PREPARING THE PROFESSORIATE TO PREPARE GLOBALLY COMPETENT LEADERS

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Rapidly increasing globalization, the expanding use of technology, and intercultural competency have been discussed in the leadership literature for more than three decades. Simultaneously, the urgency to academically prepare globally competent organizational leaders has accelerated exponentially. Recommendations for global leadership competencies have been developed and undoubtedly have provided useful guidance in academic program and curricula development. In contrast, the preparedness of the leadership professoriate to prepare globally competent leaders has received little attention through research or discourse. The ongoing professional development of the leadership professoriate in terms of a global mindset and intercultural competencies are questioned and discussed. Recommendations are made for institutional and programmatic initiatives to increase the global learning and capital of faculty. Questions and recommendations are offered for personal and collective reflection and critical discourse on the need to expand and develop the international currency of faculty so that we can ensure the professoriate is prepared to educate students to be global leaders.

Rapidly increasing globalization, the expanding use of technology, and intercultural competency development have been discussed in the leadership and cross-disciplinary leadership literature for more than 30 years, although under somewhat different nomenclature (Hofstede, 1980, 1997, 2001; Irving, 2010; Jokinen, 2005; Kantor, 1996; Morrison, 2000; Prewitt, Weil, & McClure, 2011). Increasingly, the literature has become a clarion call for leadership educators to better prepare undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate students with the competencies needed for global leadership positions in the 21st century. A foundational assumption in the call is that the professoriate is “prepared to prepare” students to be global leaders. Are we?

Several leadership scholars have scoured the existing literature and conducted research in an effort to create recommendations and taxonomies for the development of specific global leadership competencies (Andenoro, 2005; Jokinen, 2005; Tubbs & Schulz, 2006). The resulting recommendations undoubtedly have provided useful guidance in leadership program and curricula development. As Williams and Hyatt (2010) pointed out, however, “little research exists specific to the new-century skills necessary for doctoral faculty in leadership programs” (p. 81).

As educators involved in the initiation, ongoing development, and delivery of online leadership programs at the master’s and doctoral level since 1997, we maintain that positing student global leadership competencies
before faculty competencies is placing the proverbial cart before the horse. Many professors serving in essential leadership faculty positions may not themselves possess the knowledge, dispositions, and experiences necessary to effectively prepare graduate students engaged in leadership studies to gain and grow in the realm of global and intercultural leadership competencies.

We open this scholarly dialogue on how to prepare the professoriate as a precursor to preparing students to be globally competent leaders. We then explore what we believe to be the essential institutional supports and faculty development initiatives necessary to educate and cultivate effective global leaders. We focus our thoughts on the importance of a global mindset among faculty so that this pedagogical and philosophical paradigm may be passed on to students. Finally, we offer recommendations for the further development of institutional and cross-institutional faculty development activities to support the preparation and training of leadership faculty.

Global Mindset

The rapidly expanding globalized economy and international business initiatives require that leaders possess both a general set of leadership skills as well as a specialized set of skills to demonstrate efficacy in the global marketplace. For example, Leininger and Javidan (2010) maintained that global leaders must possess a unique set of traits that allow them to lead people and organizations across cultures, across borders, and to exert influence in a globally integrated environment—essentially global leaders need what has been termed a global mindset (p. 14).

A global mindset is a requirement to developing global cognitive capacity. Leininger and Javidan (2010) offered a fundamental explanation:

A global mindset is a set of individual attributes that can help increase a leader’s effectiveness in influencing groups, organizations, and systems that are unlike their own. It helps leaders to decode what’s going on around them in cross-cultural environments and choosing the right behavior under the relevant cultural conditions. A global mindset has three primary dimensions: intellectual capital, psychological capital and social capital. (p. 4)

We contend faculty members require institutional and infrastructural support in order to achieve global cognitive capacity on an individual level. A university mission, department goals, and program curricula must include aspects of cross-cultural traditions in order to demonstrate through practice and pedagogy the importance and need for a global mindset.

With regard to the requisites of a global mindset, Paul, Meyskens, and Robbins (2011) included the organizational constructs of corporate social performance, ethical norms, and sensitivity. The inclusion of these constructs suggested that there needs to be an internal (i.e., individual) and external (i.e., organizational) alignment supporting international leaders attempting to navigate the international marketplace. International leaders need to possess an ethical, integral foundation that grounds their leadership behavior. Such a personal grounding permits leaders to recognize the importance of promoting and sustaining the organization’s ethical and social norms, namely, its institutional social responsibility.

Similarly, Teagarden (2009) further asserted that the attributes of a global mindset provide the individual with a wide scope of influence. Teagarden elaborates upon the three essential dimensions of a global mindset noted by Leininger and Javidan (2010). First, intellectual capital refers to one’s global savvy, cosmopolitan outlook, and cognitive complexity. Second, psychological capital refers to one’s passion for diversity, quest for adventure, and self-assurance. Finally, Teagarden includes one’s intercultural empathy, interpersonal impact, and diplomacy as social capital.

Taken together, the dimensions of a global mindset suggest that effective global leaders need to possess a high degree of what we refer to as international currency. Personal currency is what each person exchanges and shares with others: time, energy, and expertise. In the context of the development of a global mindset, international currency is one’s possession of and the ability to exchange globally sensitive intellectual, psychological and social capital. The greater the currency with regard to each dimension of a global mindset held by the professoriate, the greater the capacity to perform as a global leader and to transfer this capital to others academically. Thus, there is both an internal and external need to support the development of a global mindset among faculty members so that these attributes will be transmitted to students.
Changing the Global Culture of Higher Education

One “critical challenge that campus leaders must confront and address” with regard to globalization is the promotion of “an effective balance between two strategic approaches” (Anderson, 2008, p. 2). Deductive or general, institution-wide approaches to diversity and globalization encompass strategies such as the mission, core values, the “moral imperative associated with affirmative action,” salary equity, and campus programming. Inductive or more specific approaches “ask members of the campus community to construct their ideas about diversity from varied sources of information and to link them to fundamental themes, values, or structures” (p. 3). The inductive strategy requires reflection, analysis, and evaluation. Such engagement is much more likely to lead to the development and integration of a global mindset within an academic community.

In the opening section of the current article, it was posited that many in the professoriate may not be equipped with the required knowledge, dispositions, and experiences to effectively prepare graduate students as global leaders. Indeed, the current national agenda for global learning encompasses higher education institutions as well as faculty and students (Anderson, 2008; NAFSA, 2005; National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges [NASULGC], 2007). Anderson argued for the development of mission-driven cultural and global competencies within institutions of higher education. Intercultural competency and globalization need to be woven into the very fabric of institutional activities at every level. The mission must be clearly articulated with constituents held accountable. In addition, for change to truly take place institutionally, the professoriate must be on board through participation and contributions. Thus, the mission of institutional globalization needs to interface significantly with scholarly research, teaching, and service.

Although there are several noteworthy exceptions (e.g., Rollins College, University of Southern California, Yale University, University of Illinois–Champaign, University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill), deductive, strategic globalization initiatives are not a high priority on most US campuses. In a survey of more than 2,700 colleges and universities, Green, Luu, and Burris (2008) found that less than 40% made specific reference to global education or internationalization in their mission statements. Additionally, a majority of institutions reported that they did not employ a full-time person to oversee or coordinate globalization efforts.

Inductive, strategic efforts to evaluate, revise, and infuse graduate-level leadership curricula with global awareness and competency development reported in the professional literature, although valuable, are sparse and appear to be programmatically isolated (Andenoro, 2005; Andenoro, Murphrey, & Dooley, 2008; Lehman, 2009), despite the growing consensus that intercultural competencies can be learned (Irving, 2010). It is important to recognize that intercultural competencies and a global mindset are needed not only by those who work for and with international organizations, but also by faculty members who are involved in ground-based as well as virtual education and business endeavors. Given the increasingly diverse composition of higher education classrooms and the expanding scope of virtual engagement, it is imperative that we, as leadership educators, acquire the competencies and skill sets that can be passed on to the students with whom we are engaged.

Few would argue with the statement that it is difficult, if not impossible, for one to know oneself as a member of a specific culture until there has been an opportunity to look at one’s culture and self from the perspective of another culture. We speculate that few faculty members in leadership programs have had opportunities to immerse themselves in another culture for an extended period of time or to challenge their cultural preconceptions or assumptions. As a result, we further speculate that only relatively few leadership faculty have had an opportunity to develop a truly global mindset. Bodcott and Walker (2000) highlighted the fact that faculty members teaching abroad experience core challenges of belief systems, pedagogy, and instructional strategies. Their findings are supported by the research of Gopal (2011) which underscores the institutional need to prepare faculty to teach cross culturally. International teaching opportunities for higher education faculty members continue to expand as universities embrace partnership initiatives and lucrative business ventures. Faculty members need to be sufficiently prepared personally and professionally to assume these instructional roles and responsibilities. It is our
contention that further professional development and training in globalization is needed.

The literature is replete with the identification of core global leadership competencies, which are beyond the scope of this article (see Aycan, 1997; Rosen and Digh, 2001). The development of a global mindset in addition to core global leadership competencies as a set of requisite global leadership skills serves to cast a wide net of knowledge, dispositions, and behaviors needed by educators as they engage with students. These competencies may serve as a developmental framework for leadership educators as they craft and create comprehensive curricula and programs in higher education to prepare global leaders.

Opening the Discourse

To encourage further reflection, analysis, evaluation, research, as well as program and curricula development, we deliberately pose a series of questions concerning the global preparedness of the professoriate. How does one’s institution deductively and inductively support or discourage globalization initiatives among faculty members in order that they can effectively prepare students for the leadership demands of the 21st century? What opportunities have leadership educators had to develop intercultural competencies? Given existing opportunities, are they focused on the development of the most relevant global skills and dispositions for today and tomorrow? To what extent are leadership educators proficient in terms of international currency? What types of opportunities or experiences, pedagogical approaches, or methods are most effective in mindfully and skillfully transferring intercultural competencies and a global mindset to students?

Professional Development Initiative Recommendations

Institutional initiatives and the deliberate thrust for intercultural competence and global effectiveness are paramount. If the professoriate embraces the educational responsibility of preparing competent global leaders, then it is imperative that both the institution and the professoriate establish a commitment to become globally competent made specific by the mission as well as strategic institutional and programmatic plans for professional development. The commitment to global competence undoubtedly requires both institutional and individual change in regard to faculty mindsets and paradigms.

To intentionally support and encourage a global mindset and international currency of faculty who fill the compelling and demanding role of educating potential global leaders, we recommend several professional development initiatives. Acknowledging the individual and unique culture, climate, and ethos of each institution and leadership degree program, the recommendations are offered as a source of individual and collective reflection and further critical discourse. Figure 1 visually depicts the overlapping functions and recommended interplay between institutional (i.e., external) and individual (i.e., internal) factors that contribute to the development of a global mindset. It is important to emphasize that internal factors linked to the development of a global mindset are embedded within the personal and strategic operational commitments of mission-driven change.

INSTITUTIONAL AGENDA

Academic leaders must be invested in globalization initiatives within institutions of higher education. The institution and its leaders should engage in professional development activities as well as providing resources. Perhaps the overarching goal of academic leadership is to create a culture of evidence (Anderson, 2008), wherein all institutional assessment and strategic plans are core components of the institution’s support for globalization and diversity. The evolution of a culture of evidence signals the administration’s degree of commitment to and support of professional development initiatives, and should include a strategic roadmap for achieving a global mindset as an institution.

For example, administration needs to articulate clearly, succinctly, and frequently, global learning goals and measurable outcomes for institutional investments, partnerships, and external business ventures. When and where feasible, administration needs to offer faculty immersion opportunities to live, teach, and conduct research abroad for extended periods of time. Using our respective academic home as one illustration, Concordia University Chicago has established online international educational partnerships with religiously affiliated programs that align with the mission and values of the university. The university’s recent establishment of the Center for Global Outreach provides leadership and support to members of Concordia’s community in order to connect and collaborate with as well as experience
international cultures. International activities supported by our institution have expanded to include hosting a faculty member from Slovakia, international conference presentations, as well as faculty and student travel during summer immersion programs to provide consulting services to schools in Argentina, Costa Rica, and Russia. If such international immersion opportunities would place undue burdens upon the institution, we recommend faculty participation in virtual conferences, or international conferences held in the United States such as the Global Faculty Development Workshop sponsored annually by the World Bank Institute. Faculty incentives and communication regarding opportunities for participation in institutional globalization and diversity efforts may be needed.

Faculty participation in the institutional agenda to develop and promote globalization initiatives also needs to focus on the creation of a culture of evidence. Course assessments, student learning outcomes, and instructional strategies must endorse the institution’s efforts to support its students to live and function effectively within a pluralistic society. Curricula need to encompass historical, political, and global perspectives, and course assignments and activities need to foster service learning. Duffy (2000) suggested that service learning is a form of experiential education in which students engage in activities that address human and community needs, together with structured opportunities intentionally designed to promote student learning and development, reflection, and reciprocity. Additional recommendations to develop principles and practices for global activities and engagement strategies in higher education are available in the Blue Ribbon Panel on Global Engagement Report from the American Council on Education at www.acenet.edu.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES (PLCs)

The authors suggest that one of the primary processes to increase global mindset and international currency of faculty members is to create university-wide, cross-disciplinary learning communities with a purposeful focus on globalization of the professoriate. The focus of these learning communities is to promote and support the inclusion of globalization into the fabric and culture of the institution, its departments, and its student body. Anderson (2008) suggested that the establishment of collegial learning communities “requires the presence of a strong structural

Figure 1. Development of a Global Mindset
undergirding, and learning communities can serve as a powerful construction site that permits, over time, intellectual, personal, and social scaffolding” (p. 100).

For example, ongoing, developmental, intercultural professional seminars and colloquia can provide faculty the opportunity to explore globalization and diversity issues. These communities may be face-to-face or virtual, scholarly, or social. Providing forums for conducting courageous conversations allows faculty to constructively reflect, explore, and debate global issues, programmatic implications, and innovative initiatives.

The formation of cross-discipline faculty communities of practice supports the exploration of issues such as social justice, Eurocentric ideology, history, and religious and political issues and their impact on globalization and global leadership.

In terms of individual academic department recommendations, we encourage membership, active participation, and travel to meetings of international professional leadership organizations and associations. Faculty should be encouraged to take part in cross-cultural research conducted by way of relationships built through emerging technologies and social networking opportunities that connect faculty across international communities of practice such as the International Association of Universities. Identified faculty members need to serve as leaders in departmental endeavors to evaluate current leadership programs and curricula with the objective of systematically infusing intercultural elements and experiential learning opportunities throughout the degree program. Additionally, these department leaders must articulate succinct global learning goals, global literacy criteria in student course evaluations, measurable outcomes for programs and courses, and clarification of why global competencies are so vital to student development. Suggestions for the internationalization of US higher education are available from the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. This collaborative work is aligned to creating the institutional culture of evidence.

INCLUSION OF INTERNATIONAL FACULTY

Department efforts to recruit and retain diverse faculty members need to be paramount. The visible diversity of faculty members supports the institution’s commitment to globalization and diversity. Departments need to invite international leaders to participate in course development, instruction, and outcomes assessment. Faculty exchange experiences, such as those coordinated by the CIEE, are excellent opportunities for universities to infuse curricula and expose students and faculty to cross-cultural pedagogy. The presence of these international leaders in the brick-and-mortar or virtual classroom highlights the institution’s commitment to developing the global mindset and international currency of its faculty and students.

Concluding Remarks

To conclude and for further reflection, we draw from the work of noted interdisciplinary educator Margaret Wheatley (2007), who calls for the professoriate to recognize “that we are responsible for more than ourselves” (p. 205). We apply this responsibility to a global scale to stress the importance of preparing ourselves so that we may better prepare our students to be global leaders.

In early 2012, at the time of this writing, we have fully entered an era of unprecedented global interdependence and interconnected systems—environmentally, economically, politically, and culturally. The world is truly becoming one interrelated village (Nateson, Keefe, & Darling, 2009). We consider the present times a step just beyond the precipice of an evolutionary shift from a world of separateness to one of interconnectedness that is full of opportunities for discovery and growth, creativity and innovation. In the interests of research, teaching, and service, we believe it is the responsibility of the professoriate to embrace and live the hard questions of our institutions and ourselves so that we all may become constructively contributive global citizens.

References


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