

Perspectives

Community College
Leadership for the
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Today's New Presidents and the Organizational Culture

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"I think as a company, if you can get those two things right – having a clear direction on what you are trying to do and bringing in great people who can execute on the stuff – then you can do pretty well."

~ Mark Zuckerberg, CEO, Facebook

Life is filled with opportunities that either come along or are created. Regardless of how an opportunity is presented, it is important to make the best of the situation. I have the great fortune to serve in my second year as the president of Lone Star College-North Harris. LSC-North Harris is located in Houston, Texas, one of the six colleges that make up Lone Star College. I believe that serving as president of the college is a great opportunity, coupled with tremendous responsibilities. The college has a great history and was the original college of Lone Star College. Prior to his current role, Lone Star College's chancellor, Dr. Stephen C. Head, was the president of LSC-North Harris.

When I assumed the presidency, I realized the high expectations and tremendous work that was ahead of me. I had the ability to influence positive change and enhance the culture of the organization. Fortunately, the college was filled with seasoned employees who have served LSC for decades. I felt enormous pressure, mostly self-created, to accomplish much in a short period of time. I wanted to make sure I hit a grand slam when I was the first one up to bat. The reality was that this was my first presidency where I would have the opportunity to use my past career experiences to make decisions and take action to help the college continue to move forward and grow. To help me focus, I realized I needed to take a deep breath and utilize my training, leadership, and background to help me in my new role.

Early in my community college career, I worked at was Richland College, an institution that exhibited a culture committed to student, employee, and community success. Faculty and staff were empowered to serve and contribute to the well-being of employees and students. The environment was filled with high morale and a sense of ownership. The president at the time was Dr. Stephen K. Mittelstet. The mascot was the Thunderduck, and the word "thunder" permeated throughout the institution including reports, newsletter (ThunderBridge) and in the

institution's values (ThunderValues). These values helped to reinforce the culture of the institution: integrity; mutual trust; wholeness; fairness; considerate, meaningful communications; mindfulness; cooperation; diversity; responsible risk-taking; and joy. Dr. Mittelstet's commitment to the organization by believing and supporting his team members shaped my perspective on leadership. He encouraged professional development and was available to speak with employees and students regarding their experiences and to address their concerns. In 2005, Richland College received the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, recognizing organizations that demonstrate quality and performance excellence.

During my time in Kentucky, I worked at Hazard Community and Technical College (HCTC) and Southcentral Kentucky Community and Technical College (SKYCTC). Though both institutions varied by region (HCTC is located in eastern Kentucky and surrounded by mountains and SKYCTC is surrounded by rolling hills and an hour away from Nashville), both exhibited a commitment to employee success. Clearly, the leaders of the institution believed in their employees. While I was at HCTC, the college participated in – and was recognized as – one of the "Best Places to Work in Kentucky." Associated with the Best Companies Group, the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, and the Kentucky Society for Human Resource Management, the program includes the administration of a survey measuring employee engagement and satisfaction. Results affirmed the positive culture of HCTC. Similarly, the leadership at SKYCTC was committed to a culture of caring, led by the president who supported employees through professional development and college-wide activities.

Lone Star College truly is a special place. One of the largest colleges in the country, it continues to grow in enrollment while colleges across the country have experienced flat or declining enrollment. The chancellor attributes the growth to a variety of factors, such as being at the right place at the right time. Another key factor is the culture of the organization. Lone Star College has identified its value through a series of interactions with various stakeholders and the chancellor. The following values represent LSC 20/20:

- ▲ Students Matter - I engage and support each student to achieve their goals.
- ▲ Inspire Excellence - I celebrate successes and value the contributions of all employees.
- ▲ Act intentionally - I create goals and make decisions based on meaningful data.
- ▲ Better Together - I share knowledge and encourage collaboration to reach common goals.
- ▲ No Fear! - I am empowered to effect positive change.
- ▲ Trust! - I practice transparent communication, encourage dialogue and cultivate trust.

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Increasing the diversity of [college] leaders, consistent with the increasing diversity of our student population and the U.S. population as a whole, is not only critically necessary... it's the right thing to do.

- Ricardo Azziz

Making progress in improving the racial/ethnic diversity of college leadership involves an institutional commitment to stated goals, sufficient resources and effective leadership, and building capacity to sustain efforts over time.

- Vernon A. Jordan

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EMERGING LEADERS' PERSPECTIVES

In this issue, the third in our series relating to equity in community college leadership, we turn our focus toward the college presidency. Many predict that the coming decades will reshape the presidency since the graying of today's leadership can open doors for women, minorities, and Gen X leaders. Having leaders from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences enriches the intellectual and cultural climate of the college, given that leaders can strongly influence institutional culture. We posed the following question to emerging and national leaders. Their answers appear below.

Michael Couch, MA

Financial Services Technician
Grand Rapids Community College
Grand Rapids Michigan

As both a millennial and an African American male, I have come to realize that opportunities for executive-level and presidency positions are becoming more available today, given the mass retirement of current presidents. Historically, these positions have been held by middle-aged Caucasian males. Therefore, it is likely that both the institution and the new minority will be facing a significant cultural change in the very near future. Since change in higher education may not be well received at times, a new minority president could assume the role without a lengthy institutional tenure and with little to no support. These issues constitute some potential barriers that a minority president might face when accepting a position of this stature.

Organizational culture can have a powerful effect on the performance and long-term effectiveness of organizations and also has a major impact on employee morale, commitment, productivity, physical health, and emotional well-being. Cameron and Quinn (1999) developed the Competing Values Framework (CVF), an organizational culture framework built upon a theoretical model. CVF evaluates whether an organization is predominantly internally or externally focused, as well as whether it strives for flexibility and individuality or stability and control. As one of the most effective models of organizational culture, CVF might serve to help a future minority leader assist in the creation of a supportive and inclusive campus culture. In my opinion, having this framework in place offers a new leader the best opportunity to be successful. CVF uses culture dimensions to place emphasis on the four dominant culture types, including clan, adhocracy, market, and hierarchy, thus enabling a new leader to assess the current culture by speaking with those who are presently working in that college environment. (Cameron & Quinn, 1999).

In any organization, it is essential to understand the relationship between the organizational culture, leadership behavior, and job satisfaction of employees. A leader might use the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) to identify the organizational culture profile based on core organizational values, assumptions, interpretations, and approaches. This model seeks to gather information in a non-threatening way and ultimately, helps to develop perspective. The CVF allows faculty and staff from a variety of backgrounds and experiences to help new leaders understand the intellectual and cultural climate of an institution. Such tools can assist new leaders to develop a greater awareness of employee value orientations and also make better sense of who or what is causing tension and conflict within organizations. By gaining such valuable insight, new presidents of diverse backgrounds are much better positioned to overcome cultural barriers to success.

Reference:

Cameron, K. S., & Quinn, R. E. (1999). *Diagnosing and changing organizational culture: Based on the competing values framework*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH:

Ideally, what model of organizational culture needs to be in place to help new presidents be successful executive leaders?

Melissa MacGregor, MEd

Manager of Workforce Grants
Harper College
Palatine, Illinois

The shifting landscape of community colleges with changes afoot in accreditation, alternative education options, eroding state funding, and technological innovations such as competency-based education, digital badges, and the trend of using data analytics to inform decision-making

begs for new leader types who can think outside of the box and add fresh perspectives to providing higher education options for students. Traditional leaders are simply not equipped to lead a non-traditional institution, so community colleges must become non-traditional. Colleges face more challenges and issues today than they did even ten years ago. It's difficult to imagine that smart phones did not even exist ten years ago, yet they have since become a ubiquitous part of everyday life from communication to wayfinding to photography to choosing a restaurant in an unfamiliar city. New jobs requiring new training emerge every day, such as wind energy, cybersecurity, and search engine optimization certification. Traditional institutions will be hopelessly underequipped to educate the generation that will develop what will exist ten years from now.

Significant data show that intentionally designing elements of engagement, such as high expectations, support and feedback, involvement and commitment, helps students to stay on track and generally leads to better outcomes. There is no reason why community college leadership shouldn't exhibit these same qualities. Establishing a culture of engagement ideally would encompass all levels of the college community from students to presidents and cabinet members. Presidents who engage more fully with faculty, students, and the community will be seen as more approachable and willing to listen to the voices of others. Representation matters. Students of every background need to observe a wide cultural diversity in their leadership and understand the ways that it impacts the richness of their community. Diversity at the highest levels of any organization opens the doors for new relationships and conversations with business owners, potential donors, and other connections that might otherwise never have materialized if the institution is perceived as conducting "business as usual."

The market tells us that today's students want convenient, low-cost, easily navigated educational experiences from any variety of institutions that they can self-manage and which align with employment opportunities. This demand will drive where students seek credentials recognized by industry (and emerging industries). Thus community college leaders must work towards developing a culture of innovation and change as well as strategies to offer the educational experiences required for – and valued by – the workforce of tomorrow.

Michael Couch, MA, currently serves as a Financial Services Technician in financial aid for Grand Rapids Community College in Michigan. He has previously held financial aid and student life positions with Western Michigan University and ITT Technical Institute. Michael earned his Masters of Arts in Higher Education and Student Affairs from Western Michigan University. Currently, he is enrolled in the Doctorate in Community College Leadership (DCCL) program at Ferris State University.



Melissa MacGregor, MEd, is the Manager of Workforce Grants at Harper College in Palatine, Illinois. She is currently building and promoting a program of apprenticeships by strengthening partnerships with business and industry in a variety of apprenticeable occupations. She also serves as Vice-Chair of the college's Strategic Planning and Accountability Committee. MacGregor earned her MEd from American Intercontinental University and is currently a student in the Ferris State University DCCL program.



NATIONAL LEADER PERSPECTIVE

In this issue, the third in our series relating to equity in community college leadership, we turn our focus toward the college presidency. Many predict that the coming decades will reshape the presidency since the graying of today's leadership can open doors for women, minorities, and Gen X leaders. Having leaders from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences enriches the intellectual and cultural climate of the college, given that leaders can strongly influence institutional culture. We posed the following question to emerging and national leaders. Their answers appear below.

Cultural Competence: A Pre-Requisite to Inclusion

Mary-Frances Winters

Founder/President
The Winters Group, Inc.
Bowie, Maryland

We have come a long way in qualifying the value-add in investing in diversity and inclusion within institutions. Perhaps, our greatest challenge today is creating the conditions and organizational cultures to fully realize that value.

A recent study by researchers at San Diego State University suggests the "sweet spot" in creating an inclusive culture that supports high performance lies at the intersection of belongingness and uniqueness (Shore, et al., 2011). This research found that organizations can only begin to maximize on the benefits of inclusion if they foster environments, cultures, and teams where 1) individuals feel their differences are acknowledged (uniqueness), and 2) feel their differences are respected and seen as a value-add (belongingness). If organizations are not careful, they can easily find themselves unintentionally perpetuating a culture of assimilation, rather than inclusion. Often times the notion of assimilation is dressed up in rhetoric used to describe talent and leaders as "not being a good fit" or not conducive to the "culture" of the organization. If left unmanaged, these biases run the risk of impeding inclusion efforts and stifling success.

In a Harvard Business Review study, Fear of Being Different Stifles Talent, researchers found that at organizations with an expressed commitment to inclusiveness, employees from traditionally underrepresented groups (ethnic minorities, women, LGBT, etc.) still felt the need to "cover," or downplay their uniqueness in order to be successful within the organization. The inclination to cover was proven to impact productivity, engagement, and ultimately one's capacity to innovate (Yoshino & Smith, 2014).

In a day and age where one's perception of their organization's inclusiveness impacts their engagement, empowerment, and innovation, it has become increasingly important to identify practical ways to foster inclusion. This is where cultural competence comes into play.

Put plainly by Andres Tapia, if diversity is the "mix," and inclusion is "making the mix work," I contend that cultural competence can be described as the "how" in achieving inclusion. Certainly, there are other macro-level factors that play a role in an institution's capacity to create a culture of inclusion, but the role of cultural competence at the micro-level, specifically among leaders and key stake-holders, cannot be understated.

The Winters Group defines cultural competence as: A continuous learning process to develop knowledge, appreciation, acceptance and skills to be able to discern cultural patterns in your own and other cultures and be able to effectively incorporate several different world views into problem solving, decision making and conflict resolution.

The Four Stages of Learning Model, a theory that was developed by Noel Burch in the 1970s, is helpful in understanding how we become more culturally competent. These stages include 1) Unconscious Incompetence, 2) Conscious Incompetence, 3) Conscious Competence, and 4) Unconscious Competence.

Unconscious incompetence means that we are unaware of how little we know; conscious incompetence is the stage where we recognize our incompetence and seek to acquire knowledge and skills so that we become consciously competent, and at unconscious competence we don't even need to think about the skill because it has been internalized.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH:

Ideally, what model of organizational culture needs to be in place to help new presidents be successful executive leaders?

In order for the next generation of diverse leaders to be effective and successful executive leaders, they must work to create culturally competent institutional cultures, which also means investing in their own individual cross cultural effectiveness. I've worked with a number of institutions and leaders on their journeys towards cultural competence and inclusion. My 4E model offers an easy way to conceptualize this journey:

▲ **Exposure:** If we live in isolation or only interact with our own cultural group, it is not likely that we

will grow in cultural competence. Exposure is key.

▲ **Experience:** Just because you have exposure to difference does not necessarily mean that you have experiences that help you to learn about other cultures. The exposure might be superficial or you may intentionally not discuss your differences. Experiencing other cultures is about building meaningful relationships that are open, trusting, and allow you to explore differences in respectful ways. Inclusion will not happen if we do not break down the barriers that limit our experiences with other cultures.

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▲ **Education:** Structured learning opportunities are necessary to provide opportunities to develop cultural competence. While experience may be the best teacher, it can also lead us to stereotypical or narrow understandings of other cultures. Your rich experience with two friends from another culture may not provide a broad enough perspective. Education can come in many forms, such as in-classroom training, visits to museums, reading, traveling, etc.

The combination of exposure, experience, and education leads to **effectiveness**, or the ability to successfully navigate cultural difference, which is what inclusion is all about!

Mary-Frances Winters, president and founder of The Winters Group, Inc., is a master strategist with over 30 years' experience in strategic planning, change management, diversity, organization development, training and facilitation, systems thinking, and qualitative and quantitative research methods. She has extensive experience in working with senior leadership teams to drive organizational change. Ms. Winters earned her MBA from the William E. Simon Executive Development Program and received an honorary doctorate from Roberts Wesleyan College in 1997. Prior to founding The Winters Group in 1984, she was affirmative action officer and senior market analyst at Eastman Kodak Company. Among her many awards and distinctions, she was named a diversity pioneer by Profiles in Diversity Journal in August 2007 and received the Winds of Change Award from the Forum on Workplace Inclusion in 2016. Ms. Winters was also featured in Forbes' June 2016 publication, which honored some of the DC Metro area's most powerful women. She is the author of three books, *Only Wet Babies Like Change: Workplace Wisdom for Baby Boomers*, *Inclusion Starts With "I"* and *CEO's Who Get It: Diversity Leadership from the Heart and Soul*. She most recently authored a chapter in the book *Diversity at Work: The Practice of Inclusion* (2013).





QUICK TAKES
Highlights
from the Field

Challenges of a New President

by Sandra Caldwell

As president of Reedley College in California, Dr. Caldwell describes her first-year experiences in this new role. Offering a number of observations and insights garnered from her early days in the presidency, Dr. Caldwell provides some helpful guidance to other new leaders who find themselves working to get acclimated early in their presidential careers. She explores how incoming community college presidents face myriad challenges and high expectations as newcomers to the campus and its culture. Access this work here: <http://bit.ly/1hESxkZ>

The New Community College Leader

by Emily R Miller and Richard A Skinner

Based upon the premise that who and how persons become community college presidents may be reflections of the origins and missions of the sector over the 100-plus years they have been in existence, the authors discuss the potential makeup of the next generation of college leaders. New presidents – many of whom may be female – will need to focus on helping to transform the college culture, engaging faculty, the Board, and the larger campus community. Access this work here: <http://bit.ly/2eJJYh>



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Today's New Presidents and the Organizational Culture (continued from page 1)

One component of change management is awareness. It was important that several sessions and conversations were held so that employees could shape and become familiar with the values. As the chancellor shares, "...we are committed to the business of teaching and learning." It is important that the focus is on the students and their successes. Without students, we would not need a college. Employees are important to the mission of the institution, and it is important to support and appreciate their good work.

Hiring people that fit the culture of the organization is a great goal, as is hiring people that will add to the culture of the organization.

At Lone Star College, we are committed to using data to inform our decisions and help make the best choices and take appropriate actions. This also reflects the importance of working beyond departments and divisions as teamwork and collaboration are vital. Similar to Richland Colleges' responsible-risk taking, employees at Lone Star College are encouraged to take action to help provide quality service. In order to support these values, trust must be developed and supported through meaningful conversations.

Communication is the key to success. Communication will help let people know what is occurring, clarify issues, and in the long-term, develop trust. As a college president, I serve on the Chancellor's Cabinet. The chancellor hosts regular meetings to keep the college presidents and vice chancellors updated on various issues. My goal is to provide ways to communicate, connect, and engage with students, employees, and community members. College Forum is an opportunity held once a month, open to all employees at LSC-North Harris, where we recognize employees, as well as provide updates related to instruction, construction, and projects. President's Council is also a monthly meeting where deans, vice presidents, presidents of the faculty senate and professional support staff association, and other administrators meet so we can discuss issues. Listening Posts are held at various locations at the main campus and the centers. This is an informal period where I sit in a high traffic area and talk with anyone who makes time to visit. The employees who report directly to me are part of the Captains Team, reflecting the team-based philosophy of the leadership team. I also attend as many events as I can. Access and communication is also supported electronically. An electronic newsletter is sent via email, and the homepage includes an Ask the President link so anyone can send me a direct message. These conversations are important ways for me to hear directly the concerns, praises, and questions of employees and students. I rely on members of the team to fulfill their roles, and I am modeling the behavior I expect as well.

Though in some ways aspects of my first year of the presidency felt as though they lasted longer than they really did, overall the year was a blur. I am familiar with the saying, "drinking from a fire hose." When I worked with Dr. Michael B. McCall, former president of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, he used the phrase to describe building the system as, "building the plane as it was flying." I definitely can relate to both

those comments since I am committed to doing what is best for the college, students, employees, and community. Not every decision will be popular, but by using data to inform my decisions, I know I will do my best to support the mission.

As shared by my mentor, Dr. John E. Roueche, hiring is Job 1. Very close to hiring is ensuring that employees, experienced and new, have the opportunity to be successful in the organization. It is important to hire people of diverse backgrounds (race, ethnicity, gender, education, and so forth). Hiring people that fit the culture of the organization is a great goal, as is hiring people that will add to the culture of the organization. Having the right people in key areas is critical. Setting clear expectations and engaging in ongoing professional development are vital for individual and organizational success. Personnel decisions are important because each member of the organization not only serves as an employee, but as an ambassador of the college. Whether a new employee comes on board or an employee leaves, it involves change. I engage in all faculty hiring as well as many staff positions. In addition to the standard interviews, I share with the candidates my expectations and LSC's cultural values.

It is important to appreciate the accomplishments of the past and find balance as we create the momentum for future successes.

Serving as president of Lone Star College-North Harris has been one of the most significant roles in my career. I have the opportunity to work with others to make decisions and shape the culture of the institution. It is important to appreciate the accomplishments of the past and find balance as we create the momentum for future successes.



Dr. Gerald F. Napoles became president of Lone Star College-North Harris in July 2015. He previously served as senior vice president of student and organizational success at Southcentral Kentucky Community and Technical College in Bowling Green, and was vice president of student affairs for the institution. Other positions include dean of learner outreach/assistant to the president at Hazard Community and Technical College, Professional Expert to the Vice Chancellor of Institutional Effectiveness in the Los Angeles Community College District Office, and at The University of Texas at Austin, he served as the Membership Coordinator for the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) and as a Teaching Assistant in The College of Education. Napoles also worked in the Dallas County Community College District, serving at both Richland College and Eastfield College.

Gerald is a past president for the National Asian/Pacific Islander Council (NAPIC), an affiliate group of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC). He currently serves on AACC's Commission on Communications and Marketing and has also served as a representative on AACC's Coalition of Affiliated Councils and on the Commission on Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity.

He holds a PhD from The University of Texas at Austin, an MA from the University of North Texas, and began his higher education journey as a community college student at Richland College.