

FOREWORD

This book serves as the interface between three critical issues facing the country: Leadership, the country's changing demographics and the continued growth of underrepresented groups, and the current state of higher education.

Although leadership has been a topic of interest for a long while, today it is the focus of attention because of current events and the scandals that have plagued corporate America. Enron, Worldcom, Tyco, and even the New York Stock Exchange have been rocked by malfeasance and abuse by their leaders with seemingly very little acknowledgment or remorse for their roles in the demise or handling of their companies. Frequently, one hears or reads of corporate and other leaders being involved in some sort of misdeed that affects not only their lives and the lives and livelihood of their employees, but consumers all over the globe. The country has been outraged to the point that Congress was moved to pass legislation in Sarbanes-Oxley as a way to provide oversight to companies and organizations so that potential abuses are detected and the nation's consumers and economy are not damaged by unscrupulous individuals.

Unfortunately, examples abound of poor leadership and abuse at all levels in this country, from the crooked politician to the local pastor who has led his flock astray. On the other hand, there are examples of courageous leadership and the steady, focused, and positive influence of leaders in various settings. Mother Theresa is perhaps an extreme example of leadership, and one that stands in stark juxtaposition to the current climate.

But how does one understand it all? Is it that people are bad or is it that there is a lack of people who can lead? Do leaders possess certain characteristics that set them apart or can leadership be taught and developed? In an attempt to understand these issues, the literature on leadership has developed taxonomies on the types of leaders and characteristics that make good leaders. But beyond being able to identify characteristics attributed to successful leadership, leaders must grapple with other issues as well. Moral leadership is important at all levels, as is the notion that one type of leadership can't fit all situations. What makes a leader like General Electric's Jack Welch different from or similar to the generals who lead the army in

Iraq? While there are many questions, one thing is certain: Leadership is needed now more than ever at all levels of society.

The second major issue this book seeks to address is the role of leadership within the context of the changing demographics and complexion of the country. Not only are we a country that is “graying” and facing the growth of senior citizens who are part of the “baby boom,” but the color and age of our next generation are changing as well. Demographer David Hayes Bautista of UCLA has estimated that by the year 2040 Latinos will comprise nearly half of all residents of this state. And that does not include the dramatic growth of Asians and other ethnic groups. More important, this projected growth will not be due mainly to immigration but rather to high fertility rates and the intermarriage of Hispanics with other groups.

California, the most populous state in the union, should be a barometer of the things to come and what the future will be like for the next generation of Americans, especially in the Southwest. Given the projections for the future, America as a multicultural, multilingual society seems much more a reality than a mere speculation. There is evidence that this trend is well underway. For example, the number of Latinos and other underrepresented groups already engaged in politics and the country’s economy is evident. In fact, the past election saw the selection of the first two Hispanics to serve in the US Senate. Clearly, then, we need to develop and train leaders not only in politics and business, but at all levels of society for the development and well-being of our future citizens and the country.

The third issue – and one inextricably linked to the well-being of future generations – is education. While much has been said and written about the poor state of our education system at the K-12 level, relatively little attention has been paid to the role and need for a high-quality system of higher education in this country. If one looks at the current state of the economy and the changes that have been brought about by technology, it should be clear that a highly trained workforce is necessary for the future survival of this country. Unlike the 1950s, when a high school education was sufficient to secure a good job and pursue the American Dream, today the requirement is at least some college and preferably a bachelor’s degree at the entry level for the jobs that are available. Without at least some education beyond high school, the prospects for those who don’t have it are not bright.

However, while the need for higher education seems clear, the reality is that public support has dwindled during the past several years and, across the country, institutions of higher education have witnessed decreases in funding. In addition, at a time when training in science and math is paramount, education generally is not preparing students well enough to

participate fully in the potential careers open to them. In sum, higher education is at a critical juncture in its history. If it is to survive and thrive, the one thing it needs more than anything is the leadership that will take it to the next level of development.

The question, of course, is who will provide this leadership? Given the changes taking place, the answer has to include representatives from those constituencies that share a stake in the future. And that's why this book is so important. It provides a framework for how to begin to address the dearth of people of color in leadership positions in higher education. More important, it presents models on how to develop the leadership that is so sorely needed.

It has been demonstrated by research and anecdote that students do better when they have the proper role models. This includes faculty and administrators who look like them and who share the same world view as well as a common set of values and history. Since the major increase in participation in higher education by members of minority groups nearly 40 years ago, the issue has remained the same; there must be more faculty and administrators of color. In other words, leadership is the need as well as the key to the student success.

By beginning to act on the issue, we will influence the events of the future rather than be driven by them. The current and next generation of students, regardless of their color or ethnicity, deserve it. This book is a first step.

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