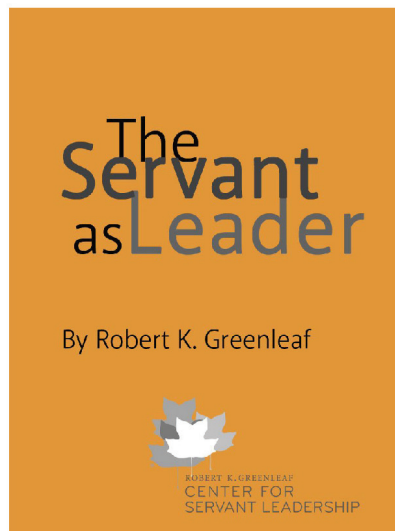
Former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt is a photograph by Everett which was uploaded on December 8th, 2011. From Fine Art America, <https://fineartamerica.com/featured/1-former-first-lady-eleanor-roosevelt-everett.html>

The core of servant-leadership is the notion of caring as a genuine concern for people. (Greenleaf, 1970; 2003; Spears, 2002). Eleanor Roosevelt once famously proclaimed, *“For our own success to be real, it must contribute to the success of others”* (Roosevelt, n.d.). In keeping with Roosevelt’s philosophy of empowering others, servant leadership focuses on the concept of “lifting people up” within an organization. Servant leaders place the needs of others within the organization at a higher priority above their own. By leading by example, servant leaders unlock the potential for others to thrive. They realize that the happiness of employees has a

direct impact on developing a positive work culture. As Flood (2019) contends, servant leaders not only lead by example, but also “are careful listeners, are encouraging, remove barriers for others, and equip others with the tools necessary for success” (para. 1).

PART 1C

ROBERT K. GREENLEAF MODERNIZES THE NOTION OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP



Greenleaf Coins the Term Servant Leadership

For Greenleaf, servant leadership was the antithesis of autocratic leadership and instead focused on the individual and how they can flourish and meet their full potential. (Greenleaf, 1970).

While servant leadership has been in existence since ancient times, the modern version of the phrase

"servant leadership" was coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in ***The Servant as Leader***, an essay that Greenleaf first published in 1970. In that seminal essay, Greenleaf (1970) said:

The servant-leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions (p. 6).

For Greenleaf, servant leadership was the antithesis of autocratic leadership and instead focused on the individual and how they can flourish and meet their full potential.



PART 1D

MYTHS , MISCONCEPTIONS, AND CRITICAL ASSESSMENTS

ABOUT SERVANT LEADERSHIP

The term servant leadership is subject to a number of myths and misconceptions. When implementing this leadership practice, Jim Collins, retired President/COO of a major food services company opted not to use the term Servant Leader and instead uses the term “Level 5 Leader” because of concerns about misinterpretations surrounding the term Servant Leader. (Lichtenwalner, 2021).



The Myth of Unquestioning Subservience to Followers

Many leaders believe that servant leadership involves blindly validating whatever subordinates wish to do without question. In truth, servant leaders must make hard decisions and often go against the wishes of followers for the greater good of the organization. (Lichtenwalner, 2021).

The Myth of Hyper-Focusing Exclusively on Followers

Many dissenters of Servant Leadership believe that servant leaders think only of being of service to followers. In truth, those practicing servant leadership must focus on serving all stakeholders (staff, partners, constituents, and the community). (Lichtenwalner, 2021).

The Myth of Contemporary Servant Leadership Being Religious in Nature

Examples of Servant Leadership are present throughout the Bible and in the majority of religions. The singular concept of Servant Leadership is actually secular in nature. A similar perspective exists across most major religions. However, the concept of Servant Leadership alone, is secular in nature. (Lichtenwalner, 2021).

Servant Leadership Under a Critical Lens

Hawkins (2009) and Spears (1995) offer criticisms based on the work of leadership theorists. In terms of servant leadership, for example, Spears (1995) asserts that servant-leaders are dreamers who need to refine their conceptualizing lens “to address problems that arise from a more global perspective rather than just from within their work environment” (Spears, 1995, p. 6). Further, they need to focus on employee needs but not at the expense of the stakeholder or the community. (Hawkins, 2009).

Understanding Servant Leadership



PART 2A

PRESENTING THE TEN CHARACTERISTICS OF A SERVANT LEADER

Spears (2002) identified 10 characteristics from Greenleaf's writing that are core to the development of servant leadership.

Servant Leadership Characteristics

1. **Listening**-acknowledging the viewpoint of followers and validating these perspectives.
2. **Empathy**-"standing in the shoes" of another person and attempting to see the world from that person's point of view.
3. **Healing**-in helping followers become whole, servant leaders are themselves healed.
4. **Awareness**-understanding oneself and the impact one has on others.
5. **Persuasion**-creates change through gentle, non-judgmental argument.
6. **Conceptualization**-the ability to be a visionary for an organization.
7. **Foresight**-the ability to predict what is



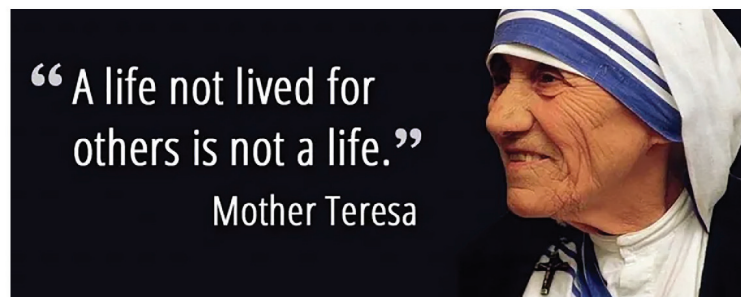
coming based on what is occurring in the present and what has happened in the past.

8. **Stewardship**-carefully managing the people and organization one has been given to lead. Holding the organization in trust for the greater good of society.
9. **Commitment to the Growth of People**-treating each follower as a unique person with intrinsic value beyond what her/she contributes to the organization.
10. **Building Community**-allowing followers to identify with something greater than themselves that they value. (Spears, 2010, p. 27).

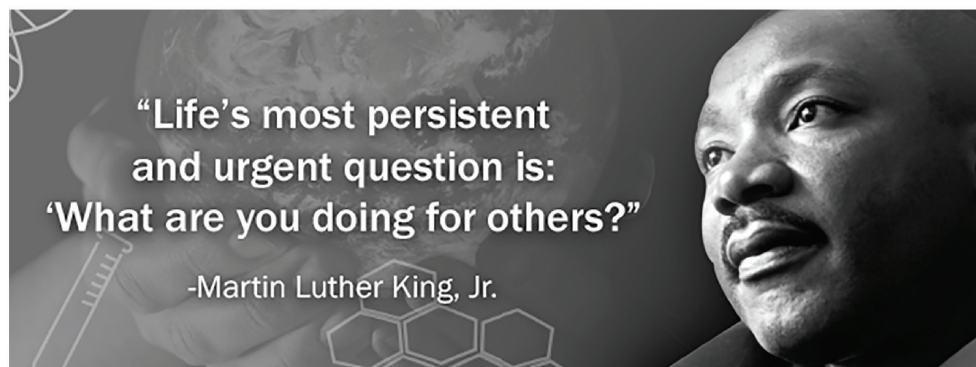


PART 2B**FEATURED SERVANT LEADERS OF HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE**

In more recent history, Mother Teresa and Martin Luther King Jr. serve as examples of historical figures demonstrating servant leadership.



From <https://www.invajy.com/mother-teresa-quotes>



From <https://www.flofalay.com/25-dr-martin-king-jr-quotes>

PART 2C

SHOWCASING CURRENT THOUGHT LEADERS WHO
EMBRACE SERVANT LEADERSHIP

“*Servant leadership is unable to thrive
in a culture of shame or fear.*”
- Brown as cited by Fox, 2018



From UT News, February 4, 2020, <https://news.utexas.edu/2020/02/04/brene-brown-brings-dare-to-lead-program-to-ut-as-new-visiting-professor-of-management>

Many of the foremost contemporary thought leaders promote servant leadership—leaders such as Simon Sinek, Patrick Lencioni, and Brené Brown—they speak tirelessly about the power of servant leadership in building a healthy, productive and thriving workplace.

Brené Brown, a thought leader, contributor to Servant Leadership in Action, and research professor at the University of Houston, asserts that **servant leadership is unable to thrive in culture of shame or fear.** (Fox, 2018) “Courage is the foundation of servant leadership; shame, meanwhile, breeds fear,” (Brown as cited by Fox, 2018).



From <https://www.military.com/veteran-jobs/career-advice/5-ted-talks-will-help-you-transition.html>

Assigned Texts for Servant Leadership Training Program

- 1) Coyle, D. (2018). *The culture code: The secrets of highly successful groups*. Bantam.
- 2) Greenleaf, R. K. (1970; 2003). The servant as leader. In H. Beazley, J. Beggs, & L. C. Spears (Eds.), *The servant-leader within: A transformative path*. (pp. 31-74). Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press
- 3) Sinek, Simon. 2017. *Leaders Eat Last*. London, England: Portfolio Penguin.
- 4) Spears, L. C. (2010). Character and Servant Leadership Ten Characteristics of Effective, Caring Leaders. *The Journal of Virtues & Leadership*, 1, 25-30.
- 5) Wheeler, D. W. (2012). *Servant leadership for higher education: Principles and practices*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.



Assigned Questions for Written Responses (Minimum 10 sentences for each question)

1. In what ways is servant leadership a paradox? Is servant leadership more of a trait or a behavior?
2. Is it always possible to build consensus in groups? If not, what is a servant leader to do?
3. Some of the measures used to assess servant leadership have a spiritual dimension to them (covenantal relationship, transcendental spirituality). How are spirituality and ethical behavior related?
4. How can organizations, and not just individual leaders, become models of servanthood? Is it possible to practice servant leadership in a competitive corporate climate?
5. How does servant leadership foster self-actualization in followers?

6. What is the distinction between persuasion and influence?
7. How is servant leadership different from authentic leadership?
8. Is it possible to be a servant leader and not be very humble?
9. Why is it important to develop a theoretical basis for servant leadership? (Chegg, 2022, p. 1).

Discussion Questions for Break Out Groups

1. When have you had “the natural desire to want to serve, to serve *“first”* in a situation?
How does this fit with your aspirations to lead?
2. Have you known people who are natural servant leaders?
3. Which of Spears leadership characteristics do you feel are most important?
Which do you implement of a daily basis as a leader?
4. How might a servant leader’s gender, age, or ethnicity influence how he or she is perceived by followers?
5. How would you compare the historical servant leaders (Mother Teresa, MLK) with the modern servant leaders (Simon Sinek, Brene Brown)?
6. Is it possible to practice servant leadership in a computer-mediated environment (e.g., in a virtual team)?
7. An empirical study by Hunter et al., (2013) concluded that “leaders scoring high in agreeableness and low in extraversion were more likely to be perceived as servant leaders by their followers.” How might one’s degree of extraversion lead to (not) being perceived as a servant leader?
8. Why is healing a central characteristic of a servant leader? Can you think of any examples where a leader was equipped to help a follower overcome a problem? How does helping someone become whole, in turn heal the servant leader?
9. In your mind, are there any risks associated with servant leadership? (Chegg, 2022, p. 1)



PART 2: BUILDING THE PRACTICE OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Assessing Servant-Leadership characteristics already present in the leader's own practice of leadership and areas of potential development:

- a) The Benefits of the Servant Leadership Profile Instrument (SLP-R) (Wong and Page, 2003).
- b) The Connection between Emotional Intelligence and Servant Leadership
- c) Addressing the Challenges of the Servant Leadership Model and Implementation of this Leadership Style.

PART 2A: THE BENEFITS OF THE SERVANT LEADERSHIP PROFILE REVISED INSTRUMENT (SLP-R)

The Servant Leadership Profile Revised Instrument (SLP-R) can provide leaders with a self-assessment of their level of servant leadership competencies and areas of potential development.

The Servant Leadership Profile Revised Instrument (SLP-R) was developed from the research of (Wong and Page, 2003). Researchers Page and Wong (2003) extended Greenleaf's work by creating a multidimensional model that recognizes 12 servant leadership attributes. These attributes are both a result of conducting a literature review and based on their own experiences in leadership. The SLP-R can provide leaders with a self-assessment of their level of servant leadership competencies and areas of potential development. The (Wong and Page, 2003) assessment can be found by visiting the following link:

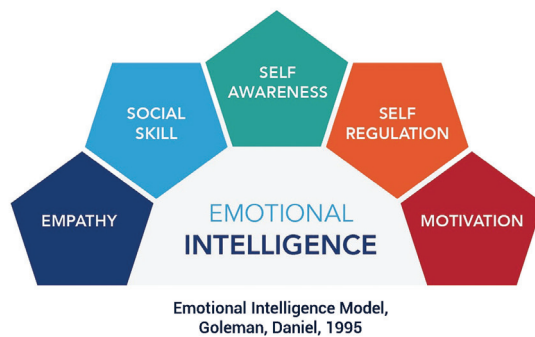
<http://www.drpaullwong.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Servant-Leadership-Profile-Revised-SLP-R-Wong-Page-2003.pdf>

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	Strongly Disagree (SD)			Undecided			Strongly Agree (SA)
For example, if you strongly agree, you may circle 7, if you mildly disagree, you may circle 3. If you are undecided, circle 4, but use this category sparingly.							
1.	To inspire team spirit, I communicate enthusiasm and confidence.						1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2.	I listen actively and receptively to what others have to say, even when they disagree with me.						1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3.	I practice plain talking—I mean what I say and say what I mean.						1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4.	I always keep my promises and commitments to others.						1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5.	I grant all my workers a fair amount of responsibility and latitude in carrying out their tasks.						1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6.	I am genuine and honest with people, even when such transparency is politically unwise.						1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Information on Servant Leadership Assessment and Scoring

The SLP-R is a 62-item survey that uses a 7-point Likert-type scale that ranges from 1, representing strongly disagree, to 7, representing strongly agree. (Wong and Page, 2003).

The SLP-R has specifically measured a set of identified categories of the best practices of servant leaders. The assessment “has been used by more than one hundred organizations and universities for research and evaluation purposes” (Wong and Davey, 2007, p. 5).



The SLP-R instrument measures an overall dimension of SL by summing the responses to each of the items on the SLP-R. The SLP-R comprises a total of 10 subscales. Eight of the subscales are used to represent the presence of SL characteristics; the remaining two

subscales are intended to measure characteristics antithetic to servant leadership. (Wong and Page, 2003).

This instrument considers the barriers to servant leadership performance and includes both positive and negative leadership attributes, particularly those that encourage (e.g., empathy and integrity) and hinder (e.g., pride and egotism) a servant's heart. According to Wong (2003), this instrument "explains and predicts the absence and presence of SL" (p. 13).

PART 2B: THE CONNECTION BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND SERVANT LEADERSHIP

“ *A high level of emotional intelligence is
a predictor of effective leadership.* ”
- George, 2000 and Goleman, 2004

Barbuto et al., (2014) established a connection between emotional intelligence and servant leadership believing that emotional intelligence is “both theoretically and practically relevant to servant leadership.” (p. 315). Both constructs, servant leadership and emotional intelligence, could have impact on the effectiveness of leadership. For followers, these constructs foster a sense of trust in leaders. Other researchers, including Goleman (2004) and George (2000) attest that a high level of emotional intelligence is a predictor of effective leadership.

Leaders who are emotionally intelligent are better equipped to navigate complex dynamics that can occur in the workplace. As Roark and Beuthin (2014) contend, leaders who analyze how their own perceptions of servant leadership behaviors compare to the assessments of their followers can

have an enhanced relationship with those they supervise. Awareness of followers' perceptions is not just for consolation of a job well done, or good interpersonal relationships, but as Greenleaf (1977) offers, awareness leads to "an awakening of an individual" with the goal of working towards a highly developed "moral, interpersonal relationship" with followers. (p. 250).

PART 2C: ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF THE SERVANT LEADERSHIP MODEL AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS MANAGEMENT STYLE

Potential Top 5 Servant Leadership Challenges



“ Basically, focusing on the relationship aspect of the organization may take time away from the functional aspects of the organization. ”
- Siekert, 2019, para. 1

According to Siekert (2019), here are the top five servant leadership challenges:**#1 - Fatigue**

Servant leadership draws on empathy to the extreme. As a servant leader, one's own needs become secondary to those of employees. This philosophy of over giving to staff can lead to fatigue. (Siekert, 2019).

#2 - Undermined Authority

In the majority of leadership scenarios, servant leadership can be effective. Yet, there are times when a leader will need to exert authority. Servant leadership does not adjust for leaders needing to take a firm position and doesn't allow for this level of increased authority. (Siekert, 2019).

For example, as Siekert (2019) asserts, "when a leader has to be more authoritative, followers aren't going to believe that the leader means business. This is because followers may have seen the leader waiver on other issues previously while being empathetic to team members. Thus, the authority of the leader is undermined" (para. 1).

#3 - Decreased Motivation

As Siekert (2019) submits, in addition to undermined authority, "servant leadership can result in diminished motivation. With leadership lending a helping hand, workers are tempted to ease off their current level. If the leader is going to shoulder some of the weight, then team members don't have to shoulder as much" (Siekert, 2019, para. 1).

Eventually, this can diminish motivation. "Why work diligently if the leader will step in and lend a hand or finish the project?" (Siekert, 2019, para. 1).

#4 - The Organization Becomes Less of a Priority

The needs of the organization itself can be diminished because the leader is hyperfocused on team members. Leaders do need to consider the needs of the team members but it should not supersede the overarching mission of the organization. (Siekert, 2019).

"Basically, focusing on the relationship aspect of the organization may take time away from the functional aspects of the organization," (Siekert, 2019, para. 1).

#5 - It Doesn't Fit Every Situation

"Each organization is like a person with individual characteristics all its own. Ultimately, there's no leadership model that works in every business or in every situation. Organizations are fluid and require a fluid leadership style" (Siekert, 2019, para. 1).

SUMMATION OF CHALLENGES

Many leaders find it difficult to transition from the power and authority that comes with their role in a hierarchical, command-and-control organization. They cannot yet see themselves as servant leaders, or indeed trust their staff enough to devolve responsibility and support them as they grow into their own new roles. Traditional leaders have nothing to fear and everything to gain from adopting a value-creation, trust-based servant leadership approach. (Whiteside, 2021, para. 3).

There are criticisms that need to be addressed in terms of the Servant Leadership model. For example, Spears (1995) asserts that servant-leaders are dreamers who need to refine their conceptualizing lens "to address problems that arise from a more global perspective rather than just from within their work environment" (Spears, 1995, p. 6). Echoing Spears (1995), Siekert (2019) asserts that servant leaders need to focus on employee needs but not at the expense of stakeholder or the community. (Siekert, 2019; Hawkins, 2009). The Servant Leadership Program focuses on celebrating the positive characteristics while analyzing the shadow side of Servant Leadership, developing strategic goals of the organization while fostering a compassion-based servant-led culture.

EXERCISE FOR PARTICIPANTS

Take the SLP-R assessment and answer the following questions in writing. A paragraph for each question is sufficient.

- 1) What was the experience like taking the SLP-R? Did you find you were hesitant or decisive in answering the questions?
- 2) Do you think your scores relating to the Servanthood and Leadership, and Abuse of Power and Pride sections are indicative of your leadership? If not, why? How does your overall score coincide with your leadership style?
- 3) Do you think having all team members in your workplace take this assessment would be valuable? Why or why not?



Break Out Group Questions

1. How do you define having a high level of psychological safety in your work environment? How can psychological safety be increased in your work setting?
2. Do you feel comfortable making mistakes and feeling supported in your work setting? Why or why not?
3. Can you share a time when a leader you have had has shown vulnerability? What did that experience (seeing a leader showing vulnerability) mean to you?
4. How do you define emotional intelligence and what importance do you think it has in the workplace?
5. Do you agree with the criticisms of servant leadership? In reviewing the downside of servant leadership, what challenges do you think would occur if this model was implemented in your work setting? Do you think your leader/team could overcome these challenges?

PART 3: THE ACTUAL PRACTICE OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP**BEGINNING THE PRACTICE OF SERVANT-LEADERSHIP**

- a) Developing a Psychological Safety Playbook
- b) Case Studies on the U of M Call Center and Starbuck's: Building and Instilling a Servant Led Culture

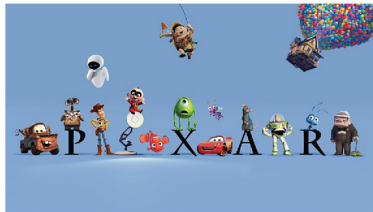


PART 3A: DEVELOPING A PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY PLAYBOOK

The foundation of a servant leadership culture is rooted in psychological safety.

Promoting a psychologically safe “speak up” environment, where people feel comfortable asserting independent opinions and providing honest feedback, can not only promote innovation and creative risk-taking but also keep ethical behavior in check (Bastian, 2019).

In *The Culture Code: The Secrets of Highly Successful Groups*, Coyle (2018) examines high performing groups and the dynamics of results oriented teams. Coyle (2018) uses Edmonson's work on psychological safety as a platform to further uncover the secret of developing successful teams.



From TechNadu, January 8, 2021, <https://www.technadu.com/watch-pixar-movies-in-order-chronological-or-pixar-theory/238553/>



From https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/a/a2/San_Antonio_Spurs.svg



From <https://designthinking.ideo.com>

Coyle (2018) visits some of the world's most productive groups--including Pixar, Navy SEALs, Zappos, IDEO, and the San Antonio Spurs in an attempt to cast the spotlight on great teamwork and develop a psychological safety playbook (Coyle, 2018).

Coyle (2018) explores productive and achievement oriented groups and how members interact in a positive manner with one another. Coyle's (2018) research identifies three tenants that help teams flourish:

- 1) Build an environment rich in psychological safety.
- 2) Create a setting where team members feel comfortable being vulnerable.
- 3) Reinforce a sense of mission and purpose within the organization and the team.

Coyle (2018) provides a solid foundation for leaders to build psychological safety and thereby hone successful teams.

BUILD SAFETY



From Alert Media, April 22, 2022,, <https://www.alertmedia.com/blog/safety-culture-examples>

Coyle (2018) recommends that leaders continually look for belonging cues that illustrate a team's operating principles. These cues provide a window into the values of the group and how leadership can align with those values. Building safety is not synonymous with creating happiness although that may be an end result. Instead, the best teams can handle and embrace raw feedback even if it comes with discomfort but nonetheless safety is an absolute prerequisite.

SHARE VULNERABILITY

“ *When we share our vulnerable stories and breakthroughs, they can help create a bridge for another person to cross.* ”
- Megan Febuary

<https://www.meganfebruary.com>

Just as pilots give “cockpit notifications” teams need to demonstrate vulnerability in addressing challenges. They need to give informal messaging to one another that is candid yet supportive. Cooperation stems from shared vulnerability. Coyle (2018) shares examples of leaders who are open and vulnerable with their teams about errors, doubts and mistakes, even in autocratic, chain of command environments such as the Navy Seals. When people are openly vulnerable (including leaders), this gives the entire team the notion that ‘we are in this together.’

ESTABLISH PURPOSE



Highly successful teams are purpose driven and able to connect their daily work to their overall purpose. Organizations need to be able to tell their story and every team member needs to be tuned into that narrative.

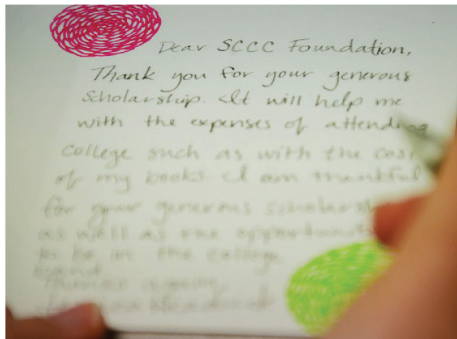
CASE STUDY



Adam Grant, Author and Organizational Psychologist
From <https://review.firstround.com/adam-grant-on-interviewing-to-hire-trailblazers-nonconformists-and-originals>



From <https://blaze.today/blog/best-tools-for-support-professionals>



From Crusader News <https://crusadernews.com/21032/lifestyles/sc-life/writing-a-thank-you-to-donors>

Adam Grant, author and organizational psychologist, researched University of Michigan's call centers and the low performance with regard to soliciting alumni donations. The rejection rate was abysmal and morale at the call center was low. Grant focused on connecting the team to the impact of the donations they were trying to raise. For example, Grant shared a letter (with the call center employees) from a student who

had received a scholarship through alumni donations, the monetary award was life changing in his educational journey. Once the call center workers became connected to the greater purpose of soliciting money from alumni, the donations started to pour into the call center. (Coyle, 2018).

PART 3B: CASE STUDY, STARBUCKS, BUILDING AND INSTILLING A SERVANT LED CULTURE

The Importance of a Servant Leadership Culture at Starbucks



From Bloomberg, October 16, 2014, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2014-10-16/starbucks-ceo-readies-thousands-of-workers-for-a-tough-year-ahead?leadSource=uverify%20wall>

Howard Schultz's leadership style at Starbucks is admired and analyzed by many scholars. As the corporation's chief executive officer (CEO), he applied servant leadership efficiently in order to empower his followers. This practice resulted in a positive culture that continues to drive the company's performance

- StudyCorgi, 2021, para. 1

The largest coffee chain in the world, has a reputation for creating a culture of openness and putting employees as a top priority. Serving as company president from 1995 until his retirement in 2003, Howard Behar partnered with CEO Howard Schultz to revolutionize Starbucks from a regional Pacific Northwest coffee chain (with just 28 stores across) to a brand with a strong global identity. One of Behar's primary goals was to integrate a compassion-based servant leadership model into the growing coffee chain. (Greenleaf, 2015).

In 2022, Schultz served as interim CEO and his servant leadership approach has stood the test of time. Howard Schultz's leadership style at Starbucks is admired and analyzed by many scholars. As the corporation's chief executive officer (CEO), he applied servant leadership efficiently in order to empower his followers. This practice resulted in a positive culture that continues to drive the company's performance.



Senior Leadership Meets with Store and District Managers, From Business Today, November 9, 2022, <https://www.businesstoday.in/latest/trends/story/starbucks-new-ceo-laxman-narasimhan-has-a-new-talent-he-is-now-barista-certified-352322-2022-11-09>

Once psychological safety was established and managers had confidence that they could speak up without fear of reprisal, the following questions were asked:

- What do you like about Starbucks?
- What do you want to keep doing?
- What do you want to change?

(Greenleaf, 2015).

OPEN FORUMS WITH BARISTAS "ASK LEADERSHIP ANYTHING"

Behar (Retired President of Starbucks) proclaims that he provided complete transparency to baristas at Open Forums. Even when asked about his own annual 1.3 million Plus salary. (Greenleaf, 2015).



From JobLagi, <https://joblagi.com/article/starbucks-hiring-near-me-remote-jobs-starbucks-virtual-jobs>



Forum Discussion

Baristas were invited to come to ask questions and raise any concerns to help open up the organization and build trust. Behar shared that he provided complete transparency even when asked about his own annual salary. (Greenleaf, 2015). In 2003, for example, Behar exercised options worth \$5.4 million last year. Behar earned about \$1.3 million in salary and bonus in fiscal 2002 and received \$250,000 new stock options.

SOCIAL JUSTICE FORUMS



From Jolt News, May 14, 2021, Image by Arloo, <https://www.thejoltnews.com/stories/city-of-olympia-invites-residents-to-virtual-discussion-about-new-social-justice-and-equity,1992>

“ We at Starbucks should be willing to talk about these issues in America. Not to point fingers or to place blame, and not because we have answers, but because staying silent is not who we are. ”

- Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz

After the fatal shooting of Michael Brown by a police officer, a series of protests and riots occurred in Ferguson Missouri in 2014. During this time of raw emotional upheaval, Starbucks launched forums centered on social justice issues. Starbucks chairman and CEO Howard Schultz said, "We at Starbucks should be willing to talk about these issues in America. Not to point fingers or to place blame, and not because we have answers, but because staying silent is not who we are." (Bogado, 2015, para. 3).

As a result of discussions at forums with Starbucks partners (employees) in St. Louis, and other cities across the country, Starbucks made a pledge to hire a minimum of 10,000 opportunity youth, those young people who were not in school or did not hold employment. (Starbucks, 2017).

EXAMPLE OF A VALUES STATEMENT

MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY VALUES STATEMENT (2022)

“ *The most important thing leaders can do is live, eat and breathe whatever culture they want and then constantly reinforce and communicate their key values with employees.* **”**
- Greenleaf, 2015, para. 4

Behar recommends capturing ideas in writing and developing a values statement to reinforce and communicate the key components which will build a thriving culture. As Behar explains, "the most important thing leaders can do is live, eat and breathe whatever culture they want and then constantly reinforce and communicate their key values with employees" (Behar as cited in Greenleaf, 2015, para.4).

Our Values



Excellence: We encourage and promote excellence through innovation and creativity, critical thinking, and problem solving.



Integrity: We are honest and ethical in all our interactions, maintaining the highest ethical/moral standards in teaching and learning, research, and public engagement.



Collaboration: We engage in respectful collaborations that promote success in education, research, practice, and public engagement.



Accountability: We accept responsibility for achieving common goals and objectives.



Leadership: We embrace and foster leadership in education, practice, and research, engaging with others to contribute to knowledge and skills that improve people's health and well-being.



Sustainability: We act in a manner that is environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable in administration, academic, and research programs.

From Memorial University, School of Pharmacy <https://www.mun.ca/pharmacy/about-us/>

POINTS OF REFLECTION AND ACTION

Submit a minimum of 10 sentences (maximum of 20) to answer the following questions:

- What would the psychological playbook look like to ensure psychological safety in your work setting?
- Can you describe a time when you showed vulnerability to your colleagues?
- Once psychological safety was established without the fear of reprisal, what direct questions would you ask your staff in order to uncover how they really feel about the work setting?
- Draft a values statement for your current work setting.

BREAK OUT ROOMS

- If you were to design a social justice forum for your workplace, what issues would you address and why?
- What are six core values of your organization and why?
- Can you describe a time when you were able to connect mission to an initiative and share with your staff?
- Can you think of a time when the mission regarding an initiative was not communicated? What were these experiences like for you as a leader?

**PART 4: SERVANT LEADERSHIP STUDY:
STRAIGHT TALK FROM UNIVERSITY SERVANT LEADERS****EXAMINING SERVANT LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS IN HIGHER EDUCATION:
EXPLORATION OF A COMPASSION-BASED LEADERSHIP MODEL
THROUGH THE LENS OF UNIVERSITY LEADERS**

This qualitative research study examined the potential of “servant leadership” in a university setting by focusing on specific enumerated behaviors of 10 leaders who practice servant leadership within a specific university. In direct contrast to the growing trends of increased accountability and cost-cutting measures, many of which are incongruous with the mission and values of higher education, servant leadership seeks to unlock team members’ potential to thrive by cultivating empowerment through empathetic leadership. The underlying theory is that compassion-based leaders in higher education contribute to fulfilled staff members. A positive work culture, in a university setting, directly impacts employee well-being, psychological safety, productivity, retention, service delivery, and programming. (Wheeler, 2012).

The study (Johansen, 2023) took an expansive look at servant leader behaviors, along with the rewards and challenges of the model, as well as external factors affecting the university and its

leadership. This qualitative study specifically examined how servant leaders (of staff) lead. The study identified and explored leader-specific behaviors that contribute to creating a compassion-based, servant leadership culture, as well as those servant leader-oriented behaviors which may pose a challenge to exhibit in a leadership capacity. Through the words and direct experiences of ten university leaders, the research seeks to clarify how servant leaders act and interact with those they lead. Both the advantages and the disadvantages of the servant leadership model, and its application in higher education were explored.

HIGHLIGHTS OF STUDY

- Purely Qualitative Study Conducted at R1 Research Institution on the West Coast
- Ten University Servant Leaders Interviewed with Five to 20 Plus Years of Experience
- Validated Servant Leaders through Servant Leadership Profile Revised (SLP-R) Self-Assessment
- Leaders were referred to as Leader 1-Leader 10

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The research clarifies how servant leaders in higher education practice servant leadership with staff, specifically how they act and interact with those they lead.



From ethicalboardroom <https://ethicalboardroom.com/behavioural-auditing>

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE STUDY

Corporate Attitudes and Datafication in Higher Education

In the current environment, the most important measures in higher education are assessments, learning outcomes, metrics, data analysis, and key performance indicators (Hendry et al., 2023).

Colleges and universities have responded by implementing private sector leadership models along with cost cutting and revenue generating measures (Hendry et al., 2023; Dean, 2014). As Dean



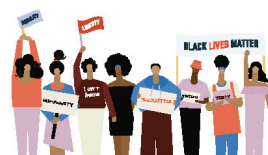
(2014) laments, "Corporate attitudes and practices, many ill-fitting, have encroached on colleges and universities" (p. 274).

The intermingling of business and academic cultures brings both challenges and opportunities to explore.

Triple Pandemic Affecting Higher Education

The United States as a nation, and higher education as a system, has faced a Triple Pandemic Threat. The global pandemic resulted in a distressed economy compounded by both the Great Resignation and systemic racism (Harper-Anderson et al., 2023).

It is a critical time to examine the positives and downside of the servant leadership model and inherent behaviors of leaders has faced a Triple Pandemic Threat (Egede et al., 2020).



INTERVIEW QUESTION FOR UNIVERSITY SERVANT LEADERS IN STUDY

Interview I

- 1) In your work as a servant leader at the university, what are three (3) specific practices that you implemented and what has been the impact? What training initiatives and/or professional development have you implemented that reinforce the practices of servant leadership?
- 2) As a higher education leader, in looking at enacting servant leadership practices, which behaviors have you been able to implement with ease and which have presented the greatest challenges? As a servant leader, what are the advantages and disadvantages of this type of leadership?
- 3) As a university leader, of the seven behaviors inherent in servant leadership (conceptualizing, emotional healing, putting followers first, helping followers grow and succeed, behaving ethically, empowering, and creating value for the community) (Northouse, 2016) which do you find to be the top three for leaders in higher education and what is your rationale?
- 4) Goleman (2006) contends there are five components of emotional intelligence. Can you offer an example of how you have demonstrated each in a leadership capacity? 1) Self-awareness. 2) Self-regulation 3) Motivation 4) Empathy 5) Social skills.

Interview II

- 5) To what extent is servant leadership a model that would be positively aligned with the goals, mission, values, and work culture inherent in your work setting?
- 6) Tell me about a specific time when you provided support to a direct report.
- 7) If I spoke with past and current direct reports, how would they describe your leadership style?
- 8) Do you think the global pandemic has impacted your ability to practice servant leadership? If it has, please provide specific examples.

Interview I: Question 1 (Part I) Asks Leaders

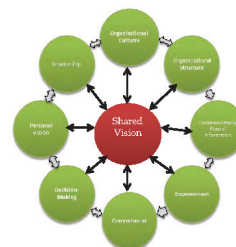
In your work as a servant leader at the university, what are three (3) specific practices that you implemented and what has been the impact?

The majority of leaders cited the following three practices as impactful in practicing servant leadership in higher education and provided commentary (see Table 1):

- 1) Investing time in Staff
- 2) Mentoring and Modeling Integrity and Kindness
- 3) Building a Strong Team through Collaboration, Providing Support, and Developing a Shared Vision

Table 1: Findings: Three Shared Practices of Servant Leadership

PRACTICE	LEADER COMMENTARY
1. Investing Time in Staff	1a) Open Door Policy 1b) Making Formal Scheduled One-On-One Meetings with Staff a Priority 1c) Adding Meeting During Times of Challenge (i.e., COVID Enhanced Connectivity) 1d) Remaining Accessible to Staff 1e) Maintaining a Physical (On-Site) Presence 1f) Regular All Staff Meetings
2. Mentoring and Modeling Integrity, Kindness, and Participation	2a) Creating Psychological Safety in the Workplace 2b) Modeling Goodwill, Patience, and Being Participatory 2c) Leading with Ethics and Integrity 2d) Role Modeling the Concept of Involvement
3. Building a Strong Team through Collaboration, Providing Support, and Developing a Shared Vision	3a) Creating Opportunities for Collaboration 3b) Providing Support in Goal Setting and Managing Workflow 3c) Building and Communicating a Shared Organizational Vision

INVESTING TIME**MENTORING AND MODELING INTEGRITY AND KINDNESS****BUILDING A STRONG TEAM THROUGH COLLABORATION
THROUGH PROVIDING SUPPORT AND DEVELOPING A SHARED VISION**

From <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/A-Review-of-Shared-Vision-and-its-Application-an-Fischer/c2e740a344c70915d-41fad26d7fbcf4aa48e84c7>

SUMMARY OF SERVANT LEADER BEHAVIORS AND INSIGHTS OF STUDY PARTICIPANTS

Top Three Behaviors

In terms of behaviors that rise to the top for the servant leaders in this study they include: Investment of Time, Mentoring, and Modeling Behaviors while Leveraging Collaboration, Support and a Shared Vision to Build a Strong Team.

Time

The servant leaders in this study prioritize time and proactively plan out their schedules to provide support for their respective teams. It is important for these leaders to be consistently available for their staff and not let e-mails, meetings, projects, and other work obligations get in the way of meeting staff where they are. The leaders in this study make themselves available to meet one-on-one and also as a team. They have scheduled meetings but are also open to impromptu discussions. In one case, the leader interviewed makes attempts to physically connect with his team each day. Given these leaders consistently connect with their staff, they increase the level of connectivity to make their team members feel valued and supported.

Quotes from Servant Leaders in Higher Education: Investing Time

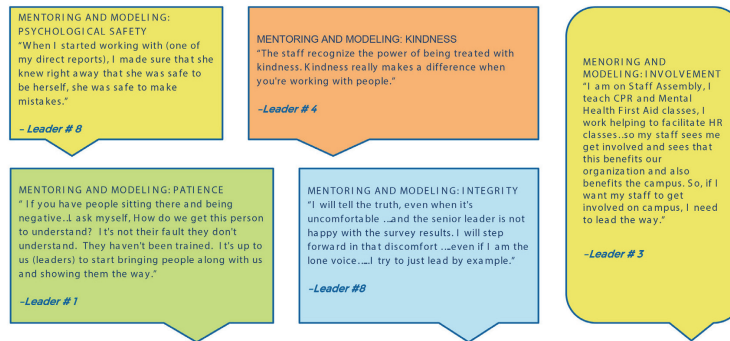


Mentoring and Modeling Behaviors

The servant leaders interviewed in this study follow an ethical approach to leadership whereby doing the right thing and being a role model to staff is of the highest priority and does not require

ample effort. With a values-driven approach, they aspire to create a psychologically safe workplace and lead by example. They show their staff by doing and thereby encourage greater participation and enhanced involvement.

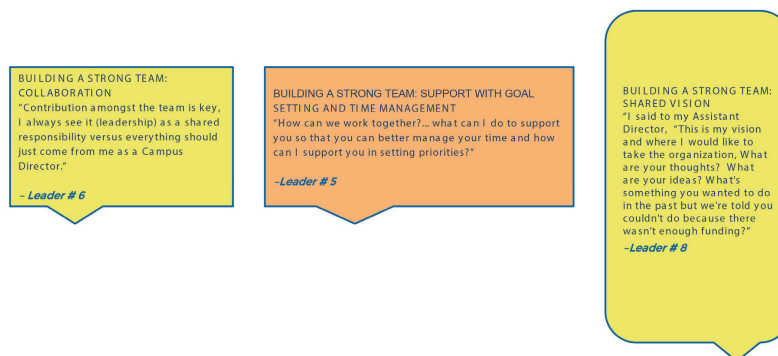
**Quotes from Servant Leaders in Higher Education:
Mentoring and Modeling Integrity, Kindness,
and Participation.**



Building a Strong Team

The leaders actively build their teams through fostering a collaborative work environment, supporting with individual and group goal setting, and effectively managing workflow while developing a shared vision.

Quotes from Servant Leaders in Higher Education: Building a Strong Team



Interview I: Question 1 (Part II) Asks Leaders

What training initiatives and/or professional development have you implemented that reinforces the practices of servant leadership?

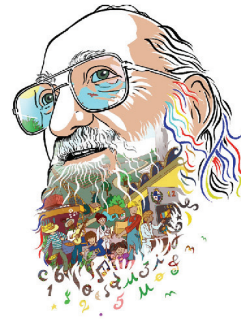
Leader Responses: Servant Leadership Practices: Training and Development

- Using Strengths Related Assessments with Staff
- Giving Release Time for Professional Development and Training
- Encouraging Staff to Participate in University Sponsored Series Offered to Staff
- Inviting Guest Speakers who are Subject Matter Experts to Present to Staff
- Provide Training and Development around Diversity, Equity Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) Issues in General and Specific to the Workplace



Guest Speakers: Incorporating the Work of Paulo Freire

One study participant (Leader #3) spoke of incorporating the philosophy of the Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire, (who was a leading advocate of critical pedagogy) into their department's staff training program.



DEIB/Implicit Bias

In the aftermath of George Floyd's murder, Leader #5 shared that the staff was engaged in training around Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

From <https://www.clasco.org/a-101-anos-del-nacimiento-de-paulo-freire>



and Belonging (DEIB) issues, "We completed implicit bias training in 2020 (as a team) as a result of the George Floyd incident and the racial reckoning that occurred."

From <https://hr.berkeley.edu/grow/grow-your-deib>

Breaking Boundaries through Courageous Leadership Exercises

Leader #6 launched a reflective exercise where staff presented on leaders who challenge the status quo and demonstrated courage in leadership. The staff were asked to bring in quotes or other content that exemplifies leading with courage and conviction. Based on the courageous leaders selected by staff members, this exercise can help university leaders identify passion areas for those they supervise (i.e., Social justice, leading with innovation).

Courageous leadership is about using your influence to **challenge the way things are** and where we're headed because you know **we need to do better.**

- Tanveer Naseer

From <https://tanveernaseer.com/why-courageous-leadership-is-critical-for-today/>

Quotes from Servant Leaders in Higher Education: Training

TRAINING: DEIB ISSUES

"We completed implicit bias training in 2020 (as a team) as a result of the George Floyd incident and the racial reckoning that occurred."

-Leader # 5

TRAINING: COURAGEOUS LEADERSHIP

"As a team, we've had courageous leadership reflective sessions. Team members are encouraged to share (on this topic) whether it's an article, a book, or a quote or a story...about leaders with courage."

-Leader # 3

TRAINING: PAULO FREIRE

"We did training with an expert in Paulo Freire's work: 'Everyone is a teacher and everyone can learn' is what we base our work on. We try to be less hierarchical...more interactive using creative methods like art, dance, videos, journaling and discussion. It has been a huge success and resonates with all of our staff."

-Leader # 4

Interview I: Question 2 Asks Leaders

As a higher education leader, in looking at enacting servant leadership practices, which behaviors have you been able to implement with ease and which have presented the greatest challenges? As a servant leader, what are the advantages and disadvantages of this type of leadership?

Effortless and Challenging Servant Leader Behaviors

Leading Ethically (Effortless)

In prioritizing the well-being of others and serving as positive role models for staff, the leaders in this study are dedicated to fostering ethical work climates. Leading ethically comes naturally for the leaders interviewed.

Putting Others First (Important yet Challenging)

Being a selfless leader and putting the priorities of others first can lead to compassion burnout. The leaders reported side effects including exhaustion and, at the extreme, for one senior executive level leader, feeling devalued and dehumanized.

Quotes from Servant Leaders in Higher Education: Behaviors



Advantages and Disadvantages

In terms of the advantages and disadvantages of servant leadership, the leaders shared a number of strengths and perceived lesser strengths of the model.

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows for Maximum Growth and Development of Others • Leadership by Example • Builds a Positive Work Environment • Encourages Others to be Leaders • Creates a Culture of Belonging, Trust and Loyalty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time Intensive • Lack of Productivity and Longer Decision Making Processes • Leader can be Perceived as Weak • Trying to Please Everyone • Sometimes does not Fit with Traditional HR Rules and Regulations Particularly with Progressive Discipline Issues

Quotes from Servant Leaders in Higher Education: Advantages

ADVANTAGES: INSTILLING LEADERSHIP IN OTHERS
 "I think servant leadership fosters leadership in everyone."
 -Leader #4

ADVANTAGES: GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT
 "You create an environment, whether it's for your team or for your students, where they're safe to show up and do good work there, they feel nurtured, and they're able to flourish."
 -Leader #8

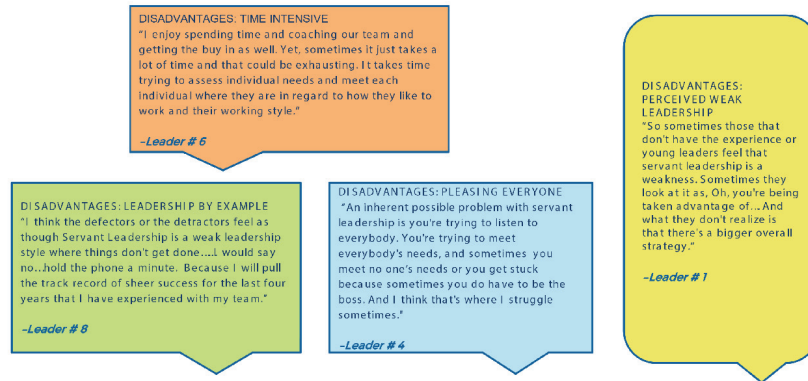
ADVANTAGES: TRUST, LOYALTY, AND BELONGING
 "Leading with compassion, honesty, hard work, kindness, and praise are advantageous as they promote trust, teamwork, understanding, job satisfaction, and overall success."
 -Leader #7

ADVANTAGES: LEADERSHIP BY EXAMPLE
 "I think the one of the advantages is leadership by example. I can show how things work. I can offer my own efforts, my labor, my knowledge, my experience to show why things can work. And that can sometimes overcome some of the obstacles informal one on ones daily."
 -Leader #3

ADVANTAGES: POSITIVE WORK CULTURE
 "In terms of the advantages, I certainly think it (Servant Leadership) instills a very positive work, culture and climate if you do the things that a servant leader would do."
 -Leader #2



Quotes from Servant Leaders in Higher Education: Disadvantages



Interview I: Question 3 Asks Leaders

As a university leader, of the seven behaviors inherent in servant leadership (conceptualizing, emotional healing, putting followers first, helping followers grow and succeed, behaving ethically, empowering, and creating value for the community) (Northouse, 2016) which do you find to be the top three for leaders in higher education and what is your rationale?

After years of conducting research on Greenleaf's original writings, Spears (2010) identified a set of ten behaviors of the servant leader that he viewed as being core to the development and critical to the practice of servant-leadership. These ten behaviors include:

Servant Leadership Behaviors

1. **Conceptualization.** The servant leaders' ability (by understanding the organization including its purpose and mission) to anticipate problems and plan for optimal responses to future issues.
2. **Emotional Healing.** The servant leader is sensitive to and concerned with the well-being of others.
3. **Putting Followers First.** The servant leader puts the welfare of his followers before his own.
4. **Helping Others Grow and Succeed.** The servant leader, by understanding the goals of their

followers, promotes the personal and professional development of the individual.

5. **Behaving Ethically.** The servant leaders does the correct thing in the correct way and has a moral center.
6. **Empowering.** The servant leader allows followers the freedom to make decisions and be self-sufficient.
7. **Creating Value for the Community.** By giving back to the community the servant leader creates values, purpose and goals for the community. (Northouse, 2016, p. 239).

BEHAVIOR	LEADER COMMENTARY
1. Empowerment	1a) Spurring Innovation 1b) Providing Validation 1c) Instilling Confidence
2. Helping Followers Grow and Succeed	2a) Creating a Culture of Psychological Safety 2b) Mentorship 2c) Identifying Growth Opportunities 2d) Long Term Career Development Coaching to Set Staff Up for Success
3. Conceptualizing	3a) Strategic Planning 3b) Overarching Vision 3c) Ease of Implementation

Empowerment

Empowerment is one of the most important characteristics of servant leadership. Greenleaf has often been revered as “the father of the empowerment movement” (Buchen, 1998; Russell & Stone, 2002).



p55

According to Northouse (2016) "empowerment is the process of enabling individuals to take control for themselves of the factors surrounding their circumstances" (p. 702). Servant leadership puts team members first, empowering them to become the best they can be (Northouse, 2016).

Of the 10 leaders interviewed, empowerment was one of the top three behaviors and, in terms of the leaders, each had their own interpretation of the meaning behind empowering others.

Helping Followers Grow and Succeed

Helping followers grow and succeed calls upon a servant leader to support the professional and personal goals of those they lead (Northouse 2022). Northouse (2022) clarifies that "helping followers grow and succeed is about aiding these individuals to become self-actualized, reaching their fullest human potential" (p. 262).



The leaders in this study are committed to fostering the growth and development of staff in a number of ways from environmental to developmental.

Conceptualizing

Servant leaders are intent on manifesting, nurturing, and sustaining the ability to "dream great dreams" (Spears, 2010). Conceptualizing, through the lens of servant leadership, is explained as, "The ability to look at a problem (or an organization) from a conceptualizing perspective means that one must think beyond day-to-day realities. For many leaders this is a characteristic that requires discipline and practice (Spears, 2012, p. 15). Additionally, "The traditional leader is driven to accomplish short-term and immediate operational goals. The leader who subscribes to the servant



leader philosophy must expand their leadership orientation to include "broader-based conceptual thinking" (Ross, 2006).

Quotes from Servant Leaders in Higher Education: Top Three Behaviors: EMPOWERMENT

**EMPOWERMENT:
SPURRING INNOVATION**
"I enjoy allowing my supervisees to have close to full authority to run their areas. I love to see them run with their ideas and use their skills and expertise many times in ways I would not have thought of myself."
-Leader # 4

EMPOWERMENT: PROVIDING VALIDATION
"I think an important part of a leader's job in higher education, in general, is empowering right. I mean that's part of the motivating, trying to do things that individuals will respond to, so that they feel good. That they do work that they do well so that they go home and they feel like they've used their strengths."
-Leader # 2

**EMPOWERMENT:
INSTILLING CONFIDENCE**
"Even though I know that the definition includes... making their own decisions and being self-sufficient, I think there's something about empowering and empowerment that includes: 'I know you can do this and I'll provide help along the way for you to be able to feel confident.' To me, empowerment is about confidence. Right?"
-Leader # 9

Quotes from Servant Leaders in Higher Education: Top Three Behaviors: HELPING FOLLOWERS GROW AND SUCCEED

GROW AND SUCCEED: PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY
"Creating an environment of safety, trust, and transparency is critical to people feeling secure, enthusiastic, and motivated."
-Leader # 7

GROW AND SUCCEED: MENTORSHIP
"I think it's up to us to start bringing people along with us...showing them the way...helping followers grow and succeed. Developing staff is so important. Mentorship through leadership."
Leader # 1

**GROW AND SUCCEED:
LONG-TERM CAREER PLANNING**
"So instead of thinking about what's the next job you want...think about the next and the next one, because then they can also start talking to those people (in those positions) now to understand, is this something I really want to do?"
-Leader # 9

**GROW AND SUCCEED:
GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES**
"So the first conversation I had with 'Elena' (my direct report) was around professional development where I said, 'You are so talented and you're not going to get stuck here'... I saw a Director position come up in Oakland so, of course, I forwarded it to her."
-Leader # 8

Quotes from Servant Leaders in Higher Education: Top Three Behaviors: CONCEPTUALIZING

**CONCEPTUALIZING:
STRATEGIC PLANNING**
"Conceptualizing is a priority...So the first 90 days that I took the position at the university, I executed strategic planning...We needed to get operationally and as an organization...where we were going...first."
-Leader # 1

CONCEPTUALIZING - OVERARCHING VISION
"The overarching vision for the organization is important. I don't know that I would have been able to create the things I would have if we didn't have that shared understanding of the conceptualization, right?"
-Leader # 8

**CONCEPTUALIZING:
EASE OF IMPLEMENTATION**
"Of the behaviors of Servant Leadership, the easiest for me is probably conceptualizing a plan of action."
-Leader # 5

Interview I: Question 4 Asks Leaders

Goleman (2006) contends there are five components of emotional intelligence. Can you offer an example of how you have demonstrated each in a leadership capacity? 1) Self-awareness. 2) Self-regulation 3) Motivation 4) Empathy 5) Social skills?

Inspiring and effective leaders must not only be concerned with their technical and operational competencies but also the emotional component of the role. As Landry (2019) explains about the mechanics of emotional intelligence, "It's what helps you successfully coach teams, manage stress, deliver feedback, and collaborate with others" (para. 1).

Emotional intelligence is defined as having the aptitude to comprehend and be in charge of your own emotions, as well as understand and have an impact on the emotions of those who are in your circle of influence (Landry, 2019). Psychologist Daniel Goleman popularized the concept and emphasized how critical it is to leadership. "The most effective leaders are all alike in one crucial way: They all have a high degree of what has come to be known as emotional intelligence" (Landry, 2019, para. 4).

As George (2000) submits, emotional intelligence and self-awareness are rudimentary to servant leadership. Emotional intelligence is deeply embedded in the framework of compassion-based leadership and is believed to be "both theoretically and practically relevant to servant leadership" Emotional intelligence is a predictor of servant leadership, so it is an integral dimension in addressing this topic (Roark & Beuthin, 2014).

Leaders who are emotionally intelligent are better equipped to navigate complex dynamics that can occur in the workplace. As Roark and Beuthin (2014) contend, leaders who analyze how their own perceptions of servant leadership behaviors compare to the assessments of their followers can have an enhanced relationship with those they supervise. Awareness of followers perceptions is not just for consolation of a job well done, or good interpersonal relationships, but as Greenleaf (1977) offers, awareness leads to "an awakening of an individual" with the goal of working towards a highly developed "moral, interpersonal relationship" with those they lead (p. 250).

The Five Components of Emotional Intelligence at Work

	DEFINITION	HALLMARKS
Self-Awareness	The ability to recognize and understand your moods, emotions, and drives, as well as their effect on others	Self-confidence Realistic self-assessment Self-deprecating sense of humor
Self-Regulation	The ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods The propensity to suspend judgment - to think before acting	Trustworthiness and integrity Comfort with ambiguity Openness to change
Motivation	A passion to work for reasons that go beyond money or status A propensity to pursue goals with energy and persistence	Strong drive to achieve Optimism, even in the face of failure Organizational commitment
Empathy	The ability to understand the emotional makeup of other people Skill in treating people according to their emotional reactions	Expertise in building and retaining talent Cross-cultural sensitivity Service to clients and customers
Social Skill	Proficiency in managing relationships and building networks An ability to find common ground and build rapport	Effectiveness in leading change Persuasiveness Expertise in building and leading teams

Goleman, D. (1998a)

Emotional Intelligence Domains and Leader Commentary Themes

1. SELF-AWARENESS	2. SELF-REGULATION	3. MOTIVATION	4. SOCIAL SKILLS
1. Spending time in self-reflection 2. Engaging the whole person approach 3. Avoiding oversteering in a leadership role 4. Soliciting feedback for growth	1. Using one's voice strategically 2. Thoughtful and discerning communication 3. Being cognizant of workplace triggers	1. Mission and purpose as a driving force 2. Focus on manageable parts 3. Democratizing access to opportunities	1. Creating relationships 2. Facilitating change 3. Modeling the way to react

Quotes from Servant Leaders in Higher Education: Emotional Intelligence

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: EMPATHY
 "People look at you as a leader. Are you going to understand their situation? Have you been in their shoes?... It's easy to get lost in other avenues of leadership, and not think of those people who are actually getting the work done." -Leader #1

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: SELF-REGULATION
 "I often take time to read an email and re-read a response to one to make sure I am clear, concise, and kind. I am also learning to pause before speaking so that I am careful not to overshadow someone, mispeak, or talk too much." -Leader #7

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: SELF-AWARENESS
 "As leaders we need to let others share their ideas, give space for those who may not be as vocal, and not listen to understand. This is especially important when we are dealing with an issue or sensitive topic. I also ask people I trust to give me feedback and suggestions for growth as I trust them to be honest with me, but kind also." -Leader #7

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: SOCIAL SKILLS
 "For me, social skills show my adaptability in motion. The first question I ask when someone does make a mistake is, did anybody else? Is the house on fire? It can be remedied where, sure, we had one mistake that ultimately cost us \$40,000. And it's yes, it's a big deal, but am I going to berate somebody over this? No I am not." -Leader #8

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE: MOTIVATION
 "I focus on pointing out the good work that they've done... Even if there's a high performer, the high performer also has their own high expectations and feels like maybe they're not getting everything done because there's just so much to do.... So it's helping them (my team) realize you don't have to accomplish everything all at once." -Leader #5

Interview II: Question 5 Asks Leaders

To what extent is servant leadership a model that would be positively aligned with the goals, mission, values, and work culture inherent in your work setting.



The leaders responded to this question covering the following areas:

- Overall Alignment with Higher Education
- Alignment with Compliance Based Units on Campus
- A View through the lens of the University's Strategic Plan
- Implementation with External Groups

Servant Leadership: Overall Alignment with Higher Education.

The majority of the leaders contend that servant leadership is a strong fit for a university setting. However, the responses to this question are quite layered and nuanced. This question is rooted in complexity as well as subjectivity in terms of the lens of the leaders and depending on the mission as well as the charge of the leader's immediate work group and overall unit.

Interview II: Question 6 Asks Leaders

To what extent is servant leadership a model that would be positively aligned with the goals, mission, values, and work culture inherent in your work setting?

Leaders Providing Support to Direct Reports in a Multitude of Ways

PROVIDING DAILY SUPPORT AND EMERGENCY INTERVENTIONS	TROUBLESHOOTING, PREVENTING BURNOUT AND ADVOCATING FOR STAFF RESOURCES	TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT OF STAFF
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day to Day Support • Emergency Interventions • Support During Employee Health Crises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting Work Life Balance • Preventing Burn Out • Advocating for Improved Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Employee Onboarding Support • Identifying and Encouraging (DEIB) Professional Development Opportunities

The literature and empirical studies show that servant leadership nurtures the emotional well-being of employees due to the creation of a positive and psychologically safe work environment created (Jit et al., 2017; Black, 2010; Jaramillo et al., 2009; Nuebert et al., 2008).

Each leader in this study was able to recall a specific instance where they provided emotional support to direct reports. The answers ranged from stepping in to provide day-to-day support to intervening in sensitive situations to mitigating emergencies to advocating for training and resources for staff.



Quotes from Servant Leaders in Higher Education: Providing Support

SUPPORT: TRAINING
 "Every time we have a new staff member, I've really taken upon myself ...to introduce them to partners on campus, to show them where the information is on the computer, and to encourage them to make the job their own."
-Leader # 7

SUPPORT: DAY-TO-DAY
 "I do this every day, it's just what I do. Yesterday, it was helping to set up the big classroom we had to turn over....we had to take out the tables and put in all the chairs. My staff would have done it without me, but I believe that is what servant leadership is, to me, servant leadership is to be in there and help."
-Leader # 3

SUPPORT: HEALTH CRISIS
 "My Associate Director was having major health problems and she needed to take an extended leave of absence for an operation. And she was very worried about taking that time off. I sat her down and said, absolutely do not worry about the work. The work will always be there. Your health is number one."
-Leader # 4

SUPPORT: PREVENTING BURN-OUT
 "I have an employee on my team who is part time. ...And I learned that the employee was kind of getting burned out because they had put in a lot of time beyond the hours for which they were getting paid. The plan was to be able to increase the employee's time to make it more in alignment with the amount of time that it takes for this kind of role. I also then put in a request for a Star Award to recognize that extra work."
-Leader # 5

SUPPORT: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
 "I asked the staff member if they wanted to participate in a number of system wide and campus based HSI initiatives."
-Leader # 10

Interview II: Question 7 Asks

Leaders

If I spoke with past and current direct reports, how would they describe your leadership style?

With its people centered focus, servant leadership fosters an



ethical workplace and a culture of trust (Burton et al., 2017). Each of the leaders were asked how they felt their team would describe their leadership style.

With its people centered focus, servant leadership fosters an ethical workplace and a culture of trust (Burton et al., 2017). Each of the leaders were asked how they felt their team would describe their leadership style.

The leaders shared insights regarding how they feel their staff would describe how they actually lead their respective teams, covering the following categories of leadership:

- Approachability
- Providing Support
- Producing Results
- Stepping in Too Much
- Not Matching the Stereotype of a Leader
- Follow Through
- Communication
- Building Positive Relationships
- Letting Staff Shine



Interview II: Question 8 Asks Leaders

Do you think the global pandemic has impacted your ability to practice servant leadership? If it has, please provide specific examples.

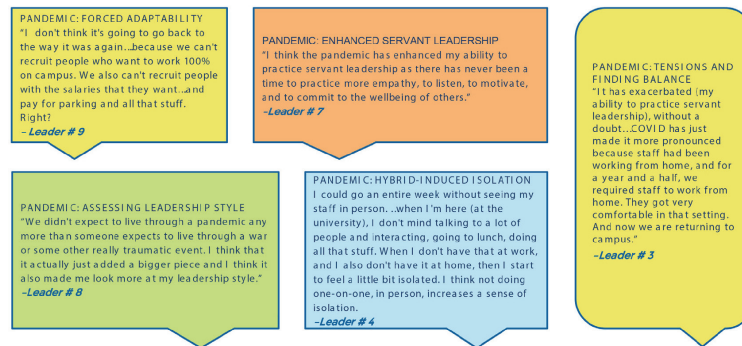
Higher education will never be the same after the global pandemic. During this period of post-COVID reflection and recovery, university leaders are facing many layers of ambiguity and scores of questions from university staff, many without concrete answers. They are grappling with how to pivot, adjust, and move forward, maintaining necessary institutional operations, while inspiring a movement towards future resilience (Thompson et al., 2023).

For the leaders that participated in this study, navigating this post-lockdown world means facing many challenges and unprecedented areas of uncertainty along with opportunities for reimagining the future. The following are some of the issues the leaders in the study discussed:

- Wrestling with Remote versus In-person and/or Hybrid Work Models

- Pandemic-Inspired Leadership Growth and Development.
- Assessing One's Own Leadership Style and Consider Ways to Improve.
- Pandemic and Hybrid Work-Induced Isolation.
- Forced Adaptability to Retain Staff

Quotes from Servant Leaders in Higher Education: Global Pandemic



SUMMARY OF STUDY FINDINGS

- *Examining Servant Leader Behaviors* (Johansen, 2023) identifies specific servant leader behaviors practiced in a university setting. The study identified behaviors implemented with ease as well as those which pose a challenge.
- This study fills a gap in servant leadership scholarly literature as most studies focus on faculty as opposed to university leaders of staff.
- There is no better time to examine compassion-based leadership models in university settings given the cataclysmic events of a Triple Pandemic (COVID 19, systemic racism, and economic distress) compounded by the Great Resignation in Higher Education.
- While not a perfect fit, based on the interviews of the 10 servant leaders in this study, this model of servant leadership is complementary with the mission, vision and practices inherent in higher education.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS BASED ON THE QUESTIONS ASKED TO UNIVERSITY SERVANT LEADERS.

Q1. Having learned about the servant leadership model which three practices of servant leaders do you think are most important? What are three practices you prioritize in your leadership? What are your thoughts about the practices cited by leaders?

Q1. (Part 11). What training initiatives does your unit have that reinforces the practices of servant leadership?

Q2. What do you think would be the easiest servant leader behaviors to implement and which would pose a challenge for you? What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of the servant leadership model?

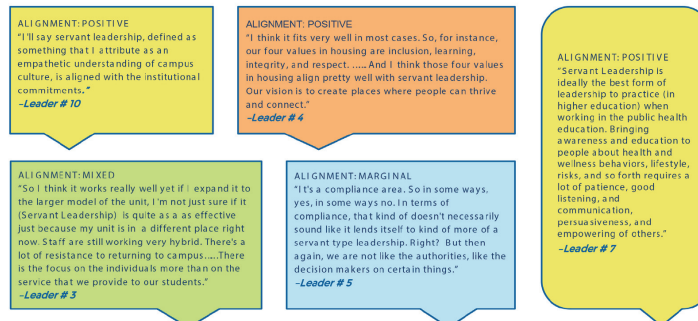
Q3. Of the seven behaviors Northouse (2016) has identified, which do you think are the top three for servant leaders to focus on and why? (conceptualizing, emotional healing, putting followers first, helping followers grow and succeed, behaving ethically, empowering, and creating value for the community) (Northouse, 2016).

Q4. Goleman (2006) contends there are five components of emotional intelligence. Can you offer an example of how you have demonstrated each in your current role or in a leadership capacity?

1) Self-Awareness 2) Self-Regulation 3) Motivation 4) Empathy 5) Social Skills.

Q5. Do you think the servant leadership model is positively aligned with the university as a whole? What about your direct work group? Is it aligned with your overall unit? Why or why not?

Quotes from Servant Leaders in Higher Education: Alignment



Q6. Can you expand on a time when you offered support to a colleague or a direct report? Which of the leader responses resonated with you and why?

Quotes from Servant Leaders in Higher Education: Providing Support

SUPPORT: TRAINING
 "Every time we have a new staff member, I've really taken upon myself ...to introduce them to partners on campus, to show them where the information is on the computer, and to encourage them to make the job their own."
 -Leader # 7

SUPPORT: DAY-TO-DAY
 "I do this every day, it's just what I do. Yesterday, it was helping to set up the big classroom we had to turn over... we had to take out the tables and put in all the chairs. My staff would have done it without me, but I believe that is what servant leadership is, to me, servant leadership is to be in there and help."
 -Leader # 3

SUPPORT: HEALTH CRISIS
 "My Associate Director was having major health problems and she needed to take an extended leave of absence for an operation. And so she was very worried about taking that time off. I sat her down and said, absolutely do not worry about the work. The work will always be there. Your health is number one."
 -Leader # 4

SUPPORT: PREVENTING BURN-OUT
 "I have an employee on my team who is part time. ...And I learned that the employee was kind of getting burned out because they had put in a lot of time beyond the hours for which they were getting paid. The plan was to be able to increase the employee's time to make it more in alignment with the amount of time that it takes for this kind of role. I also then put in a request for a Star Award to recognize that extra work."
 -Leader # 5

SUPPORT: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
 "I asked the staff member if they wanted to participate in a number of system wide and campus-based HSI initiatives."
 -Leader # 10

Q7. How would you supervisor, co-workers and/or direct reports describe you?

Q8. How do you think the global pandemic would impact the capacity to practice servant leadership?

Quotes from Servant Leaders in Higher Education: Global Pandemic

PANDEMIC: FORCED ADAPTABILITY
 "I don't think it's going to go back to the way it was again...because we can't recruit people who want to work 100% on campus. We also can't recruit people with the salaries that they want...and pay for parking and all that stuff. Right?"
 -Leader # 9

PANDEMIC: ENHANCED SERVANT LEADERSHIP
 "I think the pandemic has enhanced my ability to practice servant leadership as there has never been a time to practice more empathy, to listen, to motivate, and to commit to the wellbeing of others."
 -Leader # 7

PANDEMIC: TENSIONS AND FINDING BALANCE
 "It has exacerbated (my ability to practice servant leadership), without a doubt...COVID has just made it more pronounced because staff had been working from home, and for a year and a half, we required staff to work from home. So they got very comfortable in that setting. And now we are returning to campus."
 -Leader # 3

PANDEMIC: ASSESSING LEADERSHIP STYLE
 "We didn't expect to live through a pandemic any more than someone expects to live through a war or some other really traumatic event. So I think that it actually just added a bigger piece and I think it also made me look more at my leadership style."
 -Leader # 8

PANDEMIC: HYBRID-INDUCED ISOLATION
 "I could go an entire week without seeing my staff in person...when I'm here (at the university), I don't mind talking to a lot of people and interacting, going to lunch, doing all that stuff. When I don't have that at work, and I also don't have it at home, then I start to feel a little bit isolated. I think not doing one-on-one, in person, increases a sense of isolation."
 -Leader # 4

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The implications of the study are important for two reasons. First, the qualitative interviews provided insights into specific behaviors that servant leaders exhibit to build servant-led cultures. The leaders are those who lead university staff members which is a topic that is underrepresented in academic literature. Most of the scholarly research regarding servant leadership in higher education focuses on faculty or students with leaders of staff being the missing link.

Secondly, the information and leader insights gleaned from the qualitative interviews was used to assemble this Servant Leader Training Guide which is a resource manual for current and future leaders in higher education who wish to move towards a more compassion-based leadership style.

CONCLUSION

The servant leader, according to Greenleaf (2002) ensures that people's "highest priority needs are being served" (p. 151). This conscious choice to serve then guides a leader to aspire to lead (Greenleaf, 2008, p. 15). Greenleaf proclaims that team members reporting to a servant leader should "grow as persons... become healthier, wiser, freer, and more autonomous" (p. 15).

The findings of this study show that there are specific behaviors that contribute to servant leadership in a university setting. Many leaders interviewed were authentic servant leaders. For others, it was a longer journey which evolved into slowly adopting a more empathetic leadership style.

The global pandemic has changed the way we look at and operate within higher education. It has demanded that the university, its staff, and its faculty undergo a complete transformation in terms of service delivery. "The pandemic forced higher education professionals to learn new technologies, to transform into remote teaching, and to adapt quickly to new realities by adapting pedagogical practices" (Lemon et al., 2023).

Scholarly literature shows (more than 300 peer reviewed articles to date) that servant leadership has a positive effect in the workplace, from enhancing employee well-being to increasing productivity (Eva et al., 2019). The employee-centered behaviors of servant leadership that foster development of staff include emphasizing a culture of growth and empowerment while being sensitive to personal issues that may emerge. The net result is increased trust between leaders and

REFLECTIONS ON SERVANT LEADERSHIP STUDY (JOHANSEN, 2023)

To come full circle, those being led by servant leaders will acquire the skill set for adopting a compassion-based servant leadership philosophy themselves should they themselves be in a position to lead others (Greenleaf, 2008).

The leaders in this study identified many positive behavioral characteristics during their practice of servant leadership in higher education. Focusing on individual growth and diffusing the top-down power structure creates a more democratic workplace with bonded relationships between leadership and team members. The leaders interviewed also acknowledged the strong moral compass that servant leaders possess. According to the leaders, servant leadership ignites creativity, collaboration, enhanced communication, trust, and an overall positive workplace where staff have a strong sense of well-being.

Servant leadership has its challenges and for the leaders in this study, although they touted the benefits they also were candid that it is time intensive and even isolating (at the extreme dehumanizing) being a selfless leader who gives and gives.

Despite its downside, Leader #1 perfectly synthesized the purpose behind the most salient behaviors of the servant leadership model and its complementary alignment with higher education:

Putting followers first is probably one of the largest things you can do as a leader. They always say leaders eat last... Others come before I do, period. Because leadership is a sacrifice. A lot of people don't realize that it is a life of service, and, not about you. And a lot of people that don't understand leadership think it's bossing people around. And it's so not that, it is an art form. It's something you constantly have to have to grow. But I would say that your people come before you and you know you're a decent leader when they come back to you and they tell you in front of others. I've been in front of a whole room (of leaders and subordinates) and I've had people I lead stand up and say, this is one of the best leaders I've ever dealt with, to each other. So you know it's working when people are positive, and things are getting done, and they want to follow. (Interview II)

SERVANT LEADERSHIP: AN AWAKENED CONSCIOUS LEADER

It is essential that the servant leader is also an awakened holistic leader who strives to be a whole person and not self-sacrificing to the point where they lose their identity (Sisodia, 2018). According

to Sisodia (2018), "Servant leaders must also take time to celebrate and nurture their individuality and well-being." (Sisodia as cited in Fox, 2018, para. 20). In *Servant Leadership in Action* (2018), Sisodia details the qualities of a conscious servant leader (who is also attuned to self-care) using the easy to remember acronym S.E.L.F.L.E.S.S.:

Strength

Enthusiasm

Love

Flexibility

Long-term Orientation

Emotional Intelligence

Systems Intelligence

Spiritual Intelligence

(Sisodia, 2018, p. 27).

Selfless does not mean abandoning one's ego as that is an impossibility. Rather it is about "harnessing the ego in healthy ways" (Sisodia, 2018, p. 27). Servant leaders, as Sisodia (2018) proclaims, draw energy from the collective strength of their teams and "they tap into the moral power of the universe-which is available to anyone who engages in genuinely "right" action" (p. 28).

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VITA

KAROL A.D. JOHANSEN

EDUCATION

June, 1985	Bachelor of Arts University of California, Irvine Irvine, California
June, 1997	Master of Arts Loyola Marymount University Los Angeles, California
Pending	Doctor of Education Morehead State University Morehead, Kentucky

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

2022-present	Director, Career Education University of California, Irvine Irvine, California
2017-2022	Associate Director, Career Education University of California, Irvine Irvine, California
2015-2017	Senior Counseling Manager, South Campus University of California, Los Angeles Los Angeles, California
2012-2015	University Instructor, Edu 150 University of California, Los Angeles Los Angeles, California
2001-2015	Counseling Manager University of California, Irvine Irvine, California

1993-2001	Local Programs Manager/Career Counselor University of California, Los Angeles Los Angeles, California
1988-1993	Vacancy Management, UCLA Career Center University of California, Los Angeles Los Angeles, California
1985-1988	Advertising and Marketing Professional Investor's Business Daily Los Angeles, California

HONORS

1988-2017	UC Star Performance Awards
1994-1995	Nominated to Phi Alpha Kappa Education Honor Society by LMU Dean

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