

Leadership Development 2.0: What's Needed Now?

Crisis and change in higher education have always been the rule, and not the exception (Kerr, Gade, & Kawaoka, 1994). Nonetheless, in a recent LEADERSHIP Journal (17-3), Frederick Ricci, Graduate Professor for Organizational Leadership at Nova Southeastern University, reported that the experiences educators are currently facing will continue to transform higher education to an extent perhaps *even greater* than those experienced since the end of World War II. These include such issues as the dissolution of traditional organizational boundaries, the disruption of old practices as the result of new technologies, increasing concern for safety and security, and the promise of performance-based funding models. Nick Petrie, Senior Faculty at the Center for Creative Leadership, described the current environment as increasingly *volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous*.

One thing is clear...the nature of challenges faced by leaders is rapidly changing, and the skills needed by leaders are changing just as rapidly. Familiar competency models, while still important, may not be sufficient, as we need leaders with 'bigger minds', greater flexibility, and the ability to solve new problems. Today's leaders must develop a tolerance for ambiguity, and the ability to adapt to our increasingly complex and uncertain environment. The future requires agile learners with complex thinking abilities, and a greater awareness of self and others. These leaders must be skilled in competencies such as boundary spanning, perspective shifting, and network thinking. They must develop the ability to influence others, while leveraging and integrating diverse perspectives.

While the complex and rapidly changing nature of the educational environment demands new leadership abilities, the question is, how will we produce these capacities of thinking? The Center for Creative Leadership recently conducted a study to investigate this question and to determine what the future of leadership development should look like. The project included a comprehensive literature review, consultation with Harvard faculty from the colleges of Education, Psychology, Business, Law, and Government, and interviews with 30 experts in the field of leadership development. Research findings confirmed that leaders are working in an increasingly uncertain world that requires new leadership abilities, but that the methods being used to develop leaders have not changed (much). The research identified four trends for the future of leadership development:

- 1) The development of new skills, abilities, and behaviors is not enough; leaders must grow the capacity of their thinking in order to lead effectively in today's changing and complex environment
- 2) Ownership of leadership development must be transferred to the individual
- 3) Networks of leaders which can coalesce and disband in response to organizational challenges will replace "heroic leaders"
- 4) Ongoing evolution of existing leadership development programs will be required to support the development of highly effective leaders

Participants who attend this session will learn about this research, and experience new approaches to leadership development. Participants will then address four research questions in order to contribute to a new framework for leadership development. Summaries of responses will be summarized, analyzed, and shared with participants.

- 1) What are the current approaches to leadership development that are most effective?
- 2) What should we be doing more of to develop leaders for the future?
- 3) What should we be doing less of or phase out completely?
- 4) Where do we see the future of leadership development headed?

References

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