

**Public and Community-Based Leadership Education**  
**A White Paper for the Wilks Leadership Institute, Miami University**

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

To educate college students for leadership in the public sphere requires a particular approach to leadership education and a specific understanding of the role of leader. In this white paper, we define and discuss the importance of *public and community-based leadership* in light of both the relevant leadership literature and the evolving work of the Wilks Leadership Institute. We define leadership, as practiced in and for public life, to be comprised of the actions of citizens who convene, deliberate, inquire, collaborate, and act with the intent to improve life for fellow citizens in their communities and the larger society.

In describing this model of leadership, we intentionally use three key terms: “public,” “community,” and “leadership” itself. All three terms are central to the conception of leadership education that we outline here. Leadership education oriented toward the *public* places primary importance on preparing students for the pluralistic, shared political terrain of democratic nation-states, where multiple viewpoints collide and collaborate to find reasonable solutions to shared problems. Leadership education emphasizing the ideal of *community* enables students to see, understand, and work with the diverse communities that are located in the regions, neighborhoods, towns and cities in which colleges and universities are located. In these communities, working with local leaders, students learn how real people in real places go about working together on problems and issues. The ideal of community is also vital for leadership education in the sense of a learning framework for students, as students learn leadership best when they can build strong learning communities with their peers, faculty, and community leaders. Finally, we define *leadership* as a practice, a socially-established cooperative human activity that is associated with a set of knowledge, skills and capacities that are learned over time but which also must adapt according to cultural, historical, and social contexts. Leadership as a practice is distinguished from leadership as a trait or individual characteristic.

Preparing leadership for public and community contexts is of fundamental importance for higher education today. While interest among college students for community service and volunteering has been on the rise in recent years, there has been a steady decline in political and civic participation in the United States for more than three decades. And the demographics of those who most actively participate in civic life do not adequately represent the rich diversity of ethnic and class diversity of the populace. Higher education institutions of many types are now being challenged to re-imagine and re-commit to their public purposes, as partners in the education, research, and service towards the communities, regions, and states in which they

operate. Public and community-based leadership education is an important piece of this new public agenda in higher education.

Leadership education programs in higher education, oriented towards public and community leadership, must draw from the expertise of multiple institutional partners: the content knowledge of faculty in academic departments, the student development knowledge possessed by practitioners in students affairs, and the local communal contexts possessed by people in the organizations and networks of public life in the towns or regions surrounding colleges and universities. Future public and community-based leaders must learn content knowledge that prepares them for public problem-solving, bringing content from one and optimally multiple disciplines to bear on leadership challenges. Students learn this knowledge in communal practice, from faculty, community leaders, and peers who are part of a learning community over time. In this practice, students are building capacity in eight distinct ability areas central to public and community-based leadership: inquiry, collaboration, convening, naming and framing, deliberating, conflict management, ethical action, and reflection. These capacities enable students to effectively bring their content knowledge to life as they work with others to practice and enact public and community-based leadership in their lives as students, and throughout their adult lives. We conclude the paper by highlighting the example of one new public leadership education program at Miami University, showing how the concept of public and community leadership education is being put into practice in innovative ways.

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By “public leadership,” we mean the acts, great and small, of individuals and groups as they tackle challenges facing a community or society.<sup>1</sup>

At their best, community leaders create the social space in which citizens can recognize their own interests, assess the community’s needs and opportunities, share their beliefs and ideas, and create a pathway to put shared beliefs into action in pursuing the good. This understanding of leadership signals a “Copernican turn” from leadership revolving around the superiority of leaders to leadership revolving around the authoritative action of followers – in the exercise of their freedom and power.<sup>2</sup>

## **I. Defining public and community-based leadership education**

Leadership studies and leadership education, fields of research and practice in higher education since the mid-twentieth century<sup>3</sup>, have recently evolved to encompass more collaborative, adaptive, and relational leadership practices. These evolution is a movement away from a singular focus on trait-based and position-based theories of leadership, following Burns’ call in 1978 for more compelling, creative, moral and intellectual foundations for leadership theory and practice.<sup>4</sup> Since that time, we have seen the proliferation of inclusive and process-oriented leadership models –what has been called the postindustrial paradigm - with an increasing emphasis on social responsibility and integrity, as a trend shaping leadership education programs in U.S. colleges and universities.<sup>5</sup> Many of these new models insist that leadership is a process of fostering change to transform society, to “empower change agents” to “work for the betterment of others.”<sup>6</sup> While leadership studies and leadership education are broad, diverse, and vibrant fields, these trends have

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<sup>1</sup> Center for Public Leadership, “Welcome from Director David Gergen,” John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. Retrieved 7 March 2009. Available: [http://content.ksg.harvard.edu/leadership/index.php?Itemid=4&id=2&option=com\\_content&task=view](http://content.ksg.harvard.edu/leadership/index.php?Itemid=4&id=2&option=com_content&task=view)

<sup>2</sup> Francis J. Schweigert, “Learning to Lead: Strengthening the Practice of Community Leadership” *Leadership* 3, 3 (2007): 327.

<sup>3</sup> See Keith Grint, *Leadership: Limits and Possibilities* (London: Palgrave, 2005), 14-15.

<sup>4</sup> James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper Collins, 1978).

<sup>5</sup> For a detailed account of this evolution, see Shannon K. Faris and Charles L. Outcalt, “The Emergence of Inclusive, Process-Oriented Leadership,” in *Developing Non-hierarchical leadership on campus: Case studies and best practices in higher education*, Charles L. Outcalt, ShannonK Faris and Kathleen N. McMahon (Eds) (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001): 9-18.

<sup>6</sup> From “Understanding the Social Change Model of Leadership Development: Blueprint Leadership Development Program,” a description of the Social Change Model of Leadership Development created in 1993 by the Higher Education Research Institute of UCLA. Available: [http://students.berkeley.edu/files/osl/Student\\_Groups/Understanding%20the%20SCM.pdf](http://students.berkeley.edu/files/osl/Student_Groups/Understanding%20the%20SCM.pdf).

been well documented and signal a promising shift in the overall directions of leadership theory and practice in this new millennium. A similar yet distinct trend attempts to renew an old tradition within leadership studies – the field of public leadership- and explicitly re-situate it in the contemporary challenges and contexts of the cities, towns, communities and regions in which institutions of higher education are located. As stated by the Rawlings Center for Public Leadership at the University of Maryland-College Park, “Public leadership is not simply the preserve of those elected to office, it includes thousands of others: appointees, non-profit officials, educators, business entrepreneurs, community activists and others who may hold no title, but whose actions shape our state.”<sup>7</sup>

While these broad shifts are promising, we believe that the specific context of educating for and enacting leadership in the public sphere necessitates a particular approach to leadership education and a particular understanding of the role of “leaders.” In this white paper, we call this specific context *public and community-based leadership*. We provide definitional statements and a rationale for this model, and later in the paper, we outline practical suggestions for enacting public and community-based leadership education in higher education.

We begin with a definition of leadership and an analysis of its key concepts. *Leadership, practiced in and for public life, is comprised of the actions of citizens who convene, deliberate, inquire, collaborate, and act with the intent to improve life for fellow citizens in their communities and the larger society.* In describing this model of leadership, we use three key terms: “public,” “community,” and of course, “leadership” itself. We begin our analysis with perhaps the most common but least understood of all three of these concepts.

“Public” refers to the ideal of shared, diverse, and “universally accessible dimensions of collective life, as well as those things which have a general impact upon the interests of all; the realm of interdependence.”<sup>8</sup> The public is a more defined and specific site than the “social,” a term frequently referred to in the new leadership education literature which frequently features “social change” as a value orientation.<sup>9</sup> While “social” signals the characteristics of living, co-existing organisms as they interact and share common systems and meanings, “public” refers to a specific political ideal commonly acclaimed in democratic nation-states. It is a notion that reaches back thousands of years to the early Greek city-states in the earliest documented forms of democratic governance. The public is a “pluralist, heterogeneous social space of many different interests, viewpoints, and community histories” where the aim is “common action on public problems.”<sup>10</sup> The public is the realm of political activities, large and small, formal and informal, a space where people come together to do the difficult work of solving collective problems in the face of competing interests and multiple

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<sup>7</sup> Rawlings Center for Public Leadership (Burns Academy of Leadership, University of Maryland, 2009). Retrieved 3 June 2009. Available: [http://www.academy.umd.edu/Professional\\_Development/RCPL.html](http://www.academy.umd.edu/Professional_Development/RCPL.html)

<sup>8</sup> Terry Cooper, quoted in Ledivina V. Cariño, “Private Action for Public Good? The Public Role of Voluntary Sector Organizations,” *Public Organization Review: A Global Journal* 1 (2001): 55.

<sup>9</sup> For example, Marguerite Bonous-Hammarth, “Developing Social Change Agents: Leadership Development for the 1990s and Beyond,” in *Developing Non-hierarchical leadership on campus: Case studies and best practices in higher education*, pp. 34-39.

<sup>10</sup> Harry Boyte, “Civic Education as Public Leadership Development,” *PS: Political Science and Politics* 26, 4 (1993): 766.

viewpoints. Public work requires “acknowledging differences in interest and power and working alongside people with whom we might disagree deeply about moral issues. It means recognizing that no one perspective or interest usually suffices for adequate resolution of public problems.”<sup>11</sup>

“Public” is not a term that narrowly refers to government or those who are elected or appointed to work as public officials, though this is the meaning that has predominated the field of public leadership studies, typically a domain of political scientists and historians. The study of public leadership by scholars has mostly been the study of individuals, often in the “great man” tradition of leadership theory, who have occupied high political office or who have been authoritative and positional social leaders in history.<sup>12</sup> As Kellerman and Scott point out, the actual theory and practice of public leadership is far broader and more diffuse than the scholarly literature suggests, and that “there is a great deal of work on public leadership that does not so self-describe.”<sup>13</sup> This trend can be explained, in part, by the erosion of the perceived value of and interest in public life that has been documented by historians, social scientists and philosophers alike, as the concept of “public” itself becomes more vague and meaningless to new generations of youth and adults in the U.S.<sup>14</sup> To counter the erosion of public meanings and shared public life, it is high time to reclaim and broaden leadership education programs to be inclusive of a clearly public orientation.<sup>15</sup> The conception of leadership we offer here tries to do just that.

Joined with the emphasis on public leadership is a focus on community. While “public” is a term emphasizing difference and heterogeneity in an inclusive and broad sphere, “community” refers to the common values, interests, and concerns that are built in the social and cultural contexts of towns, neighborhoods, villages and regions. Community refers to both the commonalities found and created in these contexts among groups of people, and the communication that helps construct and maintain the relational ties that bind these groups. The public is a network of many diverse communities, inter-connected in limitless formations.

“Community-based leadership” has an intended double meaning here. It refers to leadership education situated within real places and cultural contexts found in the regions in which colleges and universities are located, as well as to the vehicle through which the learning of leadership itself occurs. In the first meaning, leadership is learned within and through the practice of leadership as experienced in

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 764.

<sup>12</sup> “Since most of the literature on leadership is generated by Americans for Americans, it comes as no surprise to us to find that much of the work on individual leaders is directly related to those in or near the Oval Office.” Barbara Kellerman and Scott W. Webster, “The Recent literature on public leadership: Reviewed and considered,” *The Leadership Quarterly* 12 (2001): 488.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 511.

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, Robert Putnam, “Bowling alone: America’s declining social capital,” *Journal of Democracy*, 6,(1): 65-78; Lizbeth Cohen, *A Consumers’ Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Knopf, 2003); William A. Galston, “Civic Education and Political Participation,” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 37 (2004): 263-266; and Alistair Hannay, *On the Public* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>15</sup> This point is clearly argued in Nicholas V. Longo and Marguerite S. Shaffer, “Leadership Education and the Revitalization of Public Life,” in B. Jacoby and Associates, Eds., *Civic Engagement in Higher Education: Concepts and Practices* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 154-173.

collaboration with local communities. Students learn leadership through collaboration with community citizen-leaders, who serve as both collaborators and role models for leadership work.<sup>16</sup> As Rossing notes, learning leadership in communities emphasizes the critical task of building relationships and constructing shared purposes.

In the new forms of community that must form the essential building blocks of effective future public and organizational life the practice of leadership must change. Gardner emphasizes the importance of widespread participation in defining and pursuing shared purposes. "Leaders must devolve initiative and responsibility widely throughout the system,"(1989, p. 79). Rost (1993) defines this new form of leadership. "Leadership is an influence relationship among leaders and their collaborators who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes." (p. 99)<sup>17</sup>

But community-based leadership education also refers to the pedagogy and curricular design of such leadership programs. Community-based leadership learning is ideally situated in learning communities, where students, faculty, staff, and community partners all play a key role in, and assume responsibility for teaching, learning, acting, reflecting and evaluating the leadership work and learning outcomes. Again, Rossing explains:

Powerful new approaches to community leadership development, in the short term, can be based on establishing situated, yet temporary, action-focused learning communities that consciously practice and test new modes of shared leadership, collaboration and community building, and that support learners in applying their new learning in their action-based home or organizational communities.<sup>18</sup>

A recent analysis of undergraduate leadership programs backs up Rossing's assertion here; Eich found three general attributes common to high-quality undergraduate leadership programs: "(a) participants engaged in building and sustaining a learning community, (b) student-centered experiential learning experiences; and (c) research-grounded continuous program development."<sup>19</sup> Community is a central concept for the new leadership paradigms emerging today, and learning within and about community contexts is a central element of the public and community-based leadership model we are discussing here.

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<sup>16</sup> Richard Couto defines citizen leaders as those who facilitate organized action to improve the conditions of people, particularly in low-income or disenfranchised communities. They are leaders who are working to address the needs of society at the local level, and often do not choose leadership at all; they are moved to act in public roles to resolve specific problems of their communities. See Richard Couto, "Defining a Citizen Leader" in *Public Leadership Education: The Role of Citizen Leadership* (Dayton, OH: The Kettering Foundation, 1992): 9-10.

<sup>17</sup> Boyd E. Rossing, "Learning Laboratories for Renewed Community Leadership: Rationale, Programs, and Challenges," in *The Journal of Leadership Studies* 5, 4 (1998): 70.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

<sup>19</sup> Darin Eich, "A Grounded Theory of High-Quality Leadership Programs: Perspectives From Student Leadership Development Programs in Higher Education," *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies* 15, 2 (2008): 176.

Finally but most critically, the term “leadership” must be clarified. While the term has multiple and sometimes conflicting meanings to many people, we offer here a definition based in the qualities and skills necessary for mobilizing citizens to tackle shared problems in the public sphere. *Leadership, practiced in and for public life, is comprised of the actions of citizens who inquire, collaborate, convene, deliberate, and act with the intent to improve life for fellow citizens in their communities and the larger society.* This definition has several important elements: 1) it identifies leadership as a practice with a specific moral purpose; 2) it is action-centered rather than person-centered; 3) it involves a definable and flexible set of skills and capacities - all of which can be learned - thus emphasizing the belief that “great leaders are made, not born.”<sup>20</sup>

Leadership is a practice, though it is often talked about as a special human gift or capacity possessed by some individuals and not to others.<sup>21</sup> A practice is a socially established, cooperative human activity that aims at human improvement, has normative standards that govern its activity, and which is adapted to local contexts and innovations over time. Like playing soccer, building furniture, or baking bread, leadership is a practice. As a practice, it has a commonly recognizable set of certain activities associated with it; when called “leadership” these activities are aimed at improving our lives in some way (even when leaders are terribly wrong about what they think might improve our lives). Like soccer players, leaders must adapt their practices of leading to local conditions: players will consider field conditions and their opponents’ strengths and weaknesses before establishing a game plan. Players in a rural village of India may play soccer with different techniques and approaches than players in Edinburgh or Brooklyn. Leadership practices must be similarly adaptable to contexts and conditions, though based in a set of disciplined skills and knowledge that are learned through both formal and informal programs and experiences. The soccer player has knowledge of her craft; her practice is based in that knowledge as well as her ability to adapt the practice as need demands.

Leadership defined as a practice and activity helps us avoid the tendency, so prevalent in the leadership studies literature and in popular culture depictions of leadership, to think of leadership as something that resides magically in individuals. The “traits” approach in leadership studies has been a long effort within the field to “reduce the ideal leader to his or her essence – the quintessential characteristics or competencies or behaviours of the leader.”<sup>22</sup> Leaders are indeed people, but not isolated individuals operating as heroic loners. Rather than focus on the magical traits of leaders, our definition of leadership focuses on what knowledge, values, and skills leaders must learn in order to help solve problems in public and community life. Leadership, in its most essential form, is the simple act of convening people and framing conversations that enable participants to become responsible and committed to shared action. “This

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<sup>20</sup> Marshall Goldsmith, “Great Leaders are Made, Not Born,” *Harvard Business Publishing*, January 14, 2008. Retrieved 21 May 2009, available:

[http://blogs.harvardbusiness.org/goldsmith/2008/01/great\\_leaders\\_are\\_made\\_not\\_bor.html](http://blogs.harvardbusiness.org/goldsmith/2008/01/great_leaders_are_made_not_bor.html)

<sup>21</sup> Leadership as a practice follows, among others, Ronald Heifetz’s notion of leadership: “Rather than define leadership either as a position of authority in a social structure or as a personal set of characteristics, we may find it a great deal more useful to define leadership as an *activity*.” (emphasis in original). Heifetz, *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap of Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 20.

<sup>22</sup> Keith Grint, *Leadership: Limits and Possibilities* (London: Palgrave, 2005), 19.

conception of leadership is a shift from the dominant conventional belief system that the task of leadership is to set a vision, enroll others in it, and hold people accountable through measurements and reward.”<sup>23</sup>

Leadership education focused on public and community-based leadership, then, is based in the work of initiating young adults into the specific knowledge, values and skills that are necessary for this particular type and domain of leadership work. The focus on leadership education specifically focused on the public and local/regional communities is particularly apt for those based in higher education institutions today, as colleges and universities respond to the clarion call to rediscover and rededicate themselves towards their public purposes.<sup>24</sup> As a recent report by the National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education noted, “The challenge for the years ahead is to achieve a public agenda in an era of diminished public purposes.”<sup>25</sup>

## **II. Why is public and community-based leadership education an important focus for U.S. higher education today?**

The weakening of the public sphere has been well articulated by scholarly and popular commentators. Most famously, Robert Putnam’s “Bowling Alone” thesis linked the diminishing of social networks and ties with a decreased willingness and sense of obligation to participate in public life and decision making forums. Independently wealthy people dominate the ranks of elected officials, and the influence of well funded interest groups and corporate lobbyists is publicly acknowledged. In the current context of economic crisis, public participation may be framed as an obstacle that stands in the way of “efficient” decision making rather than a source of solutions.<sup>26</sup>

The picture of civic life in the U.S. is, of course, complex, and there are some recent signs that citizens may be re-engaging with public and community life. The 2008 Civic Health Report shows that, while most Americans polled did not envision themselves participating in the political process beyond election day, a vast majority support publicly oriented policies such as national service and public deliberation initiatives.<sup>27</sup> And the recent renaming of the White House’s Liaison Office as the Office of Public Engagement<sup>28</sup>, in consultation with numerous community groups and organizations who facilitate and promote public dialogue, indicates a recognition of the value of public participation by citizens and holders of public office.

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<sup>23</sup> A Small Group, *Civic Engagement and the Restoration of Community: Changing the Nature of the Conversation* (Peter Block, 2007). Retrieved 3 March 2009. Available: [www.asmallgroup.net](http://www.asmallgroup.net)

<sup>24</sup> David Glenn, “After the Crash, Scholars Say, Higher Education Must Refocus on Its Public Mission,” *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 55 (32), April 17, 2009. Available: <http://chronicle.com/daily/2009/04/15232n.htm>

<sup>25</sup> National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, *Engaging Higher Education in Societal Challenges of the 21st Century* (San Jose, CA, 2008), p. 3. Retrieved May 20, 2009. Available: <http://www.highereducation.org/reports/wegner/index.shtml>

<sup>26</sup> “California: The Ungovernable State,” *The Economist*, 21 May 2009. Retrieved 24 May 2009. Available: [http://www.economist.com/world/unitedstates/displayStory.cfm?story\\_id=13649050&source=hptextfeature](http://www.economist.com/world/unitedstates/displayStory.cfm?story_id=13649050&source=hptextfeature)

<sup>27</sup> National Conference on Citizenship, *2008 Civic Health Index: Sustaining civic engagement beyond Election Day* (Washington, D.C.: National Conference on Citizenship, 2008). Available: <http://www.ncoc.net/index.php?tray=content&tid=top9&cid=92>

<sup>28</sup> [http://www.whitehouse.gov/the\\_press\\_office/TransparencyandOpenGovernment/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/TransparencyandOpenGovernment/);  
[http://www.whitehouse.gov/the\\_press\\_office/President-Obama-Launches-Office-of-Public-Engagement/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/President-Obama-Launches-Office-of-Public-Engagement/)

Still, indicators of participation in both governance and community life continue to lag previous generations. And in many cases, the demographics of those active in public life are not representative of who is in the electorate, as elected and appointed officials are far less racially and ethnically diverse, and far more wealthy, than the citizens they represent.

Concerns about the decline in social capital and public participation have led colleges and universities to place a renewed focus on their civic mission and responsibilities. The continuing growth in the membership of Campus Compact, which is committed to advancing the public purposes of higher education, is illustrative of this affirmation.<sup>29</sup> And young people, particularly those with college experience, participate in community service in high numbers. These trends in higher education are encouraging signs, yet they are largely disconnected from the dominant practices in leadership education programs in higher education today. These trends are not, however, necessarily resulting in significant learning outcomes related to public and community-based leadership capacities, however. Findings from the College Senior Survey in 2007 reveal that 27.6% of the 26,710 students taking the survey self reported that, compared with when they first began college, their abilities were stronger or much stronger in “understanding of the problems facing your community” and 26.6% of respondents self reported that they had improved in the “Ability to get along with people of different races/cultures.”<sup>30</sup>

There is a large gap in understanding and practice between the service and community engagement efforts of colleges and universities, and the discourses of public participation and leadership education. As noted above, current scholarship in leadership studies frames leadership as collaborative, adaptive, and relational. Too many university leadership education and leadership development programs, however, continue to frame leadership education around positional leadership roles (for example, offering leadership development opportunities targeted to organization leaders or student government participants). Too many programs espouse vision-driven orientations to leadership, where leadership means developing an individual vision for “change” and enlisting followers to realize that vision (for example, the popular LeaderShape<sup>31</sup> workshop is based on this model). Both these approaches to leadership education emphasize “selected qualities in exceptional individuals” and locate the work of leadership in individual leaders’ efforts.<sup>32</sup> Students are socialized into the expectations of positional leadership roles - the emphasis placed on organizational titles, the division between “officers” and “members” of a student organization. Students thus come to expect that their post-college leadership work will follow these same patterns.

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<sup>29</sup> Campus Compact. (2008). 2007 Service Statistics: Highlights and Trends of Campus Compact’s Annual Membership Survey. Providence, RI: Campus Compact.

<sup>30</sup> Hanna Spinosa, Jessica Sharkness, John H. Pryor, and Amy Liu, *Findings from the 2007 Administration of the College Senior Survey (CSS): National Aggregates* (Higher Education Research Institute, University of California, Los Angeles, May 2008), p. 16. Available: <http://www.heri.ucla.edu/publications-brp.php>

<sup>31</sup> LeaderShape is a leadership education curriculum that was named by the W.F. Kellogg Foundation as one of the nation’s “exemplary” youth leadership programs that received Kellogg grants from 1990-1997. (<http://www.leadershape.org/results/kellogg.asp>). It is one of the leading leadership education models in higher education today.

<sup>32</sup> Schweigert, op cit, 327.

While such leadership programs are often popular among students and seen as a valuable part of college life, they generally fail to link leadership with a broad sense of responsibility to the public or to the contexts and demands of public settings and real communities. Such leadership programs do not go far enough in educating students for public problem solving and their future roles as leaders in their public settings –in neighborhoods, civic associations, or government appointments. Such types of leadership education also, increasingly, do not meet the leadership needs of the private sphere, as this sphere too moves toward collaborative workplace structure and more team work orientations. But in the public sphere, collaboratively developing and realizing goals is not optional - it is a moral obligation. Schweigert describes this distinction in leadership education as a move away from a focus on individual leaders and toward understanding the “the qualities of social settings that facilitate information exchange and deliberation on means and ends,” to “‘draw out’ from residents their sense of citizen responsibility and authority to take action on behalf of their communities.”<sup>33</sup>

Contemporary college students are lacking some of the important knowledge and skills for engaging in public and community leadership work. We know that students who “have more frequent contact with diverse peers have greater attributional complexity, self-confidence in cultural awareness, development of a pluralistic orientation, a belief that conflict enhances democracy, and tend to vote in federal and state elections.”<sup>34</sup> The National Survey for Student Engagement in 2008 revealed “only 57% of first-year students and half of seniors receive substantial encouragement from their institutions to interact with students of different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds.”<sup>35</sup> Clearly, colleges and universities have much room to improve in both these arenas. Finally, there are clear indicators that students are ill-prepared for the difficult deliberations of public life with diverse others. The Higher Education Research Institute designed the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership assessment to collect data on students’ leadership outcomes, surveying a total of 49,078 students from 54 colleges and universities in 2005. Two of the several “critical values” of leadership they assessed is “controversy with civility,” the recognition that differences in viewpoint are inevitable and must be aired openly and with civility, and “change,” the belief in the importance of making a better world and a better society for oneself and others, or the belief that individuals, groups and communities have the ability to work together to make that change.<sup>36</sup> Of all the critical values assessed in the survey, students scored lowest on their self-reported abilities with these two critical values.”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 329.

<sup>34</sup> Sylvia Hurtado, *Preparing College Students for a Diverse Democracy*. Final Report to the U.S. Department of Education, OERI, Field Initiated Studies Program, Ann Arbor, MI: Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education, 2003.

<sup>35</sup> National Survey of Student Engagement, *Promoting Engagement for all students: The Imperative to Look Within – 2008 Results* (Indiana University, 2008), p. 11. Downloaded 2 June 2009. Available: [http://nsse.iub.edu/NSSE\\_2008\\_Results/](http://nsse.iub.edu/NSSE_2008_Results/) The selected results are based on almost 380,000 randomly sampled students attending 722 U.S. baccalaureate-granting institutions who completed NSSE in spring 2008.

<sup>36</sup> Wendy Wagner, “The Social Change Model of Leadership: A Brief Overview,” *Concepts and Connections* 15, 1 (2006), 8-10. College Park, MD: National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs.

<sup>37</sup> John P. Dugan and Susan R. Komives, “Select Descriptive Findings from the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership,” *Concepts and Connections* 15, 1 (2006), 16.

Public and community-based leadership education fills an important and timely gap, therefore, in higher education today. It helps broaden and deepen the education of leadership for the communities, regions, and states that have a shared stake in the educational outcomes of colleges and universities. It links the growing trends of college student volunteering and community service to the critical need for public-oriented, community-based leadership in the United States today. It helps develop more, and more skilled leaders for the problems of today and tomorrow that face our localities, villages and cities.

### **III. How do we optimally enact public and community-based leadership education in today's college and university settings?**

Enacting public and community based leadership education requires a number of considerations. First, where is the best place within institutions to house or locate such educational programs? Second, what kinds of content knowledge should be considered highest priority in terms of setting the curriculum or desired learning outcomes for students? Third, what sorts of capacities or skill-based abilities are important to learn for public and community-based leadership? And finally, what pedagogies are best suited to engage students with this type of leadership learning and development? We will address each of these questions in this last section of the paper. While we present one possible configuration among many for such a leadership education model, we believe it best supports the parameters for effective public leadership education we have laid out here.

*Where do such programs "fit" in our institutions?*

In higher education, leadership programs for undergraduates have either resided in academic departments or in student affairs units. Academic units related to business, communications, organizational theory, political science, government, and education are common sites for leadership course work. Student affairs units related to student activities and Greek life are among the most common places to find leadership education and training outside the academic realm. It is rare to find leadership programs that bridge this pervasive divide in higher education, because our colleges and universities still tend to separate student "academic" from "co-curricular" learning. But to truly educate "the whole person" about leadership, multiple organizational strengths are necessary. Both academic and student affairs expertise is needed. The most powerful learning about leadership is that which marries the student affairs knowledge of the whole student and student development theory with the discipline-based content knowledge needed by public leaders in a complex society and world. As stated by the authors of *Learning Reconsidered*, "learning is a comprehensive, holistic, transformative activity that integrates *academic learning* and *student development*, processes that have often been considered separate, and even independent of each other"<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Richard Keeling (Ed)., *Learning Reconsidered: A Campus-Wide Focus on the Student Experience* (National Association of Student Personnel Administrators and the American College Student Personnel Association, 2004). Retrieved on 30 March 2008. Page 2, emphasis in original. Available: [www.myacpa.org](http://www.myacpa.org)

From Academic Affairs comes the depth of disciplinary content knowledge. Typical leadership education programs utilize some combination of a few disciplines, such as management, organizational theory, or political science. But public and community-based leadership demands that disciplinary and professional knowledge in a wide array of arenas – the humanities, the social sciences, sciences and the arts – be brought to bear on public problem-solving. Students learn to practice public leadership “through a learning process that teaches them how to understand and embed their professional and disciplinary knowledge within a repertoire of civic concepts.”<sup>39</sup> Programs which link one, or better yet, multiple disciplines in a curriculum oriented towards public leadership help students bring professional knowledge to public settings and deliberations in more effective ways.<sup>40</sup>

From Student Affairs comes expertise in community engagement practices, student development theory, and leadership development for undergraduate students. Student affairs professionals bring expertise in the cognitive, interpersonal, and moral development of students, and a more holistic sense of students’ learning needs and interests than do most faculty. Student affairs professionals also consider building learning communities on campus to be a central part of their job. As stated earlier, public and community-based leadership education is not just community-based in its orientation towards the communities that surround our colleges and universities; it is based in a philosophy of teaching and learning that is communal. Students learn about community leadership in community with one another, their faculty teachers, and their community mentors and supervisors who serve as role models and coaches for their leadership work.

While institutional arrangements may vary, public and community-based leadership education requires multiple institutional stakeholders, including community partners themselves. Program structure and design, and particular critical learning objectives, are ultimately the responsibility of faculty and staff employed by the University, but as community partners represent genuine teachers and organizational sites for learning and practicing leadership, our local and regional partnership also represent key stakeholders in this vision of leadership education.

*What types of content knowledge should we use to frame the learning?*

“Leadership ... is different from management and governance.”<sup>41</sup> Most would agree with this statement, yet many leadership studies programs continue to be based in these disciplinary orientations. While the content knowledge for generic kinds of leadership may well be found in the fields related to management and governance, public and community-based leaders will need to rely on a far more diverse and interdisciplinary sources of knowledge for their practice. We suggest two such sources of knowledge that

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<sup>39</sup> Boyte, “Civic Education as Public Leadership Development,” p. 764.

<sup>40</sup> The Wilks Leadership Institute at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio has helped to develop two leadership education programs that are interdisciplinary models of public and community-based leadership education. For more information, go to: <http://community.muohio.edu/wilks/>

<sup>41</sup> Adel Safty, “Moral Leadership: Beyond Management and Governance,” *Harvard International Review*, Fall 2003, 84-89.

are of critical importance to public and community-based leadership: socio-cultural and place-based, and political.

Developing community leadership begins with recognizing that both the practice of leadership and the situation in which it occurs need to be understood. We consider leadership as a collective relational phenomenon. This collective relational phenomena is also 'cultured', that is, it is a phenomenon that grows out of, and is a product of its setting. It is what we call sociocultural leadership.<sup>42</sup>

Learning community leadership is facilitated by social and cultural knowledge of the communities and regions in which higher education is situated. Such knowledge can be derived from a wealth of disciplines, departments or sources outside the university itself, including community leaders, elders, and texts. Departments from Anthropology to History to Environmental Studies to Geography and Education might provide students with the kinds of local and regional knowledge that enables them to better understand the communities and regions in which they will learn and practice leadership. An American Studies curriculum on globalization gives students at Miami University a theoretical set of lenses through which to examine local challenges in the region, including immigration, local food movements, and urban decay in de-industrializing America. These examinations lead to informed, collaborative action with community partners on behalf of local efforts to address such issues.<sup>43</sup>

Public and community-based learning is not abstract; it must be tied to a place or places that are concrete, meaningful, and fraught with the realities and contradictions of genuine communities. Place-based leadership learning helps students not only situate their leadership practices in a real setting, on projects that potentially contribute to local and regional public problem-solving, but helps students learn how to learn about place. In a very mobile time of their lives, during which young people are typically moving from one geographical area to another, this learning how to learn about the places in which they reside is tremendously important for cultivating the local social and cultural knowledge in which community problems are situated. Capacities for discovering, and tapping into, local networks, politics, and organizations that are engaged in public problem-solving, are transportable skills for future community leaders to learn.

A second important but often ignored knowledge base necessary for public and community-based leadership is that of political engagement and power relations. Kirk and Shutte describe this in their discussion of community-based leadership, a practice which

should not be a picture of a group of people working harmoniously with their shared values and beliefs, in joint endeavour, with unity of purpose. This romantic and sentimental hue with its unitary perspective, that was part of the Human Relations

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<sup>42</sup> Philip Kirk and Anna Marie Shutte, "Community leadership development," *Community Development Journal* 39, 3 (2004), 235.

<sup>43</sup> For more on this program, see Longo and Shaffer, "Leadership Education and the Revitalization of Public Life."

thinking in the 1950s about organization depended on a ‘well knit group’. The reality of people working in teams from the same or from different organizations is the existence of differing political agendas and unequal power distribution. This places a greater value on the rigour of collaboration through plurality. It requires in our view a more robust view of leadership able to engage with the hard realities (not just the sound bytes) of concepts like inclusivity, collaboration and diversity.<sup>44</sup>

Boyte echoes this view, describing the civic challenge before us not as one of graduating more experts at governance or management, nor one of helping students learn how to build perfect moral and political consensus on public problems. Rather, our work should be enabling students to “cultivate the public leadership skills that allow people to work productively with others, whether or not they like or agree with each other.”<sup>45</sup> Such skills are based in a deep knowledge of formal and informal politics that are at the heart of public life. Learning about the exercise of power in civic and public life, political institutions and structures, and the ways in which distinct political interests can deliberate and attempt to reach achievable, acceptable solutions for all parties involved, is a critical knowledge base for public leadership work.

Social and cultural knowledge of communities, the sense of local and regional place, and the knowledge of political engagement can all be learned through various disciplines or majors, but they can also be learned in the community itself. But without the capacities to think about the social, cultural, place-based and political aspects of public leadership, our future leaders will be operating from a leadership play book without any understanding of the real, concrete practices of leadership in diverse communities and public settings.

*What sorts of capacities are important for public and community-based leaders to learn?*

Leadership is ultimately defined by action. The practice of public and community-based leadership is based in eight distinct but overlapping abilities that should provide the locus of educational efforts:

- **Inquiry** – The ability to ask good questions, seek reliable information through trustworthy sources, seek multiple perspectives and a diversity of community citizens’ input for knowledge forms the foundation of community-based leadership. Community-based research skills and resources enable students to conduct various kinds of inquiry to understand the communities and public problems of their locality or region.
- **Collaboration** – The ability to work with diverse others in ways that utilize the strengths and voices of all for the benefit of everyone, collaboration with diverse individuals and coalitions is necessary in all types of leadership, from public to community to business

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<sup>44</sup> Kirk and Shutte, 237.

<sup>45</sup> Boyte, 764.

contexts. Collaborating with diverse others involves a set of inter-personal skills including listening, dialogue, identifying mutual concerns, and the willingness to share resources and “turf.”

- **Convening** – The ability to bring multiple interests to the table for collaboration, deliberation and exchange, this is one of the most basic but most challenging task of leadership work. “We might say that leadership is the capacity to invite, name the debate, and design gatherings.”<sup>46</sup> How does a leader get the “right” set of diverse community citizens to the table to work on common problems? How do we create real and virtual spaces for busy citizens to come together?
- **Naming and Framing** – The ability to help a group of people name and frame the issues and problems that they face together. The way we name and frame public problems has enormous consequences for how we can successfully tackle these challenges; problems that are not named and framed in ways that resonate with community members’ experiences will not elicit the kinds of input and involvement that public problem solving requires in our communities. In her study of students involved in a “political civic leadership development” opportunity, Janc draws a clear connection between students’ civic leadership development and their ability to understand and frame complex problems. “Students as civic leaders recognize a particular set of issues on their campuses that needed to be addressed via policy recommendations, forums, or public testimonies, and educate themselves through the Board and respective campuses on the complexities of these concerns.”<sup>47</sup>
- **Deliberating** – The ability to find and use one’s political voice to seek with other citizens the solutions to complex problems facing our communities. Public deliberation models vary, but they have in common the assumption that diverse citizens, representing multiple and often conflicting interests, must come together to weigh competing values and try to arrive at reasonable solutions acceptable to all. Deliberation abilities are related to some of the key communication skills necessary for collaboration, described above, including listening, speaking clearly, and building consensus.
- **Conflict management**– The ability to use conflict to seek the creative and productive outcomes of human difference and controversy that are unavoidable aspects of public and community existence. Collaboration and deliberation will yield conflicts of various kinds; public leaders must be able to skillfully harness these differences.
- **Action with integrity** – The ability to take action on behalf of finding or enacting solutions for public problems; integrity in public leadership involves qualities of transparency, honesty, and responsibility to others. Leadership practice in public arenas, in concert with community citizens, is a powerful learning application with regards to real-world ethical questions that naturally arise in such work. Recent calls for ethical leadership from public

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<sup>46</sup> A Small Group, *Civic Engagement and the Restoration of Community*, p. 10,

<sup>47</sup> Helen Janc, “A Case Study: Student Political Civic Leadership Development In a Higher Education Coordinating Board,” *Journal of College and Character*, Available: [www.collegevalues.org/pdfs/Janc.pdf](http://www.collegevalues.org/pdfs/Janc.pdf)

and private arenas alike point to the urgency of helping students learn how to intelligently grapple with such questions.

- **Reflection** – The ability to take stock of one’s own actions and contexts in order to understand, assess, evaluate, and become more responsive and effective in leadership work. Alma Blount, Director of Duke’s Hart Leadership Program, explains that “critical reflection is not about distancing yourself from experience, but rather about cultivating an attentive awareness of your current circumstances. It is an approach for being more grounded in the here and now and has strong utilitarian functions as a diagnostic and intervention tool for problem-solving work in organizations, institutions, and social systems.”<sup>48</sup>

*What pedagogies are best suited to public and community-based education?*

Eich’s study of effective undergraduate leadership programs highlights the importance of three program attributes that were common to all the programs surveyed: (a) participants engaged in building and sustaining a learning community; (b) student-centered experiential learning experiences; and (c) research-grounded continuous program development.”<sup>49</sup> Eich’s research underscores the need for community structures to support student learning, the central role of experience and reflection, and the need for assessment practices that help ensure that the curriculum continues to respond to student and community needs.

Schweigert puts all this another way; he states that learning about community-based leadership “can be summarized in three basic dynamics: belonging, paying attention, and practicing.”<sup>50</sup> The power of belonging to a group of student peers, faculty and staff educators, and community collaborators and mentors makes leadership learning meaningful and is a natural setting in which to teach concepts and skills of integrity (responsibility to others), collaboration, deliberation, inquiry, and conflict management. “Paying attention” for Schweigert signals the power of observation and experimentation for leadership learning; our pedagogy should enable students to be in settings where they can focus their attention on leadership in action in public and community settings. “Practice” refers to the experience of leadership work itself; whether it is through collaborative projects based in community problems, or service-learning individual placements where individual students work with organizational partners on community and public problems, students must be able to engage their whole bodies and selves in the work, and then be led to reflect on the meaning of that practice to gain better, more complex conceptions of public and community-based leadership. As Schweigert reminds us,

Learning is not simply internalizing knowledge; it is “increasing participation in a community of practice [that] concerns the whole person acting in the world” (Lave &

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<sup>48</sup> Alma G. Blount, “Critical Reflection for Public Life: How Reflective Practice Helps Students become Politically Engaged,” *Journal of Political Science Education* 2, 3 (Dec 2006), p. 272.

<sup>49</sup> Darin Eich, “A Grounded Theory of High-Quality Leadership Programs,” 176.

<sup>50</sup> Schweigert, “Learning to Lead,” 329.

Wenger, 1991: 49). What must be learned is not merely “content” or “subject matter” but identity, a provisional new self.<sup>51</sup>

Forming a “new self” that is capable of taking on leadership work that addresses the toughest problems of our communities and public life requires a holistic pedagogy, one that addresses the whole self that learns – its cognitive, affective, and social dimensions. Practical experience in real settings, where students are mentored and guided by community leaders, has been shown to be a most effective form of leadership learning.<sup>52</sup>

Practical learning about leadership, with and in communities, will also enable students to understand and find ways of working through the messiness of public work and life. “Ellen Schall, dean of New York University’s Wagner Graduate School of Public Service calls this aspect of leadership development “learning to love the swamp.” Many programs in leadership development emphasize the “high ground” of leadership theory and development, but the work of practice public and community based worked is fraught with “swamp problems.” As Blount argues,

effective public leadership means learning to manage in the “indeterminate zones” where no clear formulas exist for how to approach, much less solve, swamp problems. A different kind of experiential learning is required that incorporates both high ground and swamp learning. Problem-solving work must incorporate diverse—even competing—perspectives, encourage improvisation, and reinforce the group’s purpose as literally to learn its way through the problem. If public leaders must master both high ground and swamp approaches, mastery means developing an instinctive understanding of when and how to use each approach in the most strategically effective manner for addressing the policy problem at hand.<sup>53</sup>

Unlike some types of educational programs or curricula in higher education where pedagogy is driven by tidy learning objectives and a teacher-centered classroom, public and community-based leadership education is messy. This is partly because public work is messy, as Blount argues, but also because community partnerships, student engagement, and experiential education are all pedagogical strategies that dis-lodge the professor as the “sage on the stage.” Helping faculty to engage in these partnerships with community and with students, and enabling intersections of both “high ground” classroom learning and lessons from the swamps of public life and experience is necessary to move this agenda forward. In addition, helping faculty to learn to work in partnership with student affairs staff is a required part of this work as well.

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 333-334.

<sup>52</sup> A study of the Leadership Certificate program at the University of Guelph, for example, showed that leadership coursework alone produced no significant learning outcomes between those in such course and those not enrolled in leadership courses, but that students in their leadership practicum experience showed much more significant learning outcomes than their peers enrolled only in coursework. See Krista Vogt, *Leadership Development at University: Comparing Student Leaders with Different Levels of Involvement in a Leadership Education Program*, Masters of Arts Thesis, Simon Fraser University, 2007.

<sup>53</sup> Alma G. Blount, “Critical Reflection for Public Life: How Reflective Practice Helps Students become Politically Engaged,” p. 274.

The community-building and reflective aspects of this work, so critical to this kind of leadership learning, call upon the expertise of student affairs practitioners. In addition, student affairs staff can often help facilitate and enable the community partnerships and logistical details that are so central to this type of leadership education.

### **Concluding thoughts**

*Leadership, practiced in and for public life, is comprised of the actions of citizens who convene, deliberate, inquire, collaborate, and act with the intent to improve life for fellow citizens in their communities and the larger society.* In defining and describing this notion of leadership as a grounding framework for leadership education, we join with a growing group of educators, citizens, and activists who seek to join leadership education with the broader movements to re-energize public life in the US and transnationally. It is an educational agenda that can produce a new cohort of leaders for tomorrow's public problems, whether they end up serving in the public or private sectors, for public problem solving demands the acumen and talents of people in the not-for-profit as well as the for-profit sectors of our economy. But unlike much leadership education today, it is an agenda directly aimed at helping educate leaders for the public sphere of our existence, a realm whose health and future existence cannot be taken for granted.

## **From Theory to Practice: Leadership Education at the Wilks Leadership Institute**

The Harry T. Wilks Leadership Institute, established by an endowment from Miami University alum and local philanthropist Harry T. Wilks, was founded in 2002. The Wilks Leadership Institute (WLI) mission states that the 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 Leadership Institute advances the understanding and practice of the types of engaged leadership necessary for building a vibrant democratic society today and in the future.

Organizationally, the Institute represents an innovative challenge to the compartmentalized approach to learning that has characterized the modern university. Wilks has been, from its inception, a strategic partnership between Academic and Student Affairs at Miami, the kind of partnership that is necessary for holistic learning about public leadership knowledge and skills. While this partnership can be challenging in an institution where silos are still prevalent, the interconnections between academic and student affairs have yielded innovative curricular and co-curricular programs. Wilks provides opportunities for students to develop, over time, leadership capacities for public and community settings. The Institute also engages in assessment and research activities that advance the understanding of public leadership education.

### **Curricular development**

Wilks Institute staff help develop academic programs (thematic sequences or minors) that marry content knowledge from one or more disciplines with public and community leadership education appropriate and relevant to that particular content area. Seminars in public and community-based leadership, as well as practicum and internship experiences within the courses, enable students to make important connections between content knowledge, community contexts, and leadership work and capabilities. The capabilities of inquiry, collaboration, convening, naming and framing, deliberating, conflict management, ethical action, and reflection provide the skill-based focus of the leadership education. These leadership curricula, over multiple courses and semesters, eventually lead to community-based leadership in practice, as students and faculty focus their final project work on community issues or problems. The actual work that students produce through these curricula, developed in collaboration with community partners, are products that can help contribute to the solving of these issues or problems.

Two curriculum projects that the Wilks Leadership Institute has helped develop have been the **Acting Locally thematic sequence in American Studies**, and the **Shaping Sustainable Communities program through the Urban and Regional Planning program in Geography**. These curricula have been developed through the Think Tank model, a 3-year grant program in which Wilks funding is matched by funding from the Provost's office to provide resources for faculty and curriculum development. Faculty development – helping faculty learn about public and community-based leadership practice as it connects to their disciplinary knowledge and teaching practices – is a process that is symbiotic with curriculum development.

Wilks has also helped develop leadership courses that help promote our mission of public and community leadership education. A first year seminar, **Leadership for the Public Good**, is now a permanent offering for Miami students, and we have supported two international civic leadership courses, including a spring workshop associated with the **Sustainable Dominica project** out of the Departments of Geography and Latin American Studies. This project is an effort to combine empirical research and scholarship, student projects, community-level international partnerships, and an annual on-site course, all aimed at supporting sustainable living and development on the Nature Island of Dominica.

The goal of these courses and Think Tanks, over time, is the development of a **co-major in public and community leadership**. We envision this as an interdisciplinary program of study that must be connected with another major on campus, and would include core and content courses as well as engaged electives. Courses developed through the Think Tanks would provide some of the options in this co-major, as would electives that already exist in a wide array of departments, including history, political science, sociology,

anthropology, religious studies, and educational leadership. This co-major would allow students to connect their knowledge of an academic area (the substance of their original major) with the leadership learning and capacities gained through the public and community leadership co-major curriculum.

### **Co-curricular programming**

Wilks Institute staff provides a wide array of opportunities for students at every level of learning to build their public leadership capacities and knowledge. These programs range from one-time opportunities to develop a public leadership capacity or learn about a particular public leadership issue or experience, to living/learning programs where students engage in year-long learning around public leadership themes. These programs help to provide both breadth and depth in learning about public and community leadership, enabling students to initiate or continue their development as a public leader.

At Wilks, co-curricular leadership education is comprised of non-credit bearing programs such as the following:

- **Living/Learning Communities:** At Miami, Living Learning Communities are purposeful attempts to integrate curricular and co-curricular experiences that complement and extend classroom learning. These communities foster faculty and resident interaction that enhances both intellectual and personal growth of the residents. The Wilks Leadership Institute, as of this writing, helps to sponsor the Scholar-Leader Community in Stoddard and Elliott Halls. Students learn about leadership in a supportive, active residence hall community; they develop skills in collaboration, convening, deliberating, conflict management, ethical action, and reflection.
- **Workshop Series** –Wilks Community Assistants, or undergraduate students who help run the Institute, each year develop a series of workshops on issues facing public leaders today and capacity development important to public and community leaders. Students new to leadership or new to the idea of public and community based leadership are an important intended audience for these workshops, but some offerings should appeal to those students already comfortable with their leadership knowledge but are looking to expand particular public and community based capacities like conflict management, deliberation, or reflection. Students, faculty, staff, local and national leaders run these interactive workshops across the academic year. These workshops are offered in partnership with related campus organizations in order to maximize program reach and limit institutional over-programming. Collaborators on these workshops include the Center for American and World Cultures, the Diversity Affairs Council, Residence Life, Offices of Community Engagement and Service, as well as the Office of Student Activities and Leadership. Selected Wilks workshops are cross-listed offerings in the ENGAGE program series offered through the Office of Student Activities and Leadership.
- **High School Engagement** – Community leadership takes place in the communities that surround us, and our High School Engagement program links up with two prominent secondary schools in our county to build and sustain relationships between Wilks staff, Miami undergraduate student leaders, high school students who have an interest in leadership, and high school faculty. High School Engagement involves 30-40 high school students in monthly meetings with high school mentors, and brings these students to the Oxford campus for leadership retreats each semester. Students work on leadership skills such as inquiry, naming and framing, deliberating, and reflection. Future plans for the High School Engagement Program include an annual public and community leadership conference for high school students across south-west Ohio.
- **Campus Deliberation events** – Public deliberation is the process of open discussion about a particularly controversial or thorny issue in public life. Through organizations such as the National Issues Forum, such controversial issues are researched and made available to foster deliberative events in communities on topics such as health care, transportation, and educational achievement. The Miami-Whitewater Valley Public Media Project based in Miami University's Journalism department has partnered with Wilks to sponsor an Interactive Forum that will be a resource for holding an annual campus-wide deliberative event, a program we plan to debut in spring 2010. The

Interactive Forum will provide information and multiple perspectives on a particular issue, such as underage drinking or free speech on campus. Wilks staff and students will then help to organize, prepare, and moderate the deliberation event on campus. An annual public deliberation on campus is designed to help promote student capacities for some of the most important skills of public leadership today, including conflict management, deliberation across difference, and ethical action.

- **Activism opportunities** – Part of public and community based leadership is learning about politics and power; providing students with opportunities to participate in political activism on a range of issues or topics helps build critical knowledge for leadership in public life. Helping students develop their voices as political actors, and to take action and reflect on its consequences are important learning goals for creating activism opportunities for and with student leaders at Miami. In fall 2008, Wilks helped to sponsor a group of students who participated in the School of the Americas protest. In the future, Wilks hopes to provide more opportunities to link students with activist experiences of various types. Rather than being non-partisan in our approach to these programs we hope to be omni-partisan, enabling students to become active citizens on any number of issues that concern them from any number of partisan positions on these issues.
- **Enabling leadership through organizational advising** – Advisors to campus and student organizations are typically on the “front lines” of leadership development but often have no formal training in developing the capacities for public and community leadership. Wilks offers an annual workshop for advisors of student organizations so that education and support in this work can be provided, and so that this leadership development can become more intentional in our campus advising.
- **Leadership Symposia** – Part of our role is to promote the field of public and community leadership education around the nation, helping to construct, support, and disseminate best practices in this field of leadership education. In May 2008, Wilks sponsored a Leadership Education symposium that gathered faculty, staff and students from over 12 exemplary leadership programs from around the nation, as well as other important non-profit and community leaders in the civic leadership education movement. The symposium and its follow-up initiatives will explore, discuss, and document “what it takes” to educate for civically engaged leadership among the next generation. This initial meeting was followed by regional meetings in New England and in the Mid-West to keep the momentum going, and an edited book on public leadership education, featuring many of the participants of this symposium, will go to press at the end of 2009.
- **Leadership Recognition** – Providing recognition to campus, regional, national and global leaders is part of the role of the Wilks Leadership Institute. Wilks has created the Harry T. Wilks Leadership in a Changing World award to exemplify the best ideals of human creativity, enterprise, and public service. This Award has been bestowed upon former U.S. Senator and astronaut John Glenn as well as former Soviet leader and democratic reformer Mikhail Gorbachev.

### **Assessment and research activities**

Wilks intentionally focuses on ongoing assessment work that enables us to better understand and refine the educational programs and activities sponsored by the Institute. In 2006-2008, during the first year of the Acting Locally program, a grant from the Kettering Foundation was used to fund a longitudinal qualitative research project that consisted of pre-interviews, post-interviews, and a mid-year on-line survey. This research yielded substantive outcomes that enhanced the future work of Acting Locally, and that will serve to inform the field of public and community leadership education through publication (Longo and Shaffer’s essay cited in this White Paper is one example of this work). In 2009-2010, Wilks has received internal grant funds from Miami University to assess the learning outcome of the Shaping Sustainable Communities program being launched in this same academic year. The learning goals developed by the Think Tank faculty and Wilks staff will form the substance of the assessment instrument and focus group questions. In the future, Wilks staff will be developing a survey instrument to use in a wide array of Wilks programs to assess students’ growth and development of their public leadership knowledge and capacities.

Wilks selectively sponsors, participates in, or helps to disseminate research projects that intersect with our mission of public and community based leadership education. One example of such research is the Ohio Civic Health Index, a project co-sponsored by the National Conference on Citizenship, collects data on Ohioans civic and community participation rates, helping to educate the public in Ohio and around the nation about the health of our civic life. In 2008, Wilks staff partnered with faculty from Political Science and Teacher Education to write this report, and in 2009, Wilks will collaborate with the Miami-Hamilton Office of Civic Engagement in their role as the primary authors and sponsors of the 2009 Ohio Civic Health Index.