

## Session: Student Democratic Leadership Education

### Discussion Framework:

#### Introduction

What is the predominant definition of leadership?

- Inspiring others to changes (who they are, where they love, problems in community)
- Someone who has a vision
- An organizational designation or quality
- Authority—people in positions of power
- Actualizing success
- Serving others by sharing their talents
- Institutional “leader” vs. student “leader” (positional and defined by the institution)
- Helping others build capacity
- Someone looking at the whole picture—larger perspective
- Leadership is equated with power—getting and using it
- “Leadership” envisioned without student voice and involvement

What is democratic leadership?

- Need to ask first what we value and what we expect?
- Groups must define the concept of democracy together
- Can/should? be grounded in the work of an educational institution
- Dialogue inclusive of all, dialogue shaped by all
- Representing a constituency well
- Serving others
- Respecting others
- Where one gains everyone gains
- Being able to think beyond the self
- Facilitator of dialogue
- Distinguishing between positional authority vs democratic leadership
- Participating in a process
- Embracing change in institutions—seeing roles differently
- Understanding generational differences, strengths and challenges
- Looking beyond labels but understanding them (thinks more comprehensively)
- Leading with “hands behind back”
- Standing in front, behind, beside
- A “process” thing—movement model of charismatic leader vs. diversity of individuals coming together to created shared vision
- Also an outcome thing—democratic outcomes that make like better for citizens

What are the capacities studies need to become democratic leaders?

- Conflict “management”
- Listening skills—listening across difference
- Naming and framing skills
- Amplify and make space for difference where it feel or is suppressed
- Ability to build a structure of some type for people to link together in order to create change
- Helping people see and enact action that leads to change. Gives/constructs agency
- Ability to put things into larger perspective; thinking short and long term about your goal struggle
- Ability to help people envision what’s possible and achievable
- Ability to plan, convene, and execute a productive public event
- Ability to think beyond an “individualists” and positional leadership model—individual voice matters, but as part of larger network, group, or public
- Ability to collaborate
- Ability to find/build common ground esp. around divisive issues

What are innovative programs/best practices in student democratic leadership?

- Intergroup Dialogues –UMass Amherst and other institutions
- Center for Student Engagement and Community partnerships Virginia Tech
- “Citizen Scholar” designation Virginia Tech
- Defining student citizenship
- Impact Program—U Mass Amherst
- Community and all university involvement in building a vision and commitment and part of permanent governances
- Acting Locally—Miami University--Sequences Curriculum
- Promoting cultural shift among faculty and administrators to embrace this kind of leadership education
- Students as peer educators and leaders alongside faculty and community leaders
- Programs which encourage long-term sustainability of the work, to hand on to the next group of students and changing of leadership mid year
- Self examination an important part of leadership work
- Helping students learn about place and local communities—leadership takes place in context
- Ithaca College Community partnership and environmental sustainability—Mike Smith—teaching students to deal with the realities of transience and community engagement
- Preparation and sequencing of community based learning and leadership

How do we institutionalize and integrate democratic leadership across campuses?

- Transcript notations for citizenship leadership achievements and service learning courses
- Creating curriculum in or between departments
- Reaching out and connecting with multiple departments and offices
- Building into and connecting with strategic institutional documents, like mission statements, etc.

What are next steps/action strategies?

- Involve students in orientation and reflection about community work
- Get students more centrally involved in these kinds of conversations—e.g. Bently college conference—Students as Colleagues
- Book resource—Gibson/Longo volume New Public Leadership
- More faculty partnering with students
- Students more fully integrated into governance
- Post questions on No Better Time Wiki blog
- Put more emphasis on students publishing their experiences
- Students involved in curriculum development—LsSalle (Philadelphia) “Leadership and Global Understanding” minor
- Democratic pedagogical practices
- New democratic models of teaching and learning conversation needs to be connected with conversation about student democratic leadership which needs to be connected with executive leadership models at most institutions—how do we connect these conversations and reconcile the discrepancies
- Nick Longo—example of mapping leadership across campus
- Undergraduate research conference
- Virginia Tech—“Engagement Academy”
- Student leaders weekend retreat—moving students beyond practices that reinforce the status quo
- Utilize and build on what students know and what they have done—include this in the knowledge and experience we value in higher ed world
- Bring as many departments and units in the institution into the engagement process as possible