

Roberts, D. C. (1981). *Student leadership programs in higher education*. Washington, DC: American College Personnel Association.

Reviewed by Jeremy Zilmer

## INTRODUCTION

*Student Leadership Programs in Higher Education* edited by Dennis Roberts is designed to provide pragmatic advice on establishing effective student leadership programming models. This book serves as guide for campus based professionals interested in developing effective leadership models within the realm of higher education. Focusing on three broad areas to reach students: purpose, strategies, and populations, this book is full of best practice methods and suggestions from experienced higher education and student affairs professionals. *Student Leadership Programs in Higher Education* will serve as a handbook for creating and implementing student leadership programs at any campus.

## THEORETICAL FRAMWORK

Roberts outlined several theories that helped provide a framework for this publication. Roberts described two outcomes for this framework, “The importance of developmental maturity to leadership effectiveness and a way of conceptualizing leadership development programs so that sound planning, implementation, evaluation, and accountability may be achieved” (p. 211). Roberts utilized Perry’s cognitive developmental scheme to describe differences in cognitive process among leaders as it was derived from data that had been gathered from and validated on college students.

## CHAPTER ANNOTATION

### ***Part One: Introduction and Rationale for Focusing on Student Leadership***

#### *Chapter One-Introduction*

Dennis Roberts provides the overview and introduction for *Student Leadership Programs in Higher Education*. During the 1976 ACPA Convention, the Leadership Task Force was formed in order to conceptualize a position on leadership programming. *Student Leadership Programs in Higher Education* was written in an effort to organize the materials and documents collected by the task force. “Leadership programs in higher education have the potential to make contributions toward the attainment of this goal of shared responsibility by preparing persons who are able to share the leadership” (p. 4). Roberts introduces the book in five parts: Rationale, models, process, program types, and populations in order to cover purpose, strategies, and populations to successfully reach students.

#### *Chapter Two-Rationale*

In chapter two, Robert Caruso identifies the purpose and rationale behind leadership programming at institutions of higher education. Caruso examines three factors as a means to justify student leadership programs in higher education: institutional mission statements, the evolution of student personnel programs, and the measurement of higher education outcomes directly correlated to leadership. “The philosophical conception of the aims of higher education emphasizes the role institutions in democratizing society through an educational process which allows individuals to become all they are capable of being” (p. 8). Caruso suggests that student personnel programs need to expand to include psychosocial developmental needs. Several points

are outlined in addressing how leadership programs contribute to educational outcomes including development of life skills, interpersonal competence, and increase in productivity in the work place. Caruso contends that student affairs administrators are in a unique position to utilize leadership programming as a vehicle to stimulate student growth and development.

### ***Part Two: A Model***

#### *Chapter Three-A Comprehensive Leadership Program Model*

Anthony-Gonzalez and Roberts created a model for broad based and integrative leadership programs in higher education. Chapter three outlines this model, which is based on the separation and differentiation between leadership models, focused on training, education, and development. Anthony-Gonzalez and Roberts specify that training models are those with activities focused on performance improvements, education models as those with activities designed to improve leadership competence, and development models as those with activities designed to encourage student development. These three areas overlap and integrate which helps leaders develop new skill sets, discover new opportunities for development, and gain self-awareness. Anthony-Gonzalez and Roberts stress that leadership training, education, and development programs have more merit when intentions and goals are clearly outlined.

### ***Part Three: The Process***

#### *Chapter Four-Process of Building Leadership Programs*

Newton outlines a six stage process model to utilize in planning and implementing leadership programming. Newton argues that effective leadership models need to be informed by conceptual knowledge and research from cross-disciplines. Stage one of the model outlined by Newton suggests that a preliminary analysis or needs assessment must first be conducted in order to assess and determine various input variables including needs, expectations, context, and goals. Once this data has been processed, goal and objective statements for the specific leadership program can be created in stage two. In stage three, Newton suggests various delivery format combinations, including strengths and weakness for these formats, in an effort to stay aligned with the three delivery styles identified by ACPA: teaching, consultation, and milieu management. In stage four, Newton suggests designing activities that will accomplish the identified learning objectives. Stage five is preparing and implementing action. In stage six, Newton provides suggestions for effective evaluation and follow-ups.

### ***Part Four: Types of Leadership Programs***

#### *Chapter Five-Leadership Classes*

Larkin provides a discussion on leadership programming within the formal context of a classroom setting, which at the time of this publication was not as common. “Colleagues throughout the nation have reported that the classroom teaching experience has broadened their educational scope and developed a fuller empathy for the challenges faced by teaching faculty” (p. 43). Larkin explored a discussion on major issues faced by student affairs professionals teaching leadership courses as well as potential leadership topic areas. Larkin provides keen insight on initial strategies on implementing such a leadership class as well as methods in gaining faculty and institutional support, target student populations, and creating course objectives and content.

### *Chapter Six-Seminars, Workshops, Retreats, and Conferences*

Kelly and Caruso offer an in depth look at the method in which student leadership programs are offered in higher education. Methodology of program delivery is contingent upon several factors including: target group need, learning styles, maturity of group, competency levels, leadership styles of staff, financial resources, etc. Significant detail is provided in defining common leadership programming experiences including seminars, workshops, retreats, and conferences as well as advantages and disadvantages to each of these methods. Additionally, Kelly and Caruso offer suggestions for implementing these various strategies.

### *Chapter Seven-Consultation Models*

Bowling suggests that student personnel administrators are viewed by students, faculty, and staff as consultants. In this chapter, she outlines several key skill sets and characteristics that are needed in order to be an effective consultant. Bowling states that there are two major components to establishing a consulting relationship with a student: working on the solution to the problem and the relationship itself between the consultant and the student. According to the chapter, there are three main consulting models to choose from: process, behavioral, and psychodynamic. Whatever the model chosen, the consulting relationship must be voluntary, typically sought out by the student. "Very often, the consultant is sought out by student leaders to help solve organizational problems. Helping the leader analyze the problem, brainstorming possible solutions, and discussing means of implementing a desired course of action is essential to the consulting process" (p. 78). Bowling provides tangible methods in which professionals can guide students in self-development, process consultation, and organizational strengthening. The chapter suggests that in order for there to be an effective consulting partnership, student personnel administrators must possess a strong set of personal skills.

### *Chapter Eight-The Use of Paraprofessionals as Implementers*

Most leadership programs lack sufficient funding and trained professional staff member to administer effect programming. Patterson suggests that programs utilizing paraprofessionals can help lessen the financial cost needed to sustain leadership programs. For purposes of this chapter, paraprofessionals are identified as "a person without extended professional training who is specifically selected, trained, and given ongoing supervision to perform some designated portion of the tasks usually performed by the professional" (p. 12). Patterson refers to paraprofessionals as students, either graduate or undergraduate and offers financial incentives, direct student contact, and valued student input as benefits for utilizing paraprofessional staff members to both the campus community and the individuals involved.

### *Chapter Nine-Training Student Trainers*

Barr and Keating describe utilizing students as unpaid student staff members for leadership programming, which at the time of this publishing, was a new concept. The essential outcome of this model is to effectively train student leaders to train and teach the concept of leadership to other students. The model outlines a four step training process: instructions on running a leadership workshop, skills based content and process training, practice implementing skills and competencies taught in steps one and two, and implementation of workshop and leadership activities to other student leaders. This model is based on the social learning theory as well as

other learning theory models mentioned in this book. Advantages to utilizing student trainers include extension of professional services and it provides students with development opportunities. Downsides to utilizing student trainers include time investments and potential significant financial allocation towards creating student trainer manuals and materials.

### ***Part Five: Special Populations***

#### *Chapter Ten-Designing Leadership Programs for College Women*

Student leadership programming on college campuses have a gap in providing programs tailored towards women. Current models fail to incorporate leadership skills, attitudes, and knowledge amongst women specifically. At the time of this publishing, four out of 150 leadership programs surveyed by the ACPA Leadership Task Force had components focused specifically on women. “In order to design a leadership program for women, or even before one can be persuaded to do so, certain psychosocial factors should be examined” (p. 113). Anthony-Gonzalez summarized that programs geared towards women should be altered slightly to incorporate more practical opportunities to practice leadership as women generally lack formal leadership experience compared to their male counterparts. This chapter also briefly explored the debate of whether or not separate leadership programs should be exclusively offered. The author concluded the chapters by stating that separate programs focused on women were neither always appropriate nor feasible and instead there should be a focus on removing leadership barriers for women including gender stereotyping.

#### *Chapter Eleven-Promoting Leadership Potentials for Minority Students*

“Leadership education must also include the teaching and application of specific skills in a conducive educational environment” (p. 126). At the time of this publishing there was a clear lack of participation in leadership programming amongst minority students. Denson and Sellers emphasized that little to no attention was being placed on developing the leadership potential for minority students and as a result this population of students was not able to take advantage of such programs. Denson and Sellers stressed that it was the role of student affairs administrators to create and develop opportunities for minority students to improve their leadership competencies and skill sets. The chapter called for a study on student organizations composed of primarily minority students as well as the implementation of a pilot leadership program. The chapter concluded with the idea of a leadership institute being created as an opportunity to for minority student leaders to become trained in leadership development and eventually become more successful in the transition to job placement.

#### *Chapter Twelve-Fraternity and Sorority Leaders*

“The college fraternity provides opportunities for individual growth within the context of enduring traditions and rituals, a democratic structure, and most often a national organization. Fraternities for women for many years provided the only leadership and management experiences for women on campuses where student leadership programs were reserved for men” (p. 131). Fraternity and sorority leadership programming is unique and needs to be tailored towards specific needs including recruitment, pledge training, alternatives to hazing, trainings for officers, substance abuse, and continuing education based on needs and interest.

### *Chapter Thirteen-Student Government Leaders*

Student government offers opportunities for student leaders to have a self-directed impact on their own leadership development, training, and education. Lawson identifies a four step educational model for implementation with student government organizations: pre-election orientation, team-building retreat, the year in office, and transition.

### *Chapter Fourteen-Community College Student Leaders*

Caruso and Boyar structured this chapter to focus leadership programming towards the specific demographic population of the typical community college student. As a result of the nontraditional backgrounds of many community college students, a life experiences model must be incorporated in order to accommodate the vast experiences of these individuals. “Programs that take into account the prior skills and experiences of the student leaders also attract and maintain a higher caliber of student leadership through the recognition of and respect for those skills” (p. 158). Administrators charged with leadership programming at community colleges must conduct needs analysis of the student population before incorporating new programs in order to best meet the needs of the unique student population.

### *Chapter Fifteen-Commuting Students*

Andreas points out to the reader that there are certain characteristics of commuter students that call for unique leadership programming. Students who commute to campus are faced with time constraints and typically receive most of their non-academic needs off campus which calls for specialized leadership opportunities that also align with the work commitments of commuter students. Andreas offers a variety of leadership training strategies that reach the unique needs, interests, and constraints for commuter students. The chapter concludes with a call to student affairs professionals to create leadership development models geared towards commuter students.

### *Chapter Sixteen-Non-Traditional Students: Adult Students*

“A 1974 American Council on Education Report (1978) states that of 9.9 million students in postsecondary education one-third were adults were over the age of 25” (p. 176). Adult student learners have unique needs as they lead fragmented lives separated by the responsibilities of the various aspect of their life. Leadership training for adult learners needs to focus on providing role clarity and how to manage that role. Life experiences should heavily be included in the leadership programming for adult students. Leadership should be focused on the continued enhancement of the skill sets and leadership competencies for these students regardless of previous experiences.

## ***Part Six: Evaluation***

### *Chapter Seventeen-Evaluation of Leadership Programs*

The focus for this chapter was to provide the rationale behind assessment of leadership programming and to provide useful strategies on how to effectively do so (p. 206). Assessment tools and instruments that are valid, reliable, and practical must be developed in order to meet the specific needs of the outcomes of the specific program.

## ***Part Seven: Leadership Development***

### ***Chapter Eighteen-Leadership Development-A Challenge for the Future***

Roberts concludes the book by challenging readers to look towards the future of leadership programming within the context of higher education. Roberts provides an in-depth analysis of the theoretical and research analysis of leadership development. Roberts intended to stress the importance of developmental maturity and understanding the importance of planning, implementing, and evaluating leadership programs. The chapter outlines several theories and potential frameworks for leadership development including cognitive, ethical and moral, psychosocial developmental theories.

#### **TARGET AUDIENCE:**

This book can be utilized by colleges and universities looking at revamping and or implementing leadership programming models. This book is aimed primarily at entry-level to mid-level administrators who oversee leadership programming. Although there is a chapter on academic collaboration, the chapter focuses on a student affairs perspective and would not be applicable for non-student affairs professionals.

#### **APPLICATION TO PRACTICE:**

This text is still relevant and can provide great training and insight in a how-to manner when evaluating the effectiveness of current and existing programs. Tangible and practical examples are provided that can be used for any administrator interested in providing training, education, consultation, and teaching to students, faculty, and staff.

#### **CRITIQUE:**

This book is pragmatic and offers an in-depth review of creating, developing, and implementing leadership programming in a college and university setting. While written in 1981, there are still extremely relevant points that hold up over 30 years later. At times, the book is outdated and uses terms that could be considered inappropriate and sexist. On page 57, a definition for the word “conference” is provided and refers which assimilating and producing changes in immigrants which could be taken out of context and seen as offensive.

At the time of publication, there were very few programs and studies focused on leadership development for women and underrepresented student populations such as ethnic minorities, adult learners, and commuter students which in turn fell short in providing depth and insight on these subjects. Many might make the assumption that the majority of colleges and universities now have some sort of universal leadership programs available to students. Regardless of this viewpoint, this text is still relevant and can provide great training and insight when evaluating the effectiveness of current and existing programs. In short, while dated, this text provides tangible and practical examples that can be used for any administrator interested in providing training, education, consultation, and teaching to students, faculty, and staff. The biggest pitfall of this book was the lack of specific examples for programming evaluations and follow-ups.

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