SERVANT-LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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"Top line," used by researchers in the field of leadership and creativity (Freeman, Isaksen, & Dorval, 2001), proposes that servant-leadership is a driving force of organizations focused on questions of *why* and *for whom*, as opposed to the bottom-line *what* (pp. 265-267). Higher education could improve with leadership development efforts to "reclaim intangible resources, including people's talents that increase innovative capacity by focusing on relationships, perceptions, and attitudes" (p. 264). Because public education does not have, per se, a dollar-driven, "bottom line" focus, its institutions can be wholly about service. Robert K. Greenleaf (2002), the leading figure in servant-leadership theory and practice, wrote extensively about this topic, most notably in "Servant Leadership in Education" (pp. 176-214) and "Teacher as Servant: A Parable" (Greenleaf, Beazley, Beggs, & Spears, 2003, pp. 75-239). Greenleaf believed that institutions should serve people and not the other way around. He felt strongly that his famous "best test" (2002, p. 27) should apply to colleges and universities. His "best test," which he admitted is hard to apply, is stated like this:

> Do those served grow as persons? Do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? *And*, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived? [italics original] (p. 27)

While many leaders intuitively work in ways that further these goals, developments in higher education of servant-leadership might be institutionalized through conscious growth, study, and choice.

Servant-leadership started with Greenleaf's reading of Herman Hesse's short novel, *Journey to the East* (Hesse, 1932/2003). The narrator belongs to a band of people on a mythical and spiritual journey assisted by a servant named Leo. Leo's ebullience and enthusiasm glue the group together, and when he disappears inexplicably, the group disintegrates. After many years of subsequent solitary suffering, the narrator discovers that Leo is actually the leader of the organization. Hesse's overarching implication is that there is a spectrum of leadership that has will-to-power at one end and will-to-serve at the other. Burkhardt and Spears (2002) paraphrased Greenleaf's analysis in very simple terms:

> After reading this story, Greenleaf concluded that the central meaning of it was that the great leader is first experienced as a servant to others, and that this simple fact is central to his or her greatness. True leadership emerges from those whose primary motivation is a deep desire to help others. (pp. 225-226)

This paper will describe briefly some of the conditions that cry out for the development in higher education of servant-leaders who will do well at the "best test" examination, and then lay out a conceptual framework for an initial way of making progress. These ideas build upon the "Ten Characteristics of the Servant-Leader" described by Larry Spears (1998): listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community (pp. 3-6). They are offered as a scaffold for expanding leadership capacity in higher education.

This framework might form the basis for ongoing generative dialogue with leaders at every level within their institutions, who will read several articles and books to begin the work. If a servant-leadership culture is articulated and established, an institution can begin implementing a broad-based "roll-out" with the express purpose of creating what John Gardner (1990) called "dispersed leadership." Gardner pointed out that a healthy institution has "a great many individuals who *share leadership tasks* unoffi-

cially, by behaving responsibly with respect to the purposes of the group"
[italics original] (p. xvii). By clarifying and deepening the group purpose
of servant-leadership, the institution can grow toward daily implementation
of servant-leadership principles.

It is critical to reflect upon the very important subject of power while
developing servant-leadership capacity. In many institutions there are lead-
ers who might resist servant-leadership because the idea of limited good is
so entrenched. When one person's gain is conceived as another's loss, fear-
ful or controlling behavior is common among people who want their "share
of the pie." Indeed, the idea of using power to serve others may strike right
at the heart of an organization that uses hierarchies to fulfill the needs and
desires of those at the "top." Haidt (2006) surveyed an expanse of literature
in psychology, sociology, and anthropology and concluded that hierarchy
and empowerment of others are competing axes. "In all human cultures, the
social world has two clear dimensions: a horizontal dimension of closeness
or liking, and a vertical one of hierarchy or status" (p. 183). Throughout the
history of culture, it has not been common for the ascending points on the
vertical line to share power with those along the horizontal axis, which is
what servant-leaders do. It can be unsettling, disturbing, and difficult,
which is why Greenleaf (2002) urged leaders to "create dangerously" (p.
61).

Greenleaf (2002) wanted to go to the root of organizational problems
by attacking this hierarchy that creates a structure of power to privilege
those at the top. He was also hopeful that the emerging weltanschauung
would support servant-leadership: "We live at a time when holders of
power are suspect, and actions that stem from authority are questioned.
Legitimize power has become an ethical imperative" [italics original] (p.
19). He believed that legitimate power derived from sharing power with
those who lived and worked on Haidt's (2006) horizontal line, and he was
emphatic on this point: "In the context of power in a hierarchy. . . .The
problem is the hierarchy!" (Greenleaf, 1996, p. 12). Northouse (2004) put
this point succinctly: "In becoming a servant leader, a leader uses less insti-

tutional power and less control, while shifting authority to those who are being led" (p. 309). In hierarchy, Greenleaf saw that each new generation tirelessly and predictably gives us endless incarnations of Lord Acton's famous insight that "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." With servant-leadership, he proposed a better way.

Through the "best test," which provides an ethical framework for action, combined with Spears' distillation of servant-leader attributes, a powerful staging area for servant-leadership might be created and dispersed throughout institutions. With hard work as teams, groups of people can also overcome the debilitating effects of what John Gardner (1990) called an "anti-leadership vaccine" that "places enormous emphasis on individual performance" and little or none on a "person's capacity to work with the group" (p. 160). Eventually, a model that might disperse leadership farther outside our colleges and universities to include our communities may be created.

THE CASE FOR SERVANT-LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Creating a servant-leadership development program to transform higher education institutions may be timely. A "perfect storm" is brewing in America, as demographics of race, ethnicity, educational attainment, and earning potential gather force on the horizon. If current trends continue, the proportion of workers with high school diplomas and college degrees will decrease and the personal income of Americans will decline over the next 15 years (Kelly, 2005). The most educated American generation in the current workforce, the Baby Boomers, will be leaving the workforce and be replaced by increasing numbers of the least educated generation, at a time when the global knowledge economy demands that workers have some kind of higher or further education, whether that be a four-year or two-year college degree, a vocational certificate from a community or technical college, or preparation from a trade or proprietary school.

The race and ethnicity of this replacement population are also vastly

different, which is noteworthy because these numbers include the least edu-
cated groups in the United States.

> By the year 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau projects a 77% increase in the
> number of Hispanics, a 32% increase in African-Americans, a 69%
> increase in Asians, a 26% increase in Native Americans, and less than a
> one percentage point increase in the White population. The majority of
> the growth (in numbers) will occur among the populations that are the
> least educated. (Kelly, 2005)

When we join these figures, we see that the greatest increase in the U.S.
workforce will occur among those racial and ethnic groups with the lowest
levels of education at precisely the moment when the global economy
requires more, not less, education. For these pressing demographic reasons
alone, and for purposes of basic fairness to disadvantaged groups, any lead-
ership effort will do best to rise up from the cornerstone of diversity.

Current leaders in higher education, especially those in North America,
might be encouraged to understand society's beliefs about meritocracy and
social mobility through a critical analysis that uses the concept of white
privilege as a frame of reference, rather than institutional racism, which has
been analyzed largely in terms of its effects on the stigmatized groups. A
critique of Whiteness, by contrast, focuses on the motivations of those who
directly benefit from racism. McIntosh (1993) believed that this major bar-
rier to inclusiveness, white privilege, is empowered by unconsciousness and
willful unawareness of the privilege conferred by complexion. Morrison
(1996) found that whiteness analogously included mechanisms of societal
privileging for other characteristics such as physical ability, gender, north-
ern hemispheric origin, and so forth. In most cases, the receiver of the
benefits of privilege remains unaware; as a cultural strategy, this serves to
keep the benefits intact, as McIntosh poignantly pointed out.

> I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned
> assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was
> "meant" to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weight-

less knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks. (p. 61)

Recognizing the truths of white privilege goes hand-in-hand with a multicultural philosophy of servant-leadership development. Current higher education leaders might find ways—mentorship, hiring practices, application processes—to broaden the ownership of our public institutions to include greater numbers of persons of color, of differently-abled individuals, of women. Further, current leaders might recognize the appeal of the multicultural method when compared with other approaches to diversity. As Morrison (1996) pointed out, several approaches to diversity are also deeply flawed. The "Golden Rule approach" ignores the reality that the actor's context applies the rule without regard for the receiver's frame of reference. Likewise, the "righting the wrongs" approach creates significant backlash that defeats its intent, and the "culture-specific approach" does not seek to understand the values underlying behaviors and attitudes (pp. 6-10). Morrison pointed out that only the multicultural approach is directed at "increasing the consciousness and appreciation of differences . . . . that encompasses sex and ethnic groups along with groups based on such attributes as nationality, professional discipline, or cognitive style" (p. 7).

With characteristic foresight, Greenleaf (2002) prefigured the problems and solutions of a dominant culture heavily imbued with white privilege when he wrote,

> The best that some of today's privileged can do is to stand aside and serve by helping when asked *and* as instructed . . . . Even the conceptualizing may be done better not by an elite . . . but by leaders from among people of color, the alienated, and the disadvantaged of the world [who] define their own needs in their own way, and finally, state clearly how they want to be served. The now-privileged who are natural servants may in this process get a fresh perspective on the priority of others' needs and thus they may again be able to serve by leading. [italics original] (pp. 48-49).

He warned that we must be careful not to seek to "homogenize" the poor and disadvantaged in American society; rather, he wrote, "All people should have a choice about how they want to use their lives"; he further asserted that he "would argue for educational options for those who would be challenged by the opportunity to learn to lead their own people" (p. 177). A servant-leadership development program might be conceived, then, as a virtuous circle that develops leaders inside higher education among those "least privileged" (p. 27) who in turn create opportunities for members of the greater society who are similarly disadvantaged by structures of privilege.

The demographics mentioned previously portend an urgent situation for the continuity and viability of higher education. Leadership development is in crisis, as evinced by the lack of programs to develop tomorrow's leaders ("Next in Line? The Succession Planning Debate," 2006) and to expand the ownership of higher education into underserved communities. Because of this, developing leadership capacity through servant-leadership programs might become a primary trustee concern for 21st-century higher education institutions. John Carver (1999) wrote that the servant-leadership role of boards and board chairs is critical as the "organ of ownership" that provides the institutional "legitimacy base" (pp. 194-195). As this organ, boards of trustees and regents who govern in communities where these demographics loom large might create leadership development programs to serve these communities in the coming decades of change. Because they "speak for hundreds or even millions," they might develop the stewardship understanding that as trustees "they become the vessels through which the multitudes dream, form intentions, debate, and decide" (p. 197).

In Washington State, where I live, Carver's (1999) multitude in public higher education is currently 350,000 people, and the demand for higher education is growing, not lessening. But there is a huge attainment gap. Attrition rates of entering first-year students, as high as 70%, depending on the program, at community colleges, for example, are appalling for a number of reasons, ranging from a lack of college preparation to instructional

pedagogies that do not well serve these underprepared populations. When looking for variables that a college can control, it becomes immediately apparent that higher education leaders are powerless over social problems that create underpreparedness. Nevertheless, improvements can be made in relationships, perceptions, and attitudes that move us closer to the essence of Greenleaf's (2002) "best test" (p. 27).

For example, the so-called "chalk 'n' talk" or "sage on the stage" instructional model—whereby instructors deliver "golden bricks" to students in the form of well-written and thoughtful lectures—often does not serve college students well. Structured this way, education is "teacher-centered," or focused on the teacher's need to "get through the material." "Learner-centered" approaches tend to focus on the student's efforts to make sense of the lovely brick. Attrition rates tell us that teacher-centered approaches, while they may be efficient, are not effective (O'Banion, 1997; Bain, 2004). Given the "perfect storm" scenario outlined earlier, we might develop ways to increase servant-leadership in our administrators and faculty so that our communities can build and grow.

The role of higher education leaders in this endeavor is to design, instruct, monitor, and evaluate the efforts at their colleges and universities. They will help to foster a climate and philosophy that will generate the conditions for Gardner's (1990) dispersed leadership, while knowing full well John Carver's (1999) insight that good leaders are always aware of the humbling reality that "the conductor doesn't make the music" (p. 209). Rather, as Wheatley (2006) pointed out, this kind of music is "purely relational" because "power in organizations is the capacity generated by relationships" (p. 39). Servant-leadership grows by serving others.

TEN AREAS FOR GROWTH

Listening

Leadership builds from an immanent core of listening to its final goal of community building, which incorporates the life of all its "listened-to"

members. Higher education is shifting its focus from teaching to learning, from broadcasting information in lecture halls to passive listeners toward creating dialogue and inquiry with learners actively engaged in constructing their own understandings. A learning organization is a listening institution, and success involves the symbiotic efforts of higher education administrators, faculty, and staff. Senge (1990) pointed out that "dialogue is a *team discipline*" [italics original] (p. 248), and this simple fact might need to be understood more profoundly in the boardroom as well as the classroom. A serious blockage of deep listening may occur because many people tend to assume that they already know how to listen because they have been hearing things said for their entire lifetimes. In order to develop listening skills, leaders might first agree to be open to the idea that anyone's listening skills can be improved and then read and discuss several important books, such as David Bohm's *On Dialogue* (Bohm & Nichol, 1996), William Isaacs' *Dialogue and the Art of Thinking Together* (1999), and Adam Kahane's *Solving Tough Problems* (2004). As Senge (1990) pointed out, "Bohm's distinctive contribution, one which leads to unique insights into team learning, stems from seeing thought as 'largely a collective phenomenon'" within which "the purpose of dialogue is to reveal the incoherence in our thought" (pp. 240-241). "Many people may feel threatened by the vulnerability that this approach to listening and dialogue might require of them, whether in a team or a dyad. Thought is not viewed as a team sport in the wider culture, so it may be difficult for individuals to let go of the notion that listening, as an aspect of thinking and feeling together, will involve hard work. Simply put, listening is the bedrock upon which all of the other servant-leader attributes are based, so it is unlikely that any program to develop servant-leadership capacity will succeed if, at the outset, the importance of listening is not examined and embraced.

Because the servant-leader is someone who listens before acting, leaders would not only read and discuss these books, but they would be encouraged to practice the principles contained therein. In order to begin deep listening that mitigates the common problem of waiting until someone

is finished talking so that you can make your point, every person would be asked to speak regularly during meetings. Generative dialogue, based on the idea that one says *yes* to ideas rather than *no*, would be practiced routinely. Some may find the request to say "yes" while listening distasteful. It will possibly cause some to conclude that all thoughts and feelings being expressed, both positive and negative, profound and inane, are thereby being embraced and affirmed—and for the purpose of listening this is true, which is some of why it is so difficult. What Gladwell (2005) has to say about improvisational comedy applies to listening skills:

> In life, most of us are highly skilled at suppressing action. All the improvisation teacher has to do is reverse this skill and he creates very "gifted" improvisers. Bad improvisers block action, often with a high degree of skill. Good improvisers develop action. (pp. 114-115)

Better listening might proceed from Gladwell's starting point: Stop suppressing listening. While someone else is speaking, simply say "yes" rather than "no" to their ideas and feelings. A new Golden Rule for listening might be inscribed on every leader's lips: "Grant that I may seek to listen rather than to be heard."

Empathy

The deepening of empathy is critical to servant-leadership in higher education, where access creates the democratizing threshold of social mobility through educational attainment. In systems process terms, a college with great empathy values its *throughputs* and *outputs* more than its *inputs* because it cares less about elite entrance requirements and more about the developmental process of education. Higher education has a long tradition of valuing this student development role. Therefore, a person without empathy, or one who fails to nurture and retain it, works against the very mission of higher education, which is both developmental and transformational. As Greenleaf noted, "Finally, there is a developing *view of people. All* people are seen as beings to be trusted, believed in, and loved,

and less as objects to be used, competed with, or judged" [italics original] (quoted in Burkhardt & Spears, 2002, p. 231). To ensure that this capacity is available throughout the institution, all leaders would undergo ethical training that focuses not on the usual legalistic or bureaucratic sense of protocols and propriety, but rather on the deontological obligations we owe one another as fellow travelers on a path of expanding humanity.

To accomplish this, participants might read a variety of works about ethics. There are many great writers in this rich tradition and any book list is meant to be be only suggestive. Regardless of which works are selected, one recommendation would be to make sure that objective types of ethics are put into dialogue with more caring ones. For example, Immanuel Kant's *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* (1993) is a suggested book because it can be important to ground ethical action in universal principles. Kant (1981) placed responsibility for right action squarely on the shoulders of each individual: "I ought never to act except in such a way that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law" (p. 14). But since we are attempting to expand our capacity for organizational power through relationship—not furthering an abstract notion of rightness through principle alone—participants might read feminist ethicists such as Noddings (2003), who so ably articulates the very real fact that our ontology is not, as Westerners often assume, based on a unit of one (in other words, the individual). Being, for Noddings, is created by the ontological unit of two. "We become dangerously self-righteous when we perceive ourselves as holding a precious principle not held by the other. The other may then be devalued and treated 'differently.' Our ethic of caring will not permit this to happen" (p. 5). This dialectic of approaches can then help create an interpretive community broadly across higher education that will serve to heighten general moral awareness based on empathy.

Conscience, in fact, shares its etymology with consciousness, which prompts us to ask, what is the object of consciousness? The answer for Noddings is "the other," the *subject, not object.* Conscience is based on awareness of one's separateness from others and the reconnection to them

through empathy. Sacrifice, then, is a commitment to suffering for another's good even when one's own sense of personal good might be compromised. Perhaps this is because one is conscious that reality is actually the connectedness of all things, though separateness is a very tangible illusion. Seen this way, empathy for the other is decidedly spiritual: "Thomas Merton once wrote that our spiritual life begins the moment we realize that we're not the center of the world" (Sinetar, 1998, p. 132). Servant-leaders legitimize power and therefore lead because they recognize the sacredness of the other.

Healing

Healing, in Greenleaf's (2002) terms, is an individual journey toward wholeness. He explains, "The motive for healing is the same: for one's own healing" (p. 49). Higher education leaders would come to understand in a deep way that one role of college, symbolically and functionally, is as a kind of educational Ellis Island where the huddled masses arrive in order to begin the process of accessing the American Dream through a hard-fought educational journey. The community colleges, in particular, do not serve America's intellectual elite; in fact, they often serve the refugees and exiles from failed K-12 experiences (Bailey & Morest, 2006a). In order to understand the underlying concept that the purpose of life is not perfection but wholeness, participants might read selections from writers such as Carl Jung, Joseph Campbell, Carol Gilligan, Robert A. Johnson, Alice Walker, Parker Palmer, Mother Teresa, and M. Scott Peck. The path to wholeness and healing is often darkened by egocentricity and external power pressures that impede the individual's progress. For this reason, Gina O'Connell Higgins' book, *Resilient Adults: Overcoming a Cruel Past* (1994) might also be read. Robert A. Johnson (1991) claims that the following story was Carl Jung's favorite, one that poignantly illustrates the essential difficulties in obtaining healing. It further helps us understand why healing is a journey rather than a destination, and why the college leadership might be focused on an ongoing search for truth rather than for correctness or efficiency.

> The water of life, wishing to make itself known on the face of the earth, bubbled up in an artesian well and flowed without effort or limit. People came to drink of the magic water and were nourished by it, since it was so clean and pure and invigorating. But humankind was not content to leave things in this Edenic state. Gradually they began to fence that well, charge admission, claim ownership of the property around it, make elaborate laws as to who could come to the well, put locks on the gates. Soon the well was the property of the powerful and the elite. The water was angry and offended; it stopped flowing and began to bubble up in another place. The people who owned the property around the first well were so engrossed in their power systems and ownership that they did not notice that the water had vanished. They continued selling the nonexistent water, and few people noticed that the true power was gone. But some dissatisfied people searched with great courage and found the new artesian well. Soon the well was under the control of the property owners, and the same fate overtook it. The spring took itself to yet another place—and this has been going on throughout recorded history. (pp. vii-viii)

In order to keep the waters bubbling in higher education, institutions might become committed to healing and authentic responses to the problems of those they serve.

Awareness

T.S. Eliot wrote in *Four Quartets* (1943), "human kind cannot bear very much reality," (p. 4) and Greenleaf (2002) was very sensitive to human vulnerability about awareness when he wrote the following:

> Some people cannot take what they see when the doors of perception are open too wide, and they had better test their tolerance for awareness gradually. A qualification for leadership is that one can tolerate a sustained wide span of awareness so that one better "sees it as it is." (p. 41)

This is a critical point because awareness, Greenleaf said, is "*not* a giver of solace—it is just the opposite. It is a disturber and an awakener. Able

leaders . . . . are not seekers after solace. They have their own inner serenity" [italics original] (p. 41). Conflict is part and parcel of leadership. Expanded awareness helps leaders to understand Max DePree's (1992) point that "failure is a natural part of work in organizations" (p. 165), while serenity helps them effectively use conflict for positive change. As DePree wrote further, "You might even say that people who never fail have not been trying hard enough—or have sailed their boats in small and perpetually calm ponds" (p. 165). This is the image of true failure: a limited pond of awareness that eventually stagnates.

Developing serenity is often easier said than done because awareness often causes pain when it comes in the form of cognitive dissonance. This problem of servant-leadership development and awareness is hardly specific to higher education, as all leaders are called to resist developing a "thick skin" in favor of this inner serenity. Strong traditions of academic freedom and tenure limit the power of leaders, and some colleges and universities have the additional element of a faculty collective bargaining agreement. Many leaders have failed because the thick skin grown in response to these pressures can cover the ears and heart. This unfortunate situation might be averted if leaders try at least two approaches. First, they might read deeply into the learning organizations and systems approach of Senge (1990), the developmental consciousness approach of Beck and Cowan (1996), and others that continually help to reinforce the idea that a leader's prime directive is to work for the health of the entire system. Second, curtailed perspective can be averted if leaders at all levels choose to develop, and consult, what Ira Chaleff (2003) has called "the courageous follower" in a book of the same title and remain focused on the servant half of servant-leadership. As a process, leadership is an ongoing expansion of perspective: Great leaders are usually willing to suffer and grow; they learn to depersonalize attacks that are made against them; and they learn to not take themselves seriously. This situation requires a program that develops the "inner serenity" that allows the person to develop his or her awareness with a minimum of stress or self-imposed blindness. Additional efforts to

develop serenity through prayer, meditation, and contemplation that increasingly expands the person's perspective might be encouraged.

Persuasion

Joseph Rost's (1991) definition of leadership as "an influence relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes" (p. 102) is especially pertinent to higher education. As mentioned previously, leaders do not have a great deal of the management powers common in business and industry. Rather than "ordering" a "subordinate" to do work, college leaders might use persuasion to influence others. Inherently, it is critical that they be open to influence themselves. Persuasion in this sense can be understood as the opposite of coercion, and definitions that state that persuasion is about getting people to do what they don't want to do miss the point. Larry Spears (2006) made this point when he placed the following quotation by Gordon Livingston within the context of persuasion as a key ability of the servant-leader: "Nobody likes to be told what to do. It seems too obvious to mention, and yet look how much that passes for intimate communication involves admonitions and instructions" (p. 5). Coercion is unethical, in any instance, and it is not the same as compulsion. We may require certain deliverables from employees, but to coerce them to do their jobs implies dishonesty and manipulation that undermine trust, love, and respect. As Greenleaf (2002) noted, "Leadership by persuasion has the virtue of change by convincement rather than coercion" (p. 44).

Higher education leaders might build a solid, persuasive case for actions they want accomplished. For example, the shift in emphasis from teaching to learning is perceived by some faculty members as empty semantics or, worse, threatening to a "stand-and-deliver" teacher who has not explored alternate ways of creating learning. The administration would be encouraged to convene a leadership team that includes influential faculty members to put together the case for why this approach is essential for college students to succeed. Creating deep change through persuasion

words and actions is, of course, a monumental task that prompted Schein (2004) to conclude that the "ability to perceive the limitations of one's own culture and to evolve the culture adaptively is the essence and ultimate challenge of leadership" (p. 2). Likewise, developing a reading list is difficult, but the fundamental features might include Aristotle's basic concepts of rhetoric, which he defined as "the faculty of discovering all of the available means of persuasion in any given situation" (Corbett & Connors, 1999, p. 1), as well as the concepts of interest-based negotiations (Fisher, Ury, & Patton, 1991) and important developments in gender-based and multicultural models of persuasion.

Conceptualization

On the subject of conceptualization, Larry Spears (2002) wrote that "servant-leaders seek to nurture their ability to dream great dreams. This means that one must be able to think beyond day-to-day management" (p. 227). This is a description of what is usually called "vision," often understood as the province of the leaders at the top of an organizational pyramid. But vision is the province of everyone in the institution, and leaders might cultivate their own envisioning as well as others' by concentrating on the other aspects of servant-leadership, such as listening, empathizing, and engaging in generative dialogue. Higher education is also in a position to help lead society in a broad re-conceptualization of our institutions to meet the demographics of new populations. The statistics cited earlier make it clear that higher education may very well need to significantly expand its concept of ownership if it is to pass the "best test" in the coming decades.

New concepts are generated by new questions in response to new environments, and periods of great change are times for servant-leaders to ask questions that generate new thinking. There are numerous transformational areas for which higher education leaders might help to generate new concepts. Some important questions might include the following, which are offered simply as examples:

1. O'Banion (1997) and others have argued that our educational institutions were built for a bygone era of an agricultural nation. Some changes were made to accommodate the realities of an industrial nation, but how might higher education serve the needs of citizens in today's information age, with a pace of change and knowledge creation that can render a four-year degree obsolete by the time the parchment is handed to the student at commencement?

2. When we live in an economy that requires sixty percent or more of our workers to have some college preparation, how might we create more access for our lower income individuals and people of color?

3. Technology has made asynchronous and other forms of distance learning modalities possible: How might these advances be used to serve the disadvantaged and other new segments of people?

4. With more Baby Boomers retiring and life expectancies widely predicted to exceed the century mark for today's youth, how might higher education help with lifelong learning that allows citizens to re-career several times over a long lifetime?

These questions illustrate how servant-leaders might seek new ways of conceptualizing the approaches and outcomes of higher education, with the important caveat that Greenleaf (2002) pointed out: This conceptualizing will be best if it includes those whom the institution needs to serve. "Even the conceptualizing may be done better not by an elite . . . but by leaders from among people of color, the alienated, and the disadvantaged of the world" (p. 48).

Traditions of rigor and quality might be embraced alongside the new concepts generated through surveying the communities served. For the purpose of environmental scanning, leaders might regularly read numerous reports that predict the changes that will be wrought by the demographics of ethnicity and socio-economic status, as well as numerous articles and books that might heighten awareness of the contexts of the diverse people who

will be accessing the college's services in the coming years. Out of this raw material, filtered through the other characteristics of servant-leadership, new concepts might be formed to lead higher education in the new century.

Foresight

Greenleaf (2002) regarded foresight as "the central ethic of leadership." He defined foresight as "a better than average guess about *what* is going to happen *when* in the future" [italics original] and urged that we must "cultivate the conditions that favor intuition" (p. 38) because "foresight is the 'lead' that the leader has" (p. 40). Higher education, grounded in its traditions, might become more responsive and flexible, and the development of foresight is integral to its success. Foresight creates the ability to be proactive. Ackoff (1981) wrote about four kinds of planning: reactive, inactive, preactive, and proactive. These constitute a continuum from hindsight to foresight; the first three are the most common and the least effective. Goodstein, Nolan, and Pfeiffer (1993) pointed out that "proactive planning is based on the belief that the future is not preordained or fixed and that organizations can shape their own future" (pp. 46-47). To be responsive to the communities that it serves, higher education leaders might consciously develop and exercise the capacity for foresight. In defining foresight as the central ethic, Greenleaf framed a lack of foresight as the ethical failure of the leader to exercise free will and choice "at an earlier date to foresee today's events and take the right actions when there was freedom for initiative to act" (p. 40).

Leaders would learn about the definition and sources of intuition by studying Carl Jung's theories of personality type (1976) and take the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) to personalize the information. Once a good working understanding takes hold, college leaders might be in a better position to understand and act upon what Larry Spears (Spears & Lawrence, 2002) has said philanthropically-inclined organizations must do about the treasures they are entrusted with: "But these gifts, while made in the past, were given with the future in mind. At the very heart of philan-

thropy is the responsibility to take the past and present forward into the future" (p. 236).

Stewardship

Burkhardt and Spears (Spears & Lawrence, 2002) presented Peter Block's definition of stewardship as "holding in trust for another" (p. 240), and it is true that higher education holds in trust so much of the community's hopes and aspirations about the future. This stewardship includes the entire community and not just students. In a state like Washington, for example, where the regressive tax structure relies upon a general sales tax for funding higher education, leaders "hold in trust" the needs of average citizens who will never access the college. These needs include contributions to economic development, to cultural enrichment, and a wide variety of other tangible benefits. So the question that might be answered is, "What is being held in trust, and for whom?" The specific answers to these questions would guide the college's stewardship with integrity, fidelity, and high ethical standards.

Bertrand Russell best expressed the essence of stewardship when he wrote, "One must care about a world one will never see" (Anshen & Croce, 1942). Leaders would be invited to read selections from John Carver's (2002) work on leadership and board governance. Carver, for example, in asking the fiduciary question about what public tax dollars should be used for, answered in a way that is deeply resonant with Greenleaf's (2002) "best test" (p. 27):

> For public money to be wisely spent, years of accepted practice in public administration must be replaced by an unrelenting focus on just what the money is buying *in terms of the change it brings to persons' lives. . ..* Usually some laudable activity is funded rather than a defined result. . . . The upshot is that money is given, evaluation is made, and reports written on the amount of type of *activity* rather than the amount of *results*. Even budgets, widely regarded as the *sine qua non* of control instruments, display dollars applied to various means, not ends. . .. What is needed is an

> emphasis not on what public servants *do*, but on what the *effects* are of
> their doing it. . . . In effect, *what is it worth to buy what changes for
> whom?* [italics original] (p. 551)

If ethical institutions are accountable ones, with their first and last priorities focused on service to their ownership, then the top and bottom lines will correspond directly to one another.

Commitment to the Growth of People

This is the heart of the "best test" as well as the heart of higher education. The elements of servant-leadership discussed are means for realizing this end of developing human potential. This is true across the spectrum, from community colleges that help prepare workforces to the research institutions that produce new knowledge to help move the ongoing project of humanity forward. Likewise, the means of a college or university contribute to this end. For example, nice facilities create an environment conducive to growth as sunlight and air do for plants; a knowledgeable faculty provides the experiential and research-based foundation of learning. Maslow's (1962) insights into self-actualization might be understood more broadly across campuses. To start expanding a humanistic philosophy, leaders might read Bolman and Deal's *Reframing Organizations* (2003), focusing especially on the "Human Resource Frame" (pp. 113-179). In general, two overarching ideas will further servant-leadership in higher education: (a) institutions exist to serve human needs and not the other way around; and (b) employees and students are investments in this essential "top-line" stakeholder service, not costs in a "bottom-line" shareholder business. Bread can be cast upon the waters at every opportunity when it means that any individual can learn, grow, develop, or expand his or her capabilities to perform well on the "best test."

Higher education leaders might also examine the ideas of numerous thinkers who approach this people-building project from a systems perspective so that educational delivery structures can be improved or redesigned to

meet the sometimes conflicting needs of a heterogenous population (Bailey & Morest, 2006b). One area that might be addressed is the chasm that often exists between instructional faculty and the counselors who assist students with career, academic, personal, and financial counseling (Grubb, 2006). Also, higher education often does not allow for easy articulation and transfer of credits between institutions. Obstacles to continuing education and degree completion might be removed through increased discussion between institutions, including dual-credit programs with high schools and community colleges (Morest & Karp, 2006; Bailey & Morest, 2006b). In all of these cases, the questions posed by Greenleaf (2002) in the "best test" (p. 27) might serve as the guiding ethos to developing new structures for encouraging the growth of individuals.

Building Community

Finally, there can be no more important endeavor than building community in higher education settings. Accordingly, Greenleaf's (2002) insight that educational institutions have become "too much a social-upgrading mechanism that destroys community" (p. 51) would be contemplated deeply by college leaders. In Washington State in particular, a regressive tax structure means that the employee of a McDonalds or 7-11 who may never access higher education is helping to pay the salary of all the college's employees. This visceral linkage is not a part of the average employee's consciousness, but it would benefit everyone if it were. It would help form the ethical bonds of care and commitment to make sure that the college's concepts of higher education are tempered by the community-at-large's ideas about how higher education can be helpful to the whole community through using its comprehensive mission to create pathways of access and attainment for any member of the community with the desire to develop through education. As Greenleaf (2002) wrote, we need to make sure that institutions are committed to "people-building" rather than "people-using" (p. 53).

Just as the old expression "If you want friends, you need first to be a

friend" contains a deep wisdom, it is also true that everyone might benefit if higher education would climb down from its so-called ivory towers more often to roam the streets of the commonwealth. The best way to build community, after all, is to commune. Higher education leaders might in particular learn from the literature on team-building and the previously mentioned suggestions on the art of dialogue and listening. In general, an expanded concept of community—one that includes not just students and donors but all members of society—might improve the effects of servant-leadership in untold ways.

CONCLUSION

The past 30 years have been tumultuous in a way that Greenleaf envisaged, with more women, more people of color, and more poor people bringing their views about how they might best be served. Many of these perspectives overturn status quo, top-down, dominant culture thinking from Greenleaf's generation and work directly to support servant-leadership. For example, Fiorenza (Borysenko, 1999) articulated a feminist approach that furthers servant-leadership: "Feminist spirituality proclaims wholeness, healing, love, and spiritual power not as hierarchical, as *power over*, but as power *for*, as enabling power" (p. 3). In a similar vein, Bordas (1995) found that Greenleaf's insights harmonized "with perspectives from Native American and Hispanic cultures" (p. 179). It is difficult to know what the future might bring in the middle of such hugely transformational times as the ones we are experiencing, but servant-leadership is a philosophy that might help guide us to a safer, freer, and more just future.

A servant-leadership development program in higher education would be based on insights garnered from the literature with ongoing performance metrics that provide data about how well these theories and practices are affecting people and institutions for the better. After some initial implementations by front-line leaders, a course might be offered to any and all employees of institutions that wish to develop capacity for a good score on Greenleaf's (2002)"best test" (p. 27). And we might even go further than

Greenleaf because so many transformational foundations have been built in the 30 years since he first published *Servant Leadership*. Thinkers such as Beck and Cowan (1996) have put together a strong case that the human race's evolution is ongoing through cultural DNA, or memetics. If true, Greenleaf's ideas about servant-leadership are helping to create new cultural DNA that might help us rescue ourselves *from* ourselves at a time when technology so dramatically outpaces consciousness and ethical thinking. The principles of servant-leadership can lead the way for us to consciously develop ourselves from our current status as *homo sapiens* to what some have called the next step in evolution, *homo lucens* (Beck & Cowan, 1996, p. 64). We may need to learn how to serve others in order to save ourselves.

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