leadership
FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

We have long viewed leadership as a solitary activity, the province of the individual. Now Helen Astin and a working ensemble of student affairs faculty and practitioners have created a new model of leadership for social change—one that celebrates both individuality and collaboration.

BY HELEN S. ASTIN

We have all heard or read about the national polls conducted since the 1988 presidential election that have documented a crisis in leadership in the United States. Many citizens have lost faith in our major social institutions and especially in the people who run these institutions. Likewise, many of our college students show political apathy by not voting or by not wanting to influence the political process.

Recognizing the need for colleges and universities to undertake the development of a new generation of leaders, Alexander Astin and I decided to undertake the design of a college-based program of leadership development to be used in training and developing leaders who will effect positive change in the many areas of national and international affairs.[1] We wanted to design a program of leadership development that could instill in young persons a strong sense of civic responsibility and a desire for social change. Thus, in 1992, we wrote a proposal to the Eisenhower Leadership Development Program of the U.S. Department of Education for the funding to design such a leadership development program.

First, we identified a group of student affairs faculty and practitioners who agreed to work with us in this project. We chose to work with student affairs educators because of their long history of fostering leadership development among college students. These educators are also responsible for campus functions that offer excellent opportunities for encouraging and shaping students' leadership potential.

Work on the project began in fall 1993. The group consisted of ourselves, staff at the Higher Education Research Institute, and colleagues from around the country. Together, we called ourselves the Working Ensemble, a label that represented our style of work, each one of us contributing as an individual but also working collectively with all the others. From the beginning of the project, we have tried to exemplify in our working group the values, behaviors, and process that undergird our leadership development model. Indeed, our own process has illustrated the struggles inherent in reimagining leadership as we have made the effort to let go of preconceived notions of leaders and leadership, such as the ideas that leadership equates with position and that leaders are defined by the presence of followers.

The conceptual base for the model we developed derives from recent studies of leadership and college student development. In a study Carole Leland and I published,[2] we found that leaders of social change emphasized collective action, shared power, and passionate commitment to social justice, equality, and inclusion. Empowerment and collective action emerged as the cornerstones of the leadership exercised by these women as agents of social change. Collective action took the form of the synergistic behavior of sharing responsibilities and distributing tasks according to each group member's unique talents, knowledge, and expertise. Empowerment was the process by which the group developed and functioned collectively. The leadership was nonhierarchical and embedded in clear values.

As we in the Working Ensemble identified the key elements in the leadership development model, our beliefs, knowledge, and emerging ideas were further reinforced by the work of other leadership scholars who also referenced the importance of interdependence and collaboration and the importance of developing the self as an essential first step in enhancing group relationships. (For examples of this work, see *Leadership for the Common Good,* by John M. Bryson and Barbara C. Crosby; *Stewardship: Choosing Service over Self-Interest,* by Peter Block; and *The Leader Within,* by H. G. Hass and B. Tamarkin.)[3]

The ensemble experience underscored my own belief that through the curriculum and the cocurriculum, colleges and universities provide the richest opportunities for recruiting and developing leaders and that leadership development based on collaborative group projects that serve the institution and the community can be implemented through residential living, service learning, community work, and student organizations.

The Social Change Model we developed can guide the design of a leadership development program that emphasizes clarification of values, development of self-awareness, ability to build trust, capacity to listen and serve others, collaborative work, and change for the common good. Basic premises underlying the model are that values demand a conscious focus, that leadership ought to bring about desirable social change, that leadership is a process and not a position, that all students are potential leaders (the principle of inclusiveness), and that service is a powerful vehicle for developing leaders. These premises differentiate this model from earlier approaches to leadership training, most of which focus on the development of leadership skills.

Once the ensemble agreed on these basic premises, we undertook to articulate a core set of leadership development values to be taught and practiced. The model calls for a group of students to undertake a service project, either on campus or in the community. Through the development and execution of such projects, students learn about and practice seven core values, which fall into three groupings: personal or individual values (consciousness of self, congruence, commitment), group values (collaboration, common

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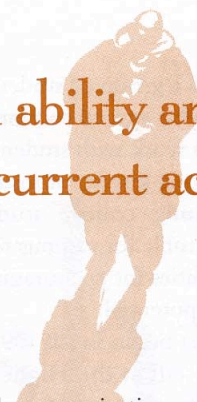
purpose, controversy with civility), and a societal and community value (citizenship).

These seven core values, which we referred to as the Seven C's of Change and which are required in individual, group, and community leadership, are described in the following sections.

PERSONAL VALUES

Personal values are those that an individual strives to develop and exhibit at the group activity level. As personal qualities that support group functioning, they are essential in leadership for social change.

Consciousness of Self. Consciousness of self means knowledge of yourself, or simply self-awareness. It is awareness of the values, emotions, attitudes, and beliefs that motivate one to take action. Self-awareness implies mindfulness, an ability and a propensity to be an observer of one's current actions and state of mind. A person with a highly developed capacity for consciousness of self not only has a reasonably accurate self-concept but also is a good observer of his or her own behavior and state of mind at any given time. Consciousness of self is a fundamental value in our model because it constitutes the necessary condition for realizing all the other values in the model.

Congruence. Congruence is thinking, feeling, and behaving with consistency, genuineness, authenticity, and honesty toward others. Congruent persons are those whose actions are consistent with their most deeply held beliefs and convictions. Developing a clear consciousness of self is a critical element in being congruent. Being clear about one's values, beliefs, strengths, and limitations, who one is as an individual, is essential.

Commitment. Commitment implies intensity and duration in relation to a person, idea, or activity. It requires a significant involvement and investment of self in the object of commitment and in the intended outcomes. It is the energy that drives the collective effort. Commitment is essential to accomplishing change. It is the heart, the profound passion that drives one to action. Commitment originates from within. No one can force a person to commit to

something, but organizations and colleagues can create and support an environment that resonates with each individual's heart and passions.

GROUP VALUES

Group values are expressed and practiced in the group work of leadership activity. Group values are reflected in such questions as, How can the collaboration be developed in order to effect positive social change? What are the elements of group interaction that promote collective leadership?

Collaboration. Collaboration is a central value in the model that views leadership as a group process. It increases group effectiveness because it capitalizes on the multiple talents and perspectives of each group member, using the power of that diversity to generate creative solutions and actions. Collaboration underscores the model's relational focus. Collaboration is about human relationships, about achieving common goals by sharing responsibility, authority, and accountability. It is leadership for service.

Common Purpose. A common purpose develops when people work with others within a shared set of aims and values. Shared aims facilitate group members' engagement in collective analyses of the issues and the task to be undertaken. Common purpose is best achieved when all members of the group build and share in the vision and participate actively in articulating the purpose and goals of the group work.

Controversy with Civility. Controversy with civility recognizes two fundamental realities of any group effort: first, that differences in viewpoint are inevitable and valuable and, second, that such differences must be aired openly and with respect and courtesy. Disagreements are inherent in almost any social interaction or group process. They bring valuable perspectives and information to the collaborative group, but eventually, they must be resolved. Such resolution is accomplished through open and honest dialogue backed by the group's commitment to understand the sources of the disagreement and to work cooperatively toward common solutions.
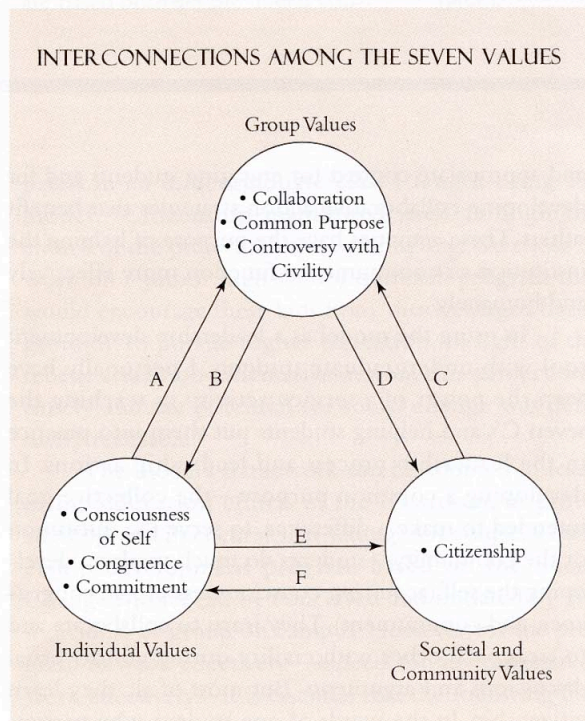
A Societal and Community Value: Citizenship

A commitment to social change connects individuals and their collaborative groups to their communities. The societal and community value of citizenship clarifies the purpose of the leadership. Toward what social ends is the leadership development activity directed?

Citizenship names the process whereby the self is responsibly connected to the environment and the community. It acknowledges the interdependence of all involved in the leadership effort. Citizenship thus recognizes that effective democracy requires individual responsibility as well as individual rights. Citizenship, in the context of the Social Change Model, means more than membership; it implies active engagement of the individual and the leadership group in an effort to serve the community. It implies social or civic responsibility. It is, in short, the value of caring about others.

How the Values Work Together

The seven personal, group, and community values are interconnected in that personal values are developed during the group functioning while the group, in order to function properly, needs individuals who exhibit those personal values. The accompanying figure depicts these connections.

INTERCONNECTIONS AMONG THE SEVEN VALUES

Group Values
- Collaboration
- Common Purpose
- Controversy with Civility

A B   D C

- Consciousness of Self
- Congruence
- Commitment

E

F

- Citizenship

Individual Values

Societal and Community Values

The arrows in the figure symbolize the continuous feedback loops needed among the three kinds of values. In general, arrows A and B outline the feedback loop that operates between the group and the individual: the group is affected by the characteristics of individual members while the group chemistry also affects each individual.

Arrow A. Consciousness of self is a critical ingredient in forging a common purpose for the group as its members ask, What are our shared values and purposes? Similarly, the division of labor so basic to true collaboration requires an understanding of each group member's special talents and limitations. Likewise, the civil controversy that often leads to innovative solutions requires both congruence (a willingness to share one's views with others even when those others are likely to hold contrary views) and commitment (a willingness to stick to ones beliefs in the face of controversy).

Arrow B. Feedback from any leadership development group is most likely to enhance the individual qualities of consciousness of self, commitment, and congruence when the group operates collaboratively with a common purpose and accepts controversy with civility.

Arrow C. Responsible citizenship and positive change are most likely to occur when the leadership group functions collaboratively with a common purpose and encourages civility in the expression of controversy.

Arrow D. Conversely, the group will find it very difficult to be an effective change agent or to fulfill its citizenship or community responsibilities if its members function competitively, if they cannot identify a common purpose, or if they pursue controversy with incivility.

Arrow E. The community is most likely to respond positively to an individual's efforts to serve if these efforts are rooted in self-understanding, integrity, and genuine commitment. Responsible citizenship, in other words, is based on self-knowledge, congruence, and commitment.

Arrow F. An individual learns through service, and his or her consciousness of self is enhanced through realization of what he or she is (and is not) capable of doing. Commitment is also enhanced when the individual feels that he or she can make a difference. And congruence is enhanced when the individual comes to realize that positive change is most likely to occur when individual actions are rooted in a person's most deeply held values and beliefs.

THE SOCIAL CHANGE MODEL IN PRACTICE —
WHAT IS HAPPENING AT MIAMI UNIVERSITY?

AT Miami University-Ohio, the Social Change Model of Leadership Development has been used both as the basis of a specific leadership program and as an overall conceptualization of leadership development across the university.

INSPIRED ANNOYANCE

A concrete example of the use of the Social Change Model is a new program called Inspired Annoyance, which targets students who have demonstrated, through their actions on campus and in the community, a commitment to making a difference through leadership. Many times, these students are not aware of the impact they have on others, and they may,

indeed, not even realize they are unusual in their convictions. The Inspired Annoyance initiative is a small noncredit seminar in which students examine questions about conviction in their own lives and the ways convictions have inspired them to take leadership in various circumstances. The students are encouraged to share their stories in a safe, exploratory seminar group. They are then asked to develop a set of questions designed to challenge and further define their convictions. Next, they respond to these questions in personal essays.

The combination of small-group verbal reflections and an introspective writing task is intended to stimulate reflective

behavior in these students as they refine their initially intuitive awareness of a call to leadership. The hope is that these students, by learning to be more reflective, will grow to challenge themselves and others to discover the passions in their lives that result in courageous acts of leadership.

Why choose the name Inspired Annoyance? When an oyster is irritated by a grain of sand, it does not spit that annoyance out or curse its presence. Instead, the oyster creates a thing of beauty. Program designers hope that by helping students embrace and work with, rather than avoid, the things that annoy them, these students, too, will do wonderful things.

The Social Change Model emphasizes both the personal and interpersonal dimensions of leadership. Under the heading of *personal* dimensions, we include self-awareness and congruence: understanding one's salient values, talents, and such other individual characteristics as personal integrity, self-renewal, openness to learning, and ability to deliberately establish a personal focus. *Interpersonal* dimensions include communication skills, coalition-building expertise, honesty, respect for others, openness to differing views, collaborative abilities, listening skills, and facility for empowering others.

PUTTING THE MODEL INTO PRACTICE

We believe that activities that serve the institution or the larger community form an especially rich

and appropriate context for engaging students and for developing collaborative action strategies that benefit others. These activities have the purpose of helping the institution or community to function more effectively and humanely.

In using the model as a leadership development tool with undergraduate students, I personally have seen the power of a service activity in teaching the seven C's and helping students put them into practice in the leadership process and leadership actions. In developing a common purpose—the collective goal intended to make a difference, to serve the institution or the community—students do much work on developing the self (acquiring consciousness of self, congruence, and commitment). They learn to collaborate and to treat each other with civility during controversial discussions and arguments. But most of all, they learn citizenship. In the words of one student who partici-

THE LEADERSHIP TASK FORCE

On a broader level, a faculty, staff, and student task force has worked over the last year to devise a comprehensive leadership development strategy for Miami University. The school is blessed with many students interested in leadership. However, its ability to respond to the breadth of the interest is limited. The challenge is this: If all students are capable of leadership (as the Social Change Model assumes), how can the school ensure that all students have access to opportunities to develop that potential? The Leadership Program Task Force took on this challenge by creating the Leadership Values Framework, which serves as the foundation for all leadership programs and initiatives on campus. These values, as shown in the following list, are based both on the liberal education goals of the university and on what we believe (informed by the Social Change Model) leadership will be like for the twenty-first century:

Active participation in the learning community

Awareness and development of potential (personal values, strengths, and abilities)

Critical thinking and reflection

Appreciation and respect for human dignity and diversity

Dialogue through active listening and civil discourse

Flexibility and openness to change

Purposeful risk taking

Responsibility and account-ability for one's actions

The challenge and support of others to live and lead by these values.

In addition, a gradual and long-term process is being undertaken to use the Leadership Values Framework in various student organizations, programs, and offices to create a campus community committed to the true leadership development of all faculty, staff, and students. As this is done, the vision is that throughout the university, numerous exemplary organizations modeling the values in their daily affairs will slowly become a reality. Learning to walk the talk of our leadership values could be a powerful source of learning—so powerful that the results may go beyond our wildest dreams.

—Dennis Roberts
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for Student Affairs
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pated in an undergraduate class I taught using the model: "Citizenship manifested itself through the choice of the project we were attempting. We chose to work on a junior high school outreach program that would encourage these kids from 'disadvantaged backgrounds' to pursue higher education. In light of the recent attack on affirmative action, this project was timely and the potential for social change was definitely realizable."

The model's framework can be adopted in leadership education efforts in the classroom, in group advising, and in cocurricular settings. Of course, a leadership development program based on the Social Change Model can be conceived and initiated by any individual or group on campus. However, for the program to work effectively—indeed, for any program to work effectively—it is essential that the following features be considered:

Preliminary task definition. What is the need or problem? What changes are needed?

Identification of personal and shared values. What is important to us individually and as a group about this need?

Task research or redefinition. What additional information about the task or need should we gather?

Division of labor. What skills or areas of knowledge are needed? Which student participants or members of the leadership group have the knowledge or skills? How do we acquire the knowledge or skills needed? (Each participant assumes a role or responsibility in the project.)

Mode of group functioning. How can debriefing, reflection, and feedback become essential

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group activities? (The leadership group meets reg-
ularly and processes the group activities. Openness,
honesty, and sensitivity in providing critical feed-
back where needed are emphasized. Group mem-
bers work on values clarification, increased
self-knowledge, and group facilitation skills.)

In spring 1995 a group of undergraduate students
at the University of California—Irvine organized them-
selves as an independent study class to review the model
for developing student leadership. The initiative came
from an undergraduate woman who had been exposed
briefly to the model in a graduate seminar on leader-
ship and who then recruited the other students for the
independent study. The group met once a week for
eight weeks. The students first set two specific class
goals: to review pertinent literature on leadership and to
emphasize the practice of the personal and group val-
ues described in the model. To achieve the latter goal,
students discussed the concepts in the model, wrote
brief essays on their understanding of the seven C's, and
used various in-class activities and exercises to demon-
strate the values in action.

The group also decided to undertake a social
action project that would help them practice and learn
the seven C's. Seeing a need to bring together different
interest groups within the campus community and to
enhance all students' awareness of issues surrounding
diversity, the group invited members of various campus
advocacy groups to collaborate in painting a vision of
diversity. The project took place over one afternoon as
the students painted five canvases, with several students
working simultaneously on each painting.

At the end of the project, the original group
members met to reflect on how they had worked
together and to explore the strengths and weaknesses of
the Social Change Model as they had practiced it.
Among their many observations about the model and
its underlying values, one is of particular interest. They
decided to add one more C to the list: *courage*. Their rea-
soning was, as one student stated, "You can see the need
to change something but it takes courage to do it." They
also felt that the power of the group inspired courage
among them and helped them persist in achieving their

common purpose. Their finding is significant. Too often,
courage is characterized as a trait exclusive to heroes—
people who are glamorized for their individual and
essentially solitary efforts to rise above common
achievements or to rescue the rest of us. The future of
true leadership rests on educators' working with young
people to help them embrace another view of courage,
a view that honors the power of individuals coming
together to work for change, and, yes, the bravery
required to do this collaborative work.

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NOTES
1. This article is based on ideas generated by the collective
efforts of Alexander W. Astin, Helen S. Astin, K. C.
Boatsman, Marguerite Bonous-Mammarth, Tony
Chambers, Leonard Goldberg, Cynthia Johnson, Susan
Komives, Emily Langdon, Carole Leland, Nance Lucas,
Raechele Pope, Dennis Roberts, Kathy Shellogg, and Lisa
Tsui.
    The Working Ensemble's work is presented in full in the
Guidebook Version III, entitled *A Social Change Model of
Leadership Development*. The guidebook can be obtained
from the National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs
at the University of Maryland or from the National
Society for Experiential Education.
    The project that resulted in the model described in *A
Social Change Model of Leadership Development* was funded
through the U.S. Department of Education Eisenhower
Leadership Program, under the directorship of Donald
Bigelow.
2. H. S. Astin and C. Leland, *Women of Influence, Women of
Vision: A Cross-Generational Study of Leaders and Social
Change* (San Francisco: Jossey–Bass, 1991).
3. J. M. Bryson and B. C. Crosby, *Leadership for the Common
Good: Tackling Public Problems in a Shared-Power World* (San
Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992); P. Block, *Stewardship:
Choosing Service over Self-Interest* (San Francisco: Berrett-
Koehler, 1993); and H. G. Hass and B. Tamarkin, *The Leader
Within* (New York: HarperBusiness, 1992).

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