

A STUDY OF SHARED LEADERSHIP
AMONG DEPARTMENT CHAIRS
IN A STATE COLLEGE

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Abstract

The purpose of this dissertation was to describe and explain the perspectives and practices of shared leadership among department chairs in a state college. The researcher used an interview guide on shared leadership, based on the work of previous researchers (Greene, 2004; Taggart, 1999). The researcher interviewed college personnel and a leader of the student body. Five department chairs (four in academic areas of operation and one in a non-academic area) and the Student Government Association president participated in the interviews. The researcher also attended a rally the college president had with all faculty and staff. The researcher observed departmental and interdepartmental meetings, a Faculty Senate meeting, and a Planning Council meeting made up of faculty members, department chairs, and upper-level administrators. The department chairs used shared leadership to pursue desired outcomes related to enhancing teaching and learning. The information gathered was classified and evaluated according to the four domains of Leadership, Involvement, Process, and Outcomes. This study yielded the following results: The perspective and practice of shared leadership was present among the department chairs and Student Government Association president. The college president was instrumental in encouraging and modeling the perspective and practice of shared leadership.

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CHAPTER 1

What is leadership? When is it shared or distributed? The topic of shared leadership is a fairly new concept that has grown in popularity and acceptance, especially in educational institutions. Shared leadership has been defined as a “dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals whose objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals” (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p. 1).

Desired Outcomes

Colleges may choose to use shared leadership to pursue desired outcomes. Leaders of college institutions noted these desired outcomes: raising student achievement, controlling costs, and handling student population growth by expanding facilities, developing new programs, filling teacher vacancies, and building faculty commitment (Cox, 1998; Gonzalez, 2009; Zeidenberg, 2008).

Raising Student Achievement

Raising student achievement is one of the main desired outcomes within institutions of higher learning. Greene, Marti, & McClenney (2008) stated, “One of the most unrelenting challenges confronting higher education is a participation and achievement gap” (p. 513).

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reported a major contributing factor in low student achievement in colleges is low achievement of minority groups. The NCES stated low achievement of minority groups stemmed from not as many minorities going to college right after graduating from high school.

Reports from the NCES showed an average of 66.4% of White students transitioned to college immediately after completing high school in contrast to 57.2% of African American and 54.2% of Hispanic high school graduates (NCES, 2005).

Bailey, Jenkins, & Leinbach (2005) reported 7.9% of African American and 15.4% of Hispanic students who started at community colleges between 1995 and 1996 (compared to 24% of their Asian and 17% of their White counterparts) finished with at least an associate degree within six years. African American and Hispanic community college students were also found to have transferred to four-year colleges at lower rates (24% and 16%, respectively) than Asian and White students (47% and 32%, respectively) where they were less likely than their counterparts to earn a bachelor's degree (NCES, 2005).

The college in this case study, Emerald State College (pseudonym), desired to raise student achievement among minority groups. The writer of one school document avowed, "Programs and services must address differences in background, culture, and ethnicity" (ESC: Scanning the Environment, 2010, p. 6).

Emerald State College used the Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (CCFSSE) to assess student achievement. The CCFSSE provided information to member colleges in identifying areas of strength, but also in recognizing challenges or gaps that required further consideration. The CCFSSE report enabled participating institutions to view perceptions of student engagement alongside student responses (Survey of Student Engagement, 2009). The CCFSSE

results revealed Emerald State College was active in pursuing its desired outcome of raising student achievement. The results are included in Appendix A.

Emerald State College's Office of Institutional Research also found Emerald State College rated higher than the national norms in several areas. This was based on 47,341 student records from 51 public postsecondary institutions that administered the ACT Student Opinion Survey between August 4, 2004, and July 31, 2008. Emerald State College's score exceeded the national norm in students' satisfaction level with the academic aspects of their college. The college also ranked above the national level in classroom facilities, laboratory facilities, course availability, attitude of non-teaching staff and faculty toward students, and concern for the student as an individual (Core Performance Indicators, 2009-2010).

Controlling Costs

Becoming and remaining cost effective is a major challenge in institutions of higher learning. This challenge is two-fold. The college has to monitor its costs to operate efficiently, and the college has to be mindful of the costs incurred by students to obtain their education. The U.S. Department of Education's Commission on the Future of Higher Education (2006) concluded there is no issue that worries the American public more about higher education than the cost of attending college.

During the 2009-10 school year, the College Board found average total charges at public four-year colleges and universities was \$15,213. Without any financial aid, the total cost amounted to 30% of the annual median family income.

The average low-income student opted to face the costs of a local community college that was considerably less (Horn & Premo, 2005).

Controlling costs was tied to raising student achievement. The U.S. Department of Education listed these costs in identifying characteristics that increased students' risk of not succeeding in college: being financially independent of one's parents, being a single parent, having dependents other than a spouse, attending college part-time, and working full-time (Horn & Premo, 2005). Furthermore, Emerald State College's president indicated that federal funds were not sufficient for students; therefore, much had to be privatized (President's Fall Address, August 18, 2010).

Emerald State College took cost cutting measures to face cost controlling challenge. Emerald State College kept tuition costs below its university counterparts. To further reduce costs, Emerald State College provided special kiosks that allowed books to be printed for a fraction of the cost of a bound textbook. The college sold electronic notebooks to the students for as little as \$20. This provision helped students to avoid purchasing a personal computer (Field Notes, 2010). These cost controlling measures are discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. A school document revealed that the college would continue its costs reductive efforts in areas such as energy conservation and more energy efficient buildings (ESC: Scanning the Environment, 2010).

Handling Student Population Growth

Leaders of college institutions desired another significant outcome: handling of student population growth through school facilities expansion, new program

development, hiring more teachers, and building faculty commitment (Cox, 1998; Gonzalez, 2009; Zeidenberg, 2008). This desired outcome coincided with Emerald State College's desired outcomes (ESC, 2010).

Emerald State College operated in two counties. The U.S. Census anticipated that the population in these two counties would increase by 10% by 2015, with the largest increase being those of Hispanic descent (27%). In response to the anticipated increase in student population and diversity, Emerald State College sought to begin more programs and services (Strategic Plan, 2010).

The 2010-2011 academic year brought expansion of facilities and program offerings to Emerald State College (ESC, 2010). The college sought to develop and promote courses, programs, and services that were flexible and responsive to the needs of students and the community (ESC, 2010). Among the new programs offered were opportunities for an expanded and enhanced online education program and online student services to minimize student travel (ESC: Scanning the Environment, 2010).

Emerald State College concentrated on handling student population growth by hiring more teachers and increasing faculty commitment. The college's plan was to recruit, develop, evaluate, and reward faculty and staff to support and encourage performance, productivity, and personal accountability (ESC, 2010). Emerald State College relied on data provided by CCFSSSE to analyze ways to pursue this desired outcome of handling student population growth (Planning Council Meeting, September 8, 2010).

CCFSSE used a three-year cohort of 332 participating colleges (2007, 2008, and 2009) in all of its data analyses. The CCFSSSE ranked Emerald State College as follows:

- Employment Status: Cox (1998) stated that schools that have a large percentage of part-time faculty as compared to full-time faculty are mostly the ones that find teacher shortage and commitment a challenge. The CCFSSSE reported that 69% of the faculty were full-time and 31% were part-time at Emerald State College. This was above the cohort and the national average.
 - Fifty-eight percent of 2009 CCFSSSE cohort respondents identified themselves as full-time faculty members, while 42% indicated that they were employed on a part-time basis. These percentages were below Emerald State. Comparatively, the NCES national data indicated that only 33% of community college faculty members were employed full-time.
- Academic Rank: Thirty-six percent of full-time faculty at Emerald State College were Professors, 31% were Associate Professors, 20% were Assistant Professors, and 10% were Instructors. These numbers ranked higher than those reported the national average.
- Education/Degree held: Full-time Emerald State College faculty held a higher percentage of Doctoral degrees than the cohort, with 29% of Emerald State College full-time faculty having a Ph.D. or Ed.D., as opposed to only 19% of the full-time cohort.

Was Shared Leadership Used to Pursue Desired Outcomes?

This researcher sought specific information about the college's leadership. This case study used Taggart's (1999) and Greene's (2004) four domains: Leadership, Active Involvement (referred to as "Involvement"), Open Process (referred to as "Process"), and Comprehensive Accepted Outcomes (referred to "Outcomes"). The researcher wanted to discover if and how the college's department chairs used shared leadership to pursue the desired outcomes of raising student achievement, controlling costs, and handling student population growth by expanding facilities, developing new programs, filling teacher vacancies, and building faculty commitment.

Statement of the Problem

Colleges are challenged when confronted with pursuing the desired outcomes mentioned in this chapter. They seek to overcome any obstacles and possess academic excellence. Emerald State College sought to raise student achievement, control costs, and handle the student population growth. The leaders of the organization have been at the forefront of pursuing their desired outcomes; therefore, this study centered on leadership practice, particularly shared leadership. The research problem led to the research question: What are the shared leadership perspectives and practices among department chairs in a state college?

Purpose of the Study, Conceptual Framework, and Research Question

The purpose of this dissertation was to describe and explain the perspectives and practices of shared leadership among department chairs in a state college. The conceptual framework for this study was: shared leadership is necessary and practiced

among all the department chairs to pursue desired outcomes (see Figure 1). This conceptual framework illustrated that there were different department chairs in the college. This conceptual framework also showed that department chairs practiced shared leadership. The size of the ovals represent the various use of shared leadership among department chairs.

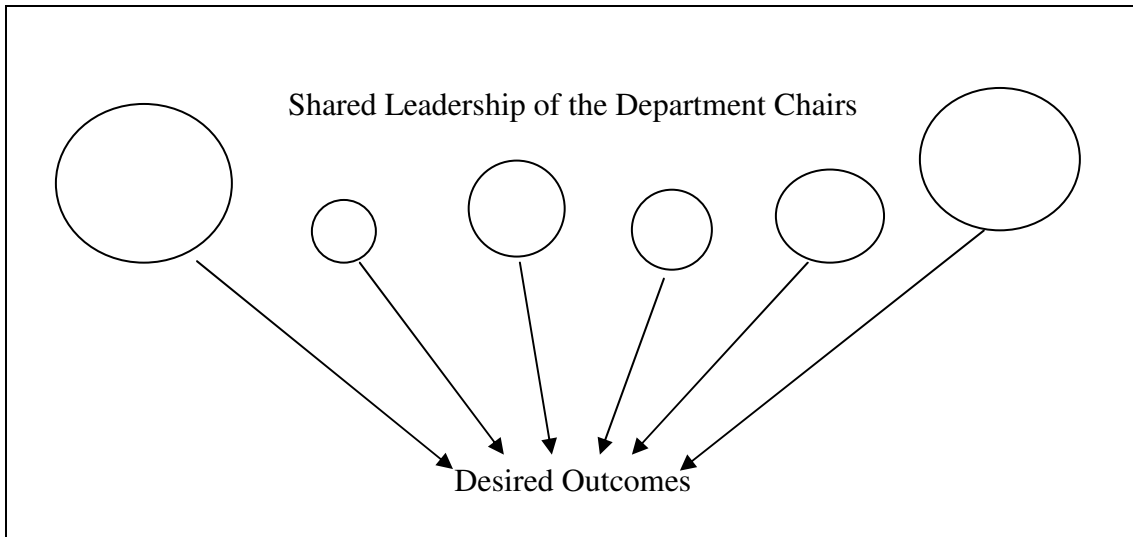


Figure 1. Shared leadership is necessary and practiced among all the department chairs to pursue desired outcomes

The analysis of shared leadership included a case study to find out the answer to the research question: What are the shared leadership perspectives and practices among department chairs in a state college? The following questions, tested by Taggart (1999) and Greene (2004), supplemented the research question in further describing the four domains under investigation.

1. Leadership - How did department chairs define leadership and what did they see as essential leadership qualities?
2. Involvement – How and why were shared leadership teams formed?

3. Process - How did department chairs function in their shared leadership responsibilities?
4. Outcomes - What shared leadership success stories pertaining to pursuing desired outcomes existed at Emerald State College?

Research Methodology and Data Analysis

This research design was a case study supported by interviews, observations, and document review. The research questions were addressed through a qualitative study of shared leadership in a state college. Further details are given in Chapter 3.

Qualitative research study. Qualitative research is concerned with understanding the social phenomena from participants' perspectives. "Participants' meanings include their feelings, beliefs, ideas, thoughts, and actions" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, p. 396).

The case study examined the perspectives and practices of shared leadership among the department chairs through a set of questions developed by Taggart (1999) and Greene (2004) in the four domains of Leadership, Involvement, Process, and Outcomes. These interviews, along with observations and document review were used to gather, evaluate, and draw conclusions (Merriam, 1998).

Interview methodology. Taggart's and Greene's questions, listed in Appendix D, formed the interview guide. The researcher personally administered the interview guide to department chairs and the Student Government Association (S.G.A.) president. The interview guide was used to extract the pertinent information

to the proposed research questions and support the case study research. This is explained further in Chapter 3.

Definitions

Case study. “In qualitative design, a ‘case study’ is the single entity or phenomenon examined in depth” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, p. 38).

Shared leadership. Shared leadership was defined as a “dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals whose objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals” (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p. 1).

Collaboration. Collaboration was the working together of the faculty, staff, administration, (and sometimes the community), to pursue the desired outcomes of the college (History chair interview, September 22, 2010).

Team. A team was defined as “a collection of individuals who are interdependent in their tasks, who share responsibility for outcomes, who see themselves and who are seen by others as an intact social entity embedded in one or more larger social systems” (Cohen & Bailey, 1997, p. 241).

Desired Outcomes. Desired outcomes are aspirations to be reached in an organization. They are sometimes referred to as desired ends (Carver, 1997).

Relevance of the Study

Colleges may choose to use shared leadership to pursue desired outcomes. Leaders of college institutions noted these desired outcomes: raising student achievement, controlling costs, and handling of student population growth through

school facilities expansion, new program development, hiring more teachers, and building faculty commitment (Cox, 1998; Gonzalez, 2009; Zeidenberg, 2008).

Mohrman, Cohen, and Mohrman (1995) and Nadler and Ancona (1992) declared that shared leadership contributed to reaching desired outcomes in the fields of education, health care, and general business. The authors stated that leaders in these fields grasped the relevance of the team-based organizational structure and its effectiveness to meet the challenges their organizations faced. Therefore, the researcher studied the team-based organizational structure of shared leadership.

The findings of this research study described and explained that the department chairs and the S.G.A. president within the study college used shared leadership to pursue desired outcomes. This researcher hopes this study provides colleges with information to assist them in pursuing desired outcomes through the contribution of shared leadership.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

This review shares literature relevant to different leadership styles. It also identifies and spotlights shared leadership and its usefulness in pursuing desired outcomes. This review includes literature within the realms of business, education, and health care regarding shared leadership. In addition, the review specifies the pros and cons of shared leadership and indicates the importance of choosing to use a shared leadership style.

Leadership Theory Inquiry

This first section concentrates on the definition of leadership and leadership theories. What is leadership? Webster's New World College Dictionary (1999) defined leadership as "the position or guidance of a leader" (p. 814).

Leadership theories were traced in history to present-day society. Leadership theories have been constructed within different realms, such as who the leader is, what the leader does, and also what the environment is in which leadership takes place. As leadership theories were developed and empirical studies were undertaken, it was revealed the greatest indication of a successful leader was whether or not that leader had followers. The motivation level of the followers was vital; therefore, followers came to the forefront of researcher interest (Northouse, 2001). Researchers claimed that when followers modeled leaders, the result was a predictable outcome such as organizational success (Bates, 2004). Bates also reported that there has been an increased level of disengagement among employees (Bates, 2004). In 2002, this

“engagement loss” cost U.S. businesses \$300 billion in lost productivity (Kowalski & Bell, 2003).

Trait theory. The traditional view of leadership was based on a top-down relationship between the single leader and the led (Pearce & Conger, 2003). Early leadership theories focused on the individual traits of the leader. Leadership trait researchers stressed instinctive qualities were inherited rather than developed. Trait theorists believed that characteristics were stable over time and across a variety of situations. Lussier and Achua (2004) stated, “Leadership trait theories attempt to explain distinctive characteristics accounting for effective leadership” (p. 15). However, Northouse (2001) suggested that the lack of research in examining leader-follower interaction contributed to the failure of trait theory investigations.

Behavioral theory. Yukl (2002) revealed researchers began to broaden their studies into other styles of leadership when trait forms of leadership seemed to lack convincing research. Other studies seemed to provide more validity and resulted in more effective leadership. Researchers sought to evaluate behavioral patterns. They discovered the primary difference between trait and behavior research was the focus on the leadership behaviors as opposed to an examination of the individual traits of leaders. Relational components of leadership came under review and consideration for the first time.

Behavioral approach theories focused on positive leadership behaviors and the effect that these had on the followers. Yukl (2002) observed that Blake and Mouton’s managerial grid theory investigated the relationship between behaviors and leader

concerns. The team style of leadership on Blake and Mouton's managerial grid attracted attention as a plausible option.

Contingency theory. Leadership research continued as the focus shifted from leadership traits and to leader behaviors to the consideration of contingency factors and situational variables as components of effective leadership (Lussier & Achua, 2004). This new leadership theory became known as the contingency theory. The premise of the contingency theory was attributed to determining the appropriate fit between leadership styles and contextual situations (Northouse, 2001).

Empirical evidence within the investigation of the contingency theory pointed to the importance of the leader-follower relationship, and this progressed to the development of the leader-member exchange theory (LMX), which targeted the relationship between leaders and followers (Lussier & Achua, 2004). Yukl (2002) stated that the foundation of the LMX theory was that "leaders develop a separate exchange relationship with each individual subordinate as the two parties mutually define the role of the subordinate" (p. 116).

Shared leadership theory. By the 1970s, it was clear leadership theory development had undergone a swing in focus from the significance and traits of the leader to the consideration of the behavior and involvement of the follower in facilitating organizational desired outcomes. This developed into greater responsibility for the follower and into the territory of shared leadership. Shared leadership emphasized the importance of the development of employee abilities and engagement. This shared leadership allowed the employee to take initiative, embrace

risk, stimulate innovation, and cope with uncertainty more effectively (Spreitzer, 1995). Heenan and Bennis (1999) studied shared leadership and referred to this particular leadership style as co-leadership.

A summary of the literature that identifies leadership theories. The succession of research in leadership has graduated from trait theories, to those in the behavioral realm, to contingency theories, and then to shared leadership. This has resulted in placing the follower in a greater role. The best way to summarize the key distinction between shared leadership and other forms of traditional leadership is leadership is distributed among a set of individuals as opposed to being centralized (Pearce & Conger, 2003).

There was a paradigm shift in leadership research from a stern management control to a new consideration of the potential of the abilities and talents of multiple individuals. Current leadership theories have increasingly pointed to the importance of the follower in consideration for team effectiveness (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999).

Shared Leadership

Shared leadership has been defined as a “dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups whose objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals” (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p.1).

History. Although new to many, this interactive dynamic known as shared leadership is not really new at all. Sally (2002) stated the Roman Republic had a system of shared leadership that lasted for more than four centuries. Others have

noted shared leadership is not original, though it has been somewhat ignored in comparison to solo leadership (O'Toole, Galbraith, & Lawler, 2002). The resistance to shared leadership “stems from thousands of years of cultural conditioning. In the popular mind, leadership is always singular” (O'Toole et al., 2002, p. 65).

Early behavioral research mentioned the leadership function being shared among group members rather than performed by a single individual. This was present in the work of Gibb (Lindzey, 1954), Slater (1955), and Bowers and Seashore (1966). Recent work included those by Katzenbach and Smith (1993), Bass (1997), and Gronn (2002).

Pearce and Conger (2003) argued a multitude of research contributions during the 1970s to the mid-1990s formed a conceptual grounding for the model of shared leadership. They cited the practices of participative decision-making and self-managing work teams in action as examples among these research contributions.

Research conducted in the middle of the 1990s indicated the world was embracing the idea of shared leadership over single leadership (Pearce & Conger, 2003). This idea of shared leadership was composed of the fact leadership was not shared in just an informal and inferred way, but also in a formal and explicit way.

Since the mid-1990s, many organizations utilized shared leadership in the decision-making as well as the implementation processes with regards to their goods and services (Cohen & Bailey, 1997). The Gallup organization interviewed over 2,500 businesses and empirically determined shared leadership was a significant

contributor in reaching desirable organizational outcomes such as customer satisfaction, retention, productivity, and profitability (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999).

International research. Research had been conducted on 404 Swedish organizations of varying sizes and sectors. The research found 41% of the organizations practiced shared leadership. Shared leadership was more common in small private organizations with less than 50 employees (Vouzas & Psychogios, 2007).

The Japanese method of team-based solutions was extensively used in the manufacturing environment. The Japanese leadership approach emphasized autonomy and creativity among employees and required active cooperation rather than mere compliance (Vouzas & Psychogios, 2007).

Fletcher and Käufer's (2003) international research on the emergence of shared leadership revealed three relational shifts. These shifts identified the contrast of shared leadership and the traditional view of leadership. The first shift was the notion of single leadership was starting to decay. Fletcher and Käufer gave an illustration of an organization as an iceberg. The researchers presented the top (single leader) of the iceberg (organization) as visible, but the base (followers) of the iceberg (organization) as even more important than the visible top. This first shift indicated a change from individual achievement to shared responsibility and collective achievement.

Fletcher and Käufer's second relational shift was leadership was starting to be seen as a social action. Followers were viewed as important co-creators of leadership

under this interactive dynamic known as shared leadership. Shared leadership proponents shared a common belief that leadership includes a relationship and not merely a set of attributes or traits.

Fletcher and Käufer's third relational shift was that leadership is learning. This varied from the traditional view of leadership and implied a collective learning process that involved the entire group.

National studies – education. Montgomery High School valued the importance of shared leadership. The key to the institution's success had been a shift in company culture to utilize shared leadership. The institution's guiding principles drove this evolution in culture, which lasted for several years. Its guiding principles were:

1. Common vision and focus
2. Shared leadership and responsibility
3. Valuing results and relationships
4. Continuous reflection and improvement

The organizational structure and shared leadership approach of the institution promoted commonalities, social relationships, empowerment, cooperation, and innovation. The school leader gave each group responsibilities that addressed a piece of the school-wide puzzle. Then, the school leader encouraged the groups to propose solutions or ideas to address identified needs, complaints, or concerns (Janney, Morris, & Stubbs, 2005).

While needs were primarily focused on instruction and student achievement, organizational, facility, or budgetary issues were also addressed. The school used various handbooks to educate employees in the identification and implementation of shared leadership. Individuals grew into their positions and took ownership through shared leadership. The implementation of the staff development program was a result of the shared leadership team's work (Janney, Morris, & Stubbs, 2005).

The term "shared leadership" is closely linked to the concept of "professional learning communities" in educational literature. Hord (1997) defined a "professional learning community" as the professional staff learning together to direct its efforts toward improved student learning. Hord identified five main attributes of professional learning communities in educational institutions:

1. *Supportive and shared leadership:* School administrators participate democratically with teachers, sharing power, authority, and decision-making.
2. *Shared values and vision:* Staff-shared visions for school improvement have an undeviating focus on student learning.
3. *Collective learning and application of learning:* Staff's collective learning and application of that learning creates solutions to address students' needs.
4. *Supportive conditions:* School conditions support the staff's arrangement as a professional learning organization.

5. *Shared personal practice:* Peers review and provide feedback on teachers' instructional practice in order to increase individual and organizational capacity.

The key notion to shared leadership existing in professional learning communities was that leadership is about learning together. It was also about constructing meaning and knowledge collectively and collaboratively (Lambert, 2002). It meant the novice teacher's idea about the testing schedule was as valued as the principal's. School improvement specialists noted shared leadership recognized everyone wanted to grow professionally, and leadership was a critical component of professional life (Lambert, 2002).

Shared leadership is listening, valuing, and respecting every member of the school community. Schools all want to improve student learning, but reaching this goal is impossible without the assistance of the whole school community. A school improvement specialist looks for opportunities to share leadership within the school in working to influence the culture of a school (Lambert, 2002).

Lambert (2003) stated shared leadership in education is based on the following assumptions:

1. Everyone has the right, responsibility, and ability to be a leader.
2. How leadership is defined influences how people will participate.
3. Educators yearn to be more purposeful and professional.
4. Leadership is an essential aspect of an educator's professional life.

Hanson & Moore (2003) advocated success is more likely when everyone is committed to reaching the same outcomes. Moreover, Hanson and Moore explained when all the adults who impact students' lives work together, students achieve exceptional results.

National studies – health care. A research study conducted in the health care industry revealed the importance and contributing nature of shared leadership. A committee was created, based on the principles of shared leadership, ensuring equal representation from allied health and physician leadership. A similar program was used in a medical imaging department where the principles of shared leadership were implemented. The results revealed utilizing shared leadership yielded an increase in job satisfaction (from 44% to 69%) and a significant decrease in employee turnover - 40% to 14.5% (Varkey, Karlapudi, & Hensrud, 2008).

A summary of the literature that identifies shared leadership. The literature concludes shared leadership is not a new concept. It was implemented as early as in the Roman Republic. The problem had been the little attention it had received as compared to single leadership. The research of Bowers and Seashore (1966) yielded a new interest in shared leadership in this modern era. By the 1990s, the world was embracing this style of leadership more than ever (Pearce & Conger, 2003). The literature review demonstrated more organizations utilized shared leadership in the last decade than ever before, both in the United States and abroad, and in fields such as education and health care. The use of shared leadership contributed to reaching desired ends.

Teamwork

Cohen and Bailey (1997) defined a “team” as: “a collection of individuals who are interdependent in their tasks, who share responsibility for outcomes, who see themselves and who are seen by others as an intact social entity embedded in one or more larger social systems” (p. 241). Other researchers have cited the Cohen and Bailey definition in research projects (Huusko, 2006; Senior & Swailes, 2004).

Beyerlein, Freedman, McGee, and Moran (2002) found 80% of organizations with over 100 employees reported 50% of their employees were members of at least one team. Teams with shared leadership strengthened their resolve and focused at the first sign of adversity, uniting as one. They supported each other and took care of their own responsibilities to insure the success of the team. Shared leadership principles took groups of individuals in organizations to a higher level of performance and productivity (Graham, 2007).

Pearce and Conger (2003) articulated the importance of shared leadership in teams. They stated,

People who are effective in the follower role have the vision to see both the forest and the trees, the social capacity to work well with others, the strength of character to flourish without heroic status, the moral and psychological balance to pursue personal and corporate goals at no cost to either, and, above all, the desire to participate in a team effort for the accomplishment of some greater common purpose (p. 12).

Kinds of teams. Hackman (2004) classified teams in the following ways; all of which have their place and importance.

1. Manager-led teams – a team executes a task, but is led by someone who is not part of the team itself. This is essentially a group of staff members working together who are given instructions by their leader.
2. Self-designing teams – a team not only executes a task, but is able to make modifications as necessary. These teams still work within a strategic direction that is established outside the team.
3. Self-managing teams – these teams have all the characteristics of a self-designing team, but the team's direction occurs from within the team, and the team monitors and manages its own performance.
4. Self-governing teams – these are teams which have all the characteristics of self-managing and self-designing teams, but also establish and have the greatest strategic direction of a team. Boards and strategic committees are sometimes examples of self-governing teams.

Katzenbach and Smith (1993) found teams that engage in shared leadership are more effective than other teams. Teams with shared leadership have better coordination and cooperation (Yeatts & Hyten, 1998). Perry, Pearce, and Sims (1999) argued shared leadership increases the team's interpretation of needs.

Varkey, Karlapudi, and Hensrud (2008) discussed two key concepts in organizational studies: leadership and teams. Their article, centering on employee satisfaction in an academic micro system, represented an empirical analysis of

leadership styles and team processes. The results of the study suggested that teams with shared leadership have motivational and cognitive advantages over teams that took the traditional approach of relying on a single leader.

Benefits of teams. Organizations have seen the benefit of team involvement in the leadership process as companies participate in a highly competitive marketplace. Team effectiveness is regarded as important in the struggle for organizations to remain afloat financially (McCarter, Fawcett, & Mangan, 2005).

Hill, Nicholson and Westbrook (1999) advocated the world features advanced technology, instant communication, as well as other challenges. The authors stated that the presence of effective teams yielded a competitive advantage in the market.

Shared leadership allows for stronger team cohesion, which means less relational conflict because that cohesion is allowed to emerge naturally rather than be imposed by a single leader (Brown & Gioia, 2002). Solansky (2008) stated that a work team could find a stronger sense of competence (efficacy) and a stronger transactive memory system (to encode, store, and retrieve knowledge) when leadership is shared.

Causes of effective teamwork. More research is needed to determine the causes of effective leadership teams (Kozlowski & Bell, 2003). Fletcher and Käufer (2003) noted that research on shared leadership seldom is linked to research on group processes and teamwork and stated that the theory and practice of shared leadership would benefit from such a link. As organizations struggled to maintain market share

and competitiveness, team effectiveness was increasingly being researched (Thorpe, 2004).

Determining the causes of team effectiveness within organizations began with the Hawthorne studies of 1927-1934 and has continued through the present (Sibbet, 1997). Hackman's (2004) research assessed team effectiveness in terms of three primary measures:

1. The group's output meeting established standards
2. The group's ability to work interdependently
3. The growth and well-being of team members

Eisenhardt and Schoonhoven (1990) maintained that many organizations relied on traditional financial-related performance measures when measuring the effectiveness of an organization, organizational teams, and organizational forms of leadership. Measures used to generate the causes and motivational factors of effectiveness included sales growth, profit margin, cash flow, and other financial returns (Eisenhardt & Schoonhoven, 1990; Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1990; Halebian & Finkelstein, 1993; Michel & Hambrick, 1992). These authors also concurred with each other that organizational success was relative versus absolute, meaning that goal obtainment was specific to individual situations.

Researchers documented the limitations of these traditional financial measures in evaluating organizational effectiveness (Kaplan & Cooper, 1998). Critics argued that reliance on traditional financial indicators led to promoting short-term thinking (Banks & Wheelwright, 1979; Hayes & Garvin, 1982).

Influential factors for the improvement of team effectiveness are leadership (Schminke & Wells, 1999), team formation, team structure and team members' characteristics (Stewart & Barrick, 2000). Among these influential factors of team effectiveness, Parker (1990) argued the variable of leadership was the most important factor impacting team effectiveness. Parker did not, however, reveal which leadership style was needed to enhance team effectiveness.

Kets De Vries' (1999) research affirmed seven principles of effective teamwork:

1. Members respect and trust each other.
2. Members protect and support each other.
3. Members engage in open dialogue and communication.
4. Members share a strong common goal.
5. Members have strong shared values and beliefs.
6. Members subordinate their own objectives to those of the team.
7. Members pledge to shared leadership.

Busci and Bititci (2006) found that leadership involvement and employee collaboration were facilitators of increased productivity. The skills of employees were company assets just like tangible assets; therefore, employees with fundamental skills were an important source when organizations sought effectiveness (Porter, 1985). Porter and Stern (2001) contended examinations of employee-driven measures were important and a focal point of consideration when accessing the causes of team effectiveness within the helm of shared leadership.

The causes of effective teamwork lie in the fact that success has been redefined (Sheehy, 1995). People could just coast into retirement laboring in a state of mediocrity in the past. That is not the case in this modern era. Both men and woman are not satisfied with the status quo. They desire more and are proactive in the process. In *New Passages* (1995), Gail Sheehy stated people believe they are “destined for something great” (p. 216). Sheehy wrote that this belief enabled people to feel that others would recognize them, admire them, and enable them to always feel young. People were now seeking out greater significance in their lives through accomplishments in the workplace either through individual or team effort.

A summary of the literature on teamwork. People are living in the age of teamwork; the belief is that there is strength in numbers. The importance and success of shared leadership teams was revealed through better need analysis, better coordination and cohesion, and higher performance. Teams enabled organizations to adjust quickly to surrounding and internal changes in order to keep up with or stay ahead of the game in their respective market segments in an ever-changing environment.

Organizations have grasped the significance of a team-based organizational structure such as shared leadership and its effectiveness to meet the challenges that they face (Mohrman, Cohen, & Mohrman, 1995; Nadler & Ancona, 1992). The literature review demonstrated there are different kinds of teams, as well as benefits of having teams. Variables also caused effective teamwork to take place. Among them was the natural draw of human beings to want to be included not only in a team,

but also in an equally distributed team where people are of value. Many tangible and financial measures such as sales growth and returns were measures of team success. Also, the actual make-up of the team (leadership, structure, and member characteristics) was what made or broke a team (Mohrman, Cohen, & Mohrman, 1995; Nadler & Ancona, 1992).

General Summary of this Review

A review of the literature showed shared leadership, encoded in a teamwork philosophy, has grown in popularity and validity. Guillory (2007) suggested organizations were now in the age of connectedness and that power was based upon cooperation. Collins and Schmenner (2007) found evidence that the deeply-embedded cultural assumptions about the purpose of leadership and teams changed and have been viewed from a new perspective. The effect of the long held assumptions related to the absolutes of standardization and control has been questioned within the workplace. Diversity, creativity, adaptation, and change moved to the forefront.

Greenberg and Robertson (2001) stated shared leadership was the future model of leadership because there would be greater demands that one individual would not be able to cope with alone. Decision-making was getting more complex, and as Mintzberg (1983) stated, “The more complex the environment, the more decentralized the structure” (p. 138).

CHAPTER 3

Research Design and Methodology

This chapter presents the research design, which is a case study supported by interviews, observations, and document review. The researcher identified the interviewees and discussed the procedures for collecting and analyzing the data. Pseudonyms were used for all proper names in reporting information from the study site to insure confidentiality.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe and explain the shared leadership perspectives and practices among department chairs in a state college. The conceptual framework of this study was: shared leadership is viewed as necessary and practiced among all the department chairs. One question directed the research: What are the shared leadership perspectives and practices of department chairs in a state college? This question was addressed through a qualitative study of shared leadership in a state college.

A case study examined the perspectives and practices of the department chairs and S.G.A. president in the domains of Leadership, Involvement, Process, and Outcomes. The researcher conducted one-on-one interviews with the department chairs and the S.G.A. president.

Qualitative techniques collect data primarily in the form of words rather than numbers (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). “Interactive qualitative inquiry is an in-depth study using face-to-face techniques to collect data from people in their natural

settings. The researcher interprets phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them with detailed descriptions of informants' perspectives" (p. 35). McMillan and Schumacher state that researchers use the data "to construct narrative descriptions, detailed narrations of people, incidences and processes" (p. 93). This section includes a discussion of the methodology and a summary of the process.

Significance of the Study

The literature review showed that shared leadership contributed to pursuing desired outcomes in the field of education, health care, and general business. The leaders in these fields grasped the significance of the team-based organizational structure and its effectiveness to meet the challenges that organizations face (Mohrman, Cohen, & Mohrman, 1995; Nadler & Ancona, 1992).

The findings of this research study described the existence and use of shared leadership to pursue desired outcomes. This study will provide colleges with information gathered from Emerald State College, a college that operates with a shared leadership perspective and practice. The researcher's desire is also that this research will inspire additional interest and empirical research into the value of shared leadership.

Research Design

The research design for this study is a case study supported by interviews, observations, and document review. "The term 'case study design' is used to refer to a single 'case' studied in depth. In qualitative design, a 'case' is the single entity or phenomenon examined in depth" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, p. 38). The case

study was chosen because it was a model throughout the field of education. It also provided an interactive means to better examine the perspectives, meaning, understanding, and practices within a college educational setting.

Merriam (1998) contended “research that is focused on discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied offers the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and practice of education” (p. 1). Merriam affirmed that qualitative inquiry in a case study focuses on meaning and requires interviewing and observing as data collection instruments. Interviewing and observing are sensitive to underlying meanings when gathering and interpreting data. Human interaction is essential to qualitative research.

Merriam’s particularistic, descriptive, and heuristic characterizations and Lincoln and Guba’s (1985) procedures for naturalistic inquiry (credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability) were pertinent to the research design of this study. Lewis (2000) remarked on naturalistic inquiry, “Qualitative research concentrates on words and observations to express reality and attempts to describe people in natural situations” (p. 1).

The study was particularistic because the research focused on one college, Emerald State College. “Particularistic means that case studies focus on a particular situation, event, program or phenomenon” (Merriam, 1998, p. 29). The case study was descriptive in the sense that the data collected “is a description of the phenomenon under study” (Merriam, 1998, p. 29). The study was heuristic in the sense that it “illuminates the reader’s understanding of the phenomenon under study,

and can bring about the discovery of new meaning, extend the reader's experience, or confirm what is known" (Merriam, 1998, p. 30).

Guba and Lincoln (1985) explained the trustworthiness of a case study is vital, and they provided the evaluative criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility, in this study, was established through extensive time spent with the participants through interviewing, observing, participant review, and member checking. The interview and observation results are discussed in length in Chapter 4. To conduct member checking one must "check informally with participants for accuracy during data collection" (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, p. 408). Participant reviews were conducted. Each participant was asked to review the researcher's interview notes for accuracy of representation.

Transferability is obtained by taking the collected information and describing the phenomenon in sufficient detail whereby an individual can identify how the information is transferable to other times, settings, situations, and people (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). Dependability and confirmability were substantiated through the use of an audit trail and also through triangulation.

Participants

The participants were solely from Emerald State College. The interviewees were four chairs of academic departments and one chair of a non-academic department. An additional interview with the S.G.A. president provided a viewpoint from a student leader. The S.G.A. president worked closely with the department heads and school administration.

The researcher selected participants based on the main objective of the project: the study of shared leadership perspectives and practices among department chairs in a state college. The researcher required participants who could respond to questions in a depth that would provide sufficient information for the project. "A purposive sampling posits that people or locations are sought because they meet some criteria for inclusion in the study" (Palys, 1997, p. 137).

The factors that directed the choice of participants in this project were:

1. Leaders who had decision-making power in the organization specifically concerning raising student achievement, controlling costs, and developing new programs.
2. Leaders who were generally perceived as influencers at a high level in the organization and got others involved.
3. Leaders who were proactive in the planning and implementation processes.
4. Leaders who may have success stories related to pursuing desired outcomes.
5. Individuals who responded to the invitation to participate in the case study.
6. Individuals who were accessible within the interview timeframe.

The researcher conducted all the interviews on different days in August and September of 2010. Observations of department heads, the college president, full-time and part-time faculty and staff were conducted during departmental, interdepartmental, Faculty Senate, and planning meetings. These individuals were

also observed in their day-to-day operations. The details of these observations are discussed in Chapter 4.

Consent for Research and Confidentiality

The researcher contacted the chair of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Emerald State College on June 4, 2010 about taking part in this study of the shared leadership perspectives and practices of the college's department chairs. The researcher followed up with a phone call two weeks later. The IRB chair told the researcher that he would bring the proposal before the Institutional Review Board. In the interim, the researcher completed a human subjects' online learning course. The study school requested this. Upon completion, the researcher earned a completion certificate. See Appendix B for a copy of this certificate.

The researcher submitted the IRB application and all the necessary documentation to Emerald State College's IRB Board at the end of June 2010. The IRB chair contacted the researcher on July 14, 2010. The IRB chair notified him that the Board had approved his study and the qualitative techniques of interview, observation, and document review. The IRB chair then wished the researcher well. A copy of the IRB approval letter was not included in this document due to the confidentiality within this study but has been retained in the researcher's records.

The participants in this study were provided a copy of the IRB approval letter. They also read and signed consent forms in order to participate in the one-on-one tape-recorded interviews. See Appendix B to review a copy of the form. Pseudonyms were assigned to the persons interviewed.

Data Collection

Yukl (2002) explained there was a debate over whether qualitative research was more suited than quantitative research when studying a leadership topic. Quantitative research has relied on using questionnaires/surveys as the mechanism to gather data. Yukl claimed that these collection sources are not appropriate for studying the complex field of leadership. He stated that this is especially important when one takes into the account the key roles that relationships play in leadership. The researcher should uncover what people are thinking, feeling, and experiencing in qualitative research. Therefore, the one-on-one interview process was the chief data collection method in this study.

Interviews. McMillan and Schumacher (2001) stated an in-depth interview is often characterized as a conversation with a goal. However, “the interview guide gives considerable latitude” (p. 42). Generally, questions are grouped by topic, but in many instances interviewers can allow for flexibility in the scripted sequence as people voluntarily elaborate on topics of interest to them. Tape recording the interview insures completeness of the verbal interaction (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001)

Furthermore, McMillan and Schumacher (2001) asserted the choice of persons for in-depth interviews starts with a “prescription of the desired attributes or profiles of persons who would have knowledge of the topic. Locating possible interviewees can be done through use of records, an informal network, or nomination” (p. 433).

The selection of the participants chosen in this case were the department chairs in the college. They were identified through the use of school records.

Qualitative methods allow the researcher the opportunity to gather in-depth information from the perspective of a smaller number of people (Patton, 1987). This researcher conducted six interviews by recommendation of this project's committee chair. Stringer (1996) advocated interviews allow participants to describe their situation. "The interview process not only provides a record of their views and perspectives, but also symbolically recognizes the legitimacy of their points of view." (p. 62)

A case study examined the perspectives and practices of the department chairs related to the domains of Leadership, Involvement, Process, and Outcomes. The researcher conducted one-on-one interviews with the department chairs and the S.G.A. president. A combination of structured, semi-structured, and open-ended questions was used in conducting the interviews. Taggart (1999) and Greene (2004) granted the researcher permission to use their interview questions. See Appendices D and E.

Probing questions were used when necessary to generate further information. Clarification and probing occurred in every interview, with new information being brought out. It was critical to the quality of the data gathered that the researcher had the opportunity to probe the participants' views for the deepest level of opinion on the subject at hand. The interviews with the participants lasted between 45 and 120 minutes.

The researcher used a SONY Digital Voice Tape Recorder in addition to taking handwritten notes. The recorder was used during each interview. Interviews were downloaded to a laptop computer. Two of the interviews were transcribed by a voice recognition system available on the computer. The remaining interviews were transcribed by hand. The transcribing process of all the interviews was completed in twenty-one workdays. The transcripts were double-checked by another individual and corrected. Verbal stutters and repetitive “crutch” words or phrases were eliminated for clarity.

Credibility was established through participant review. The transcribed (typed and double-spaced) interview was given to each interviewee for editing and agreement. Only one transcript was not initially approved. The participant’s noted corrections on the document were made. All the other transcripts were approved with no corrections. The interviewees gave approval through electronic mail.

The interview responses were sorted by question category (introductory, the four domains, and closing), and question. The writing style was third person, except for direct quotes from interviewees, which were presented as spoken. In order to preserve the anonymity of the participants, no operational unit was referred to. The pronoun “he” was used in the narrative for anonymity.

Observations. “A technique fundamental to most qualitative research is field observation – direct, eyewitness accounts taking the form of field notes. The researcher relies on careful observation as he or she explores several areas of interest at a site” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, p. 42). Furthermore, “qualitative field

observations are detailed descriptive recordings of events, people, actions, and objects in settings. Field observation is an integral part of participant observation and in-depth interviewing” (p. 454). The observer collects the data by observing the scene as it occurs, such as in a departmental meeting (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001).

The researcher observed groups at Emerald State College on four occasions. The first group observation was an interdepartmental meeting on August 18, 2010 in a large theatre. The college president addressed the faculty and staff. The second observation, a Faculty Senate meeting, was held in a smaller theatre style room on August 18, 2010. This followed the college president’s address. The third observation, a departmental meeting, occurred on August 23, 2010. This meeting followed the interdepartmental and the Faculty Senate meetings. The fourth and final group observation was a Planning Council meeting made up of faculty members, department chairs, and upper-level administrators. This took place on September 8, 2010.

The researcher observed students and the day-to-day operations of faculty and staff for twelve additional days in August and September (mostly Monday and Wednesday mornings for one hour). The researcher wrote field notes to record information. The condition of the property, the neighborhood, bulletin board information, and award displays were taken into account.

Document Review. Artifacts are material objects and/or symbols of an organization. The qualitative researcher is “less interested in the artifact itself and more interested in the meanings related to the artifact” (McMillan & Schumacher,

2001, p. 42). Artifacts of educational institutions may take one or more of these forms: personal documents, official documents, and objects (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001).

Examples of analytical research include historical analysis and concept analysis. Historical analysis involves a systematic collection and criticism of documents that describe past events. Concept analysis is the study of educational practices such as cooperative learning, or leadership to describe the different meanings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). The researcher used historical analysis and concept analysis. This was accomplished through a review of personal and official documents analyzing the concept of shared leadership.

The researcher reviewed many school documents: Emerald State College Campus Directory; Calendar; Accreditation Statement; Mission Statement; Core Performance Indicators Reports; Student Handbook; Academic Standards; Disciplinary Policy; Program Listing; Class Schedules; Graduation Requirements; Meeting Notes/Minutes and Newsletters. The researcher also examined past public addresses by the college president; a comprehensive student opinion survey revealing students' perspectives on academics, rules and policies, facilities, programs, and activities; studies on Emerald State College's achievements as compared to other state colleges in areas such as enrollment, student engagement, graduation data, and qualifications of faculty; and emails to faculty and staff.

Method of Analysis

The participants in this case study verified the interview transcripts after the interviews, observations, and document review were completed. After the interviewees gave approval, the researcher classified the interview answers according to the four domain categories of Leadership, Involvement, Process, and Outcomes. The interviewees' answers were condensed with information pertinent to the question. Information gathered from the review of documents went into the appropriate domain.

McMillan and Schumacher (2001) contended that analyzing qualitative data is an “eclectic activity – there is no one right way and data can be analyzed in more than one way” (p. 463). Other researchers insisted that the most appropriate form of qualitative analysis focuses on both manifest, actual words in the text, and latent, interpreted meaning in the text (Rubin & Babbie, 1993; Sarantakos, 1998).

The analysis of shared leadership included a case study into finding out the answer to the research question: What are the shared leadership perspectives and practices among department chairs in a state college? The researcher in this study of Emerald State College analyzed the key terms, phrases, thoughts, experiences, meanings, and practices used by the participants. This was done to see whether or not the conceptual framework for this study was accurate: shared leadership is necessary and practiced among all the department chairs to pursue desired outcomes. The researcher also compared the collective information to see if it revealed overlapping themes.

Summary

The researcher examined the shared leadership perspectives and practices of department chairs and the S.G.A. president at a state college by conducting a case study supported by one-on-one interviews, observations, and the review of documents. In this chapter, the qualitative research design was explained along with a description of the interview guide and process. The participants were introduced. The data collection methods were discussed, and then the data analysis was explained. The results from the data collection are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4

Results

The researcher contacted the Institutional Review Board of Emerald State College in June of 2010. The Board gave approval for a case study at Emerald State College in July of 2010. The researcher began the study in August of 2010, and in August through December 2010, reviewed many documents and conducted several observations and six interviews. The researcher interviewed four department chairs, one additional department chair of a non-academic area, and the S.G.A. president. The purpose of the case study and methods of data collection were to answer the research question: What are the shared leadership perspectives and practices of department chairs in a state college? This chapter presents the findings of the research question.

Institutional Study and Document Review

The college selected for this case study was in the southeastern part of the United States in the urban section of a city of approximately 65,000 residents. The college serves as a hub for several cities that surround it and for another neighboring county. The college campus is located on the main highway in the city next to a large hospital, the city's largest mall, and the top tourist attractions of the city.

The buildings on the main campus are a mixture of well-maintained, old and new buildings. The classrooms are equipped with recent technology in audiovisual equipment. Bulletin boards and award displays were prominently visible throughout the main campus (Field Notes, 2010).

Emerald State College has six other locations in addition to the main campus. Classes are scheduled during the day, evening, and on weekends. Shared leadership teams work to begin new programs, Web-based courses, and other distance learning technologies (ESC, 2010).

The college's Web site was given a pseudonym of www.emerald.edu. The Web site provided this brief overview of Emerald State College's history:

In 1957, the State Legislature authorized Emerald State College as the state's first comprehensive community college. Over the years, the college has evolved from a small campus into an academically superior multi-campus institution providing educational and cultural programs for the citizens of two counties. In 2006, the college was authorized to begin offering its first bachelor's degree. In June 2008, the institution joined eight other colleges (out of the state's 28 community colleges) to be part of the state's first state college pilot project. In the Spring Semester of 2009, the college began offering seven specialized bachelor's degrees. In the Fall of 2010, the college began a new bachelor's program in Engineering (www.emerald.edu).

A shared leadership team at Emerald State College worked on getting the college ready for accreditation. The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools accredited the college to award associate of arts, associate of applied science, associate of science, bachelor of applied science, and bachelor of science degrees. Professional and academic organizations have conferred

special accreditation to various college programs such as nursing and dental assisting (ESC, 2010).

Emerald State College has an open admissions policy. Applicants need a high school diploma or GED equivalent. Home-schooled graduates need official documentation to apply. The college president commented to all faculty and staff that having an open admission policy meant that the college would accept applicants, and would be ready to equip them with the tools necessary to succeed on a college level by providing remedial support (ESC, 2010).

Emerald State College offers grants, loans, scholarships, and work-study programs for students who need financial assistance. Some of these specific programs include the Pell Grant, Federal Supplement Education Opportunity Grant, the State Student Assistance Grant, Emerald State Need Grant, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs Higher Education Grant. The State Work Experience Program, a work-study program, is also available.

The college's mission statement reads:

Emerald State College, a comprehensive public college, provides access to a range of flexible programs - from community enrichment to the baccalaureate degree, emphasizing student success, embracing excellence and diversity, and fostering innovation to enhance teaching and learning (Student handbook, 2010).

The college served more than 33,000 students in the 2009-2010 academic year. The college's student population consisted of five times as many White

students than African American students. There were also half as many Hispanics as African American students. The average class size was 25. The college graduated more students in the last academic year than ever before: 5063 students (ESC, 2010). Seventy one percent of students that graduated from Emerald State College in the 2006-2007 academic year continued on with further education (ESC, 2010). The institution stated that they were committed to assisting students in achieving their educational goals through the shared vision and responsibility of departments such as academic advising, counseling, financial aid, career services and the student support staff (www.emerald.edu).

Observations

This researcher found the faculty and staff to be friendly and helpful in accommodating him with anything needed. The college was contacted three times (electronic mail, telephone call, and written submission of required documentation) in June and July of 2010 regarding participating in this project as the “case” to be studied. The IRB approved the proposal in July 2010. The researcher conducted observations and interviews in August through December 2010. The college was visited 15 times for an average period of one hour.

The researcher arrived at the college at 1:00 in the afternoon on a beautiful, yet hot, Wednesday afternoon on August 18, 2010. Even though this was two weeks prior to classes beginning for the Fall semester, there was a crowd of faculty and staff members heading to the theatre center. An “all staff and faculty” meeting was scheduled.

As people walked into the theatre center, there was an upbeat song amplifying through the room with the words “What have you done today to make you feel proud?” repeated over and over. The message in the song was seemingly designed to be motivational and to make the faculty and staff to feel important – of value. This reminded the researcher of Sheehy’s (1995) theory of success mentioned in the literature review.

The meeting started on time with awards presented for “teaching excellence.” These awards recognized faculty members that had displayed excellence in leadership and instruction. The president of the Faculty Senate presented awards to different members of the faculty, staff, and administration. The final leadership award went to the president of the college. He received a standing ovation. The Faculty Senate president used several commending words in introducing the recipient of this award (the college president) such as: encouraging, continuously supporting, and able to maintain academic excellence even with the significant increase in enrollment.

The president of the college then spoke. He promoted a new leadership program called “Master Faculty.” This program’s goal was to set existing faculty on a course toward leadership by building up teacher commitment. He stated that this program allowed people “to bring their talents to the table and have an impact.” This was shared leadership “in training” (President’s Fall Address, August 18, 2010).

The college also rewarded employees with incentives for coming up with ideas that assisted in the efficiency or effectiveness in some area of operation in the organization. Two individuals were recognized by the college president and rewarded

for their contributions. One was given a day off with pay. Both of the individuals' ideas were also put into action.

The president of the college continued to speak. He was quick to downplay his role in the college and emphasized the importance of shared leadership.

No one's job is any more important than anybody else's job in this business.

My job is no more important as the guy that helps us with the maintenance of the facility or teaches in the classroom. We just have different job titles but are equally important members on the team (President's Fall Address, August 18, 2010).

The president recognized his faculty and staff as "a wonderful conglomerate of unique people that bring different and special talents to the table and have a marvelous impact on the people that we serve. This institution, faculty, and staff does not take a back seat to anybody" (President's Fall Address, August 18, 2010).

He concluded this part of his speech by saying, "What a blessing it is to those who are served and to us" (President's Fall Address, August 18, 2010). The president stated that he would stack his faculty up against any faculty in the United States. He based this on the fact that he spent eight years as the president of an accreditation agency and chaired 25 visits across schools in the region.

The college president then addressed the issue of the growing student population. This college had a higher percentage of growth than the other colleges in this state (ESC, 2010). The president asked one of his administrative leaders for the specific figures. The gentleman stated that the enrollment in Fall 2005 was 11,740

and the projected Fall 2010 enrollment was 19,017. The college president stated that after adding the online students, the total number was around 33,000.

The president portrayed students as customers to serve. But more than customers, they were part of the college family. The president encouraged the staff by saying:

We need to continue to spread our wings and wrap our arms around those students and make them successful. We are an open admissions school. We help those who need to get their math, reading, or comprehension skills up so that they are qualified to get into the program they want to. We will never sacrifice quality, but we are committed to every living human being that walks in the door to be successful (President's Fall Address, August 18, 2010).

The president revealed plans for an expansion of the existing school facilities, which included a new building on the property to accommodate the growth in student enrollment. The college is in the planning process of building a new Arts and Sciences building. The president indicated that the college is working with people in the state capital to get that new building approved. The president encouraged the faculty and staff, saying that the college was financially sound with \$25 million dollars in reserve funds. He challenged the audience to find another college in the United States, during these tough economic times, with those kinds of reserves.

The president shared the vision for the future of the college. It consisted of adding campus space nearby the main campus, purchasing another 100 or so acres of

land. He announced that the college has already received 14 or 15 responses from parties interested in selling.

The president assured the faculty and staff that as the college grew, new bachelor's programs would be added as needed. The president talked about his pleasure in the college's development of new programs, specifically the new engineering technology program. He commented that the college's geographic area needed economic development, and the new engineering technology program would help give it a boost. "That is the way to encourage existing businesses to expand and also use that as a tool for recruiting new businesses and industries. What a wonderful addition this new program will be to our curriculum and a major engine for driving economic growth" (President's Fall Address, August 18, 2010).

The president claimed that he is very pleased that the college did not have any teacher shortages. Even with the new programs, the college is fully staffed. The college president was most proud of faculty increase. He elaborated that the college's core value is teaching. In the last ten years, 330 new faculty members have been added. This is an increase of 58% from ten years ago. The college also had a 9% increase in total employment from 2010 compared to 2009. The president stated that Emerald State College was the fastest growing business in its county – an economic driver for the community.

The college president concluded the meeting by reiterating that his job is not any more important than anyone else's job. He said that he respects everyone's input and value. He claimed that he meets once a month with constituencies from the

different areas of operation at the college and gets their input prior to going into board meetings. The president named the individuals that he meets with. He portrayed the group as a shared leadership team. The researcher heard the president tell the audience, “Nothing can stop us as we progress, reenergized and refocused” (President’s Fall Address, August 18, 2010). The president also called this staff and faculty the closest knit family that he has ever worked with.

The momentum from the president’s Fall address carried forward into the next meeting: the Faculty Senate meeting. This meeting was held in a theatre style setting in the newest building on campus but on a smaller scale than the previous meeting. The Faculty Senate represents teaching and non-teaching faculty in the college governance system.

The new president of the Faculty Senate moderated the meeting. He stated that there are many more people in attendance than what was expected. He began by discussing initiatives that would “make a difference in daily lives - initiatives of actual consequence” (Faculty Senate meeting, August 18, 2010). He said that the Faculty Senate is a very important body and reminded the members of the Senate that they are “on the front lines, doing what is most vital in this college in achieving its mission: teaching, learning, students, and what they do with the students” (Faculty Senate meeting, August 18, 2010). He also alleged that the Faculty Senate was the body that could make a profound impact at Emerald State College.

The first initiative proposal was: Institutional Support for Scholarship (in addition to pedagogy). The Faculty Senate president declared, “Pedagogy and

teaching excellence are the two pillars of scholarship and devotion.” He then asked the group, “What made you passionate about getting into the classroom in the first place?” (Faculty Senate meeting, August 18, 2010).

The Senate committee members in the meeting were positive. One person remarked, “These are the things we can do to move ahead.” Many individuals in attendance participated in the discussion and offered their input. The S.G.A. president also came in with an executive staff member from the college to take part in the meeting. There were several department chairs in the Faculty Senate who were present for the meeting.

The week after the president’s charge and the interdepartmental Faculty Senate meeting, the individual departments conducted their semester kickoff meetings. The researcher attended one department’s kickoff meeting on Monday, August 23, 2010. When going over course syllabi, the department chair told his faculty, “It is up to the faculty to decide the course assignments” (Department meeting, August 23, 2010). On policy violation, he remarked, “It is up to the faculty to decide the punishment for cell phone usage in class.” Many faculty members offered input on the consequences of cell phone usage in class.

The department chair received feedback from faculty on fighting the “battle” with others over the Gordon Rule requirement. The faculty suggested that the basic English Grammar and Composition course be a pre-requisite, not a co-requisite for a Gordon Rule class. The department chair also asserted, “student learning objectives should not be a top down approach, but bottom up” (Department meeting, August 23,

2010). The departmental group discussed the “verb” selection in student learning objectives. The department chair stated that he was told that standardized student learning objectives for all courses may be forthcoming. Within this coming decision, it was noted that the faculty agreed that the verb “demonstrated” could not be used to measure critical thinking. The department chair’s position was that the faculty should be free to make their own decisions regarding verb usages.

During the meeting, the department chair constantly asked the faculty for their input for further decision-making. He posed questions and comments to them such as: “How do you feel about this? I need input from you guys. How do you measure student learning objectives? How do you feel about pre-tests/post-tests? How do you feel about capstone projects?” (Department meeting, August 23, 2010).

The final group observation, the Planning Council orientation meeting, took place in the ballroom. The researcher had contacted the chairman of the IRB on August 8, 2010 about attending an interdepartmental meeting in which collaborative measures would be discussed toward pursuing desired organizational outcomes. This question was referred to the vice president of the college. On August 15, 2010, the vice president of the college emailed the researcher. He was pleased that the researcher was pursuing such a valuable topic for his dissertation and looked forward to being supportive. The vice president extended an invitation to the first meeting of the college’s Planning Council for the 2010-11 academic year the researcher. This meeting was held on September 8, 2010, from 2-4 p.m.

The Planning Council consisted of fifty members of the faculty, administration, department chairs, and staff that made up different shared leadership teams for: Teaching & Learning, Institutional Technology, Faculty and Staff Development, Institutional Development, Institutional Advancement, Operational Effectiveness and Accountability, Strategic Planning and Assessment, and Instructional Program Review. These teams primarily focused on planning, prioritizing, budgeting, and institutional effectiveness.

The ballroom was fancifully arranged with delicious food items and beverages for the Planning Council members. Wait staff attended to those present. Key administrative personnel, including the college president, greeted and socialized with Council members as the members entered the ballroom. At check-in, each person was given a binder. The binder's title was "Enhancing Institutional Quality." The title was explained as emphasis of the mission of the college: fostering innovation to enhance teaching and learning.

The theme of this meeting was shared leadership. Council members were portrayed as valuable decision-makers and implementers in leading the organization. The researcher sensed that key administrative personnel tried to make everyone feel important.

The president of the college opened the meeting. He said that he started the Planning Council in the year 2000 because of his shared leadership philosophy. He shared this philosophy with the group; "Surround yourself with people – a collective group. The collective group is always better than one person" (Planning Council

meeting, September 8, 2010). The president acknowledged that in the past, whenever a topic had been presented, the shared leadership team always came up with a better decision than the president could have ever made by himself.

The president reflected on the composition of the collective group of people that made up the Planning Council. He explained, "If teaching and learning is the mission, then at least one half of the Planning Council should be faculty members" (Planning Council meeting, September 8, 2010). There were also members in the Planning Council from non-academic areas such as Finance and Human Resources because one of the main purposes of the Council was to develop and implement college-wide initiatives and to make spending decisions (after all the fixed costs were paid). Several department chairs were on the Planning Council as well as on the Faculty Senate.

The president affirmed the role of the Council, stating they decide the priorities to help the college improve and pursue its desired outcomes. The president told the Council that he would back their decisions. "In eight years, we have never deviated from the decisions of the Planning Council" (Planning Council meeting, September 8, 2010). The Planning Council submitted 26 proposals in the 2009-10 school year. The president stated that all of the proposals were approved, and the college funded over \$1 million in projects. The president then encouraged the Council to build a strategic plan by consensus.

The college's vice president, who is the president of the Planning Council, spoke after the college president. He opened with an introduction of each individual

present at the meeting. He reemphasized that the goal of the Planning Council was to fulfill the vision and mission of the college and to work to meet the desired outcomes.

He then shared the primary initiatives for the 2010-11 academic year. The first initiative in teaching and learning focused on online learning. Another initiative concentrated on cost-effectiveness (saving students money). This would be accomplished through a program known as E-Texts. One of the department chairs, later interviewed, was working on this shared leadership team project. The final initiative that was mentioned in this opening meeting of the year was entitled: Ageless Learning: From Retired to Rewired.

After reviewing the first group of initiatives the Planning Council would be working on, the college vice president proposed the Council consider several planning assumptions. The Council was to reflect on the state of the economy and local, state, and national unemployment. They were to recognize the student body was 1,100 individuals larger than the same time last year. The Planning Council was also encouraged to evaluate the need for space and facilities.

The vice president shared a few keys of institutional sustainability to conclude the Planning Council meeting. These keys included enrollment, retention, student engagement/success, quality programs, increased efficiencies, and investment in human capital.

Some members of the Planning Council gave brief testimonies afterward. One person explained his experience, "You learn to accept others' perspectives and appreciate them as you work on a team. We can make it happen if we work together"

(Planning Council member, September 8, 2010). Another Council member described his shared leadership tenure by openly stating, “Titles are left at the door. Everyone is equal. We are a team to make a great institution greater. Your ideas do count and together we can get it done” (Planning Council member, September 8, 2010).

These individuals’ testimonies were backed up by data provided at the meeting. In survey results provided by the college, 32 out of 33 (97%) Planning Council respondents stated that the membership was conducive to providing broad-based input into the planning process. When asked what the greatest strength of the Council was, the respondents gave several answers. They included: diverse composition and broad representation among Council members, the fact that everyone could participate, discussion and consensus, cohesiveness to work together, and the feeling that Council members actually cared about the institution and its role in education and the community (ESC Planning Council Manual, 2010).

Interviews

The department chairs spoke about their shared leadership perspectives and practices. The research question in this study was: What are the shared leadership perspectives and practices of department chairs in a state college? The information gathered from the interviews was organized in Taggart’s and Greene’s four-domain structure.

The researcher established a profile on each participant before he asked the questions pertaining to the four domains. The questions that established the profile also served to help break the ice and get the participants talking. The researcher gave

pseudonyms to the participants and their department names. They are referenced as Math Chair, English Chair, Science Chair, History Chair, Financial Aid Chair, and S.G.A. president.

Participant Profile

Q1 - How long have you served in a leadership capacity in the college?

Math chair - two years

English chair - four years

Science chair- one year

History chair - nine years

Financial Aid chair - six years

S.G.A. president - a student with the college for a year and seven months

Q2 - What are your major responsibilities and duties?

Math chair - He dealt with a great deal of curriculum development and personnel issues such as hiring, recruiting students, marketing, and curriculum development.

English chair - He viewed his job with an others-focused mentality stating, "We want to create the environment in which my faculty can do their best job."

Science chair - He was in charge of the bachelor's program, consisting of degrees in physical science, chemistry, physics, biology, math, ESE, and elementary education. The college had approximately 150 students in the new bachelor's program.

History chair - In 2010, he was responsible for getting a new program up and operational. That meant “establishing the classes, getting the classes up and running, getting them scheduled, getting the faculty, getting faculty in the right classes, and getting the offices done - all the pieces to get a department that didn’t exist to exist to be operational.”

Financial Aid chair - This individual simply commented that he was responsible for all aspects of his department.

S.G.A. president - He was responsible for nearly 40,000 students. He exclaimed, “I am their voice.” The S.G.A. president was very willing to elaborate and share the details of his job responsibilities. The responsibilities were documented as such:

1. Manage, from a student leadership position, the departments that provide student learning and development opportunities.
2. Manage, from a student leadership position, the departments that provide student and college-wide support services.
3. Responsible for learning and development of students outside the classroom.
4. Coordinate with campus constituencies and community leaders in developing and managing co-curricular learning and service opportunities.
5. Work with the Student Affairs staff, student groups, and other members of the college community in developing extracurricular programming assuring integration with the academic life of the institution and encouraging student personal growth and development.

6. Help establish a student culture where diversity is encouraged and where students learn to respect differences, take responsibility for their actions, and exercise leadership.
7. Provide leadership in and is responsible for the development, implementation, and evaluation of policies and regulations pertaining to student life.
8. Serve as liaison to the Board of Trustee Committees on Student and Campus Life.
9. Serve as a member of the college's student management team.
10. Serve as ambassador for the college with alumni, students, neighbors, community leaders, and career, faculty, administrative and professional employees.

After the participant profile questions, the interview questions were framed around the four domains of Leadership, Involvement, Process, and Outcomes. The research started with questions about Leadership. The Leadership questions served a two-fold purpose. They served to allow the participants to state their perspectives on the general topic of leadership and allowed for a transition to the more specific topic of shared leadership.

Section 1 - Leadership

Q1 - What does "leadership" mean to you?

The interview participants discussed the importance of moving toward a common goal, but indicated that someone had to be in charge. The head of the Math department used this analogy.

Someone has to drive the bus, but everyone has to get there. Everyone has to get to there, but someone has to be in charge. Everyone needs to be on the bus. You might take some direction from those on the bus whether to turn left or right or whether to go straight. But someone's got to be in charge.

Someone has to lead. Someone has got to direct it, to be in charge, to get to that goal. Someone has to develop the vision to get to that goal (Math chair interview, August 10, 2010).

Leadership involved vision, but also productivity. The English department chair noted that leadership is "taking on roles of responsibility and getting things done. The person in the position of leadership must 'do' - perform leadership just because of the position that he or she is in" (English chair interview, August 11, 2010).

The interview participants also perceived that leaders are those that led teams. The English department chair (English chair interview, August 11, 2010), stated, "They do not have to have a particular leadership position in the college. They have taken on projects and make things happen. This is important, too, because that is how we look for promotion among faculty beyond the associate professor position."

The head of Financial Aid at the college hinted at shared leadership defining leadership as "an individual or group of individuals with the ability to communicate a vision while compelling others to share the same vision" (Financial Aid chair interview, August 11, 2010). The S.G.A. president explained that leadership meant

“to lead by example and inspire others to act/perform. Furthermore, leadership is to place the well-being and needs of others before oneself” (S.G.A. president interview, August 26, 2010).

Q2 - What do you see as some of the key qualities in an effective leader?

The participants listed qualities that had been mentioned or displayed on previous occasions by the college president.

One of the key qualities in a leader is to have empathy – knowing what your people are going through. Ask your people what their idea of a leader is.

What do they want to see in a leader? What do they want the department chair to do? That is what I did. That is what I have seen in the president that I have tried to emulate (Math chair interview, August 10, 2010).

The English department chairman further emphasized the people component as he added,

You need to be able to work with people. Now I have more than 100 faculty to deal with as compared to 4 - 5 in the past. I knew I had to build relationships with people so they could trust me. In academia, you cannot be hardnosed and expect all to follow in line. It's the people skills that make the difference.

It's not only about working with the people under you. You also must work with the people over you. A lot of the times you are in the middle, and sometimes decisions come down from above. You have to enforce. You have to work with people both ways and sometimes you have to negotiate

(English chair interview, August 11, 2010).

The Science department chair provided a perspective that no other participant offered:

It is important that you have to be able to take criticism. In every decision you make, someone is going to be upset. You have to be able to say that you are sorry but this is the way we are going to do it. You have to be very straightforward with people and not lead them astray. For example, adjunct professors expect to be the next ones promoted, but in reality we are looking for Ph.D.s. If I am straightforward with them, there can't be any misunderstandings. So that is what I try to do. I have learned that you cannot please all the people all the time. The subordinates did not like all the decisions that I made (Science chair interview, August 8, 2010).

The History department chair added his insights about the ability of a leader to take criticism. He said that leaders must possess a "high level of tolerance" (History chair interview, September 22, 2010).

Three of the department chairs used the phrase "buy-in" to explain that decisions usually go over more smoothly when everyone feels as if they are contributing to a decision before it is made final. The department chairs identified "buy-in" as a key quality of an effective teacher.

A vice president told me that when I had an idea to do something, to do it, but I told him that I could not do it unless I brought my people in. They need buy-

in. If I don't bring them in, it is not going to work well, and they're not going to do a good job.

I think it's different in the business world where you have more of a top down approach. Here, you need commitment. I could design a perfect course. But, if the teachers don't care for the design of the course, they won't teach as well. To me, I am going to be doing a better job with what I believe in, and my faculty will do a better job in teaching from what they believe in. It is that commitment - caring about what you are doing, and that is what we mean by buy-in. Someone up above cannot make the decision. We have to work collectively to make decisions that we all can live with (English chair interview, August 11, 2010).

Other essential leadership qualities mentioned by the department chairs, in addition to having vision, being productive, possessing people skills, accepting criticism, and using buy-in were knowledge, power, experience, and skill sets.

Often if you have a good knowledge base, and just from experience, people will follow. People will listen because I do have that experience. Another thing, because of the position power, just because I am the department chair, they will follow. People follow because they think you are a leader, and a lot of it is just the belief.

You have leaders and you also have followers, and both roles are interchangeable, because if somebody were to talk about technology, then I

become a follower. Leadership is interchangeable by the skill sets that you have (Science chair interview, August 8, 2010).

The department chair of Financial Aid added communication and courage to the essential leadership qualities mix. He stated the essential qualities are “excellent verbal communication skills, the ability to show courage and compassion, and to make individuals feel they are part of a larger purpose than just their own job/existence” (Financial Aid chair interview, August 11, 2010).

The S.G.A. president had some input as well. The “key qualities are to motivate, encourage, and guide.” He took things one step further by defining the word “effective” in this interview question. “What makes effective leaders is their ability to make difficult decisions, but to still have poise” (S.G.A. president interview, August 26, 2010).

Q3 - What would you need to do to develop your leadership abilities?

This last question in this section asked the leaders what they needed for professional growth. The participants listed different items that seemed relevant to their particular area of operation. Tying into the essential leadership quality of communication, one of the newest department chairs in the college noted that he could develop his leadership abilities through the improvement of listening skills. “They can always get better - active listening or inactive listening through eavesdropping. Whether it is listening to students or faculty members, they both have important things to say, and you can glean from them” (Math chair interview, August 10, 2010).

The Science department head communicated he needed a knowledge of what he was supposed to be doing. “Every college is different, so it is a matter of learning different. If I do not have the answers then they look for somebody else, and if somebody else has the answers then they may not always need me” (Science chair interview, August 9, 2010).

The Financial Aid chair had a different perspective. He did not focus on listening skills or knowledge but on an outward component: “additional training in advanced/applied leadership with opportunities to apply what is learned” (Financial Aid chair interview, August 11, 2010).

The S.G.A. president also concentrated on actions, rather than knowledge. He commented he would further develop his leadership skills if he was able to continue to be placed into situations where he could use the skills that he has learned and embrace the new ones that he will learn (S.G.A. president interview, August 26, 2010).

Section 2 – Involvement

This section of questions allowed for a transition to the more specific topic of shared leadership. A definition of shared leadership was given to the interview participants for clarification. It was defined as a “dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals whose objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals” (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p. 1).

Q1 - When do you share leadership in some fashion with another co-worker?

The History department chair stated, “I deal with this one literally everyday

because I work with groups of faculty on teams to accomplish some sort of mission” (History chair interview, September 22, 2010). He specifically mentioned one shared leadership team project that he was working on.

We actually have a project that we are working on. We are doing refinement of healthcare to try and make healthcare more efficient. The same group just came off of a study that we did, trying to make government more efficient.

The people that are on that team have a very strong desire to see things move forward (History chair interview, September 22, 2010).

The Math department chair described shared leadership explaining, “Within the department, shared leadership involves the Vice President, the instructors, and me. The main involvement is in curriculum development and coming to a consensus. We are also restructuring the class schedule. None of us are the experts, but we work together” (Math chair interview, August 10, 2010).

The Math department chair indicated shared leadership was helpful because there were a lot of logistics involved. “It took everybody working together and hashing things out, even though it may get a little bit heated at times” (Math chair interview, August 10, 2010). This department chair told of his pride for his team regardless of any friction that may have occurred in the planning or implementation processes.

The people on the team are qualified. We have those who have Masters degrees. People bring their ideas together for collaboration in figuring out what is going to be the best way for our students to learn. But I get those

ideas, developmental and implementation ideas, from my staff and faculty.

We, the department chairs, need to know what we want to do, but we can get so much input from others, and we want their buy-in. We want everybody on the same page. Here is why it is going to work. Here is why it is going to help the students (Math chair interview, August 10, 2010).

A different department chair explained shared leadership in his area of operation as having assistant chairs that work with him. One person oversees the speech classes, and another person oversees the developmental reading and writing programs. He stated there is a lot to do, but things go smoothly when he and his staff work together. “When most of the committees meet, I attend the meetings. I am a part of them. I help to set the agenda, priorities, and what needs to be accomplished” (English chair interview, August 11, 2010).

The Science department chair shared his position.

I have worked on different projects, and the others and I take a back seat to the most knowledgeable person on the team. And I will certainly do that frequently if someone has more skill than I do on a particular topic. We have an assistant chair that takes over a lot of things. When we discuss computers, then the person who is most knowledgeable is in charge of that. So yes, we share leadership all the time. I think that is very important. I worked a lot with others who believe very much in shared leadership (Science chair interview, August 9, 2010).

The S.G.A. president explained his role in sharing leadership at Emerald State College.

The collaborations through leadership sharing came while working with other students, staff, faculty, and administration. Working with the various departments and within Student Activities was a great asset to the overall leadership experience. To work with other departments and allowing for them to use their strengths helped with the overall success of the projects (S.G.A. president interview, August 26, 2010).

Q2 - How do people get involved in a shared leadership team?

The English department's organization of a permanent shared leadership team formed in an odd way. The department chairman did not have the luxury of selecting either of his assistant chairs. In fact, one of them was the chairperson before him. "The administration told me they wanted some other kind of leadership, so the current department chair became my assistant chair. He was offered that position and he stayed" (English chair interview, August 11, 2010). When the English department was expanded later, his superiors brought in a second assistant chairman.

The department chair revealed shared leadership teams were also organized in the forms of committees. These committees were sometimes formed voluntarily. "Sometimes, I try to talk my faculty into working in this committee or that committee. I try to get them involved largely and in areas in which they have an interest as I pull committees together. I ask them what they would like to work on" (English chair interview, August 11, 2010).

The department chair also shared he had a number of initiatives in his department. To meet those initiatives, his faculty had divided into small teams. The mission of the college included fostering innovation to enhance teaching and learning with the goals of academic excellence and student success. The department chair conveyed to the researcher that he and his team were taking a close look at their teaching process. “We are not just assuming that everything is fine. Every institution needs to have some evaluation process” (English chair interview, August 11, 2010).

The Science department chair also described that organized shared leadership took place on an interdepartmental level in the form of collaboration with members of other departments. “Regarding collaboration, there are a number of us working on accreditation. At the planning and organization office, fifteen of us are involved. We are broken apart into small groups, working on different parts of the document” (English chair interview, August 11, 2010).

Another department chair discussed the manner in which he first got involved in the shared leadership process at the college. “One of the vice presidents asked for volunteers, and I volunteered. The shared leadership team is made up of people from different departments. You don’t have to be a chair. You could be a faculty member (Science chair interview, August 9, 2010).

Q3 - What lends to the diversity of your team?

The college stated that one of its key values is diversity. Its statement reads as such:

Diversity of people, thought, and expression provides energy and vitality for the learning process. Emerald State celebrates both the originality and distinction of individuals and cultures, while at the same time valuing the common bonds that unite us as a global community (ESC, 2010).

The college's student population consists of five times as many White students than African American. There are also half as many Hispanics as African American students. The largest growing segment of students is minorities (ESC, 2010). The college has recognized the importance of diversity. It is reflected in its student body, but the question at hand for the department chairs was whether this same importance was in practice with them? Was it evident in the compositional make-up of shared leadership teams? The department chairs were asked to comment on diversity in the college including race, gender, experience, and education.

The Math department chair shared that everyone on his staff came from different backgrounds.

We all have been in the industry, but we have been in the industry in different places. My assistant chair was a student here and has been here for 14 years now. Another staff member used to be the boss of three of us at a previous employer. He has a lot of experience in education, but he didn't want to be in charge anymore. He wanted to teach, so he came here. So we all have come from the industry, but we all have different experiences (Math chair interview, August 10, 2010).

The Math department chair added, “Trying to take a little bit from everybody and implementing it gives people self-worth and they feel that they have contributed to the whole. Instituting their ideas makes them feel worthwhile” (Math chair interview, August 10, 2010).

The English department chair gave his interpretation of the question on diversity. “One of my assistant chairs has a great deal of experience. My other assistant is highly committed in his role in affiliation with state organizations. He has been president of some statewide organizations. That is the reason why they are there” (English chair interview, August 11, 2010).

This department chair then spoke of those on his diverse staff that volunteer their time to serve on team projects. “Most people that serve voluntarily will have something to contribute. People that are serving under duress will be more apprehensive about contributing and not happy” (English chair interview, August 11, 2010).

The department chair shared that problems occur if someone is on a team and that team member is asked for his opinion, but his opinion is ignored. The department chair elaborated the devaluation of a team member had a detrimental effect on the whole team.

For example, if there is a search for a position that needs to be filled, the team will come together and recommend a person. But someone outside of the team will come back and tell the team that he decided to go with someone else. If that happens to you a few times, you will be reluctant to serve on the

team. People do not want to do that. They feel that if you are going to make your own decisions, then they don't want to be part of the team (English chair interview, August 11, 2010).

The S.G.A. president demonstrated how Emerald State College has assembled a diversity-based team.

Diversity comes from using different departments on campus. Their contributions provide the necessary qualities needed for the project such as securing resources and a wealth of knowledge. As a leader you have to be able to trust and have mutual respect for the individuals that you are working with. It will bring strain to the overall project's success if you are not on the same page with the individuals that you are working with. During your meetings, you encourage each member publicly for their efforts and encourage them to keep up the good work. Everyone likes to hear something said positive about him or her (S.G.A. president interview, August 26, 2010).

The chairman of the Science department credited the college for its diverse staff because they provided knowledge. He stated, "They have knowledge of what works and what can work. There are some people that are extremely knowledgeable" (Science chair interview, August 9, 2010).

Section 3 – Process

This next set of questions moved from the organization, composition, and involvement of individuals in shared leadership to the actual process in which it is utilized.

Q1 - How would you describe the process members use to work together?

The president of the college advised the Planning Council to operate by consensus, without one specific, dominant leader (President's Fall Address, August 18, 2010). The academic department chairs agreed that shared leadership must be utilized and having one person as the ultimate authority on the team can sometimes be dangerous. The English department chair described the process this way.

When I was on the program development shared leadership team, one person was taking it over and running it the way that he thought it should be run.

There were a couple of us who saw things that we thought were potential problems. We voiced them, but were overruled. Now, this program is not making it because they cannot get students into it because the requirements are too narrow. There are qualified students that may want to enter the program that are eliminated because the program is too narrow. There was no buy-in from the shared leadership team (English chair interview, August 11, 2010).

The S.G.A. president explained things this way, "As a leader that works with various departments you lead, you allow for others to apply their expertise." He added, "You step back and allow for others to feel equally as important by giving them tasks that they would enjoy doing. You do not have to exert your authority by trying to be in charge all of the time" (S.G.A. president interview, August 26, 2010).

The department chair of the academic operational area of Science expressed his feelings on the conflict that sometimes occurs and ways to resolve it.

Generally, we would just talk it out. Everybody would. We were very big on compromise. We might try something for a semester. If it did not work out, we would go to Plan B. Sometimes, we would try Plan A for the first semester, and we would do Plan B for the second semester. We would do things like that (Science chair interview, August 9, 2010).

The Science chair described the process members use to work together, citing a specific example.

I will never forget. There were eleven science teachers and ten good science rooms and one science room was not good. They asked who was going to get the bad room. I told them that I didn't know. I then asked them the same question. I asked the science teachers to sit down and told them that they were all smarter than me. I instructed them to decide what room is best for chemistry, physics, biology, physical science, general science, and all the other classes, and after they all decided to then let me know so we could change it on the schedule. So begrudgingly, they scampered off. Hours later, two or three of them came back and said that was the worst thing they ever did, but they understand why they did it.

Everybody needs to have buy-in. If I made that decision, there would be ten people happy, and one person would be unhappy. Now you have got eleven, and they are all happy or unhappy together. That is how shared leadership should be.

Many people say that this is their school and their faculty. This is mine, mine, and mine. I refuse to say that. I say that this is ours! I got an email from a guy who is leaving the district. He asked me to keep him in mind if a job opens up at our college. He said that he would love to work for me. I told him that it would not be for me, but with me. We work for a goal, a mission. You don't work for me (Science chair interview, August 9, 2010).

Q2 - How are your collaborative goals determined?

The Math department chair said that he used shared leadership, but as department chair, he developed the goals.

Ultimately, I determine the goals. Can my mind be changed? Sure. I am not that kind of autocrat, my way or the highway, manager. I, by all means, do not have all the answers, and I want everyone to know that. The strategies and implementation are up for discussion – not that the goals and objectives aren't; it is that they are not always my goals and strategies. They have to be in alignment with the department or college. For example, there are things we have to do with accreditation (Math chair interview, August 10, 2010).

The S.G.A. president 's comments were very similar: “Once the tasks are handed out, you allow for the group to determine the strategies and the implementation process. The goal and objectives are the items that the department chair determines” (S.G.A. president interview, August 26, 2010).

Another department chair agreed that he is primarily responsible for goal development and attainment. He stated one of the department goals was to establish an assessment program for writing classes.

There was no assessment whatsoever when I came here. You have to have an assessment process - assessment of the quality of instruction, which is different than giving students tests and grading them. It is accountability. How do we know that we are doing what we say we are doing? That was a big one because our people tend to resist assessment. Some people say that they have a degree and should be trusted to do a great job. Now we have an age of accountability where you assess and find out whether you have done well or poorly. If you do well and do something right, go ahead and assess something else that you are concerned about. If you're doing poorly, assess what you can do to improve (English chair interview, August 11, 2010).

The department chair of the Financial Aid area shared his experience; "It depends on the situation and the need. Sometimes goals are dictated; sometimes they are set collaboratively with a supervisor or a team" (Financial Aid chair interview, August 11, 2010).

The History department chair emphasized that regardless of who develops the goals, everyone likes to be informed of what the goals are, and when they know, they can be more profitable in the achieving of the goals. "People that are in the organization that know what that goal is, know what they are trying to accomplish, are

usually very happy in trying to accomplish the goal” (History chair interview, September 22, 2010).

Q3 - In shared leadership situations, tell me what guides your decision-making?

The English department chair informed the researcher that his decision-making was dependant on the situation at hand. He stressed, however, that the college's desired outcome of providing academic excellence guided his decision-making.

The decision has to be based upon the best quality that we can provide. I always try to listen and discuss and obey policy. I do not make policy. It does not come as an edict from me. We have to work with people in order to get their buy-in (English chair interview, August 11, 2010).

The Science department chair stated that he also referred to written policies when making decisions. “I am the keeper of the laws and policies, so we can’t be out of whack with that” (Science chair interview, August 9, 2010). In his interview, the Financial Aid chairman was in agreement as well. “Obviously, any applicable policy is taken into consideration when making any decision. As a publicly-funded agency, this is extremely important” (Financial Aid chair interview, August 11, 2010).

Other department chairs expressed the importance of relying on experience, but also mentioned that the buy-in of the staff is essential. One of the department chairs emphasized the vitality of the input of members of the team this way:

You want to have buy-in and tie it in to decision-making. Many of the old-time leaders never liked shared leadership, because they were all-knowing.

They were smarter than anybody else. A group would go out and spend a year investigating and come back with their decision, and the chief leader would thank them, but then tell them that he was going to do something else. That is not shared decision-making. Shared decision-making is when you have consensus and everybody is in agreement on what should be done. If people had a feeling of buy in, that their decision mattered, then they are more agreeable to work on teams and such.

The biggest complaint that I would hear from others is time. When can we do this? I would never bog the faculty down with things like how much do you want to spend for a drink in the soda machine? I can send that out on an email, or we would just take a vote on it at a faculty meeting. But if we were looking at policies and procedures that affect them all in the school, then we would spend some time getting buy-in from everybody (Science chair interview, August 9, 2010).

The S.G.A. president 's opinion on decision-making was as follows: "If you are working with a group, the last decision should rest with the group. As the leader, you determine the pace and make sure that everything is running on schedule" (S.G.A. president interview, August 26, 2010).

The chair of the Financial Aid department also provided insight regarding whom to turn to for decision making, if needed. "Additional information is generally gathered from legal counsel and/or networks at other institutions" (Financial Aid chair interview, August 11, 2010).

Q4 - What are some specific ways that various members use their expertise or interests?

The Math department chair communicated that he has benefited from the expertise of his team members, especially the ones with a lot of educational experience.

I have the operations experience, management skills, and knowledge of how to get from A to B in the most efficient way, how to save money doing it, and how to do it for the best interest of the student. We get new information from the instructors all the time. It is stuff I need to do or techniques I need to work on. I will watch videos and ask them questions (Math chair interview, August 10, 2010).

Another department chair shared his thought on the expertise of his assistant chair that handled several of the departmental responsibilities. “I learned a lot from my assistant chair because I came in from the outside, and I had to learn about the college” (English chair interview, August 11, 2010).

The History department chair said that if leaders do not allow for and learn from the expertise of others on their shared leadership team, they are not being good leaders.

You have got to constantly be learning from the people you have, from the people working with you. You can't be everything. The only way to do that is to rely on the knowledge and expertise and opinions of the people that you have got working with you (History chair interview, September 22, 2010).

About specific ways that various team members used their expertise, the S.G.A. president commented:

As a leader that works with various departments, you must allow for others to apply their expertise. You step back and allow others to feel equally as important. You do not have to exert your authority by trying to be in charge all of the time. You have to allow for them to work and not micromanage (S.G.A. president interview, August 26, 2010).

Q5 - Do you feel there is a gap in how supervisors and staff understand the process of shared leadership? If yes, how can this gap be closed?

The Math chair gave his perspective on the gap in understanding the process of shared leadership.

It is not just everybody putting his or her two cents in. I do not think that is the goal or definition of shared leadership. Five people sitting around the table is more shared decision-making or discussion rather than shared leadership. It is tough to get buy-in into shared leadership because people's roles are not as defined. I think that maybe egos can get in the way some time (Math chair interview, August 10, 2010).

Another interview participant agreed that a gap exists. "Absolutely. If you are going to use shared leadership you have to be very clear with the roles, responsibilities, vision, and all that, with what they are supposed to do" (Science chair interview, August 9, 2010).

The History chair shared insight on the origination of the gap. “If there is a gap in the understanding of shared leadership, then it has to be in the people at the top of the leadership themselves” (History chair interview, September 22, 2010).

Section 4 – Outcomes

Q1 - Tell me one of your recent success stories.

The S.G.A. president stated that he believed Emerald State College was reaching its desired outcomes because of “openness to new ideas, willingness to put them into action, willingness to share information, and the ability to coordinate work projects” (S.G.A. president interview, August 26, 2010).

The Math department chair focused on the desired outcome of raising student achievement through the development of new curriculum by his shared leadership cohorts. “We believe that it will help the students’ learning abilities. The others I work with play a large role. They are the ones doing all the hard work, and I recognize that” (Math chair interview, August 10, 2010).

The English department chair told the researcher a success story concerning teacher development. He believed this would aid in pursuing desired outcomes by building teacher commitment and reducing faculty turnover.

We have developed and set up a peer evaluation system. The idea of peer evaluation is one in which the teachers will pair off and ask each other questions about their syllabus and give each other advice. Maybe I will have good advice for you, but maybe you will have good advice for me. The full-time professors evaluate the adjunct professors. New faculty is set up with a

peer mentor that can help them during their first year, answering questions and getting them on track. It is meant to be as positive as possible. Other departments of the college are considering following this model (English chair interview, August 11, 2010).

The Science department chair considered the students' cost savings as a success story in pursuing the college's desired outcome of controlling costs.

Every student will get or can get an electronic notebook. This has the ability to be internet and telephone connected. It can take pictures. It can record. You can do all this. Do you know what the cost will be of buying one of these notebooks? \$20! It is a substantial savings. It would be something that you would buy, and you would use for your entire college career.

We are also looking at getting kiosks for printing. You would put in your flash drive and a couple of minutes later you will have a 200-page book. I am in the shared leadership group, trying to be as helpful as possible. If we save \$100 for every student a semester, we will save close to 7 million dollars a year on textbooks (Science chair interview, August 9, 2010).

In pursuing the desired outcome of handling student population growth, the college has started several new programs in the last few years, including its latest engineering program. When the college president addressed the faculty and staff, he stated that he considered the engineering program a success because it would increase faculty and students and benefit the local economy. "What a wonderful addition this

new program will be to our curriculum and a major engine for driving economic growth” (President’s Fall Address, August 18, 2010).

The History department chair described the set up of the engineering program: A staff of 13 individuals from an extremely popular program (at another educational institution) with 600+ students came to an end when a poor leadership decision was made by a committee to cut the program. It was not so much the decision, but how the faculty was undermined. Many of the top-level faculty members and administrators left. There was an undermining of trust. Academia loves involvement, and to bypass involvement is a very poor decision.

The big success is when you are able to convince and bring 10 of 13 internationally-known faculty to migrate from point A to point B as a group. The reason they wanted to do that is because they wanted to stay as a group. What is important is that with all the options available to them, those 10 faculty members chose this college. That says a lot. Out of the other three faculty that did not come over, one retired, and the other two now would like to come (History chair interview, September 22, 2010).

Final Summary question - Is there anything that was left out that I should have included regarding shared leadership or any final comments you would like to make?

The Math department chair stated that ego plays a big factor in the implementation of shared leadership.

Everyone wants to feel that they contributed, otherwise why have a meeting? Why ask someone's opinion? Just go ahead and do it. It has happened to me in the past. You do not want people to wonder why we did it. Why did we get involved if our input is not being used or even considered? (Math chair interview, August 10, 2010).

The English department chair compared his previous place of employment to Emerald State College.

When I think about my previous place of employment, I know I would have gotten pushed into a position of leadership. I would have not done it there. To be in the middle here, I have people that will work with me - both above me and below me. In my past days of employment being in the middle meant that I had to take the edicts from the madman up top and force them on a bunch of unwilling people who had low morale. I would have had very little choice in anything. They had little input. So the context in which you share leadership is very important (English chair interview, August 11, 2010).

The Science department chair shared his concluding thoughts. He felt that the college is most effective in its communication process.

I am kind of new here, but I think the college has done a pretty good job of communicating. That is very important. I email all the time. Normally, my door is open. I try to get around and talk to people. I try to treat everybody as regular people. Nobody is better than anybody else. I do not like to put on

airs, like I am better than everyone else. There is a problem when leaders kind of forget that (Science chair interview, August 9, 2010).

The Science chair told the researcher that many institutions reserve specific parking spaces for certain members of the organization. He described the experience at another educational institution.

I took down the reserved parking sign at my last school. I never had a problem parking because I believe that I should be the first one to arrive each day. People would wonder what I would do if I would lose my parking spot when I left for lunch. I would tell them that I would park someplace else, and walk the extra thirty feet, like my teachers do every day (Science chair interview, August 9, 2010).

The Science department chair shared his thoughts on a possible weakness of shared leadership.

The shared leadership process as opposed to single leadership is slower. If there is a fire, we do not bring in the group to study what we are going to do next. You have to make a quick decision. If you know there is a fire, you do whatever you are supposed to do. But if it is long-term, then you have the time. Then people have the buy-in, and they feel much better about themselves and the school (Science chair interview, August 9, 2010).

Summary

The results presented in this chapter from the case study provide insight into the shared leadership perspectives and practices among department chairs in a state

college. The department chairs' leadership perspectives and practices were seen through observations, review of documents, and interviews. In the next chapter, the researcher provides a discussion of the findings and makes recommendations for additional research.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to describe and explain the shared leadership perspectives and practices among department chairs in a state college. The conceptual framework of this study was: shared leadership is viewed as necessary and practiced among the department chairs. This question directed the research: what are the shared leadership perspectives and practices of department chairs in a state college? The research question was addressed through a qualitative study of shared leadership in a state college.

The perspectives and practices of the department chairs and the S.G.A. president were examined according to the domains of Leadership, Involvement, Process, and Outcomes. One-on-one interviews were conducted with the department chairs and the S.G.A. president. The researcher conducted group observations at Emerald State College on four occasions. He also observed students and the day-to-day operations of faculty and staff. Field notes were used to record physical data, such as the condition of the property, the neighborhood, bulletin board information, and awards received. The researcher reviewed dozens of school documents, many of which were ascertained on-line.

Analyzing the collective information from the interviews, observations, and review of documents revealed overlapping themes. They were:

1. The perspective of the department chairs and S.G.A. president was that shared leadership is essential to pursuing the desired outcomes of the organization.
2. The practice of shared leadership was present in some form or another (shared decision-making, shared leadership responsibilities, team projects, committees).
3. The college president was the model to follow regarding shared leadership.
4. Department chairs seemed to be genuinely dedicated in involving themselves and others in pursuing academic excellence through better preparing faculty to teach and students to learn.
5. Employees contributed their personal resources to the benefit of group projects.
6. Open communication channels were valued.
7. Mutual respect underscored work relationships.
8. Employee morale was high.

Institutional Study and Document Review

Data collected during the study identified the importance of the college's vision. Emerald State College's vision was to be the destination of choice for education for local students (ESC, 2010). Emerald State College students have the option to attend classes on seven different campuses. Classes are offered during the day, evening, and on weekends. Shared leadership teams work to begin new programs, Web-based courses and other distance learning technologies (ESC, 2010).

The college values academic excellence. One college statement read: “Excellence - To achieve academic excellence, professionalism, and quality in all the programs and services we offer, Emerald State employs a system of continuous improvement based on assessment, accountability, and engagement with the entire community” (ESC, 2010). Achieving academic excellence through teaching and learning is a goal of the institution. The department chairs are instructed to link their goals and objectives to one or more of the annual institution-wide objectives to develop shared goals (ESC Unit Planning, 2010).

The college serves a growing community. It served more than 33,000 students in the 2010-2011 academic year. The institution is committed to assisting students in achieving their educational goals through the shared vision and responsibility of departments such as academic advising, counseling, financial aid, career services and the student support staff.

Emerald State’s dedicated faculty and staff are committed to providing the personal attention and human touch that can ensure a rewarding college experience for you. Your success is how we measure our success, whether you are a recent high school graduate unsure of which career path to choose, a veteran employee seeking to upgrade your job skills, or a displaced worker in need of retraining for a new career. From the moment you walk through our doors, Emerald State’s academic advising, counseling, financial aid, career services and student support staff are here to help make sure you get started on the right foot and stay on course (www.emerald.edu).

Emerald State College keeps its commitment in providing personal attention to help students reach their academic goals. A shared leadership group came to a consensus that, depending on the course requirements, a class could not exceed a certain size (ESC, 2010). The average class size is 25. Emerald State College rated higher than the national norm in students' satisfaction level with the academic aspects of their college. The college rated 4.33 on a 5.0 scale. The national norm is 3.97. The college ranked above the national level in all of the following areas: classroom facilities, laboratory facilities, course availability, racial harmony, attitude of non-teaching staff and faculty toward students, and concern for the student as an individual (Core Performance Indicators, 2008-2009). The college graduated 5.4% more students in the last academic year with 71% of graduating students continuing on with further education (ESC, 2010).

Surveys collected during this case study showed the importance of shared leadership to the college's department chairs, faculty, and staff. In survey results provided by the college, 97% of the respondents stated that they were able to provide broad-based input into the planning process. The respondents commended the college for allowing for a diverse composition, broad representation, participation, discussion, consensus, and the cohesiveness to work together to pursue desired outcomes (ESC Planning Council Manual, 2010).

A shared leadership group at Emerald State College worked on getting the college ready for accreditation. The Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools has accredited the college to award associate of

arts, associate of applied science, associate of science, bachelor of applied science, and bachelor of science degrees.

Emerald State College values the expertise of its leaders in order to provide the collective innovation necessary to pursue its desired outcomes. The desired outcomes have been communicated and displayed by the president of the college and followed through by his staff.

Observations

The mission of the college to enhance teaching and learning is firmly in place. During two observation sessions, the president himself claimed that through the collaborative work of key individuals in the college, the mission is being accomplished. The researcher noticed that the president of the college was quick to downplay his role in the college and emphasized the importance of shared leadership.

In one session, the college president stated, “No one’s job is any more important than anybody else’s job in this business. My job is no more important than the guy that helps us with the maintenance of the facility or teaches in the classroom. We just have different job titles but are equally important members on the team” (President’s Fall Address, 2010).

The college president shared this philosophy with the group during another observation session: “Surround yourself with people – a collective group. The collective group is always better than one person” (Planning Council meeting, September 8, 2010). The president acknowledged that whenever a topic had been

discussed in the past, the shared leadership group always came up with a better decision than he could have ever made.

The president started the Planning Council as an outlet for employees to participate in and practice shared leadership. The Planning Council was one in which collaborative measures would be discussed toward achieving desired organizational outcomes. One Planning Council member described his shared leadership experience by openly stating at the Planning Council meeting, “Titles are left at the door. Everyone is equal. We are a team to make a great institution greater. Your ideas do count, and together we can get it done” (Planning Council member, September 8, 2010).

The president of the college said that he meets once a month with constituencies from the different areas of operation at the college to get their input prior to going into a board meeting. The president named the individuals he meets with. They function as a shared leadership team (President’s Fall Address, 2010).

The president of the college formed a new program called “Master Faculty”. This program’s goal was to set existing faculty on a course toward shared leadership by building up teacher commitment. He stated that this program allowed people “to bring their talents to the table and have an impact.” This program is shared leadership “in training” (President’s Fall Address, August 18, 2010).

The college president is the driving force behind shared leadership in the college. There are several department chairs in the Faculty Senate. The Planning Council also has department chairs voluntarily serving as Council members.

Department chairs are heads of some shared leadership teams within the Council. Chairs are also working outside of the Faculty Senate and Planning Council on shared leadership projects in pursuing desired outcomes such as institution-wide cost controlling (Science chair), curriculum development (Math chair), faculty commitment and student achievement (English chair), and new program development (History chair).

Individual department chairs are utilizing shared leadership in their day-to-day operations with their assistant chairs (English chair) or with their faculty/subordinates (Science, Math, Financial Aid chairs). Observed by the researcher, one department chair included his faculty in the decision-making process concerning several issues (Department meeting, August 23, 2010).

One individual on the shared leadership-based Faculty Senate described the college president: encouraging, continuously supporting, and able to maintain academic excellence even with the significant increase in enrollment (President's Fall Address, August 18, 2010). The researcher, throughout the observational sessions, noticed the Faculty Senate member's sentiments in action.

Interviews

Leadership. It was interesting to note that the participants looked beyond the outward appearance of a leader. They agreed that a leader could be someone that was a man or woman or young or old. Their focus was on what a leader could do and on what internal qualities that leader possessed. One department chair's definition of leadership summarized the participants' collective view.

There is something about character. There are individuals that are leaders but get in trouble for misappropriation of money and other things, and they call themselves leaders. Also, if you were named a leader, you know what those expectations are, so you lead by example. You lead by knowledge. You lead because that is what is expected of you. And you always have to do that (Science chair interview, August 8, 2010).

The department chairs used the phrase “buy-in” to describe the shared decision-making aspect of shared leadership. The department chairs explained that leadership decisions are made final only after everyone felt as if they contributed. The department chairs marked the use of buy-in as a key quality in an effective leader. “I could not do it unless I brought my people in. They need buy-in. If I do not bring them in, it is not going to work well. We have to work collectively to make decisions that we all can live with” (English chair interview, August 11, 2010).

Other essential leadership qualities mentioned by the department chairs were people skills, knowledge, experience, management skills, and being able to accept criticism. The department chairs agreed with each other that empathy and compassion were essential qualities in a leader. The S.G.A president, specifically, considered a sense of compassion in a leader’s delivery a very important attribute (S.G.A president interview, August 26, 2010).

The president of the college set the pattern for shared leadership. One department chair, referring to the college president, reinforced this idea that was shared by the other interview participants.

Really for leaders, you have to have someone that people are willing to follow, the college president. So, you are looking for the actual characteristics in someone that people would be willing to follow. You are looking for their willingness to take a leadership role, to make decisions to develop consensus, to mitigate concerns of lots of individuals, because everybody has lots of different viewpoints (History chair interview, September 22, 2010).

Involvement. At the start of the interviews, the department chairs were on different levels of understanding concerning the definition and utilization of shared leadership. This was a problem because, unlike the phrase “buy-in”, “shared leadership” was not a catchphrase at the college. This was the case especially with the department chair of Financial Aid who asked, “From my perception, by shared leadership, what are you referencing? Individuals sharing management for the same area/resources?” (Financial Aid chair interview, August 11, 2010).

The researcher gave the participants the definition of shared leadership. They then indicated that individuals at Emerald State College, including them, were involved in the shared leadership process. One department chair said, “I deal with this one literally every day” (History chair interview, September 22, 2010).

Employees were involved in shared leadership in two ways. Their shared leadership responsibilities were either voluntary or assigned. They were engaged in two other ways. First, decisions and actions were made on a consensus basis interdepartmentally, as was the case with the Faculty Senate and the Planning Council. Second, they were engaged in shared leadership through shared planning,

decision-making, and responsibility in individual departments. In these individual departments, the ultimate authority was the department chair.

The History department chair reinforced the usage of shared leadership in individual departments when he said:

If you are a good leader, you always have people sharing in the decision-making process because you do not simply make a decision blindly without input from all the different people that might be able to give you good input. So, as a leader, you always have got shared leadership responsibility. As far as sharing the leadership, you have specific people as leaders that are within your organization that you learn to trust. It's just that you have that ultimate responsibility (History chair interview, September 22, 2010).

The participants in the Faculty Senate, Planning Council, and individual departments expressed the value of each member of their shared leadership group. The department chairs agreed with each other that if a team member was not valued, that devaluation could have a detrimental effect on the whole team.

It was important that shared leadership team members understood their roles and responsibilities. The final respondent concluded it this way:

You do need to have delineated roles and responsibilities that move the team forward. People have to know what their responsibilities are - what they are responsible for and what others are responsible for. If you have a shared leadership organization, it means that there are specific leadership roles that have been distributed to individuals within the organization. Those roles have

to be narrow, tight, and focused, so that you don't have big overlaps with leadership roles with the individuals (History chair interview, September 22, 2010).

The department chair of the Financial Aid department expressed a mixed viewpoint on the organization of shared leadership. He presented evidence of shared leadership in action on one hand in that he and his staff worked together to set the goals and continued to communicate on the progress and any potential obstacles. But on the other hand, he stated, "In most instances, the communication and work relationship is relaxed in the sense that it is not formally appointed or announced; rather shared leadership happens out of necessity" (Financial Aid chair interview, August 11, 2010).

Process. Interviews showed that shared leadership, for the most part, did not occur randomly. It was part of a strategic process of getting individuals involved in leadership positions, working together to pursue desired outcomes. This was done at Emerald State College in the Master Teacher program, the Planning Council, the Faculty Senate, special project teams, committees, and through working with faculty and assistant department chairs. The information collected from interviews showed that each person was expected to lend his individual expertise when contributing to the pursuit of organizational desired outcomes.

Goals were set by consensus in interdepartmental matters. Department chairs determined the goals within the individual departments, but the goals were open for

discussion. Strategies and implementation processes were finalized in a shared leadership manner.

The Science department chair did not agree with the other chairs' and the S.G.A. president 's comments on goal development. He did not say that he was ultimately responsible for goal development, but that was the responsibility of his superior.

The vice president determines the goals. He's very knowledgeable because of his position as vice president of the college. He has done this for thirty plus years. So although he is the unofficial person in charge, when we have committee meetings, he is not the person who runs the meeting, although he will answer 95% of the questions because he knows the answers (Science chair interview, August 9, 2010).

The History department chair gave a different insight into goal development that none of the previous participants had. He emphasized that regardless of who develops the goals, everyone likes to be informed of what the goals are. When the team knows the goals, they can be more profitable in the achieving of the goals (History chair interview, September 22, 2010).

Regarding decision-making, the participants gave similar answers in both interdepartmental and departmental situations. They said that decisions were made based not only on input and experience, but also in accordance with the organization's mission and policies. Decisions were made according to the situation at hand. Legal

counsel and networking with colleagues from other colleges came into play when necessary.

The interview participants agreed with each other that the shared leadership process sometimes does not go as smoothly as anticipated. Disagreements were resolved by communicating. “Conflicts are resolved by asking those involved one at a time to talk it out, together trying to come up with a solution” (S.G.A. president interview, August 26, 2010).

Outcomes. School documents made known that the college values student success. A statement from one source read as such:

There is no value more important than the success of our students. Our main goal is to provide students with the skills, knowledge, and drive to succeed in the classroom, the workplace, and in life. Beyond this success, we hope to instill in our students a lifelong love of learning (ESC, 2010).

The department chairs told success stories involving the use of shared leadership. The interviews conveyed the department chairs felt pursuing desired outcomes came in the form of utilizing shared leadership strategies in faculty improvement, student achievement, and new program development.

New programs (especially bachelor’s programs) increased and accommodated the growing student population. According to the History department chair, new programs attracted an influx of top international faculty members. New programs opened the doors for the development of new curriculum. New programs provided

ways for graduates to remain local and assist their communities (History chair interview, September 22, 2010).

The department chairs attributed the achievement of desired outcomes to shared leadership decisions. The newly created peer evaluation system granted faculty opportunities to sharpen their teaching skills. E-text and electronic notebooks had cut costs in providing students aid in pursuing their educational goals.

Summary

The perspectives and practices of the department chairs and the S.G.A. president were examined according to the domains of Leadership, Involvement, Process, and Outcomes. One-on-one interviews were conducted with the department chairs and the S.G.A. president. The researcher conducted group observations at Emerald State College on four occasions. He also observed students and the day-to-day operations of faculty and staff. The researcher reviewed many school documents.

Participants responded differently to the interviews. Palys (1997) stated that “researchers soon realize that prospective interviewees are not created equal: some are incredibly informative or provocative” (p. 137). The English, Science, and History department chairs were more outspoken than other department chairs. The Financial Aid chair did not share a lot of information. His answers were very concise. He also did not answer all the questions, while on the other end of the spectrum, the Science department chair elaborated on each answer given. That interview lasted for nearly two hours.

There were similarities in the participants' comments within the four domains of Leadership, Involvement, Process, and Outcomes such as referring to the ability to work with others and getting buy-in. At times, department chairs would mention something that no one else had previously shared like being able to take criticism and still function as a member of a shared leadership team. All the interviews provided information pertinent to the study of shared leadership among department chairs at this state college. The interviews revealed that the college president had an overriding influence on the perspectives and practices of shared leadership, chiefly among his department chairs.

The researcher conducted group observations at Emerald State College on four occasions. He also observed the department chairs, faculty, and staff. Individual department chairs were utilizing shared leadership in their day-to-day operations and in departmental meetings with their assistant chairs (English chair) or with their faculty/subordinates (Science, Math, Financial Aid chairs). The researcher also noticed that the president of the college was quick to downplay his role in the college and emphasized the importance of shared leadership, providing outlets for shared leadership training and usage.

The researcher reviewed many school documents. The researcher concluded that the survey documents showed the greatest importance of shared leadership to the college. In survey results provided by the college, 97% of the respondents stated that they were able to provide broad-based input into the planning process. The respondents commended the college for allowing for a diverse composition, broad

representation, discussion, consensus, and the cohesiveness to work together to pursue desired outcomes (ESC Planning Council Manual, 2010).

Emerald State College valued relationships and results. One department chair boasted:

Within the department is a shared goal among my faculty to be top notch. They always say they want to be one of the best, and I have the philosophy that there is the best and then there is everybody else. So your goal is always to be the best at something. So, of course, then you have to define what you mean by that. In some cases, it is having a certain number of students and size. For us, it is the quality of the education we provide. We want to be recognized as the best in providing the best in education (History chair interview, September 22, 2010).

Through the observations and interviews, the researcher discovered the department chairs genuinely enjoy their positions.

I have never thought of myself as a leader until I took this position, and now I enjoy it. This is a wonderful college, and people get along so well here. At meetings we have a few laughs and have a pleasant time together. People don't jump all over you. I make mistakes. You make mistakes. Let's just get the mistakes fixed. Just fix it. We do not need to lay blame. It is a wonderful place to be in (English chair interview, August 11, 2010).

Limitations of the study

The researcher chose Emerald State College due to proximity and relationship as an adjunct professor. Potential researcher bias was ameliorated through careful member checking of data and observations. It should also be noted that, while the researcher is an adjunct professor, he had not met any of the interviewees prior to the research data gathering sessions.

Care should be exercised in the interpretation of this case study's findings. The research was conducted at one state college and involved one college president. The interviews were completed by a small number of participants. Generalization of the findings would be a prudent step.

Theory revision

The initial conceptual framework for this study was: shared leadership is viewed as necessary and practiced among the department chairs (see Figure 1). This conceptual framework showed several ovals. These ovals represented that there were different department chairs in the college. The size of the ovals represented the varied usage of shared leadership among the department chairs. The department chairs used shared leadership to pursue the college's desired outcomes.

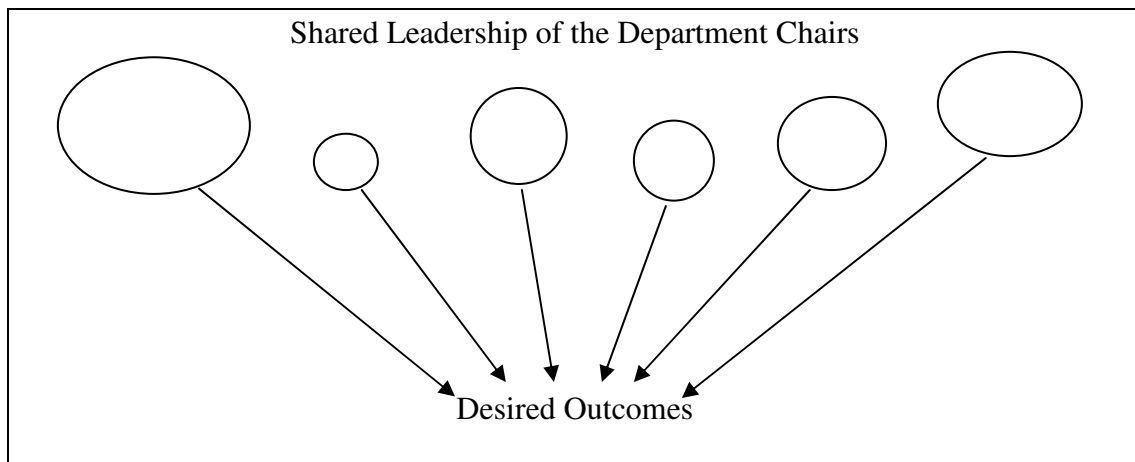


Figure 1. Shared leadership is viewed as necessary and practiced among the department chairs

The gathered information indicated a slight modification of the original framework was in order to better describe and explain shared leadership at Emerald State College. The revised leadership theory (see Figure 2) was: The college president's shared leadership perspectives and practices influenced department chairs' shared leadership. The use of shared leadership contributed in pursuing desired outcomes.

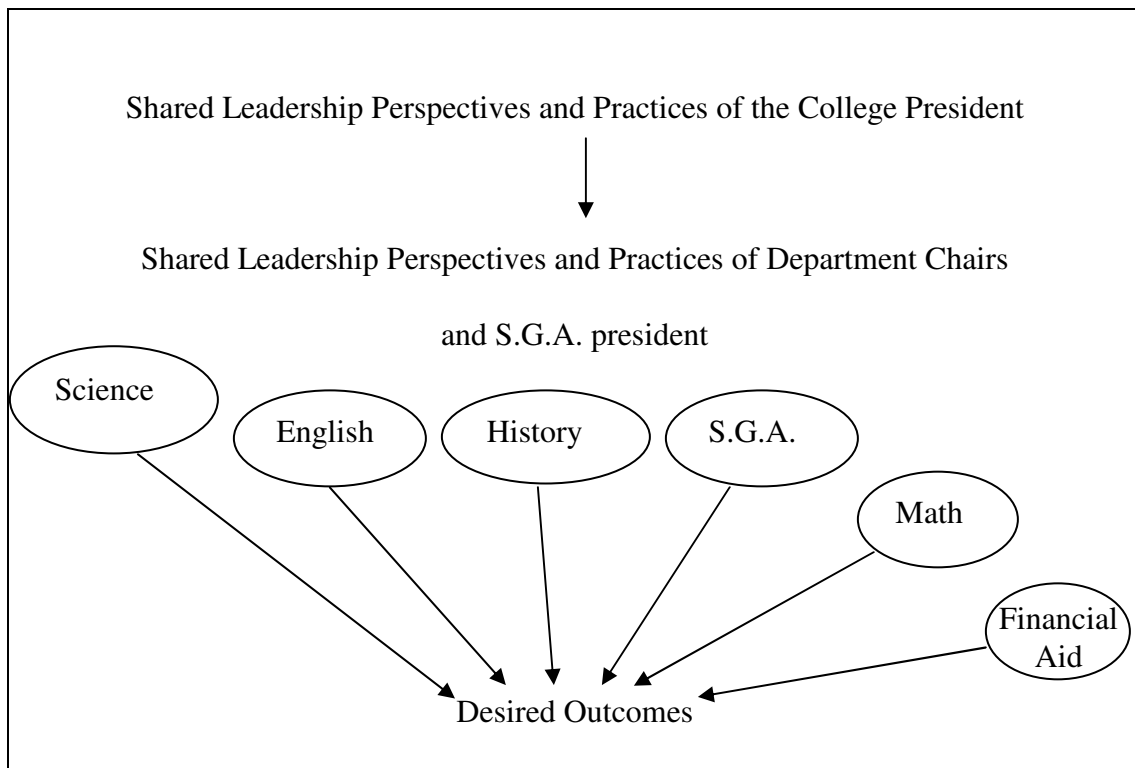


Figure 2. The college president's shared leadership perspectives and practices influenced department chairs' shared leadership

This revised conceptual framework illustrates that there is a primary leader of the organization (the college president). He influences the college's department chairs and the S.G.A. president through written correspondence and verbal directives. The department chairs and the S.G.A. president then use shared leadership to pursue desired outcomes. The observations, interviews, and documentation show that the college president is the leader whose vision sets the school's direction. He also builds a culture and climate that brings the organization and people towards common goals.

He has been the college president for fifteen years. The college president provides individuals with the necessary training and opportunities to pursue desired outcomes with the shared leadership teams he created, such as the Planning Council.

The college president has a larger span of influence to more than the department chairs due to his visibility and accessibility. The staff and faculty gave him the Instructional Support and Encouragement Award. It is evident that Emerald State College values leadership, and the faculty and staff recognize it (President's Fall Address, August 18, 2010).

Through his public addresses (President's Fall Address, Planning Council Meeting), emails, and letters (ESC, 2010), the college president encourages the faculty and staff to model his example in using shared leadership. The History chair stated that the faculty responded well to the president's encouragement. "The faculty are all very devoted to the college's desired outcomes, so getting them to provide input, feedback, and hard work to do that is not a tremendous challenge" (History chair interview, September 22, 2010).

The revised conceptual framework has different size ovals representing the department chairs. This conceptual framework shows that department chairs practice shared leadership. The sizes and heights of ovals represent, through the researcher's interviews and observations, some department chairs use shared leadership more than other department chairs. The Science department chair stated that he extensively used shared leadership (Science chair interview, August 9, 2010). He was also observed using shared leadership in pursuing the desired outcome of cost effectiveness

(Planning Council meeting, September 8, 2010). Two other department chairs (English, History) and the S.G.A. president also exercised shared leadership. The English chair utilized shared leadership in pursuing the desired outcomes of raising faculty commitment and student achievement. The History chair used shared leadership in pursuing the desired outcome of new program development. The interview with the Math department chair revealed that he utilized shared leadership mostly in non-crisis situations that allowed for decision-making time (Math chair interview, August 10, 2010). He did use shared leadership with his staff in curriculum development. The Financial Aid chair testified to sharing leadership mostly in crisis situations (Financial Aid chair interview, August 11, 2010).

Implication

The president of the college stated that he works through capable individuals to achieve the vision and mission of the organization. He commented that everyone makes him look good (President's Fall Address, August 18, 2010). The implication is department chairs model his perspective and practice of shared leadership. The History chair duplicated that philosophy. He similarly remarked, "The nice thing about having really good people is they make you look good. Well, they only make you look good if you let them make you look good" (History chair interview, September 22, 2010).

Recommendations for further studies

This case study gives a description of the shared leadership perspectives and practices among department chairs at Emerald State College. The following are the recommended ideas for further study:

1. Expand the research base to include other state colleges in the United States of America.
2. Conduct the study from a quantitative standpoint, allowing for a component in the form of a survey to see if the same results are yielded.
3. Study the relationship between shared leadership and indicators of collaborative success.
4. Examine shared leadership among department chairs in faith-based colleges.
5. Expand the study to see other forms of leadership Emerald State College utilizes and how those forms of leadership are used in pursuing desired outcomes.

Conclusion

This case study of the shared leadership perspectives and practices among department chairs at Emerald State College found that the department chairs use shared leadership. The college president influences the shared leadership behaviors and practices of department chairs. The president is instrumental in providing several opportunities for shared leadership in keeping the school moving toward the vision of

being the destination of choice for education and toward the mission of fostering innovation.

The college president leads by example. He demonstrates shared leadership as “a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals whose objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals” (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p. 1). The college president is strongly collaborative and an enabler. Those qualities attracted department chairs to the college and keeps them there because department chairs are encouraged to expand their horizons and try new things.

Emerald State College’s president enlists administration and staff and cultivates a common vision, sharing culture, and positive climate. Emerald State College’s president and department chairs used shared leadership to pursue the stated desired outcomes by raising student achievement, controlling costs, and handling student population growth through new program development, hiring more teachers, and building faculty commitment. Employees enjoy their positions and feel appreciated and valued. Students feel cared for. The president of Emerald State College emphasizes the entire college’s shared commitment to assist students.

Emerald State’s dedicated faculty and staff are committed to providing the personal attention and human touch that can ensure a rewarding college experience for you. Your success is how we measure our success, whether you are a recent high school graduate unsure of which career path to choose, a veteran employee seeking to upgrade your job skills, or a displaced worker in

need of retraining for a new career. From the moment you walk through our doors, Emerald State's academic advising, counseling, financial aid, career services and student support staff are here to help make sure you get started on the right foot and stay on course (www.emerald.edu).

Emerald State College was a college with a president, department chairs, and S.G.A. president that possessed a perspective and practice of shared leadership.

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APPENDIX A

CCFSSE RESULTS FOR EMERALD STATE COLLEGE

- College Prep Success Rate - Emerald State College had the highest college prep success rate in the state in Math and the second highest success rate in Reading.
- Student Persistence Rates - The college's student persistence rate (percent of students registered Fall semester who continued into the following Spring semester) was at 74.2% in 2009-2010.
- Graduation and Retention Rates - Graduation and retention rates all increased in 2008-09 and were above the state averages.
- Degrees Awarded - College degrees and certificates awarded increased at Emerald State College in 2009-10 over 2008-09 by 5.4%.
- Minority Degrees/Certificates Awarded - Minority degrees/certificates awarded increased 16.2%. Adult Education graduates increased 11.9%. In 2009-10, Emerald State College had the highest percentage of minority graduates in both degrees/certificates awarded (22.5%) and Adult Education graduates (25%).
- Associate of Arts Graduate Outcomes - After a 2-year tracking period, 75% of Emerald State College's Fall 2007 AA graduates were found continuing their education. This was up from 71% the prior year.

- Vocational Programs Graduate Outcomes - 78% of the 1,598 vocational program graduates found in Florida were employed. Of those, 55% were employed in jobs related to their vocational program.
- Licensure/Certification Exam Pass Rate - Licensure/certification exam pass rates ranged from 74.4% to 100% across all programs.
- CLAST Performance Rates (% who met CLAST requirement) - The CLAST performance rate remained above the state average.
- Nationally, Emerald State College boasted in ranking 10th in the number of Communications Technologies Technicians & Support Services degrees awarded.
- Emerald State College ranked 22nd nationally in the number of Liberal Arts and Sciences degrees awarded and 38th in the country in the number of Associates degrees awarded.
- Emerald State College scored higher (51.5) than their cohort group members (50.0) and all large colleges (49.2) in implementing active and collaborative learning.
- Emerald State College scored higher than their cohort group members (56.1 to 50.0) when evaluated in the category of increasing student effort that would increase the likelihood that students would successfully attain their educational goals.

APPENDIX B

Certificate of Completion

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Richard Costanza** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course “Protecting Human Research Participants”.

Date of completion: 06/21/2010

Certification Number: 467635

APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORM

A Study of Shared Leadership
Among Department Chairs
In a State College
Richard J. Costanza
Tennessee Temple University

You are invited to be in a research study of the practices of leaders in a state college. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a leader in the school and your contribution will benefit the case study. We ask that you read this form and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. This study is being conducted by: Richard J. Costanza, doctoral candidate at Tennessee Temple University.

Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to study, describe, and explain the usage of shared leadership.

Procedures:

If you agree to be in this study, you will answer interview questions that will be audio-recorded & transcribed (with an opportunity to review, comment and correct the interview transcript). Interviews will be conducted in the participant's workplace or another mutually agreed upon location. The interview will be less than one hour.

Risks and Benefits of being in the Study:

The study has minimal risks that are no more than the participant would encounter in everyday life.

The interview may be useful for helping you to think about important issues related to leadership roles and practices in your college.

Confidentiality:

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report that may be published, the researcher will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant. Research records will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the records.

The privacy and confidentiality of the participant will be protected through the use of an alphanumeric code (no SSN/names). Any audio tapes, memory cards, or interview

transcripts will be kept in a locked storage file in the researcher's office and then destroyed upon the completion of the overall project.

Voluntary Nature of the Study:

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with any parties involved. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

Contacts and Questions:

The researcher conducting this study is Richard J. Costanza. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at (xxx)-xxx-xxxx. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board at (xxx) xxx-xxxx.

You will be given a copy of this information to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent:

I understand the study described above and have been given a copy of the description as outlined above. I am 18 years or older and I agree to participate.

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Researcher

Date

APPENDIX D

GREENE PERMISSION LETTER

You have my permission. I would really like to see the results of your work when you are finished.

Ken

"There are two ways of exerting one's strength; one is pushing down the other is pulling up" Booker T. Washington

-----Original Message-----

From: Rich Costanza [mailto:rcostanza@wps.net]

Sent: Thursday, September 02, 2010 4:21 PM

To: Ken Greene

Subject: Dissertation

Dr. Greene,

This is Rich Costanza. I am a doctoral candidate at Tennessee Temple doing my dissertation on the topic of shared leadership. I was inquiring about, in addition to getting permission from you in using your interview questions, about also utilizing the domains in your initial shared leadership model of Involvement, Process, and Outcomes? They match very closely with my case study.

Thank you,
Rich Costanza

APPENDIX E

TAGGART PERMISSION LETTER

September 1, 2010

Re: Ph.D. dissertation

Jim Taggart to cos24

That's interesting and good to know, Rich. If my thesis questions are of help to your Ph.D. work and you wish to adapt them, then please do so.

Best of luck...Jim

Dr. Taggart,

I am a doctoral candidate doing my dissertation on the topic of shared leadership. I have been reading several dissertations on the topic and ran across yours. I was inquiring about getting permission from you in modeling the questions you developed under the domain of Leadership.

Thank you,

Rich Costanza

APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW GUIDE**Introduction**

(Introduce myself covering employment history, length of time with organization, and position held. Explain my role as researcher and interviewer.)

I am interested in how you would evaluate leadership philosophies and practices in your college. In my study I want to answer this primary question:

What are the shared leadership perspectives and practices of department chairs in a state college?

I will be asking a series of questions to help me gather information to describe and explain the view and usage of shared leadership at your college. I will be tape-recording our interview in order to have an accurate transcription. You will be given a copy of the transcript to check for accuracy.

Participant Profile

Gender: Female or Male

First I would like to gather some information about your time with the college.

How long have you been employed by the college?

How long have you served in a leadership capacity in the college?

What are your major responsibilities and duties?

Section 1 – Leadership

What does “leadership” mean to you?

Prompts to use if necessary:

When you hear the word “leadership” what comes to mind?

What do you see as some of the key qualities in an effective leader?

Prompts to use if necessary:

What makes them leaders?

What would you need to do to develop your leadership abilities?

Section 2 – Involvement

When do you share leadership in some fashion with another co-worker(s)?

Prompts to use if necessary:

Team projects/Collaboration

Departmental/Interdepartmental initiatives

How do people get involved in a shared leadership team?

Prompts to use if necessary:

How is the shared leadership team organized?

What keeps members active in the team?

What lends to the diversity of your team?

Prompts to use if necessary:

Contributions/Enhancements

What makes one on the team feel important/of value? How do you sense that?

Section 3 – Process

How would you describe the process members use to work together?

Prompts to use if necessary:

How does communication occur?

How are conflicts resolved?

How are your collaborative goals determined?

Prompts to use if necessary:

Who determines the goals, objectives, strategies, and implementation process?

What are some specific ways members participate in this process?

In shared leadership situations, tell me what guides your decision-making?

Prompts to use if necessary:

What information do you need to make these decisions?

What are some specific ways that various members use their expertise or interests?

Prompts to use if necessary:

What new skills or information have you learned from them?

How have various members helped each other in the work of the collaborative (teamwork)?

Do you feel there is a gap in how supervisors and staff understand the process of shared leadership? If yes, how can this gap be closed?

Prompts to use if necessary:

Collective learning

Supportive conditions

Access to their supervisors

Section 4 – Outcomes

Tell me one of your recent success stories.

Prompts to use if necessary:

How were you able to achieve this success?

What are some specific ways that various members contributed to the success?

Conclusion

Is there anything that was left out that I should have included regarding shared leadership or any final comments you would like to make?

APPENDIX G

Vision and Mission of Emerald State College

Vision

Emerald State College will be the destination of choice for education.

Mission

The mission of Emerald State College is to advance teaching, learning and innovation. Emerald State College, a comprehensive public college, provides access to a range of flexible programs from community enrichment to the baccalaureate degree, emphasizing student success, embracing excellence and diversity, and fostering innovation to enhance teaching and learning (www.emerald.edu).