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The Chief Student Affairs Officer: What Constitutes Effective Leadership?

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Abstract

The leadership characteristics of a 21 chief student affairs officers (CSAOs) within four-year, post-secondary institutions in the Southeast were examined using The Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) developed by Kouzes and Posner. The LPI measures five fundamental leadership factors: challenge the process, inspire a shared vision, enable others to act, model the way, and encourage the heart. Each of these factors was investigated in relation to length of time in the current position, length in the student affairs profession, gender, and geographic location. Statistical analyses of performance on the LPI suggest that CSAOs tend to be most effective in leadership practices of challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. CSAOs seem to be effective in the leadership practices of model the way and inspire a shared vision. Gender and geographic location were not found to be statistically significant to any of the leadership factors.

Higher education, in comparison with its societal counterparts, has yet to evolve into a mature industry. In reality, most colleges and universities are complex and unique entities, although they do share some common characteristics with respect to their organization (Brukardt, Percy & Zimpher, 2006; Bensimon, Neumann & Birnbaum, 1989). In an effort to understand and augment institutional effectiveness and raise standards in higher education, researchers have described several different organizational structures, including the simple structure, the machine bureaucracy, the divisionalized form, and the adhocracy (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Mintzberg, 1979). Conceptually, each has strengths and weaknesses; it is unclear as to which is more ideally suited for a contemporary academic institution.

Studies on leadership in higher education are relatively rare; investigations into leadership within student affairs administration are virtually nonexistent (Smith & Hughey, 2006; Ruben, 2006; Clement & Rickard, 1992; Peterson & Mets, 1987). Randall and Globetti (1992) reported that college presidents typically wanted student affairs administrators who had personal and interpersonal competencies in the areas of integrity, conflict resolution, and decisiveness. They also wanted individuals who were supportive of the central academic mission of the institution, which was seen as paramount (Johnson & O'Grady, 2006). Anderson's (1998) profile of effective, exemplary student affairs leaders included their specific leadership styles and behaviors, whether or not their decision-making was information-based, their human relations and communication skills, and their genuine concern for students as exemplified through their role as student advocates.

With the more defined development of the field amid challenging times, student affairs administration has gained in value and integrity (Smith & Hughey, 2006; Manning, 1996). Much of this enhanced credibility can be traced directly to the leadership provided by student affairs administrators (Sandeen, 1991). As was the case with other academic leaders, student affairs administrators also fill the dual roles of educator and leader. As educators, they communicate their vision of how developmental opportunities can be pursued and attempt to structure an environment that is conducive to enriching the quality of life for students (Miller, Bender & Schuh, 2005; Ruben, 2005). As leaders, they motivate and guide their staffs, influence others within the institution to be more student-oriented, and work to secure the resources necessary for the provision of even more effective student services (Smith & Hughey, 2006).

Today's chief student affairs officers (CSAOs) face a myriad of challenges that would have been inconceivable in a previous era (Smith, 2005). Yet whether the goal is to generate a profit or to educate students, leadership constitutes one of the most critical determinants of ultimate success or failure. The difference between

excellence and mediocrity, or even survival and extinction, is often a direct reflection of the leadership within an organization (Buller, 2006; Birnbaum, 1988).

Purpose of the Study

The primary intent of the current study was to develop a profile of the effective CSAO in higher education by attempting to answer the following two research questions:

1. What are the traits (i.e., profiles, behaviors, and characteristics) perceived as most effective of chief student affairs officers-especially those working in institutions in the southeast region of the U.S.?

2. What is the relationship between leadership characteristics of CSAOs throughout the student affairs career as based on years of service with the current job, gender, and geographic location?

Methods

Instrument

In order to answer these questions, the leadership behaviors and characteristics of CSAOs were assessed using the Leadership Practice Inventory (LPI). The LPI is used to assess and measure both self and observer perception of the five leadership practices (Kouzes and Posner, 2007). For this study, the "self" portion of the LPI was used. The LPI was originally based on case study analyses of more than 1,100 managers and their personal-best experiences as leaders (Kouzes and Posner, 2007). The research was expanded to include data from more than 2,100 managers and their subordinates. This led to the development of both the self and observer forms of the LPI. A recent analysis of the LPI by Kouzes and Posner was based on data gathered from a sample population of more than 36,000 individuals (5,298 self and 30,913 observers). Functional and ethnic backgrounds do not seem to affect leadership behavior as measured by the LPI (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

The LPI has been used by several researchers to study leadership in higher education. Scott (1989) used the LPI to examine the leadership practices of community college presidents in California. Plowman (1991) used it to assess institutional environment and the leadership practices of college presidents in Florida. Brown (1997) employed the LPI to examine differences in perceptions of effective leadership practices among public college and university presidents. Straub (1997) modified the use of the LPI to examine the perception and practice of student affairs leaders. Reliabilities for the LPI-self range between 0.71 and 0.85 (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Test-retest reliabilities are generally above 0.93 (Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

Kouzes and Posner (2007; 2002; 1995) noted that the LPI was developed as an empirical measure of the conceptual leadership framework generated from the best personal experience as a leader. The instrument has been used both as a management development tool and has served as a useful assessment tool for individual leadership characteristics and behaviors. Factor analysis studies, designed to determine validity of the LPI, have consistently identified five factors as being related to effective leadership. The first fundamental leadership practice is challenge the process, which means that successful leaders are willing to take calculated risks (Kouzes & Posner, 2007; Whetten & Cameron, 1985). The second, inspire a shared vision, denotes the importance of precipitating a collective commitment to the future of the organization (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). Enable others to act, the third fundamental leadership practice, refers to the importance of empowering followers in order to nurture true collaboration (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). The fourth practice, model the way, means that successful leaders consistently and conscientiously project an appropriate example for their followers (Kouzes & Posner, 2007). The last practice is encourage the heart, which refers to the importance of recognizing and celebrating the efforts and accomplishments of followers (Kouzes & Posner, 2007).

Sample

The sample consisted of CSAOs who hold membership in Region III of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA); i.e., the southern United States. Twenty-nine nationally recognized higher education institutions were chosen as a purposive sample for the study. Selection of these 29 institutions was based on whether an institution was either public or private and its classification according to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (1994). Each of the participating public institutions had a student enrollment ranging from 10,600 to 28,000, while the private institutions had enrollments ranging from 1,900 to 10,000. The CSAO at each selected institution was selected to participate in the study. Of the 29 CSAOs contacted, 21 agreed to participate in the study. Once each CSAO committed to the study, the researcher mailed the LPI for each participant to complete and return. The average tenure of each CSAO included in the study was 7.85 years, the average number of years at the institution was 17.23, and the average number of years in the field was 26.90 years.

Data Analysis

The results of the LPI-self were compared and analyzed to determine the leadership skills of an effective CSAO. The LPI was entered into the LPI scoring software, which tabulated the sum of the LPI-self to statements about each of the five leadership practices on each participant. Comparison of data for this study was extrapolated from Kouzes and Posner's extensive database that is based on 17,908 subjects. Data are compared as percentile rankings, with a high score considered at the 70th percentile or above, a low score at the 30th percentile or below, and a moderate score falling between the 31st and 69th percentiles. Scoring is based on each of the five leadership practices. Thus, an individual could have

a high score in modeling the way and a low score in inspiring a shared vision.
To further clarify the research questions, each is followed by the analysis used to answer the question, as follows:

1.What are the traits, i.e., profiles, behaviors, and characteristics, measured by the Leadership Practices Inventory that may be perceived as most effective of chief student affairs officers especially those working in institutions in the southeast region of the U.S.?

A. Using mean scores of CSAOs, comparisons were made through the LPI scoring with a longitudinal sample of leaders from other studies that assessed their own leadership behaviors. The normative data from the LPI scoring software also permitted comparison to be made among each of the study's participants.

2. Is the leadership relationship positive or negative between each of the leadership characteristics of CSAOs throughout the student affairs career as based on years of service with the current job, gender, and geographic location?

A. Based on the leadership perceptions of CSAOs, stimulus statement rankings, and LPI results, the researcher posed a positive profile of the CSAO as an effective leader.

The 21 CSAOs who participated in this study completed an LPI instrument that asked them to consider their own individual leadership behaviors and characteristics. The LPI mean for combined CSAO scores was calculated for each of the five leadership practices: challenge the process, inspire a shared vision, enable others to act, model the way, and encourage the heart. Participants were asked to consider self-observations of their given leadership behaviors. Normative data for the LPI were provided by Posner (in a paper written on May 12, 2002), which allowed the researcher to compare the sample population mean scores. The normative data were based on 17,908 subjects and provided means and standard deviation for each of the leadership practices. The highest score possible for each of the practices was 60. The LPI was based on a 10-point scale for each of the statements, with a total of six statements for each of the practices. The CSAO self mean scores and the normative data mean scores for all 21 participants are shown in Table 1 for each of the five leadership practices. The CSAO self mean scores are higher in all of the leadership practices, except for model the way in which the normative data is slightly higher by 0.14.

Table 1 provides a visual picture representation of the LPI mean comparison.

In comparing their own leadership behaviors, CSAOs' highest mean (52.00) was challenge the process, and their lowest (46.24) was inspire a shared vision. Overall, self-perceptions of their own leadership behavior and characteristics were slightly higher than the normative mean. The smallest difference between mean scores (0.14) occurred with model the way. The largest difference in mean scores (8.1) occurred with the leadership practice of challenge the process.

In ranking the normative percentile data, Kouzes and Posner (2002) considered a high score to be at or above the 70th percentile, a low score to be at or below the 30th percentile, and a moderate score to fall between the 31st and 69th percentiles. Kouzes and Posner (2002) used the high, moderate, and low LPI percentile rankings as benchmark numbers. They further suggested that any individual who scored in the low-to-moderate range should strive to modify or change his or her behavior in leadership practices. Such a modification could move the individual into the next percentile of scores or into a higher range, which would suggest an improvement as a leader within the field. The combined leadership practice mean scores of CSAO participants fell primarily within the moderate range, with challenge the process achieving the highest range t-tests. Analysis of each of the leadership practices was determined by using a t-test with a confidence level of 0.95 and/or a T-score of 2.086 or greater. After comparing each of the leadership practices against the normative mean, three leadership characteristics appeared statistically significant: challenge the process, inspire a shared vision, and encourage the heart.

While comparing the CSAO self mean of males in

Table 1. Comparison of CSAO self mean scores and normative data:

	CSAO		Normative		t	2-tail
Characteristics	M	SD	M	SD	Value	Significance
Challenge	52	3.36	43.90	6.8	11.04	.000
Inspire	46.24	4.09	40.60	8.8	6.30	.000
Enable	50.57	4.87	48.70	5.4	1.75	.094
Model	46.86	5.30	47.00	6.0	-0.14	.905
Encourage	48.38	4.15	43.80	8.0	5.05	.000

Note: The values represent t test for equality of mean. df=20 When t > 2.086 then p < 05.

Table 2. Comparison of CSAO male self mean and normative data:

	CSAO		Normative		t	2-tail
Characteristics	M	SD	M	SD	Value	Significance
Challenge	52.25	2.81	43.90	6.8	11.85	.000
Inspire	45.69	4.36	40.60	8.8	4.66	.000
Enable	50.50	4.81	48.70	5.4	1.49	.102
Model	46.63	5.35	47.00	6.0	-0.28	.755
Encourage	47.75	3.99	43.80	8.0	3.95	.000

Note: The values represent t test for equality of mean. df=15. When t > 2.131, then p < 05.

contrast to normative data, some minor differences are illustrated in Table 2 for each of the five leadership practices. The males reported about the same frequency of means in regard to challenge the process, enable others to act, and model the way. Analysis of each of the leadership practices was conducted using a t-test with a confidence level of 0.95 and/or a T-score of 2.131 or greater. After comparing each of the leadership practices against the normative mean, the same three leadership characteristics revealed a significant difference, to include challenge the process, inspire a shared vision, and encourage the heart.

Likewise, while comparing the CSAO self mean of females in contrast to the normative data, some minor differences are illustrated in Table 3 for each of the five leadership practices.

Interestingly, females reported the same outcome as the males, to include challenge the process, inspire a shared vision and encourage the heart. Analysis of each of the leadership practices was determined by using a t-test with a confidence level of 0.95 and/or a T-score of 2.776 or greater. After comparing each of the leadership practices against the normative mean for the female participants, they, too, are in agreement regarding the same three leadership characteristics, including challenge the process, inspire a shared vision, and encourage the heart. As noted in Table 4, the mean scores of the males and females did not reveal any significant differences.

Analysis of each of the leadership practices was determined using a t-test with a confidence level of 0.95 and/or a T-score of 2.093 or greater. After comparing

Table 3. Comparison of CSAO female self mean to normative data:

	CSAO		Normative		t	2-tail
Characteristics	M	SD	M	SD	Value	Significance
Challenge	51.20	5.06	43.90	6.8	3.21	.000
Inspire	48.00	2.73	40.60	8.8	6.04	.000
Enable	50.80	5.63	48.70	5.4	0.83	.103
Model	47.60	5.68	47.00	6.0	0.23	.634
Encourage	50.40	4.44	43.80	8.0	3.31	.000

Note: The values represent t test for equality of mean. df=4 When t > 2.766 then p < .05

Table 4. Comparison of CSAO male and female mean scores:

	Male		Female		t	2-tail
Characteristics	M	SD	M	SD	Value	Significance
Challenge	52.25	5.35	51.20	5.06	.412	.685
Inspire	45.69	4.36	48.00	2.73	-0.891	.384
Enable	50.50	4.81	50.80	5.63	-0.089	.930
Model	46.63	5.35	47.60	5.68	-0.268	.791
Encourage	47.75	3.99	50.40	4.44	-0.935	.362

Note: The values represent t test for equality of mean. df=19 When t > 2.093 then p < .05

each of the leadership characteristics between the males and females, no significant difference was evidenced among any of the leadership characteristics.

ANOVA. Each of the five leadership practices was analyzed among the 21 sample institutions represented in the eight states that participated in this study. The researcher sought to determine what differences or similarities existed among the different participating CSAOs in accordance with the geographic location of their state institutions. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed regarding each of the five leadership characteristics among each of the participants in all eight states surveyed. At a 0.95 confidence level, no significant differences were found among each of the five leadership characteristics within all eight states, as illustrated in Tables 5A-5E.

When comparing challenge the process between the states, a P-value of 0.595 was not significant in comparison to a p< .05. Challenge the process ranked last among the leadership characteristics. When comparing inspire a shared vision among the states, a P-value of 0.335 was not significant in comparison to a p< .05. Inspire a shared vision ranked third among the leadership characteristics. When comparing enable others to act between the states with a P-value of 0.128, no significance was observed in comparison to a p< .05. However, enable others to act ranked first among each of the leadership characteristics, yet is still not significant. When comparing model the way between the states with a P-value of 0.164, no significance was observed in comparison to a p< .05. Model the way ranked second among the leadership characteristics. When comparing encourage the heart among the states

Table 5A. Comparison of leadership style *challenge the process* between states:

ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-Value
Between Groups	68.633	7	9.805	0.810	0.595
Within Groups	157.366	13	12.105		
Total	225.999	20			

Note: No statistical difference between the states regarding *challenge the process*. p > .05

with a P-value of 0.430, no significance was observed in comparison to a p< .05. Encourage the heart ranked fourth among the leadership characteristics.

Data analysis of the LPI provided insights into the leadership behaviors and characteristics of the CSAOs. The LPI indicated that CSAO self mean scores were higher than the normative mean scores in four of the five leadership practices. The only exception to this was in model the way, where the normative mean score was higher than the self mean score by .14.

Regression Analyses. A comparison of CSAOs' years of employment was examined using regression analysis to determine if years of service had a significant impact on each of the leadership characteristics. No significant correlation was found between challenge the process (r = .357; df = 19, r-value < .433 at 95% confidence level) and years in the current position. The relationship between challenge the process and years in the current position ranked second highest among the five leadership characteristics. No significant correlation was found between inspire a shared vision (r = .281; df = 19, r-value < .433 at 95% confidence level) and years in the current position. The relationship between inspired a shared vision and years in the current position ranked third highest among the five leadership characteristics. A strong correlation was found between enable others to act (r = .498; df = 19, r-value > .433 at 95% confidence level) and years in the current position. The relationship between enable others to act and years in the current position ranked first, or top, of the five leadership characteristics. No significant correlation was found between model the way (r = .228; df = 19, r-value < .433 at 95% confidence level) and years in the current position. The relationship between model the way and years in the current position ranked fourth highest among the five leadership characteristics. No significant correlation was found between encourage the heart (r = .081; df = 19, r-value < .433 at 95% confidence level) and years in the current position. The relationship between encourage the heart and years in the current position ranked last among the five leadership characteristics.

A comparison of years of service in student affairs positions was examined using regression analysis to determine if years of service within the department of student affairs had a significant impact on each of the leadership characteristics. A strong correlation was found between challenge the process (r = .447; df = 19, r-value > .433 at 95% confidence level) and years in student affairs. It is worth noting that the relationship between challenge the process and years in student affairs ranked

Table 5B. Comparison of leadership style *inspire a shared vision* between states.

ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-Value
Between Groups	136.500	7	19.501	1.272	0.335
Within Groups	199.300	13	15.330		
Total	335.800	20			

Note: No statistical difference between the states regarding *inspire a shared vision*. p > .05

Table 5C. Comparison of leadership style *enable others to act* between states.

ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-Value
Between Groups	248.140	7	35.448	2.030	0.128
Within Groups	227.000	13	17.461		
Total	475.140	20			

Note: No statistical difference between the states regarding *enable others to act*. p >.05

Table 5D. Comparison of leadership style *model the way* between states:

ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-Value
Between Groups	279.371	7	39.910	1.832	0.164
Within Groups	283.200	13	21.784		
Total	562.571	20			

Note: No statistical difference between the states regarding *model the way*. p >.05

Table 5E. Comparison of leadership style *encourage the heart* between states:

ANOVA

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	P-Value
Between Groups	126.485	7	18.069	1.075	0.430
Within Groups	218.466	13	16.805		
Total	344.951	20			

Note: No statistical difference between the states regarding *encourage the heart*. p >.05

first, or top, among the five leadership characteristics. No significant correlation was found between inspire a shared vision (r = .114; df = 19, r-value < .433 at 95% confidence level) and years in student affairs. The relationship between inspire a shared vision and years in student affairs ranked second highest among the five leadership characteristics. No significant correlation was found between enable others to act (r = .094; df = 19, r-value < .433 at 95% confidence level) and years in student affairs. The relationship between enable others to act and years in student affairs ranked third highest among the five leadership characteristics. No significant correlation was found between model the way (r = -.065; df = 19, r-value < .433 at 95% confidence level) and years in student affairs. The relationship between model the way and years in student affairs ranked fourth highest among the five leadership characteristics. No significant correlation was found between encourage the heart (r = -.167; df = 19, r-value < .433 at 95% confidence level) and years in student affairs. The relationship between encourage the heart and years in student affairs ranked last among the five leadership characteristics.

Discussion

Research Question 1

What are the traits (i.e., profiles, behaviors, and characteristics) perceived as most effective in chief student affairs officers, especially those working in institutions in the southeast region of the U.S.?

To some degree, the answer to what was perceived as the most effective leadership behaviors and characteristics of CSAOs depended on how the participants responded to the LPI-self document. However, the main focus seemed to center on the idea that the CSAOs need to be involved in the day-to-day operations of their institutions. Accordingly, CSAOs should give considerable attention to the following areas: involvement in institutional decision making, development of a shared vision, and creation of an environment where student involvement is supported and encouraged. Further, CSAOs should be ethical persons who respond effectively to campus crisis situations, and CSAOs should collaborate with the academic affairs divisions. As regards the Leadership Practice Inventory, CSAOs have a similar assessment of their leadership behaviors. Information from CSAO scores or the five LPI leadership practices provides additional insight.

Challenge the process was the leadership characteristic that achieved the highest mean score for the CSAO. The main focus came from the statement challenging people to try new and different approaches to a given situation.

Enable others to act was the second highest in the mean score ranking of leadership practices. This practice involved treating people with dignity and respect, listening to diverse points of view, developing cooperative relationships, and letting people choose how to do their job. Clearly, such behavior associated with trust and respect only strengthens CSAOs.

Encourage the heart was ranked third highest of the five leadership practices. Praising people for a job well done, rewarding them for their contributions, recognizing commitment, and expressing appreciation were behaviors prized among CSAOs.

Model the way achieved the fourth highest ranked position of the five practices. The main point of interest centers on the notion of following through on promises and commitments and setting an example of what is expected. Additionally, CSAOs should demonstrate a clear philosophy of leadership and be viewed as role models.

Inspire a shared vision was ranked last of the five practices. CSAOs viewed themselves as needing room for improvement in this area. The main point of discussion was the notion of having a specific vision of the institution and being able to articulate it to their division.

Results from the LPI revealed leadership behaviors currently exhibited by the sample population of CSAOs. Scores in the five leadership characteristics ranged from the high 40s to the low 50s. While it appears that CSAOs

are above average in their leadership practices, they did not report what would be considered high scores according to Kouzes and Posner (1997). To propose a profile of the CSAO as an effective leader, a combination of perceptions of CSAOs' current leadership behaviors and characteristics is matched with perceived ideal leadership behaviors and characteristics.

The results of the LPI suggest a profile of a CSAO who is most effective in leadership practices of challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. Within the parameters of these practices, CSAOs demonstrated a cooperative relationship with their staffs to consider new and different approaches to ideas related to the academic arena. Additionally, CSAOs focused on inspiring the trust and respect of the interrelationship between themselves and the individuals being supervised, and finally, efforts to recognize and reward individual employee behaviors were emphasized. The two least effective leadership practices of CSAOs were model the way and inspire a shared vision. The weaknesses of the leadership of CSAOs in these two practices included a lack of leading by example and an inability to clearly articulate a vision for the future. Nevertheless, it was evident that no single CSAO prototype exists and each institution is different and unique. Yet a leadership pattern does exist. The pattern suggests that effective CSAOs exhibit the following characteristics: visibility, high motivation, honesty and trustworthiness, empowerment, relationship building, collaborative efforts, advocacy for diversity, and willingness to take risks.

Research Question 2
What is the relationship between characteristics of CSAOs throughout the student affairs career as based on years of services with the current job, gender, and geographic location?

The relationship between years of service within a current job and years of experience in the student affairs profession has an impact on the leader's ability to be effective. A regression line was used as a means of testing the statistical impact of both years in current job in student affairs with the relationship to each of the five leadership characteristics. Only one characteristic-enable others to act-revealed a strong correlation to years in current job. In the area of years in student affairs, the characteristic that showed a strong correlation was challenge the process.

Regarding each of the leadership characteristics and their relationship with years in current position, the evidence shows that all five leadership characteristics have a positive, interrelated relationship, yet the correlation varies from strong-to-weak depending on the individual characteristic. When comparing each of the leadership characteristics with years in student affairs, some differences are evident. The research shows that only three leadership characteristics show a positive, interrelated relationship: challenge the process, inspire a shared vision, and enable others to act. However, the remaining two characteristics show a negative relationship: model the way and encourage the heart. Only one characteristic-challenge the process-shows a strong correlation pertaining to years in student affairs; the remaining four show a weak correlation.

Limitations

The current study includes several limitations. First, the sample included only 21 institutions representing the southern portion of the United States. Second, the data included self-reporting perceptions of the CSAOs regarding their own behavior and the use of the LPI-self as a means of assessment. These limitations suggest that more research is needed in the area of leadership in higher education, more specifically in student affairs. Additional research designed to examine the leadership characteristics of CSAOs, in particular, should be conducted. Moreover, the research data base should include different campuses across the country regarding context and culture, and whether or not any consistency is shown among chief student affairs officers.

Conclusion

The current study supports the notion that each institution is different and unique and therefore no single, ideal CSAO prototype exists (Smith & Hughey, 2006). Yet it is also evident that a leadership profile does exist among CSAOs. This profile suggests that effective CSAOs tend to exhibit the following general characteristics: high visibility, high motivation, honesty and trustworthiness, a belief in empowerment, an emphasis on relationship building and collaborative efforts, an advocacy for diversity, and a willingness to take risks. The LPI suggests that CSAOs tend to be most effective in the leadership practices of challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. Specifically, the findings of this study support the following:

• The role, visibility, and active involvement of the CSAO within the institutional framework are critical to being an effective leader.

• CSAOs' ability to empower employees within their division is central to improving the working relationship between the CSAOs and their subordinates.

• CSAOs recognize the value of acknowledging employee contribution and praising outstanding work.

• CSAOs recognize the value of a shared vision of student affairs within the institution.

• CSAOs' efforts to foster collaboration with other institutional leaders emphasize that such relationship building is critical for CSAOs to be effective leaders.
Within the parameters of these practices, CSAOs demonstrated a cooperative relationship with their staffs to consider new and different approaches to ideas related

to the academic arena. Additionally, CSAOs focused on inspiring the trust and respect of the interrelationship between themselves and the individuals being supervised, and finally, efforts to recognize and reward individual employee behaviors were emphasized. The two least effective leadership practices of CSAOs were model the way and inspire a shared vision. The weaknesses of the leadership of CSAOs in these two practices included a lack of leading by example and an inability to clearly articulate a vision for the future.

Leadership is critical to the success of any student affairs division, unit or program. It is the critical dimension that most often determines success or failure and distinguishes excellence from mediocrity (Lara & Hughey, 2008; Smith, 2005). In order to respond effectively to the immense challenges and demands that lie ahead, CSAOs are needed who have the capability and the capacity to inspire those within their divisions to perform at their best.

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