


CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Concepts and Practices

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CHAPTER NINE

LEADERSHIP EDUCATION
AND THE REVITALIZATION
OF PUBLIC LIFE

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It is time for citizens to strike out in new directions and refashion our ideas about community leadership. We need some leadership in changing our concept of leadership.

—David Mathews (1996, p. 17)

In the beginning, I had a very narrow view of a leader as an individualistic, in-charge person who pulled or pushed others along with them. Having a better understanding of the way communities are structured and function, I now see that leaders do not necessarily have to be out in front of an issue, but rather need only to stand by their own convictions and often will work mutually with other leaders in their efforts.

—Miami University Wilks Scholar

In an age of divisive, zero-sum politics and global consumer culture, it is difficult to imagine a vibrant democratic public, let alone publicly empowered citizen leadership. Our students make this painfully clear. Having come of age in a culture of increased privatization and

renewed individualism, they have been socialized to think of themselves as consumers and measure their accomplishments according to marketplace standards. As William Galston (2004) has noted, today's young adults "have confidence in personalized acts with consequences they can see for themselves; they have less confidence in collective actions (especially those undertaken through public institutions), whose consequences they see as remote, opaque, and impossible to control" (p. 263).

It also seems abundantly clear, given the problems confronting us—among them intractable global poverty, pervasive educational inequity, the spread of HIV/AIDS, and the decline in civic participation—that the dominant model of the "heroic" or "charismatic" person with authority leading a cadre of followers is no longer acceptable (Heifetz, 1994). Likewise, the established model of teaching and learning in higher education, in which students are filled up with knowledge and credentialed by scholarly experts, is ineffective in preparing students to address these problems. Higher education cannot simply be a site for the creation and acquisition of knowledge for its own sake, nor can our nation's colleges and universities operate under an efficiency-driven, customer service model that views preparing students for the workforce as its top priority.

Rather, colleges and universities must be engaged in leadership for the diverse democracy of the twenty-first century. In fact, higher education is perhaps the single most important catalyst not only for educating the next generation for a new kind of leadership but also for mobilizing institutional resources to engage in the type of collaborative problem solving necessary to address difficult public issues. Thus, leadership education needs to be relational, collaborative, community based, and perhaps most important, public. It also must be integrally connected to the kind of learning that asks students to see themselves as creators and agents actively shaping local and global communities, rather than as passive consumers of their education and the broader culture.

This chapter begins with an overview of models of leadership development. After describing the leadership efforts of the Highlander Folk School during the civil rights movement, to give some historical context to the theory and practice of leadership education on college campuses today, the core of this chapter presents an emerging program for putting this conception of leadership

into practice at one institution of higher education. It describes the Harry T. Wilks Leadership Institute at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, as a case study of the development of a national model for public leadership that connects leadership education with civic engagement through curricular and cocurricular initiatives in southwest Ohio. The Wilks Institute and, more specifically, an interdisciplinary think tank in American studies called Acting Locally serve as promising examples for thinking differently about leadership education for democracy. Building from these examples, the chapter concludes by offering recommendations for connecting leadership education with civic engagement that are applicable to all types of institutions.

COUNTERING THE DOMINANT MODEL OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The tensions between individualism and community and between private and public goods have a long and deep history in the United States. From its earliest days, ideals of biblical mission and republican virtue have vied with the realities of frontier self-reliance and liberal individualism (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, and Tipton, 1985). Although the ideal of the independent, successful individual embodied in Benjamin Franklin's model for personal success and Ralph Waldo Emerson's notion of self-reliance has been dominant in American culture, our history is marked with moments from the abolitionist movement to the Progressive Era, from the New Deal to the civil rights movement, in which civic engagement and commitment to community have sought to turn individual self-interest toward the larger public good. We believe that American culture is currently in the midst of another one of these moments. An understanding of these trends, especially in the context of higher education, is important for designing leadership education programs that create opportunities for students to act as engaged citizens.

The past thirty years have witnessed a dramatic shift away from investing in the public good toward individual interests and private concerns. The election of Ronald Reagan in 1980 solidified the turn away from issues of civil rights and social justice that defined the culture of the 1960s. Reagan's presidency ushered in an era

of policy that promoted small government, deregulation of public utilities, and supply-side economics. The emerging culture of conservatism cast big government as a villain, pilloried the welfare system, and demonized all forms of taxation. Government, politicians, and the public became suspect, while the ideal of the private individual, the self-made man, and the free market resurged. As the private sphere flourished, consumer values of therapeutic self-fulfillment and expressive individualism recast public culture in terms of the marketplace. Historian Lizbeth Cohen (2003) has extensively documented this "consumerization of the Republic" in which citizens have become shoppers and public institutions have become an extension of the marketplace (p. 369). "The market," according to Galston (2004), "has become more pervasive during the past generation as organizing metaphor and as daily experience, [and] the range of opportunities to develop non-market skills and dispositions has narrowed" (p. 263).

The loss of public life is reflected in the predominant model of leadership that promotes individual accomplishment and personal success. This idea of leadership can be seen everywhere. For example, in American politics, candidates are treated like celebrities, while citizens are treated like spectators. Equally alarming is the suggestion that arose after the events of September 11, 2001, that the best way for ordinary Americans to respond to the attacks against the United States was to "go shopping" (Pelligrini, 2007).

On a more hopeful note, the individualistic, consumer-driven model is being called into question by rising concerns over the decline in civic life. There are countertrends emerging where "citizens are at the center," as Harry Boyte (2004), Cynthia Gibson (2006), Peter Levine (2006), and others have argued. This citizen-centered approach has taken many forms and is rooted in the ideals of republicanism, with its grounding in classical ideals of civic virtue and in the theory and practice of John Dewey, Jane Addams, Ella Baker, and Myles Horton. Although too often seen as outside the domain of leadership education in higher education, these developments inform some of the earliest efforts to transform the nature of leadership education. For instance, David Mathews (1996) describes the importance of "leaderful communities," which make leadership "the responsibility of the many" (p. 9). Drawing on the research of the Kettering Foundation, Mathews finds that

the challenges we face require a new conception of leadership that includes people from every facet of a community contributing their talents. Likewise, Benjamin Barber (1998) argues that in a strong democracy there is a need for strong citizens, not strong leaders. Barber's point is that when leadership is defined by charismatic individuals, the result is disempowered citizens.

More engaged and relational models have emerged over the past four decades from leadership scholars and practitioners as well (Goethals and Sorenson, 2006; Roberts, 2007). These models vary from the influential "servant leadership" model (Greenleaf, 1991) to those advocating leadership as a "relational and ethical process of people together attempting to accomplish positive change" (Komives, Lucas, and MacMahon, 2007, p. ix). In perhaps the most promising approach to leadership development, Ronald Heifetz and his colleagues at Harvard offer an alternative to the individual model of leadership by defining leadership as "mobilizing people to tackle tough problems" (Heifetz, 1994, p. 15; see also Parks, 2005).

In addition, building on what has been termed the "social change model of leadership development" (Higher Education Research Institute, 1996), a report for the Kellogg Foundation argues that "colleges and universities provide rich opportunities for recruiting and developing leaders through the curriculum and co-curriculum" (Astin and Astin, 2000, p. 3). In calling for greater attention to leadership development in higher education, *Leadership Reconsidered* (Astin and Astin, 2000) declares: "If the next generation of citizen leaders is to be engaged and committed to leading for the common good, then the institutions which nurture them must be engaged in the work of the society and the community, modeling effective leadership and problem solving skills, demonstrating how to accomplish change for the common good" (p. 2).

TOWARD AN ALTERNATIVE CONCEPTION OF PUBLIC LEADERSHIP: THE HIGHLANDER FOLK SCHOOL

In this chapter, we call for a different but related model of public leadership that is rooted in the community-based struggles for the fullest promise of democracy. This alternative conception of

leadership for the common good has taken shape throughout American history. Perhaps not surprisingly, during the 1950s and 1960s, a public idea of leadership education emerged in the heart of the civil rights movement through the efforts of the Highlander Folk School.

The Highlander Folk School was founded in 1932 by legendary democratic educator Myles Horton in the poor, rural area near the small Cumberland Plateau town of Monteagle, Tennessee. After providing educational training for southern unions in the 1930s and 1940s during the labor movement, Highlander became a key partner and gathering place for black and white civil rights activists during the 1950s and 1960s. In a beautiful, natural setting, Highlander brought black and white community leaders together for workshop retreats, or "learning circles," to deliberate and plan for collaborative action in their home communities.

Highlander helped empower an array of leaders during the civil rights movement, including Fannie Lou Hamer, Ella Baker, John Lewis, Bob Moses, and many others. Its most notable student, Rosa Parks, attended a workshop at Highlander the summer before initiating the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, on December 1, 1955.

While the dominant narrative of Rosa Parks most often deeply resembles the individual model of leadership that she was simply a poor, tired seamstress who ignited a movement through her spontaneous refusal to give up her seat on a segregated bus, this is inaccurate. In fact, Parks had been a community leader for many years and was the executive secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in Montgomery. She was sent by several local organizations to attend the Highlander workshop on school desegregation because of her local leadership in Montgomery. Learning with others at Highlander proved powerful for Parks. "At Highlander, I found out for the first time in my adult life that this could be a unified society, that there was such a thing as people of different races and backgrounds meeting together in workshops, and living together in peace and harmony," she later reflected (Horton, 1998, pp. 149–150).

And yet the power of the public leadership approach is not individual stories of success. Highlander minimized the importance of positional leadership and technical expertise, instead

focusing on the capacity of ordinary people—often with little formal education—to define and then solve problems collectively. Thus, Highlander’s approach to leadership education, which can be a model for colleges and universities today, is best expressed in what was a mantra for the civil rights movement: “we are the ones we’ve been waiting for.”

One powerful example of this idea of leadership was seen in the early 1950s through the creation of a leadership and educational program called the Citizenship Schools, arguably the most successful leadership and educational program of the Highlander Folk School and the civil rights movement. Started on Johns Island, one of the largest of the South Carolina Sea Islands, the Citizenship Schools enabled more than a thousand volunteer educators to teach literacy to tens of thousands of African Americans across the South (Clark, 1965). While the direct purpose was using informal education to teach literacy, the larger vision was leadership development, which enabled African Americans to register to vote and, more important, to become first-class citizens.

The selection of the first teacher for the Citizenship Schools is instructive of the conception of leadership. Aware of the limitations of professional expertise, Myles Horton and Septima Clark didn’t want a certified teacher because “people with teaching experience would likely impose their schooling methodology on the students and be judgmental” (Horton, 1998, p. 101). Horton and Clark wanted a community-oriented, nonhierarchical leader. Thus, Highlander recruited Bernice Robinson, a black beautician with no training, as a teacher. At first Robinson was hesitant, explaining, “I’m a beautician. I don’t know anything about teaching.” But Horton and Clark were adamant. Clark later explained, “We knew that she had the most important quality, the ability to listen to people” (Brown, 1990, p. 49).

In 1956, after three months of planning, Robinson began the first class in the back room of a cooperative store by insisting on the theme that would epitomize the Citizenship Schools: we are all teachers and leaders. “I am not a teacher, we are here to learn together. You are going to teach me as much as I’m going to teach you” (Horton, 1998, p. 103). Thus, like all the workshops held at Highlander, the Citizenship Schools were based on the concept that all participants could be contributors and leaders and

acknowledged the potential of leadership as a group endeavor. “Our desire is to empower people collectively, not individually,” Horton explained (1998, p. 157).

HARRY T. WILKS LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE AT MIAMI UNIVERSITY

As a public university with regional campuses that has made an institutional commitment to leadership over the past decade, Miami University offers an array of curricular and cocurricular leadership programs. It also offers multiple venues for exploring an alternative model of leadership in higher education and public culture (Roberts, 2001, 2007). And while Miami has an array of leadership programs and curricula, including the high-level Integrating Leadership Committee convened by the Office of the Provost and the vice president of student affairs, the newly created Harry T. Wilks Leadership Institute and its focus on collaborative efforts that connect leadership education with civic engagement provides an innovative model for the role of higher education in supporting public leadership. In the tradition of the Highlander Folk School, where students became leaders by practicing leadership together on the issues that most affected them, the Wilks Institute is grounded in the idea that “the best way of educating people is to give them an experience that embodies what you are trying to teach” (Horton, 1998, p. 68).

The Wilks Institute is committed to promoting community-based learning experiences that prepare students to become engaged public leaders and informed global citizens while also enriching and giving back to the communities that surround and support Miami University. By connecting students and communities, in southwest Ohio and around the world, the Wilks Institute advances the understanding and practice of the types of engaged leadership necessary for building a vibrant democratic society today and in the future. With its emphasis on public leadership, the Wilks Institute sponsors a series of innovative civic engagement programs, including courses focused on public engagement and community learning, a high school leadership program, international leadership capacity development, engaged scholarship, and a series of speakers and symposiums promoting leadership for the public good.

Founded through a \$5 million gift from philanthropist and alumnus Harry T. Wilks, the institute was launched in 2003 with a sense of urgency about the lack of leadership in our democracy. In the words of the bipartisan National Commission on Civic Renewal (1998): "In a time that cries out for civic action, we are in danger of becoming a nation of spectators" (p. 6). And yet our students are also volunteering in record numbers and engaged in "alternative politics" characterized by community service and relational civic action (Long, 2002). A series of studies has documented that while college students see politics as corrupt, irrelevant, and unresponsive, they tend to try to make change through community service (Longo and Meyer, 2006). Further, young people's views on civic engagement and leadership suggest that giving them the space to explore a model of leadership that is more relational, community based, and collaborative is congruent with how they view leadership in the community. According to research commissioned by Public Allies, for example, young people tend to view leadership as less hierarchical and more collaborative, more bottom-up than top-down, and welcoming, rather than fearful, of diversity. As a result, more and more young people who were involved in community service during high school are seeking opportunities in college to develop new models for addressing problems in local communities that challenge the dominant model of leadership and also value their voices and perspectives (Peter D. Hart Research Associates, 1998).

With this understanding, the Wilks Institute provides programs that promote public leadership and operates with a model of leadership that reflects this approach. For example, the institute is jointly housed in academic and student affairs. Cutting across the traditional compartmentalization that categorizes colleges and universities, the collaboration between student and academic affairs facilitates the connection of public engagement to student life and to the core academic mission of the university.

Another example of the collaboration is CHANGE, a newly created living-learning community for first-year students interested in leadership and civic engagement. In the development of this program, the Wilks Institute worked closely with the Office of Residence Life and several other leadership programs on campus to reimagine how a living-learning community focused on leadership

could move beyond positional leadership. This new community replaces a formerly successful living-learning community called Leadership, Excellence, Community, because it was determined that this name implied too much of a positional and individual conception of leadership. CHANGE, on the other hand, focuses on civic leadership and more aptly describes its focus as "emerging community leaders who are dedicated to making the world a better place" among peers who are working toward "finding their voices, building community, and taking positive action on Miami's campus and beyond" (Miami University Office of Residential Life, 2007, p. 5). The new living-learning community features courses on leadership, including a new course entitled Leadership for the Public Good, which uses interdisciplinary scholarship of citizenship, citizenship education, and leadership studies to explore what it means to work in public life and lead for the public good in local, national, and international contexts.

In addition, the Wilks Institute organized a university/school/community project that used public art to promote community leadership. Faculty members and students from the art department partnered with their counterparts from Hamilton High School to create a series of murals at the Booker T. Washington Center, a local community center in the heart of the African American community in Hamilton, Ohio. The ideas for the murals were developed from the stories of local residents who participated in the center over the past decades. After hearing the stories, high school and college students worked in small teams to create several murals to celebrate and embody the history and vibrancy of the community. Given the success of the partnership, the art department again offered the community art course in the spring of 2008 and partnered with Hamilton High School students and teachers to develop new public art in the local community.

To develop additional partnerships with academic departments, the Wilks Institute also supports faculty development through workshops and fellowships to raise faculty awareness of the connections between knowledge production and civic, social, and ethical issues. A faculty learning community focused on community-based education facilitates the development of engaged courses.

Finally, the Wilks Institute has initiated the first in a series of interdisciplinary think tanks to embed public engagement and

community leadership into the curriculum through university departments and programs. The first think tank, Acting Locally, an interdisciplinary program located within American studies, is the flagship initiative of the Wilks Institute and is described in detail next. And new think tanks are being developed to embed public engagement and community leadership courses in other departments on campus.

ACTING LOCALLY THINK TANK

[Wilks Acting Locally] is very different because we are learning from going out and doing. Most other classes you learn from a book, and in this class you learn from engaging with the community, other students, and the professors.

—Miami University Wilks Scholar

The first think tank sponsored by the Wilks Institute, Acting Locally: Civic Learning and Civic Leadership in Southwestern Ohio, promotes public leadership through a community-based exploration of the impact of globalization on local communities. Conceived in the fall of 2003 by faculty associated with the American studies program with support from the Office of the Provost and the Miami University Center for Community Engagement in the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood of Cincinnati, the project explores the ways in which local communities of different sorts are created, challenged, transformed, and sustained in a world where global and local forces intersect in complex ways. The first cohort of students enrolled in the two-year think tank curriculum in the fall of 2006:

Acting Locally targets three locales in southwest Ohio—the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood, the city of Hamilton, and rural Butler County—to explore how globalization has affected a decaying urban center, an expanding postindustrial metropolitan city, and a rural agricultural community. Specifically, these three sites provide an opportunity to study and act on a range of topics, including issues of race and class in the context of urban development and decay; increased Latino immigration and migration in the context of service-sector expansion; and agricultural, environmental, and

community sustainability in the context of metropolitan sprawl and rural transformation. Designed as an effort to enhance students' understanding of the connections between theory and practice and between analysis and agency, the project centers on the integral relationship between learning and leadership. As one Wilks Scholar explains, "This process has made me see that as students we have so much more power and credibility than I ever thought possible."

Acting Locally grew out of a larger curricular reassessment of the American studies program at Miami. Established in 1944, the program is one of the oldest interdisciplinary programs at the university and among the first wave of undergraduate American studies programs established in the United States. In 2002, the program was one of twenty-five humanities departments and programs nationally to be awarded a National Endowment for the Humanities grant to assess and reenvision its curriculum. The effort began with broad questions: What does it mean to study American culture? Why is it important to do so? As faculty members examined the tensions between national identity and common culture on the one hand and diversity and multiculturalism on the other, they arrived at the concept of "public culture." Faculty then framed additional questions to address the core issues of American studies: What does it mean to be American? How, if at all, do diverse cultures come together in the United States in terms of public culture to examine the process by which diverse individuals negotiate shared meaning? It was important to offer a curriculum that did more than just provide students with the skills to analyze American culture. Faculty members wanted them to understand that they were also *shapers* of American culture. The curricular model that resulted centers on notions of the public: public action, public discourse, public image, public space, public identity, and public belonging. The goal is to support a curriculum that allows students to see the connections between their individual beliefs, values, and actions, and the common cultures they share and create.

These ideas laid the preliminary groundwork for the concept of public leadership that provided the impetus and framework for the Acting Locally think tank project. Faculty began to conceptualize courses that explored issues of identity, diversity, community,

and public culture and to develop assignments that encouraged students to link their individual experiences with the larger culture and to move from critical analysis to cultural agency. Students were then propelled to explore bigger questions about the relationship between the global and the local and about developing a shared identity in an increasingly global and postnational culture. As the concept of Acting Locally emerged from these discussions, the faculty imagined an interdisciplinary, community-based curriculum in which a group of selected students and faculty members could partner with local communities to explore the intersections between globalization and local transformation. It was also crucial that students and faculty connect with local communities in an effort to comprehend and experience key civic issues—such as rapid suburbanization, environmental degradation, increased immigration and migration, urban decay, poverty, and racism—as more than abstractions. Thus, faculty sought to integrate learning and leadership through community interaction and problem solving in the three distinct communities and to create a prototype model for a collaborative and interactive curriculum in which students, faculty, and community members work together to share resources, make connections, and develop projects that link critical thinking and learning with public leadership and community development.

As a way to counter the dominant model of the first two years of college, students who are accepted in the Acting Locally program, called Wilks Scholars, enroll as a group in two years of team-taught courses. The cohort model allows students and faculty to build and sustain deeper relationships both with each other and with their community partners. In the first year, Wilks Scholars take an introductory course that critically examines theories of globalization. They then move on to a course on community engagement, in which they engage in guided experiential learning, contextualizing these theories of globalization in local situations. These two courses are based on a standard classroom pedagogical model, encompassing basic concepts, analytical skills, research tools, fieldwork techniques, and service-learning experiences. Faculty members—who are affiliated with American studies and trained in disciplines ranging from geography and history, to political science and Spanish—are challenged to move beyond the role of scholarly expert and to embrace a more democratic form

of teaching and learning. This means pushing the boundaries of the traditional classroom, sharing authority with students and community partners, and becoming a facilitator and cocreator of knowledge. In this way, students not only are engaged in public leadership but also are given the opportunity to take on leadership roles in defining the learning process.

Students then participate in a community immersion experience that takes the form of a weeklong summer workshop. Here there is a shift to student-directed learning, drawing from the learning partnership model that stipulates, “Knowledge is mutually constructed via the sharing of experience and authority” (Baxter Magolda, 2004, p. xix). During the summer workshop, students begin to use what they have learned to initiate and expand dialogue with community members to lay the groundwork for community partnerships. In the process, students work together with faculty to define and agree on learning objectives, course material, and assessment criteria. They assume responsibility for working collaboratively to define a community partnership project. In the second year, students complete a yearlong capstone experience focused on developing and implementing their community partnership project.

The first group of Wilks Scholars completed the two-year sequence in the spring of 2008. The projects they developed, which emerged from the students and faculty collaborations in the community, were ambitious and innovative. Students partnered with Latino immigrants in Hamilton to create a series of ongoing Spanish-English language and cultural exchanges in local restaurants, churches, and community organizations using a nonprofessional, democratic approach that centers on one-on-one learning partnerships. Students also collaborated with Latino business owners to host a series of community events, including a neighborhood cleanup and festival, to celebrate and highlight the contribution that immigrants make to this changing industrial city. Students partnered with local farmers to create and sustain a local food network in rural Butler County, including hosting a local-foods dinner to build support for local farmers and developing a food guide to publicize local food options. Finally, students worked on creating a neighborhood coffee shop, along with a job skills training internship program in Over-the-Rhine for former felons.

The goal of this sequence is to draw connections between knowledge production, community engagement, and public leadership. It is critical that students see that knowledge generated in the classroom can be used in partnership with communities to serve the larger needs of society and that knowledge generated in the community is just as valid as curricular knowledge. In addition, the courses are designed to enable students to move from abstract critical thinking to engaged thinking and acting. As students share authority with each other, with faculty members, and with community members, they establish relationships that extend beyond the classroom and begin to appreciate the process of collaborative learning. Most important, students come to understand that their knowledge can only be put into action through these relationships.

This kind of engaged learning can be transformational for students. As one Wilks Scholar explains, "Before, I thought my time as a Miami student was merely an opportunity to gather information in classes and then disengage when I stepped out of the classroom. I now view my time as a student as an opportunity to learn from both my classes and from the community, as a time to build new relationships, and as a chance to understand my place as a member of a community." Another Wilks Scholar wrote, "I realize I am an asset. Though I am younger and have little/no money, my presence still matters and I can still influence what is happening in my communities. My voice is not softer than others, and I am at an institute where I can have the backing of my peers, and as a member of such a large group I have the ability to be noticed and make changes." Students have begun to integrate their academic learning with community learning and action. They see that they can effect purposeful and positive change in their communities. They are beginning to see themselves as public leaders.

Building on the projects developed by this first group of Wilks Scholars, a new cohort of students was recruited to the Acting Locally think tank for fall 2008. Several former Wilks Scholars are community assistants, serving as bridges between the classroom and the community. Although the first cohort of Wilks Scholars did not live together, the second cohort is part of a student-directed living-learning community. This vibrant residential community also provides scholarships to student members.

In addition, the Wilks Institute seeks new think tank proposals focused on public engagement and community leadership from all Miami academic departments and programs. The goal of the institute is to continually provide seed money to departments, programs, and faculty members to support and sustain the integration of permanent public leadership experiences throughout the university curriculum.

CONCLUSION

All the programs supported by the Wilks Institute are grounded in the idea that knowledge is actionable and that individuals coming together to cocreate knowledge empowers them to make positive change in the world around them. Although Miami University benefits from having a funded institute to coordinate and support these kinds of public leadership initiatives, many of these programs can be developed and supported through existing academic and administrative programs. The idea is to shift the driving question from "How does this knowledge or this experience serve me?" to "How can this knowledge or experience be used to serve the broader public?"

Thus, promoting and supporting public leadership means fundamentally changing the way knowledge production and dissemination has been conceptualized at institutions of higher education in recent years. It means shifting the focus of colleges and universities away from the customer service, credential-generating model toward revitalizing the core mission of higher education to create responsible, ethical, and engaged citizens. It means moving from a predominantly individual, private, economic frame to an ecological frame that is based on the principle of interdependence.

The Wilks Institute provides a model for reframing leadership education as comprehensive, relational, and public (Cremin, 1976). When conceptualized in broad terms, this task can seem daunting. However, what our experience has shown us is that seemingly small interventions can have a huge impact.

Thinking *comprehensively* about leadership involves several related aspects. First, it breaks down the leader-follower dichotomy and acknowledges that, as the radically democratic civil rights organizer Ella Baker would argue, "Strong people don't need

strong leaders" (Ransby, 2003). Leadership education, thus, means creating space for all stakeholders in higher education (students, faculty, staff, community partners) to use their assets toward public problem solving while, at the same time, further developing their leadership capacity. We have learned that this can begin with the small act of faculty sharing authority with students in their courses, and it can flourish when students and faculty are given the opportunity to move beyond the confines of the traditional semester-long course to address broader, inherently interdisciplinary, questions connected to the larger public good.

Next, thinking comprehensively means considering and valuing all the places where leadership education might take place, including the classroom, the cocurriculum, the residence halls, and the community. Bureaucratic organizational silos discourage collaborative learning. Often universities and colleges isolate or separate themselves from their surrounding communities; academic affairs is walled off from student affairs; sciences are completely divorced from the humanities. However, we have found that community members, students, and most faculty do not think in terms of organizational bureaucratic structures. They want to make connections and forge partnerships. Placing the university's responsibility to the public good over the university's attachment to organizational structure expands opportunities for collaborative learning, which is central to leadership education.

Thinking comprehensively also means thinking about leadership education as part of an ongoing developmental process. The Wilks Institute begins with high school students, offering leadership conferences that bring together students and faculty from approximately twenty high schools in southwest Ohio to build relationships and civic skills. Its programs at Miami span the entire undergraduate experience, commencing with a first-year living-learning community focused on leadership. Courses on public and community leadership range from first-year seminars to capstones courses. In summer 2008, the Wilks Institute cosponsored a national symposium at Miami University on the role of colleges and universities in developing student leadership through civic engagement with leading national organizations, including the McCormick Tribune Foundation, the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning

& Engagement, Illinois Campus Compact, and Public Allies. The symposium focused on what it takes to educate for publicly engaged leadership among the next generation through presentations and conversations on cutting-edge practices from a diverse range of institutions of higher education and nonprofit partners.

Leadership education should also be *relational*. A key dimension of this type of relationship building is rethinking the more traditional academic model, asking for a longer commitment from students and faculty, and creating sustained university-community partnerships. As described earlier, Acting Locally requires much more than the usual one-term commitment; students and faculty commit to two years of intensive community engagement. This allows deeper relationships not only among the students and faculty but, more important, with the community. And it allows this model of public leadership to go beyond simple volunteerism. As a Wilks Scholar explained, "I plan on establishing as many relationships as I can with people in the community and working with them to help develop their talents and gifts, rather than myself coming in and telling people what I think would work for them."

Finally, leadership education, as this chapter has argued throughout, must be *public*. This means students must be given the opportunity to link theory and practice—to understand that knowledge alone is powerless; it only becomes meaningful when people act on it. Our experience with the Wilks Institute has shown us that when leadership education is connected with community engagement, it becomes clear that leadership can transform publics as well as individuals. An underlying assumption of the work of the Wilks Institute is that by educating a new generation for citizen leadership, we can also partner with our students in the revitalization of public life.

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