

## Seven Ways to Practice Multicultural Leadership

by Juana Bordas

Not only is the world getting flatter, it is becoming more colorful. As globalization becomes a reality, more organizations will employ people of every race, nationality, religious background, and age group. That is why if your organization is still leading the old traditional way, you're making a mistake.

Traditional leadership models—although they may differ from person to person and method to method—generally exclude the enormous contributions, potential learning, and valuable insights that come from leaders in diverse communities. Through implementing multicultural leadership, not only will your organization's working environment be a better, more enjoyable place to work, but you will be able to provide more comprehensive services at your institution.

Multicultural leadership encourages an inclusive and adaptable style that cultivates the ability to bring out the best in our diverse workforce and to fashion a sense of community with people from many parts of the globe. Here are eight ways to help you make the transition to a multicultural leadership model.

### 1. First, you need a history lesson.

Understanding the history that gave rise to ethnocentricity is perhaps the most difficult step in transforming leadership to an inclusive, multicultural form. You

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can't just go to a seminar for a day and come out understanding why the old Eurocentric leadership models won't work in a globalized world. You need to learn about these cultures in order to develop the clarity that allows you to incorporate multicultural leadership techniques into your organization.

- 2. Think we, not I.** Today's work environments can be an incredibly competitive place where the accepted motto seems to be "every person for themselves." Leaders who put an end to this harmful way of thinking will create a work environment where the focus is on mutual, not singular advancement. Then people will work for group success before personal credit or gain. This will ultimately result in the entire department or organization's success.
- 3. Flatten your leadership structure.** Successful work units will be those whose leaders view themselves as just another part of the organization and who

place value in the expertise and innovation of their employees. Flattening the leadership structure will help employees feel more appreciated and will work more easily together instead of getting hung up on a 'you're the boss' mentality.

- 4. Help people learn to work better together.** No two people come from exactly the same background. Despite outward similarities, every employee, manager, or director is unique. Successful organizations are those that learn to accept the small differences that make us human and work together for the greater good of the organization. Consensus building is a great way to strengthen any work environment.
- 5. Minimize conflict by reminding employees that they truly are "family."** Any number of conflicts can arise in an office setting, and by using the right leadership techniques, you can alleviate conflict so everyone works together (for the most part, at least) as one big, happy family. If leaders encourage employees to view one another as family helps them to seek out resolutions to their problems. It makes them feel a responsibility to find a way to coexist in order to benefit the organization.
- 6. Foster a culture that's accepting of spirituality.** You might be reluctant to make a connection between spirituality and work, but it is possible to do it without stepping on anyone's toes. As long as no one tries to force his or her faith on anyone else, the entire workplace is free to learn from one another and be inspired by the values that underline many faith traditions—hope, optimism, and gratitude. By encouraging employees to share their spiritual sides rather than compartmentalize

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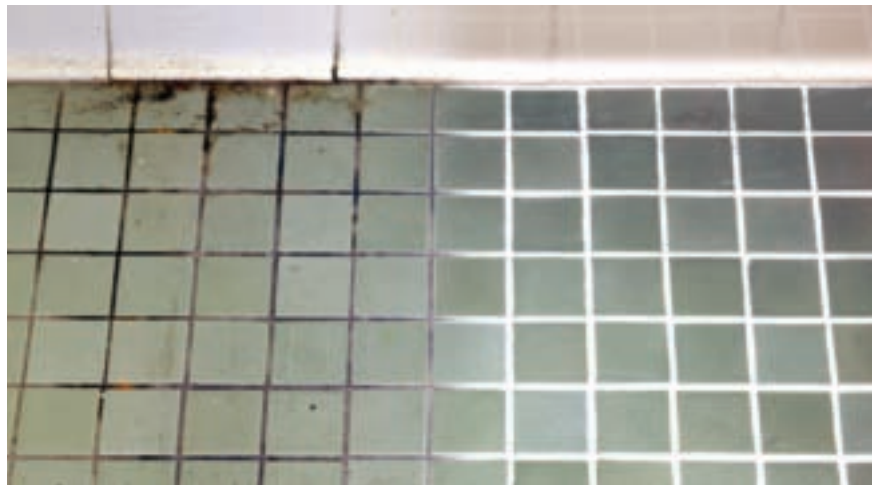
them, you create a workplace where people bring their “whole selves” to work. Your employees will quickly see that they are free to be themselves. And as a result, they will be happier people—and happier people are more productive and creative.

**7. Focus employees on a departmental or institutional vision.** Almost every organization has a motto or mission that is meant to inspire employees to provide high-quality service. If you don't have one, you should come up with one right away. But does your organization's vision really represent the beliefs and attitudes of all of your employees? In order to develop a vision that truly reflects the diverse attitudes of your employees, think of it as a community vision. Listen to different points of view, communicate in an open, give-and-take fashion, and welcome new ideas. The shared vision that results will provide a focal point for people's skills, talents, and resources. With that vision assuring them that their efforts will make a difference, people will be willing to assume a higher degree of risk and make greater sacrifices, which will translate to an organization with harder working, more dedicated employees.

Tapping the potential of the changing workforce, member base, and community requires leadership approaches that resonate with and are representative of a much broader population base. Leaders must be able to use practices and approaches that are effective with the many cultures that make up our communities.

Leaders without significant experience within diverse cultures needn't worry. People *can* develop affinities and sensitivities for a number of different cultures. Leaders *can* acquire multicultural competencies and work effectively with many different populations. †

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## Correlating Facilities Impact Study with FPI Data

by Gary L. Reynolds

In promoting leadership in educational facilities, APPA has conducted surveys of its members to provide benchmark data for comparative purposes. A biennial survey, *Comparative Costs and Staffing Report*, was the mainstay of APPA's survey efforts for many years and included basic data on costs per square foot for custodial, maintenance, utilities, etc. More recently, APPA recognized that additional measures are important to provide a strategic picture of institutional facilities. Thus, over the past several years APPA made changes to the survey instrument with strong influences on the redesign coming from the Strategic Assessment Model (SAM) and the Balanced Scorecard.

The redesigned survey, *Facilities Performance Indicators* (FPI), now includes Facilities Operating Expenses (FOE), Current Replacement Value (CRV) of facilities, and General Institution Expense (GIE), as well as the usual costs for custodial, maintenance, and utilities.

Findings from the recent CFaR project on the Impact of Facilities on the Recruitment and Retention of Students came from survey results of more than 16,000 students from 46 institutions across the U.S. and Canada. Of those 46 institutions, eight of the schools also participated in APPA's FPI survey. Thus, there is an opportunity to explore correlations between student responses and financial measures.

Seven measures from the FPI (data from FY05-06) include custodial, maintenance, and total costs per gross



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square foot (GSF) as well as normalized ratios such as FOE/CRV, FOE/GSF and FOE/GIE. From the student survey (completed in Spring 2005) there were several questions asking for student satisfaction such as, "Overall, how satisfied are you with the quality of the facilities on your college campus?", "How would you rate the quality of maintenance of your college/university?" and "How would you describe your overall feelings about your college or university?"

The data was prepared by taking the average of all the student responses for each of the eight schools for each of the three questions noted above. The data was then combined with the FPI data in a common SPSS database (the

same data analysis software used for previously reported results). A number of multiple linear regression models were run with various dependent (student responses) and independent (FPI data) relationships. Of all the analysis completed, a student's perception of the *quality of maintenance* is the most strongly correlated to FPI data, with the strongest relationship to the two ratios of FOE/GSF and FOE/GIE and with a weaker correlation to FOE/CRV.

Research shows that students are evaluating an institution, in part, on their perceptions of the quality of the maintenance at the college or university they are considering. The results also showed that approximately 1 in 6 students rejected an institution if they perceived that the institution was poorly maintained. This follow-up research (admittedly based on a small sample size) shows that there is a positive statistical correlation between students' perception of the quality of maintenance and the facilities operations expenditures per gross square foot (FOE/GSF).

The sum of these two pieces of research indicates that an institution's operation and maintenance expenditures have a direct and strong statistical correlation with the ability of an institution to recruit students. †



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