ABSTRACT

Title of thesis: THE MEANING OF THE STUDENT ADVISORY

BOARD LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

EXPERIENCE TO THE STUDENT BOARD

MEMBERS

Jelena Janc, Master of Arts, 2004

Thesis directed by: Professor Hanne Mawhinney
Education Policy and Leadership

This case study explores the nature of leadership development framed in the

relational model through the perceptions of five members of the Student Advisory Board

on their development as leaders. The central research question is, *How does the*

experience at the Student Advisory Board create meaning to Board members in their

leadership development? The findings exhibit students' leadership development in three

dimensions: I – understanding oneself as a leader; you – understanding others' leadership

backgrounds and ideas; and we – working as a team to accomplish the Board's goals.

The case study contributes to the existing research on the strategies that state-level higher education coordinating bodies can use to engage higher education students in the policy-making process. The research also creates an understanding of the meaning that public policy opportunities have on students' leadership development. Finally, the case study provides significant validation of the relational model of leadership development.

THE MEANING OF THE STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD LEADERSHIP

DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE TO THE STUDENT BOARD MEMBERS

by

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

My reaction to the Board is that everybody there is already a "leader."

They are there for a reason. They have the desire to be involved in a leadership

position – a pretty big responsibility to be in the Student Advisory Board,[1] so they

are in leadership. They come with some faculties with regard to leadership, but I

think that you can develop a totally new set of tools for leadership on SAB

because it is so diverse and you appreciate a real variety of perspectives. The

community college students have a goal they need to reach, and then there are

college students who have a different dynamics in their school, and they are

looking in what will help that. The larger universities – there are different needs

there. And, then of course, there are professional schools... I think that is great!

In terms of developing leadership skills for Student Advisory Board, it is

all about being able to appreciate perspectives that before you didn't understand,

and that is very important because you want to do something, at least in my mind,

I wanted to do something that I can bring back here to Jesuit Ideals University. I

always wanted to do something there that is universally applicable, for everyone.

You have to be pretty flexible, understand different perspectives, different needs,

and that is what you have to do on a smaller scale within your own colleges, but

that is a much bigger task to do, and it is much bigger task to be successful.

<div align="right">Henry, Jesuit Ideals College</div>

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[1] Student Advisory Board will also be referred to from here on out as either SAB or the Board.

Introduction to the Case Study

Researchers in the field of leadership education have recognized the importance of leadership development[2] among college students. They argue that college students can assume many types of leadership roles; they may become institutional representatives, community leaders, and organizational directors. All of these roles are important public-service opportunities (Golden & Schwartz, 1994). According to a study by Golden and Schwartz, student leadership in public service originates from four motivating factors:

1. Students' desire to make a difference;

2. The opportunity to develop significant leadership skills;

3. A need to further a particular higher education issue or political agenda; and

4. Their desire to take a more active role in the organizations they serve.[3]

These motivating factors (Golden & Schwartz) serve to encourage students to represent their institutions, get involved both on and off campus, and to take active leadership positions enhancing their leadership development and empowering others to do the same (Klopf, 1960). According to Henry,[4] a case study participant from a private, four-year Jesuit college, students engage in opportunities such as the Student Advisory Board for the purpose of making a "universal" difference both on their campus and within the Board. In addition, Henry believes that this opportunity, being an institutional

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[2] Development is defined as growth, change, ability to "become a more complex individual" (McEwen in Komives, Woodard, & Associates, 1996). Development means growth, achieving self-direction, and interdependence (Miller in Hanson, 1982).

[3] The role of ego could possibly be the fifth motivating factor.

[4] See vignette on page 1 for full text.

representative at the Board, allows one to enhance and develop new leadership skills such as working with diverse groups and understanding multiple perspectives.

Over the course of the 20th century, the role of students in higher education has significantly increased, expanding extracurricular activities from traditional student positions to institutional-level positions and segmental governing committees such as the public colleges' governing board. According to the study conducted by Alden J. Carr (1959) on behalf of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, "Development of these joint councils clearly represents an advance beyond the point reached by the student council concerned with the traditional areas of student life" (p. 29). Students not only have symbolic positions in higher education institutions but also have the right to discuss issues, make recommendations, and, in some instances vote. As Carr further explains, student boards are "a regularly established policy-determining and/or administering body, composed entirely of students, though possibly with a faculty and/or administrative adviser, and with broadly inclusive responsibilities and powers" (p. 20).

The expansion of the student role in higher education governance has caused a transformation in how states view higher education actors.[5] Due to a changing profile of students to a nontraditional, commuter, employed status, higher education boards have become more inclusive of the student population, providing advisory or project-oriented positions. In the Atlantic[6] state, the importance of student participation has been

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[5] Actors are defined as faculty, administrators, Boards of Trustees, segmental governing boards (e.g., public four-year colleges), and coordinating boards (state-run higher education commissions).

[6] Pseudonym has been attributed to the East Coast state researched in this case study.

recognized since the early 1970s, and today students serve a vital role to the Coordinating

Commission,[7] and in particular to the Secretary of Higher Education, in the capacity of a

Student Advisory Board. The extent of their powers, policy influence, and student

networking is unique, making this opportunity a national phenomenon.

The Student Advisory Board, established in 1988 after the reorganization of

Atlantic Higher Education Coordinating Commission,[8] is a standing committee of

students who serve to review higher education proposals, select a Student Commissioner

to the state's Coordinating Commission, and make policy recommendations on current

higher education topics (Anonymous, personal communication, October 16, 2002).[9] In

agreement with the *Bylaws*[10] (Higher Education Coordinating Commission, 1998), the

Board serves to "advise the concerns, perspectives, and experiences of students of

institutions of higher education" and "for the purpose to reviewing such matters as

referred by the Commission or the Secretary of Higher Education for their consideration

and advice." Hence, students serve multiple policy, legislative, and advisory roles, acting

in the best interest of their institutions, their fellow students, and higher education as a

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[7] "Coordinating Commission is defined as a statewide higher education agency in charge of academic program and accreditation approval, operating and capital budgets, and establishment of guidelines for tuition and fees" (State Board for Higher Education, 1976, p. 1)

[8] Higher Education Coordinating Commission is from here on out referred to as the Coordinating Commission.

[9] A student committee was founded in 1976, but the Board explored in this case study was officially founded after the Higher Education Reorganization Act of 1988, expanding the already existing student structure in the state.

[10] See Appendix A for a full *Bylaws* document.

whole. Furthermore, they continuously[11] seek out institutional administrators, student government representatives, general student body, and faculties to gather an up-to-date list of policy concerns, unaddressed issues, and to get feedback on current higher education policies (Anonymous, personal communication, October 16, 2002). Due to this range of duties, the Board members selected are committed to their campus community and are recognized by their institutions as student leaders.

Although the Student Advisory Board has been in place for fifteen years, we have no empirical research on the meaning of the experience to the participants, and how that meaning can inform our understanding of leadership development in the context of the relational model of leadership. The purpose of this case study is to alleviate this gap of knowledge through an informed understanding of leadership development and the meaning that the Student Advisory Board experience has to its student leaders. The central research question is: *How does the experience at the Student Advisory Board create meaning to Board members in their leadership development?*

The qualitative inquiry used is a case study methodology. The case study was conducted through a series of individual interviews and focus group sessions with five student participants, Board observations, journal reflections, and informative meetings with Coordinating Commission staff. Once collected, data were organized through a paper and electronic storage systems, cross-examined through a coding and memoing system, and presented to the participants for member checks as well as to the research community through peer analysis. The data analyzed served to explore students' backgrounds, their role within the Board, lessons learned from this experience, and the

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[11] The session lasted from October until April.

meaning the experiences had on their leadership development as individuals/student leaders.

Adopting the relational model of leadership as the theoretical premise of the case study, leadership is defined as a "relational process of people together attempting to accomplish change or make a difference to benefit the common good" (Komives, Lucas, McMahon, 1998, p. 11). The assumptions associated with the model are:

- Leaders are made, not born.

- Anyone can be a leader.

- Leadership can be both positional and nonpositional.

- Leadership carries a sense of civic responsibility, upholding an obligation as part of a community (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon).

- Leadership is about I - understanding oneself, you - understanding of others, and we - understanding the community, working as a team to accomplish a goal. (Buber, 1958)

Over the course of the Student Advisory Board session students experienced diversity, were engaged in group dynamics, and adopted roles[12] that enhanced their learning about how to work in a heterogeneous environment; listen to, respect, and understand opposing viewpoints; and collaborate in the decision-making process and project execution. As the session progressed, students learned the value of collective thinking through inclusiveness, empowerment, purposeful, process-oriented, and ethical

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[12] Roles include: information seeker, opinion seeker, opinion giver, summarizer, clarifier, gatekeeper, encourager, mediator, and follower (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998).

group dynamics (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998)[13] and that goals can be accomplished and objectives reached when Board members work as a team. Through open discussions, students not only came away with tangible leadership skills on how to work in diverse groups, multitask, and create education policy, but also made meaning on who they are as individuals, as student leaders, and as public servants. Their leadership development within this unique environment meant self-discovery and citizenship (Haas & Tamarkin, 1992).

By exploring the perception students have in a Student Advisory Board on their leadership development and the meaning it has on their individual identity as student leaders, this case brings an understanding of the importance of statewide-level higher education student involvement, not only as a public policy experience, but as a leadership development opportunity. To fully understand this authentic leadership opportunity, the following questions have been explored:[14]

- How do students adjust to the Student Advisory Board leadership role having previously served at campus wide positions?

- What experiences and leadership skills do student members bring to the Board?

- What is their understanding of student leadership and public service (theoretical perspective of the organization)?

- How do they view their own leadership as institutional representatives and public servants of students at-large?

- How does this experience in the Board impact their leadership development?

- What is the meaning of this experience to the members?

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[13] Terminology has been adopted from the relational model of leadership development.

[14] See Appendix D for the full list of focus group and interview questions.

These questions center around the theme of leadership development bounded in this unique public service experience.

The purpose of this case study is to examine the responses to the above questions in order to understand the meaning of the overall experience. The case study also serves to provide a perspective to state policy makers in higher education on student leadership development at the state level. Through this case study I seek to gain an understanding of the students' leadership backgrounds, students' roles at the Board, the Board's impact on their leadership development, and their outlook on public service. Furthermore, I contribute to the new theoretical concept, the relational model of leadership development. Finally, the study contributes to the existing research on the strategies that state-level higher education coordinating bodies can use to engage higher education students in the policy-making process.

History of Student Activism & Engagement in Higher Education Policy

College students have historically played an integral part in the higher education community, but their involvement in extracurricular activities was limited to special-interest roles, such as departmental clubs, Greek life, athletics, and symbolic positions on university curriculum boards, usually nonvoting. Nonetheless, these extracurricular roles, although limited to college premises, played an important role in students' development as individuals and citizens. The extracurricular activities served as an outlet for the student's voice, creativity, and abilities. Extracurricular activities also symbolized the inner culture and values of both the student population and the institutions of higher learning. As Rudolph (1966) reflected on the student activism in higher education:

> The most sensitive barometer of what is going on at a college is the extra-curriculum. It is the instrument of change, the instrument with which generations

> of students, who possess the college for but a few years, register their values, often fleetingly, yet perhaps indelibly. It is the agency that identifies their enthusiasm, their understanding of what a college should be, their preferences.… It is the measure of their growth. (p. 53)

Over the course of the twentieth century, extracurriculum activities have indeed changed, revolutionizing the students' role in higher education, leading to a more diverse system of academic programs, a range of student affairs activities and support mechanisms, and an overall emphasis on student empowerment. Today, higher education provides not only an academic venue, but also an opportunity for civic and social benefits that lead to a successful life of achievement and citizenship (State Department of Education, 1955). These benefits include community service opportunities, internships, student government associations, cultural organizations, and equal-gender athletics. However, to expand on the newly defined role of extracurricular activities, political empowerment opportunities should be included as the means of educating students to be public servants and community advocates.

As echoed by 1960s historians, students should be involved in higher education policymaking both on and off campus and should be given voting power not only on curriculum committees but in administration and intra-institutional boards, "Every college and university ought to include voting student members" (Eddy, 1966, p. 169). Eddy explains, "They [students] are full participants, not just receiving but continually giving. They can be encouraged to give in a much deeper dimension. Student participation, with the fresh point of view it brings, is highly desirable" (p. 170). Students, although present in the higher education community for only few short years at the time, provided a new perspective on policy, education, and politics, and their commitment to their institutions and fellow students can be a powerful integration tool

between the students and the university. As Eddy concludes, "…genuine student involvement in the formation of educational policy offers the best hope of regaining the lost concept of an academic community. The result of student involvement in the formation of educational policy may well be the emergence of a new sense of academic community, possibly something quite different from what we have known before" (pp. 169-171).

The Student Advisory Board of the Atlantic State Higher Education Coordinating Commission is one such example of student empowerment through public policymaking. As a branch of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, the Student Advisory Board gives college students an opportunity to serve a year on a statewide level, advising the Secretary of Higher Education, making recommendations on education policy, and selecting the student commissioner, who serves as a bridge between the Advisory Board and the Coordinating Commission. This opportunity, open to all colleges, universities, and professional institutes in the state, gives students an official leadership post where they can voice their opinions, learn from other students, and expand their own development as public servants and citizens. However, to understand the magnitude of this phenomenon, it is important to grasp the evolution of student activism over the twentieth century and its impact on the Atlantic state.[15]

1800s

The nineteenth century was symbolized by the expansion of extracurricular activities from traditional honor and Greek-letter societies to student-advocate interest

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[15] There is minimal research available on the historical development of statewide student boards. Thus, the historical elements are derived from the existing research on student governments, on-campus student councils/committees, and on the role of students in joint college committees/Boards of Trustees.

groups in particular, the student government (McGrath, 1970). The new advocate groups

created an opportunity for undergraduate and graduate students to take a direct, active

role in their education through student college councils, graduate managers in charge of

graduate on-campus social activities, and self-governing boards (Carr, 1959; McKown,

1944). Institutions that offered these opportunities were postcolonial liberal art colleges

(McGrath) such as Oberlin College (circa 1933), known for the first student government

association, which provided students with an opportunity to participate in institutional

management (Carr). However, the first student governments, both in Oberlin and other

liberal colleges, were limited to:

> Orientation of new students, the controlling of student conduct, the ordering of
> campus social life, the sponsoring of self-help program, the enriching of religious
> life, the providing and management of athletic programs for men and women, the
> regulating of certain fraternity and sorority activities, the chartering of clubs and
> societies, the supporting and regulating of the college newspaper, magazine,
> handbook, and annual, and the encouraging and controlling of music, forensic,
> and dramatic organizations. (Hand, 1938, p. 7)

The 19th century development of student government symbolized students'

acceptance into the governance of higher education and the embracing of the Wisconsin

idea of social service and student engagement into the community of which they are a

part. As John Bascom, president of the University of Wisconsin (circa 1877), believed,

service and education go hand in hand (Lucas, 1994). Furthermore, he encouraged

institutions to focus on preparing students to be community and civic agents and engage

their "resources and energies directly in the search for solutions to public problems"

(Lucas, p. 175). Although the resolutions to public problems [from the students'

perspective] were often limited to on-campus social, religious, and support services, it

created an outlet for students to gain training in governance, teamwork, political debate, and leadership (Lynn, 1957).

1900-1920s

The acceptance of students into the education public policy realm of higher education was in its developmental stages at the turn of the 20th century. As World War I concluded, the sentiments on American campuses began to change towards student political activism through a student personnel movement that began to incorporate leadership development into college missions statements, providing both curricular and cocurricular venues through which leadership concepts could be integrated (Chickering & Reisser, 1993).[16] The key element of the student personnel movement, in regard to students' public policy and political activism, was embracement of the collegiate theory of academic government, "a theory of government which ostensibly rests on the basic democratic principle that all who are affected by the government should have a voice in determining its policies and choosing its officers" (McGrath, 1970, p. 48). The collegiate theory exposed the need for student governments as well as student presence in governing and coordinating boards. As Cronin (in Wren, 1995, chap. 5) examines, the collegiate theory also called for value-driven extracurricular activities that would provide students with leadership skills such as time management, self-worth, understanding of others, and citizenship.

According to Vaccaro's (in Vaccaro & Covert, 1969) article "The New Student Subculture and the Search for Meaning," the student climate in the early 20th century college campuses was marked by the evolution of extracurricular activities towards a

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[16] Over the course of the 19th century this role was designated for research and graduate programs.

collegiate community. However, Vaccaro cautioned that the new collegiate environment was not inviting to student-faculty relations, which have historically been strained, in his opinion. The reluctance to accept students in the higher education policymaking was further echoed by Theodore Farris (in Vaccaro & Covert), who warned that students will continue to win increasing control over personal aspects of their lives and would soon demand university-wide control that could endanger the existing system.

Although students enjoyed membership rights to college student governments, their presence on the Board of Trustees was virtually nonexistent. According to McGrath (1970), "The officers of student organizations enjoyed neither the right to nor the responsibility for collaboration with the faculty in determining academic purposes, policies, or practices" (p. 19). In his study on student participation in governing boards, Earl McGrath found that in the first half of the 20th century only two percent of the 175 surveyed institutions in the United States had voting students on the Board of Trustees and segmental boards. And, as McGrath points out, even when students did participate, they were asked to withdraw on sensitive matters. As McGrath further stated, students were not given sufficient resources to voice their opinions and build valuable citizenship:

> Since students far more than any other persons are where the educational action is in the classroom, they are better informed about educational substance and processes. The significance of higher education in the life of the average educated American would doubtless be increased if students sat on committees which determine the character and content of instruction." (p. 55)

McGrath concluded his findings by stating that student participation in higher education "might help in restoring some sense of unity and meaning" (p. 55).

"Student activism in the 1920s, as at other periods, was limited to particular groups in the student body and to specific campuses" (Altbach, 1974, p. 20). During this

period, student activism was primarily concentrated in large universities in the Northern

regions, as their liberal views created a culture of activism. Students' participation in

higher education, although limited to college campuses, provided a valuable stepping-

stone for future student activism. The highest education institution most successful in

opening leadership opportunities to students was the Antioch College in Yellow Springs,

Ohio, which in 1926 under the leadership of Arthur Morgan, established a community

government that gave students the opportunity to govern quality-of-life matters

(McGrath, 1970).

Arthur Morgan, director of the Tennessee Valley Authority, believed that

"colleges ought to use the period of higher education in students' lives to prepare the

students for the intelligent discharge of their future civic responsibilities in the larger

society" (McGrath, 1970, pp. 22-23). As Morgan became the president of Antioch

University, he proposed that students should be involved not only in student government

and on-campus extracurricular activities, but also in community government comprised

of faculty, administrators, student representatives, and community members. He believed

that students should take responsibility for their own college career, participate, and

formulate education policy (McGrath). Morgan's idea of balancing college life and civic

responsibility set a precedent for an expansion in student leadership development through

nontraditional ways such as internships, research assistantships, community service, and

higher education governing boards. Further, Morgan's revolutionary approach to student

development empowered other institutions to follow.[17]

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[17] Institutions that expanded extracurricular opportunities beyond the campus included
Harvard, University of Chicago, Columbia University, and Johns Hopkins University
(McGrath, 1970).

The expansion of the traditional extracurricular activities into civic opportunities was a revolutionary concept and one often not embraced by the higher education community. According to historian Earl McGrath (1970), the society was not ready for student empowerment through governing boards, due to their sentiment "that the constituent governing groups are satisfied with what they have and fear that their autonomy will be divided or destroyed if they share it with students" (p. 28). In fact, McGrath goes on to say that "the lack of student involvement can be attributed to the desire of administrators and faculty members to preserve the existing system" (p. 28). Traditionally, student involvement in the governing boards was limited to student affairs, life, or welfare; the selection of the president; and the design of the campus and its structures (McGrath). Although Morgan's philosophy on student development was embraced by elite Northeast institutions, in the majority of higher education institutions students continued to serve traditional roles. Even with the universalism of student government associations, the students' place in the higher education community remained secondary (McGrath).

In the Atlantic state, the student involvement reflected McGrath's findings; meaning their participation was limited to campus-focused student activities. According to the State Board for Higher Education (1978) report, the Janney Commission of 1924 formed a College Commission designed to coordinate institutional finances, preparatory programs, and standards of quality; however, it made a provision to limit participation by students feeling that college youth should not participate in the higher education policy.

The turn of the 20th century was marked by the expansions of on-campus support services, honor programs, and the emergence of student government associations. Due to

limited presence of students at statewide [and institutional] boards, students increasingly became involved with the sociopolitical movements that dominated the national scene (Klopf, 1960). As one observer stated, "Students accepted the society as it was, and looked forward... to becoming its leaders" (Feuer, 1969, p. 335).

1930s

The organization instrumental in this shift toward student *political* leadership was the National Intercollegiate Socialist Society. As historian Schnell (1976) points out, "The founding of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society in 1905 was a landmark in the history of student activism in American higher education. For the first time, a national organization, not linked to religious societies, was established to work among and with university students on a wide range of social and political issues" (p. 221). The Intercollegiate Socialist Society was a liberal radical organization, a catalyst for the 1930s student movement. Unlike the religious associations, the Intercollegiate Society believed in student empowerment through governance (Lipset, 1971) and created multiple leadership opportunities for undergraduate students, as well as research grants for the graduate students. For example, in the late 1920s, the Intercollegiate Socialists created one of the first student-governed councils [National Socialist Student Council] in American higher education, giving undergraduate and graduate students voting powers on the Society's national political agenda (Schnell). Soon after the Society gave voting powers to its youth activists, the students from major universities began to open Intercollegiate on-campus chapters, a total of seventy nationwide, and hold campus forums on the issues of free speech and assembly [in higher education institutions], national social welfare [the New Deal], and civil liberties [women's rights and

immigration policies] (Lipset). The largest chapters were founded in America's elite institutions such as Yale, Columbia, Harvard, and City College of New York (Schnell).

As the Great Depression swept away the Jazz Age and economic prosperity, students across American higher education campuses continued to turn toward radical liberalism for the answers to their own socioeconomic [after college] futures. Empowered by the student participation through campus forums and chapters, the Intercollegiate Socialist Society renamed itself the League of Industrial Democracy and created two outlets for college student governance, the National Student Forum and the National Student Federation of America (Schnell, 1976). As one national political journal, *New Student*, noted, the League further empowered college students by giving them full governance over the two new branches and by encouraging students to take control over their extracurricular activities and to form campus political enclaves that would continue youth discussions on national issues (Altbach, 1974).

Aside from these radical student groups, students also had more mainstream outlets. Two earlier moderate organizations were the National Student Federation of America and the American Youth Congress, both founded in 1925 for the purpose of bringing student leaders across the country together for the annual conferences on world affairs, sociopolitical, and higher education issues (Brax, 1980). These organizations, which had chapter representations in all major universities including the Atlantic state, fought for a student free press by working with the Office of Education to create a Federal Youth Service that would provide a student voice in sociopolitical topics. Due to the organizations' moderate ideology, their appeal drew a membership of over 1.5 million nationwide in their first year alone (Brax).

Another powerful moderate outlet was the National Self-Government Committee, Inc., established in the early 1930s for the purpose of linking all existing institutional student governments under one national umbrella (Altbach, 1974). The committee served to unify student government associations, sociopolitical organizations on campuses, and student councils for the purpose of creating a network of student leaders. With a membership of over one million students, the National Self-Government Committee, Inc. provided annual conferences, higher education policy forums, and symposia on the national sociopolical climate (Altbach).

"As emotions rose throughout higher education institutions, the need to publicly voice opinions increased" (Brax, 1980, p. 19). Due to ineligibility of students to vote, "students did not affect actual political decision-making;" thus they voiced their views through "all sorts of protests, demonstrations…" (Brax, p. 19). Although most institutions faced student protests, some colleges and universities created another outlet for student voice – forums and conferences. Two examples of such political activism were at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and Smith College.

As world affairs began to consume students' political interests, universities and colleges became the forefront of political discussion. As one student stated in the *Student Outlook* national newspaper, "We [can] see no way of separating a student movement from the wider political and economic movement in behalf of which it was organized" (Brax, 1980, p. 70). The precedent was set by University of California, Los Angeles (circa 1932), which addressed students' need for political outlet through a series of anti-war seminars and forums entitled "Peace and Disarmament," allowing students to communicate with faculty and community leaders (Brax). Smith College, following

UCLA's example, created its own conferences open to both students and faculty, addressing socioeconomic and international issues of the time. As the president of Smith College stated, addressing a room of students and faculty in 1934, "Peace cannot be achieved by an act of Congress, you must sit at these conferences" (Brax, p. 36).

In the Atlantic state, the student movement reflected that of the nation through a series of multicampus antiwar protests. The most significant institution in these student protests was a small, private, urban college, School without Boundaries,[18] that allowed students to have open forums tackling such issues as working conditions in factories, disengagement of students from the voting process, and the need for unification of student leaders from across the state's normal schools/teacher colleges (Brax, 1980). Although students did not have an official public support system, these forums, protests, and demonstrations created a sense of student empowerment and increased student involvement not only in national political organizations, but also in on-campus student government associations, special interest groups, and support services (Brax; Schnell, 1976).

However, as the United States entered World War II, student membership in these liberal and moderate self-governing student councils began to decline. In fact, the political liberal on-campus groups that once had over sixty members had dropped in participation to less than twenty by the early 1940s (Schnell, 1976). Altbach (1974) explains:

> American student activism is marked by both continuity and change. On one hand, there are political, cultural, and ideological currents which can be seen throughout the history of student activism; on the other hand, specific

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[18] A pseudonym adopted in this case study for the purpose of protecting institutional identity.

organizations have often been short-lived and activist movements have often disappeared when the particular issue which concerned them was resolved. (p. 7)

Although students still carried their convictions on internal socioeconomic issues, their time commitment turned away from political participation and toward the war efforts, marking the end of the first student movement to empower students through political and education policy discourse.

1940-1950s

As World War II concluded in 1945, new opportunities flourished on American campuses, once again engaging students in extracurricular activities, and more significantly, into nontraditional roles first developed around World War I.[19] According to Carr (1959), there were four main post-World War II factors that influenced the re-development and expansion of student presence in higher education public policy:

1. Increased number of veterans entering higher education, indirectly creating an expansion of two-year institutions;

2. Recognition of students as whole persons by the student personnel professionals creating an expansion of the access to social and citizenship-building activities;

3. Students' concern for American democracy; and

4. Greater interest in student participation in college wide committees and the "increased student interest in sharing in the operation of the institution." (p. 11)

The four forces resulted in an expansion of higher education institutions, working relationship between students and deans, and redirection of student activities towards

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[19] Nontraditional opportunities include participation in community service, presence in the governing boards, participation in political organizations, and broad engagement within the student governing associations.

leadership development, expansion of student government, and politically oriented organizations (Carr).

As American students who served in the war returned to campuses, they took advantage of the G.I. Bill of Rights of 1944 (Goodchild & Wechsler, 1997), which have them an opportunity to free higher education, thus marking the period of higher education expansion, a Golden Age (Freeland in Goodchild & Wechsler). In this postwar era, the primary concerns of higher education were its role in the society at large, its development from elite to mass higher education, as well as its renewed emphasis on students as citizens.[20] However, the change to a participatory student climate was slow, reflecting past struggles in the post-World War I era. Although American campuses of the 1940s enjoyed diverse extracurricular activities such as honor and Greek organizations, sports clubs, and student government associations, the role of students in governing and coordinating boards continued to be limited to nonvoting positions. The reasons for such slow development of student presence in governing and coordinating boards of higher education can be attributed to the philosophical paradigm in higher education in which students were seen as immature youth, whose judgment through four years of college education was not enough experience to engage in complex education policy (McKown, 1944). Both faculty and administrators have long believed that students' brief stay is not sufficient to acquire a full perspective of the structure and function of higher education

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[20] As a result of the G.I. Bill of 1944, thousands of servicemen began returning to higher education, and demanding the expansion of admissions in America's colleges and universities. Thus, the central question became who should have access to higher education as well as what students' role should be on campuses. The Zook commission, founded in the late 1940s, fought to expand diversity and access to higher education and demanded greater emphasis on mass education and encouraged development of students as citizens (Goodchild & Wechsler).

(Altbach, 1974; McGrath, 1970). Moreover, the two larger entities, faculty and administrators, saw student involvement as interfering with their academics, causing students to feel overwhelmed with responsibilities.

However, the supporters of students' voice in policy affairs claimed that students are an important part of the larger society, reflective of its values, beliefs, and sociopolitical sentiments, and that, more importantly, students are the "raw material" of higher education, who throughout their stay receive a liberal education creating new perspectives and deeper understandings of the society in which they function (Demerath, Stephens, & Taylor, 1967). Furthermore, students themselves believed "that if they had a proper role in academic government, an important dimension would be added to their education and an indispensable element to their preparation for effective citizenship" (McGrath, 1970, p. 54).

The renewed pressure from students and student affairs professionals to create a collegiate atmosphere on campuses, as well as to recognize students as whole individuals, created change in the culture and inclusion of students into academic, administrative, and political affairs (Carr, 1959). Traditionally, students throughout American higher education history had minimal involvement in the governance of their institutions or the public policy that governed their colleges (McGrath, 1970). As Rudolph (1966) provocatively stated, "College students constitute the most neglected, least understood element of the American academic community" (p. 47). Like other historians of this time period, Rudolph and McGrath recognized that students are an integral part of higher education and that their past political movements were not "fads," rather, they were chapters reflective of American sociopolitical history. As McGrath concluded, "Many

students believe that if any significant reforms in educational objectives and procedures are to be accomplished, the conventional government of institutions must be so altered as to give students an influential role in the formulation of institutional policies" (p. 4).

The role of students in the post-World War II era began to change as a result of education policy reports that demanded an expansion of student services as well as leadership opportunities. One of the most significant reports was a list of recommendations set forth by the American Council for Education in 1947, which stated that higher education must provide extracurricular venues for students' development, both as individuals and as citizens. The report urged colleges and universities to create activities that would enhance students' civic achievement and growth (American Council for Education). As the American Council for Education report concluded, "It is well recognized today that students require more than classroom instruction and academic assignments for their all-around development" (p. 235).

The renewed pressure for student involvement in higher education policies was further echoed by the 1959 Alden Carr report published on behalf of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) entitled *Student Participation in College Policy Determination and Administration*. Based on the AACTE research of 186 institutions nation-wide, Carr found that less than two percent of student governments, councils, or committees had voting rights within their campuses.[21] The number was especially reduced within joint councils, be that on the campus or segmental

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[21] A finding similar to Earl McGrath's study on pre-World War II student governance in higher education.

levels (Carr). As the result of the study, Carr suggested four channels of student

participation in higher education public policy:

1. The student council – "a regularly established policy determining and/or

   administrative body composed entirely of students" (p. 14);

2. The joint councils – policy determining bodies comprised of faculty,

   administrators, and students;

3. Student committees – student council with a supervisory advisor. The committee

   would have subgroups and would focus on a specific matter/concern; and

4. Joint committees – same as joint council except that the powers would be specific

   to an issue.[22]

The experience in such councils and committees "gives students a chance not only to

learn the democratic processes but to experiment with them" (Klopf, 1960, p. 47).

Furthermore, they provide students with broad leadership outcomes such as:

- To establish a cooperative system of government with the faculty and

  administrators;

- To give the students a part in decision-making;

- To give students an opportunity to share in the management;

- To cooperate with the community in promoting the welfare of the institution;

- To develop and promote self-discipline and cooperation;

- To create interest and a true spirit of democracy;

- To provide an agency for training in democratic citizenship; and

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[22] Depending on the institution, students would or would not have voting powers on specific policy-making decisions, and their decisions will be weighted against those of other higher education actors, depending on the liberty an institution is giving to its students (Carr, 1959).

- To give students opportunities for self-direction. (Carr, 1959; Kirkendall & Zeran, 1953; Klopf)

"The basic objective of students participating in the administration of an institution is to help them gain skills of citizenship" (Klopf, p. 47). Thus, "students must be given opportunities to assume responsibility in the college scene if they are going to develop leadership. Responsibilities must be related to the actual function training of the college as well as in those areas usually thought of as student activities" (pp. 29-30).

The two reports, the American Council for Education and the AACTE, were significant sets of recommendations of the 1940s and 1950s "Gold Age" era, calling for the redefinition of extracurricular activities and direct participation of students in the joint committees on campuses, as well as governing and coordinating boards. They encouraged higher education institutions to expand the traditional extracurricular activities towards leadership and participatory governance of students in American colleges and universities. As Miller (in Hanson, 1982) suggests, the primary function of higher education is to provide "deliberate development of students" (p. 5) and as the result develop mature individuals, citizens, and public servants (Klopf, 1960).

1960s

"Groups dedicated to change either within society, or more commonly within the university have been relatively frequent among the undergraduate population" (Lipset, 1971, p. 126). However, as students became re-engaged in student governments, their demands for shared governance in higher education increased. The traditional lack of shared governance by the administration (Linowitz, 1970) raised tensions between students and universities. This clash of youth and the administration created a perfect

political environment in which to demonstrate the need to reform higher education governance structure (Report of the President's Commission on Campus Unrest, n. d., p. 189).

With the external support of such organizations as the National Student Association, the International Student Service, and United States Student Assembly (Lipset, 1971), students began to mobilize via written communication and conferences on such issues as Civil Rights, war in Vietnam, and the students' role on America's campuses. The National Student Association (NSA), the largest of the three student organizations mentioned above, was a student-run liberal organization comprised of nationwide student government association members. NSA, as did other national organizations, encouraged students to actively mobilize on campuses via chapters, rallies, and forums, and become engaged in sociopolical changes taking place on the national scene (Altbach, 1974).

As the civil rights national movement and higher education desegregation evolved, the New Left resurfaced encouraging students to fight not only for equality but for civil liberties (Kerr, 1970). As the free speech movement developed, the students began to mobilize on different political and social issues. One of the major manifestations of the student movement and the turning point in student activism was at the University of California, Berkeley.

In 1963, the American Civil Liberties Union issued the "Academic Freedom and Civil Liberties of Students in Colleges and Universities Statement" in which the Union acknowledged that students have the freedom of political activism, "The student government, student organizations, and individual students should be free to discuss, pass

resolutions, distribute leaflets, circulate petitions, and take other lawful action respecting any matter which directly or indirectly concerns or affects them" (Kauffman, 1966, p. 148). However, many higher education institutions felt otherwise. On September 16, 1964, officials at Berkeley banned the off-campus assembly of political activists, as well as the national student organizations (Phillips, 1985, p. 161). This move against the student body sparked a two-day sit-in at the administration building, sponsored by the Free Speech Movement (FSM) (Report of the President's Commission on Campus Unrest, 1970, p. 22). Orchestrated under Mario Savio, the president of FSM (Lucas, 1994), students gathered to protest against administrative control over freedom of speech, assembly, and political affiliation. The protest ended when the administration's activated police force arrested demonstrators, including Savio. Enraged by the events, the student movement escalated, reaching deadly proportions at Kent State University and Jackson State (Lucas).

The incident at Berkeley was a breaking point for students. Influenced by the liberal faculty and national student organizations, the student movement spread throughout the country standing up for civil rights, and liberties, as well as protesting America's involvement in Vietnam and Cambodia (Philips, 1985). As students from Texas University at Austin observed, "Since Berkeley… a new revolution has been under way, a revolution led by a new type of student activist who seeks to balance the weight of power in the academic community equally between the student and the administration. It is a revolt not merely for civil liberties, but for complete academic freedom" (Philips, p. 183). The incident at Berkeley not only marked the presence of students in the national

sociopolical scene, but also the "grand idealistic experience that empowered students to independent voice" (Kristol, 1966, p. 8).

One of the breakthroughs in pro-student reasoning came from Earl McGrath (1970), who, reflecting on the student activist movement of the 1960s, wrote:

> Students' preoccupations suggest that they could be more thoughtfully effective than their predecessors is taking part in the reform of higher education. In contrast to earlier generations, today's students have a more serious and informed interest in the social, economic, racial, political, and international problems of their age. They have also become sensitively conscious of the potential therapeutic value of education in curing the ills of an ailing humanity. Unlike the teachers and parents of an earlier time, those of the seventies cannot rightly complain about the social, political, or intellectual apathy of most college and university students. In fact, the current complaint is not about lethargy, but the reverse, activism! Students are now concerned about the relationship between the exercises of the classroom, the library, and the laboratory, on the one hand, and their own existence and the conditions of life generally, on the other. (pp. 52-53)

Due to students' increased involvement, students have begun to demand a more active role in higher education decision-making processes on campus and at interinstitutional levels.

As Crane specifies, it is the movements of the 1960s that served as a wake-up call to the higher education system implying the need for an increased participation by students. As a result, students have become a part of the collegiate system. "Student governance and issues of student freedom have evolved as faculty and university solidified an organization and a system, developed traditions and a culture – a collegiate way of life – and above all, set standards for behavior related to the image of a gentleman, a man of intellect and reason, all of which seemed to be required by the needs of the times" (Crane in Vaccaro & Covert, 1969, p. 54).

In the Atlantic state, the post-1960s period was one of higher education structural reform in which student governance was an omitted element. According to the interview

with the higher education historian Joe Smith (personal communication, April 23, 2003),

the students' role in higher education administration both on campus and on an

interinstitutional level did not become visible until the 1970s. Although students were

actively engaged in student governments, on-campus organizations, and had national

affiliations with political parties, their voice did not travel past the fliers, antiwar forums,

and demonstration rallies. However, as the state expanded its higher education in 1963,

under the Curlett Commission (The State Board for Higher Education, 1978) into a

tripartite system,[23] the need for student empowerment on the statewide level increased

(State Board for Higher Education, October, 1976).

1970s

The evolution of students' presence in higher education governance has expanded

from traditional honor and Greek affiliations to student government associations (that

oversaw honor codes, organizational finances, and participated in the national political

affiliations). Through the 20th century movements of the 1930s and 1960s, the

importance of students in higher education governance and public policy was elevated.

By the 1970s, higher education institutions had expanded extracurricular activities and

support programs such as financial aid, counseling, and orientation. In addition, most

colleges and universities began creating student positions on presidential/administrative

councils, board of trustees, and segmental (e.g., community colleges) associations. It was

a time when students gained statewide recognition by higher education governing and

coordinating boards, who created regional and advisory student boards, allowing both

undergraduate and graduate students to voice their opinions on educational policy.

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[23] A tripartite system includes the public university system, a college segment of former normal schools, and a segment for community colleges.

In 1973, the Atlantic state governor created a twenty-seven member coordinating board comprised of state's business, higher education, and community representatives responsible for heading a task force on higher education restructuring (State Board for Higher Education, October, 1976). The coordinating board, the State Board for Higher Education, aided by the segmental advisory committee comprised of faculty, student, and community members, served five major purposes:

1. Academic program approval;

2. Review of operating budgets and capital budgets;

3. Approval of accreditation;

4. Establishment of guidelines for tuition and fees for faculty and academic salary; and

5. Aid to nonpublic institutions. (p. 1)

However, their primary purpose was to restructure the complex system comprised of 119 institutions (State Board for Higher Education, November, 1976). The board, with the help of the segmental advisory committee, was able to successfully restructure (simplify) the system into a tripartite system. The result was the 1976 Higher Education Reorganization Act dividing higher education into three segments: four-year public, four-year private, and community colleges (State Board for Higher Education, November, 1976, p. 1).

As the higher education structural system reorganized, so did the coordinating board, creating for the first time a full administrative body designed to align programs, disseminate the budget, and coordinate the higher education mission. In addition, this coordinating body had the power to unite and work with all segments of higher education

(State Board for Higher Education, November, 1976). By maintaining a strong bond with the state legislature through regular addresses on budgetary issues, a partnership was established between the state and its higher education.

Another result of the Coordinating Board administrative expansion and positive relationship with the state was the passage of Senate Bill 347 (State Board for Higher Education, October, 1976). Under SB347, the Coordinating Board was given the power to create a comprehensive master plan outlining the major areas the coordinating board intends to work on as well as the expectation the state has for its public and private institutions. Secondly, the bill called for an appointment of the higher education secretary, who was to serve in the governor's cabinet as a permanent member. As the Senate Bill 347 reads, [It] "offers to the segments and the new State Board for Higher Education an opportunity to work together toward development of a post secondary education system that will provide quality education to the citizens of the State" (p. 2).

The final result of Senate Bill 347 was the establishment of the first Student Advisory Committee on November 5, 1976, a body of nine student members, designed to "assess issues pertaining to students" and "to have the opportunity to report directly to the Board periodically" (State Board for Higher Education, October 1976, p. 5). The nine students were nominated by their institutions and selected by the segmental boards. Those selected made up the higher education spectrum: two from private universities, two from the public universities, two from state colleges, two from community colleges, and one from a historically black college.

Between 1976 and 1978, the Student Advisory Committee (SAC) held meetings at different institutions each month for the purpose of allowing student governments and

their representatives to get involved in the state government through open political

discussions. In order to increase interest by the general student body, SAC issued a

special meeting inviting all institutional student government presidents to participate

(State Board for Higher Education, 1979a). In addition, the Student Advisory Committee

(SAC) aided the State Board for Higher Education by writing reports and

recommendations on such issues as a study of the increasing cost of textbooks,

recommendations to improve student voter registration and participation, and the

expansion of remedial programs for students (State Board for Higher Education, 1979c).

One of the primary examples of SAC's involvement in state politics was through a

support of the funding initiative, the Senatorial Scholarship, a financial grant awarded to

merit high school students by the local senators in hope of aiding students in their tuition

payments. In 1979, the Student Advisory Committee, headed by its chair, created a

comprehensive report outlining the need, its benefits, and the urgency of this form of

scholarship to the overall student financial aid package. According to the State Board for

Higher Education's monthly newsletter *Record* (1979c), "The Student Advisory

Committee developed a draft proposal of principles designed to amend the present

General State and Senatorial Scholarship Programs" (p. 2). The proposal, once it was

taken into consideration by the coordinating board, was addressed by its chair. The

Record prints, "He [the student chair] reported that a sub-committee had studied the

documents and information related to efforts over the past ten years to change a system

which has been criticized in the past" (p. 1). As a result of the active involvement of

SAC in the State Higher Education Coordinating Board meeting and state legislature,

higher education adopted the students' recommendations into a gradual transformation of

the financial aid plan, increasing the scholarship resources and financial aid packages for students (1979a).

In addition to policy and legislative initiatives, the Student Advisory Committee also encouraged strong political participation by making sure that student voices were heard across the state. Thus, in February 1979, sixty Student Government Association (SGA) presidents were invited to attend a legislative meeting with key legislative leaders, including President of the Senate and Speaker of the House, and to share their views on higher education policy. According to the *Report* (State Board for Higher Education, 1979b), the students' active involvement in the state government put the committee in the public spotlight and helped recognize students' efforts in public policy and unification of student government leaders across institutions.

By the end of 1979, the Student Advisory Committee began a process of expanding the role and composition of the Board through the creation of the independent student alliance, composed of all SGA leaders. The hope of the committee was to host a leadership conference that would serve to inform student governments on the ways in which to lobby for higher education. To ensure that the change could take place, the SAC chair created a resolution calling "for the membership to consist of all Student Government presidents from all two and four-year public and independent colleges and universities" (State Board for Higher Education, 1980a, p. 6). The hope was that SAC would expand to fifty members, thus creating a statewide network of student leaders. In addition, the resolution called for cooperation between the institutions and their segments. The State Board for Higher Education (1980a) not only accepted the resolution, but also called for the reconstruction of SAC bylaws, encouraging all

institutions to send their SGA presidents, and, if they do not have one, to have a student

leader sent to the Committee.

1980s

In the early 1980s, the Student Advisory Assembly began its new mission by

engaging all student leaders in financial and education issues such as financial aid,

student voting, formation of an international council for students, sponsoring of a retreat

for the general student population on topics of higher education, and testifying on

education bills impacting the institutional budgets and programs (State Board for Higher

Education, 1981, 1982). These new innovative student initiatives served to expand the

student governance at the state level and influence the general involvement of students in

public policy matters. As Downey (1981) stated:

> The impetus for the establishment of the [new] organization grew from three
> major situations. First, students realized that the traditional student government
> model of representation was ineffective… Second was the realization that higher
> education was no longer a funding priority in many state legislatures. Third,
> students realized that higher education was becoming more complex in its
> structure and that decisions were increasingly being made by professionals,
> particularly in the state capitals, removing from the campuses. (p. 85)

To ensure that the students' voice is not only heard, but is active in the state

governmental structure, the Student Advisory Committee (SAC) requested a name and

mission change from the Coordinating Board in hopes of expanding membership to all

student government leaders of higher education institutions (Downey).

By the end of 1980, a Coordinating Commission resolution was passed, officially

closing the Student Advisory Committee and adopting the Student Advisory Assembly as

the new advisory committee. The newly renamed committee, Student Advisory

Assembly (SAA), was comprised of student government presidents in hopes of opening

the lines of communication among 250,000 state students attending higher education institutions (State Board for Higher Education, 1980b). According to the *Record* (State Board for Higher Education), the intention was to have student leaders representative of the state at large. During its first year there were twenty-seven members.

By 1984, the student role in higher education was becoming very active, but its orientation toward the state legislature was distancing the relationship between the students and the State Board for Higher Education. Thus, in the fall of 1984, the State Coordinating Board for Higher Education voted to add a nonvoting student member that would serve on the coordinating board for a one-year term for the purpose of relaying information between the Student Advisory Assembly (SAA) and the State Board. To ensure the appointed student had familiarity with SAA, the chair of SAA was selected to also serve as the Coordinating Board nonvoting student member[24] (State Board for Higher Education, 1984).

Over the course of the mid-80s, the Student Advisory Assembly grew into a body of fifty students statewide, who met in the Capital City to discuss the issues facing higher education, as well as to discuss topics the student government associations were tackling. The students, although more mobilized, did not gain increasing rights within the bylaws of the advisory committee, and their involvement with the State Coordinating Commission decreased. By the late 1980s, the attendance in SAA began to decline and the overall structure of higher education coordinating administration underwent a major reform, the first since the 1970s.

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[24] The first student commissioner was a graduate student from a four-year public institution.

Under the 1988 Reorganization Act of Higher Education, the State Board, as created by the 1976 bylaws, was eliminated. In its place came a more powerful Coordinating Commission comprised of eleven members, including a student member (State Board for Higher Education, 1988). This new Coordinating Commission, like the one before it, was given the "authority to appoint a student advisory committee to make recommendations to the Board on the matters affecting them" (State Board for Higher Education, p. 6). According to the 1988 Code of the State, in article §11-106 "Advisory councils and Committees," the newly established Student Advisory Board was responsible for making reports and recommendations to the commission on the master plans and policy issues and to advise the Secretary of Higher Education, who would direct the students' role in the Statewide Higher Education Coordinating Commission. Furthermore, the committee was responsible for the selection of the next student commissioner and would serve as a forum for public policy issues. Thus, the Student Advisory Board was a standing committee of students who served to review higher education proposals, select a Student Commissioner to that state's Higher Education Commission, and make policy recommendations on current higher education topics.

1990s – The Emergence of the Student Advisory Board

According to the new Student Advisory Board's *Bylaws* (Higher Education Coordinating Commission, 2002), the Board serves to "advise the concerns, perspectives, and experiences of students of institutions of higher education" and "for the purpose to reviewing such matters as referred by the Commission or the Secretary of Higher Education for their consideration and advice."[25] As a newly revised forum for college

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[25] See Appendix A for the *Bylaws* document.

students, the Board's early years (1990-1993) were spent in educational sessions given by the Statewide Higher Education Coordinating Commission's staff on the higher education policy making, the legislative process, and the hot political issues (Booker, personal communication, April 23, 2003). Although students had an opportunity to testify on behalf of the Commission on issues directly impacting college students, the Board members wanted to create a Congressional student body made up of a couple of hundred student government representatives that would create legislation and propose it to the State's legislative body. The proposal, two years in the making, was rejected by the Commission, stating that the Board's requests went outside of the lawful jurisdiction assigned to them by the Reorganization Act of 1988 (Booker). Instead, the Board was encouraged to develop a mission statement that would reflect its lawful purpose "to advise the Commission and the Secretary of Higher Education" (Booker).

Over the course of the mid and late 1990s, the Board members worked together on the mission statement. With a new task at hand, the Board refocused its efforts towards the development of bylaws and policy recommendations. Due to the hard work of the Board, the student commissioner, and the advisor, SAB developed strong bylaws, and its policy recommendations on remedial education made a difference in higher education as they passed through the Coordinating Commission. The remedial education policy project called for the increased support of students through institution-based "transition" programs, change in type of data collected on remedial education [by the institutions], and standardization of community college entrance exams. The recommendations, according to former advisor Lola Booker (personal communication, April 23, 2003), showed the impact student collaboration, understanding of students in

higher education, and hard work can have. These recommendations, once passed by the

Commission, were sent to the legislature where they added significant weight to the other

similar proposals made by community colleges themselves. As one legislature stated,

"Student views are important and decisions are not made in a vacuum" (Booker, 2003).

Being recognized by the legislature and the Commission signified a new beginning of the

Student Advisory Board, one where the students' voice is heard and whose work is

focused on the Commission, higher education issues, and student empowerment though

institutional representation.

New Millennium – New Bylaws

Since no previous form of the Advisory Board had concrete mission statements,

the student Board members of the mid-1990s sessions solicited the support of [then]

student commissioner and the Board advisor, Lola Booker. The result was the 1998

Bylaws (see Appendix A). The *Bylaws* clearly stated the selection process, structure, and

function of the Board, making it more effective, efficient, and providing student members

with diverse leadership opportunities.

According to the *Bylaws* (Statewide Higher Education Coordinating Commission,

2002), each year Atlantic state's colleges and universities were to select student

representatives to the Board who the institutions felt had shown commitment to the

academic and cocurricular activities on campus, had a strong leadership background, and

were passionate about higher education policy (Booker, 2002). All institutions would be

encouraged to selected a representative in order to have a broad-based committee. Once

institutions select their representatives, the members would be formally appointed by the

Secretary of Higher Education to serve at the Board for seven months, from October to

April, meeting once a month at different higher education institutions to develop recommendations on a particular statewide policy, select the next Student Commissioner to the higher education Commission, and to share students' concerns in higher education institutions (Booker).

The structure of the Board is divided into three tiers: 1) the full board, made up of all institutional representatives; 2) an executive committee, comprised of the chair, vice-chair, secretary, treasurer, financial and education advisory students, and chairs of each segment; and 3) segmental groups representing the four-year public, four-year private, and community colleges. Although the executive committee leaders hold positional offices, their roles only extend to that of a coordinator of meeting places, agendas, and supervision of activities (Higher Education Commission, 2002). Furthermore, the Board operates under *Robert's Rules of Order* (Rozakis, 1994).[26] In practice, this translates into teamwork during the annual Board policy project [e.g., academic advising], selection of the next Student Commissioner, and assessment of top higher education budgetary and program agendas. As the language of the project outline (see Appendix B) states, students are expected to collaborate on data gathering, analysis, and recommendations on academic advising. The language of both the bylaws and the project outline indicate an expectation that students will be public servants working together on policy analysis and policy making to better both students and institutions in the entire state. As Verba (1961) pointed out in his book, *Small Groups and Political Behavior*, leaders with multiple tasks and a vast constituency have to learn how to debate, negotiate, and prioritize while

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[26] *The Robert's Rules of Order* (Rozakis, 1996) promotes parliamentary procedures as the means of coordinated organizational processes including majority vote, equal rights and privileges, equal obligations, protection of minority rights, order of motions, and consideration of one question at a time.

emphasizing teamwork and public service. Through the use of *Robert's Rules of Order*, it can be inferred that the Board members have the opportunity to build valuable leadership skills such as: 1) how to be effective institutional representatives; 2) how to debate; 3) how to gather and synthesize public opinion; 4) how to work in diverse teams and deal with group dynamics; 5) how to play versatile roles such as institutional representatives, segmental committee members, executive committee members, and statewide student representatives; and 6) how to be effective student leaders.

As students enter the Board, their first meeting is spent electing the executive committee, discussing the annual policy project topics,[27] and selecting meeting locations. Generally, the first meeting is the most attended meeting; thus, the pool from which the executive committee is chosen is representative of the Board at large. Each year, the election process differs – executive members might be self-selected or there might be multiple candidates. If there are multiple candidates, each student is given one minute to make a statement of why s/he should be in that position. After a few minutes, usually before the Board's lunch, students would be given voting papers on which they would write down the names of those they want on the executive committee. By the end of their lunch, the advisor would tabulate votes, and the winner would be announced. If there is a tie, a compromise is made that each individual would serve as a chair or co-chair of a segmental group. By the end of the first meeting, the Board would have elected its executive committee, which would serve the full session term.

In addition to the election process, the Board spends the second portion of the first meeting selecting their policy topic and location sites. Students are asked to generate a

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[27] The solicitation by credit card companies on campuses and education of students on the use of credit cards.

list of topics they would like to research and to create policy recommendations. Once the list is selected, students discuss issues and vote via majority hand vote. Should there be a tie, more discussion would occur or the advisor would select one of the top two choices. Towards the closing of the meeting, students volunteer to host one of the meetings. Considering the size of the state, students from the central part, near the Capital City, are given priority. This five-hour meeting is a crucial working session that determines the work, leadership, and locations of future meetings.

Over the course of the remaining sessions, students work on the selection of the next student commissioner and collaborate in their segmental groups for the purpose of creating surveys that would address a selected policy topic. As students collect data, they team up and create segmental reports, later on (in April) merging them into one Board report filled with recommendations, background information, and findings from each participating institution. In addition to these tasks, students hold open discussions on state politics and higher education, co-author bills, and support each other's agendas in the state legislature.

Through these multiple roles, students not only produce a product, but learn to be more effective leaders, acting in the best interest of their institutions, their fellow students, and higher education as a whole. By representing multiple constituencies, the student Board members learn the true meaning of public service, putting the agenda of their institutions and students ahead of their own interests (Anonymous, personal communication, October 16, 2002). Due to such a range of duties, the Board members selected become committed members of their campus community and higher education system as a whole.

Historical Significance of the Student Advisory Board

The presence of students in the higher education governing and coordinating boards has historically been symbolic and indirect. "While historians of higher education have no trouble documenting the fact that leadership development has always been a desired outcome of higher education, the means by which this has been achieved have been less clear" (Faris & Outcalt in Faris, Outcalt, & McMahon, 2001, p. 14). In fact, student governance, since the founding days in the mid 1800s, did not assume today's role until the 1970s.[28] It was at that same time that a new trend emerged across the country – student positions on Board of Trustees, presidential councils, and higher education governing and coordinating boards. As Rudolph (1966) argues, reflecting on historical student involvement in the higher education system:

> The agents of change were the students. The particular group to whom law and tradition has assigned the identity and purposes of the colleges, the presidents and boards of trustees and the professors, stood aside, indifferent or ineffectual observers, and failed to address themselves to the questions which should always be raised on an American college campus when any extracurricular development is stirring. (p. 52)

Rudolph, referring to the development of extracurricular activities towards citizenship and public service focus, echoed the point students have made throughout the 20th century. "Students want to be well informed, reinforced in their personal convictions, successful in careers, and knowledgeable as citizens in a participatory society" (Mable & DeCoster, 1981, p. 57). "Youth both reflects and responds to the society in which it

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[28] The presence of students in governing boards was a result of the 1960s student activism, higher education reforms, which created student advisory boards, as well as the 1976 American College Personnel Association's Commission IV Leadership Task Force recommendations, which introduced leadership programs on campuses and made student leadership development a priority (Faris & Outcalt in Faris, Outcalt, & McMahon, 2001).

grows" (Kerr, 1970, p. 4); thus, students should be included in the higher education governance, not only on the institutional level, but also on a statewide level.

Atlantic state's Higher Education Coordinating Commission not only provides an outlet for college students through the Student Advisory Board, but it empowers students to come together and immerse themselves in policy development and state politics. Due to the vast powers invested in the Student Advisory Board, this example is a historical phenomenon, setting a precedent (since the mid-1970s) for other states to follow. The Student Advisory Board of Atlantic state's Higher Education Coordinating Commission is a unique, cross-institutional body of students from colleges, universities, and professional institutes, who come together each academic year to enhance their leadership skills and gain experience in public service, representing voices of their respective institutions and students at large. A part of the Coordinating Commission, and thus the executive branch of the state government, students possess a significant public venue through which they craft recommendations, testify, and experience public service and the impact their policies have on the state. This experience not only equips students with policy-making skills, but also provides avenues for a meaningful and creative learning experience. This gives "students a chance not only to learn the democratic processes but to experiment with them" (Klopf, 1960, p. 48). As the Student Advisory Board's former advisor (Booker, 2002) states, "The [Board] is a wonderful opportunity for students to practice leadership skills, learn about the important higher education issues, and learn from other student leaders across the state" (p. 4).

Student Advisory Board as a Web Structure

Student development on the state level is impacted by higher education's

willingness to open its policy doors to student opinions and recommendations. In the

Atlantic state, those doors have been open since the mid-1970s, as the Student Advisory

Board continues to make a difference on the state-level higher education policies. The

Board provides a significant and unique opportunity for students to vote on policy issues,

to make recommendations and craft new policies that impact students, and to discuss "hot

topics" facing students of the Atlantic state. Student Advisory Board is a phenomenon

not only in the leadership development it provides, but also for its unique organizational

structure.

Since its founding days in mid 1970s, the Board had *Bylaws*, which served as

general parameters, limited to the organizational purpose, main responsibilities, and the

student selection process. Removed from the day-to-day functions of the Higher

Education Coordinating Commission, the Student Advisory Board relied on the guidance

of its Board advisor and seldom had opportunities to share their political and policy views

with the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. Empowered by the open structure,

students within the group often found themselves to be an independent student-run entity,

open to track legislation, hold forums, and take an active role in politics. In fact, it was

because of these open parameters that students recognized the opportunity to become an

effective learning community, collaborating with students across higher education

institutions on issues and legislation deemed to be of the essence.

Over the course of the 1980s and early 1990s, the student boards began to serve

not only as advisory students to the Secretary of Higher Education, but as a place of

forum, political discussion, and policy development. Meeting once a month across different institutions, students began to form ties with student governments and organizations across the states, and to create learning communities through which public policy recommendations were developed. The results of students' collaboration with each other and student government leaders not only increased the visibility of students in higher education policy and state politics, but also created a culture of teamwork and student self-empowerment – the web structure of organizational development.

Web structure is crucial for the success of an organization (Lappé & Du Bois, 1994). The web structure is a unique organizational form where each member of the group has open communication flow with other members of the group. As Helgesen's model of inclusion theory (Bolman & Deal, 1998) states, "It [the web model] creates multiple connections so that each team member can talk to anyone else. Information flows freely; decisions require touching multiple bases" (p. 87). The web model thus assumes open structure in which each member is empowered to be a leader.

Structure is a reflection of the organizational chart, the formal reporting relationships, departmentalization, and system design (Daft, 1995). Structure provides clear purpose, functions, and power distribution that serves as a guide for organizational development, maintenance, and advancement.[29] As addressed in the previous section, the Student Advisory Board has well-defined *Bylaws*, which indicate the Board's three main purposes: 1) to elect the next student commissioner to the Higher Education Coordinating

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[29] Specialization includes six dimensions: 1) task distribution; 2) work performance; 3) hierarchy of authority; 4) complexity of dimension (vertical, horizontal); 5) centralization of authority; and 6) personnel ratios – deployment of people to various functions and departments (Daft, 1995).

Commission; 2) to make recommendations about a timely issue facing state education

policy; and 3) to serve as an advisory board to the Secretary of Higher Education. In

addition, the *Bylaws* call for an executive committee and an advisor[30] responsible for

strategic planning and project management. However, the role of the executive

committee is that of a planner and agenda setter, leaving the Board to lead discussions,

hold forums, work together in an open environment, and make decisions. The advisor,

who serves as a mentor and a discussion facilitator, also encourages open

communication. Therefore, the Board is a structure that empowers each member to speak

up, bring up issues important to their institutions or state as a whole, and innovate on how

to include more students in education policy and how to expand the Board's mission, as

well as to seek support and aid on complex legislative projects. Due to the Board's

indirect relationship with the Coordinating Commission, the students have since the early

1980s, taken upon themselves to expand their roles, include student governments in

legislative discussions, and create cocurrent educational legislation that addressed the

needs often neglected by the state legislature.[31]

Contextually, the Board, made up of statewide institutional representatives, is a

goal-driven organization, focused on education policy and legislation, and embedded in

culture of mutual respect, understanding, and empowerment. According to Daft (1995), a

web structure of an organization provides its members with an opportunity to think

outside given parameters, to create production strategies that would best accommodate

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[30] Advisor is a full-time staff member from the Secretary of Higher Education Office, designated for tracking and acting on state legislation as well as mentoring the Student Advisory Board.

[31] Examples include: student affairs, academic advising, credit card solicitation on campus, and scholarship for nontraditional students.

organizational members, as well as to share common values, beliefs, and norms. The Student Advisory Board exhibits these elements. The Board is a community, a team that works together to not only accomplish their three structural tasks, but to always go beyond their call of duty and reach out to other students. This drive comes from two sources – students' inner leadership drive, which they bring to the Board and through the embedded, open structure, as well as the innovative practices of the previous Boards, who created a culture of community leadership and teamwork.

"A community is a group of people sharing a common purpose who coordinate work done by members" (Fairholm, 2001, p. 168). For an organization to develop a strong sense of community, it must exhibit the following characteristics (Fairholm, 1991):

- The group is interdependent – members work together and rely on each other to accomplish a goal.

- Members believe that there are areas that can be improved – members continue to innovate on how to improve their organization, expand its mission, and create new goals.

- They are motivated to change – members see their role as one of a change agent.

- They can see tangible results from their efforts – members accomplish goals in a timely fashion.

- They are willing to risk trying new ways to work together – members develop ways to meet with each other, listen and understand one another's points of view, and support each other's efforts.

- They are willing and able to diagnose their relationships – members have well defined positional and nonpositional roles.

- They attach themselves psychologically to the group and individual members – members create close working relationships and learn to collaborate as a team. (p. 171)

These community elements not only strengthen the organization, but create a structure that allows a free flow of information, shared values, empowerment of each other, and development of a teamlike atmosphere (Fairholm, 2001).

"A team is a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable" (Katzenbach & Smith, 1993, p. 112). The Student Advisory Board is a strong community of student leaders who work as a team to accomplish goals set out by the bylaws and students' own ideas. In order to accomplish all the goals, the Board practices the following team characteristics:

- They work together to shape a purpose.

- They translate common purpose into specific, measurable performance goals.

- They work together to bring out the best in people's skills and abilities.

- They develop a common commitment.

- They hold each other collectively accountable. (Katzenbach & Smith)

Student teams provide an important avenue for leadership development. According to Bensimon and Neumann (1993), successful "thinking teams" provide leadership opportunities to all team members, thus making each individual a leader, decision maker, collaborator, and innovator (Bensimon & Neumann). That means that all

members, even those on the "margin," are encouraged to engage in conversations, make recommendations, and actively voice their opinions in decision-making (Bensimon & Neumann; Rogers in Komives, Woodard, & Associates, 1996). "Creative effective teamwork requires a design of roles and relationships well suited to the situation" (Bolman & Deal, 1998, p. 87).

According to Conger (1992), the first stage of development in student-based leadership opportunities is through conceptual understanding. Conceptual understanding, or as recognized in the relational model, collective smarts, encompasses teamwork, and personal growth. The more an individual is exposed to teamwork and teambuilding, the more learning opportunities this person would have to grow. The second stage is feedback, a method-driven training that focuses on behavior and instrumentation. "Feedback serves to bring relevance to work, to focus on specific actions, and to create a better self-understanding" (Conger, p. 133). Feedback also serves to allow the group to brainstorm ways to be more effective (Conger). It is thus a powerful motivational tool. Finally, there is leadership development through skill building. The skills learned during an experience should be transferable to any other leadership place (Conger). This three-stage developmental process is key in student leadership development because it provides lessons on teamwork, the decision-making process, as well as on the collaboration of team members towards shared goals and vision (Conger).

The Student Advisory Board is a team with shared vision and mission, common policy agenda, and high expectations that emphasize teamwork, collaboration, and leadership effectiveness. In order to build effective teams and instill a sense of collaboration among the student leaders, the Board provides an outlet through which

students can ask questions, balance tasks, and conceptualize (Greenleaf, 1977). By providing this outlet, the students can learn to trust each other, to build relationships (Fairholm, 1998), and to become more effective leaders. As Hollander (1978) points out, leadership effectiveness gives the student an opportunity to learn how to set goals and implement them within the parameters of a group as well as how to use existing resources to produce change.

Teams also provide opportunities for active learning, empowerment, innovation, and inspiration (Fairholm, 1998). For example, leaders could use active learning to listen to the content and feeling of what followers are stating. Secondly, the leaders could work as teams, sharing a common purpose and working in a "coordinated and interdependent relationship" (Fairholm, p. 97). Leaders could also empower their team members to do their best and to follow organizational and personal goals (Fairholm; Bolman & Deal, 1997). Finally, leaders would work within their teams to encourage innovation, quality work, and a sense of ownership in decision-making and project development (Fairholm).

There are four essential team tasks that create group and personal growth opportunities: 1) additive – individual tasks; 2) conjunctive – parallel individual assignments; 3) disjunctive – team chooses among alternatives; and 4) unitary task – all work closely together. The Student Advisory Board provides all four types of tasks: 1) it allows each individual to raise concerns of their representative institution and to gather specific data that will aid the Board in a policy evaluation; 2) during the annual project, each student is responsible for polling their student body, faculty, and administration on the issues formulated through a collective survey and for synthesizing the outcomes to the Board; 3) each year the Board is given an opportunity to choose from among many

candidates a new student commissioner to the Coordinating Commission; and 4) at the end of the year, the Board is expected to collectively formulate policy recommendations or create a proposal for a new public policy pertaining to higher education. Through these four types of tasks, the Board provides members with many opportunities to engage in discussions, negotiations, and student empowerment (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

The key to leadership development within formal groups such as the Student Advisory Board is team building. As Fairholm (1998) describes, a team member can become effective only when an organization provides outlets, diverse tasks, and a model of values [that can be converted into actions]. Because the hierarchy of power is not present in the Board's *de facto* structural form (Bolman & Deal, 1997), the team functions on uni-level where all students "are coequals and where each has the right to exercise power in forming the particulars of his or her stewardship within the team" (Fairholm, p. 148). Thus, the Student Advisory Board functions as a web structure, including all of its members in discussion, innovative policy analysis, and decision-making; allowing each member to develop their own leadership skills while serving the state, their higher education institution, and students at-large.

Student Advisory Board as a Leadership Development Opportunity

"Understanding the role and function of leadership is the single most important intellectual task of this generation, and leading is the most needed skill" (Fairholm, 1998, p. xiii). Preparing students for civic responsibility and community building has become particularly significant under the new paradigm of the relational model of leadership centered on community building, sharing, and diversity. Under this new paradigm of reciprocal leadership (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998), college students today are

pursuing active learning opportunities, seeking volunteer experience, and changing the nature of their positional, legitimate, and expert roles in their academic, athletic, or extracurricular organizations. However, the majority of their leadership opportunities rest within the parameters of their institutions and, in rare cases, within segmental committees. As such, the students are not exposed to the leadership opportunities in which their main purpose is to act on behalf of their fellow students and their institutions, to shape the policy of higher education, and to directly promote changes in existing practices. For that reason, the Student Advisory Board promotes a unique opportunity where this form of leadership can be learned.

The Student Advisory Board, according to its *Bylaws* (Higher Education Commission, 2002), develops a number of key leadership skills, from teambuilding and negotiation, to public speaking and policy analysis. According to the former advisor to the Board (Booker, 2002), students who participate in the experience have a unique opportunity to directly influence state policies, institutional services for college students, and to interact with other students from the state. Although there are campus wide service-oriented leadership development opportunities available to college students, there are very few statewide policy-level positions open to them. For this reason, it is important to study the Board in order to better understand the leadership development and meaning this experience has for students as public leaders.

"Leadership development programs provide participants an opportunity to learn the cognitive and effective dimensions of leadership" (Osteen, 2001, p. 4). Leadership development opportunities serve as learning models through which students can grow and expand their role within an organization (London, 2002). They serve to instill

confidence, values, and certainty (Jacobs, 1971). The Student Advisory Board is one such opportunity, allowing students to develop their leadership skills, build upon their past experiences, and to grow into the role of a public servant. This leadership development opportunity provides lessons in which Board participants learn about themselves, gain confidence, and learn "effective, interpersonal skills" (Conger, 1992, p. 36). As Conger points out, this type of personal growth experience builds self-esteem, provides valuable public-service training, and motivates students to lead and formulate broader organizational visions, thus transforming students into change agents (Osteen).

The Student Advisory Board is a leadership opportunity that provides students with social support, personal development tools (Jacobs, 1971), and the power to be effective public change agents. This type of public organization has significant social and political importance because it often reflects greater leadership themes that can be adopted by other similar organizations (Verba, 1961).

Although Board documents point to de jure teambuilding and collaborative tasks, there is little research on the actual leadership development that takes place among the participants over the course of an academic session. Furthermore, there is no research on Board students' development in state public positions. Thus, the intent of this case study is to explore the leadership development skills the Board provides, as well as to understand the impact this experience has on students' transformation from on-campus extracurricular offices to statewide public service, where their actions impact students of the entire state higher education system.

Research Question

The purpose of this study is to examine the process of students' leadership development by analyzing their leadership background, their self-identity as Board members and institutional representatives, and by exploring the meaning and impact the Board experience has on them as student leaders. As Golden and Schwartz (1994) state, student leadership development is an ongoing process comprised of diverse experiences, roles, and skills developed, all of which renew the self-identity of a student-leader. The more opportunities students have to serve their institution, fellow students, and their community, the more venues they will have to enhance their leadership abilities (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998; Woodward, 1994). The Student Advisory Board is one such leadership development opportunity; in fact, it is the highest statewide opportunity for students interested in higher education institutional policies. By exploring the leadership development at the Board, I hope that I have significantly contributed to an understanding of student involvement in higher education matters on the statewide level and how that leadership development opportunity can enhance students' commitment to public service and education.

The main research question is, *How does the experience at the Student Advisory Board create meaning to Board members in their leadership development?* To explore this question, the focus of the case study is on the students' understanding of leadership, their view of the Board as a student leadership opportunity, and the meaning Board experience has had on their leadership development.

Connection to the Purpose

The purpose of this case study is to understand the leadership development and meaning the Board experience has to student leaders. To gain a full understanding of the leadership development process in the Board, the research question focuses on examination of the leadership development of participants prior to their membership on the Board, their motivations to join the Board, the impact the experience has on their leadership development, and the meaning this opportunity has on these students as institutional and state wide student leaders.

Connection to the Researcher

From my experiences as a former Student Commissioner to Atlantic state's Higher Education Commission and as a former Student Advisory Board ex-officio, I have learned valuable leadership skills unique to the Board experience: 1) the importance of student participation in the state government; 2) the honor of institutional recognition as a "student leader;" 3) the importance of public service; 4) the significance of student citizen involvement in political activism both on and off campus; 5) the representation of students' interests at the statewide higher education level; 6) the meaning of the coordinating board experience in an individual understanding of public policy, higher education systems, and student issues; and 7) the extent to which political opportunities are available to college students.

As a former student commissioner [circa 2000], I previously participated in the Student Advisory Board session, the next student commissioner selection process, and the public policy recommendations development, as well as broad political discussions. In addition, I actively participated at the State Higher Education Coordinating

Commission as a student member to the Commission as a whole, as well as its finance and education policy committees. From this one-year experience, I learned the complexities of the higher education system in the Atlantic state, the budgetary and curricular issues facing the state, as well as a unique opportunity available to all institutions – the Student Advisory Board. As an ex-officio member of the Board in 2000, I have come to recognize the uniqueness of the group, the extent to which students at the Board have power to shape higher education policy, as well as the importance of such opportunity for the development of leadership skills. In order to better understand the leadership development opportunities as well as the benefits this opportunity brings, I explored the meaning leadership opportunities have on student development as student leaders and citizens.

On the professional level, I served as the coordinator for the National Clearinghouse for Leadership Programs (NCLP) located at the University of Maryland. As the coordinator of this non-profit organization, I edited leadership monographs and newsletters, developed leadership databases for curricular and co-curricular student affairs professionals, co-assembled a leadership bibliography to aid leadership educators in their research pursuits, and wrote the annual leadership symposia proceedings. Finally, as a leadership educator, I held workshops on team building and group dynamics across the campus, at state leadership conferences, and taught an introductory leadership course to University of Maryland upper classmen. Through these experiences I became familiar with the contemporary, theoretical, leadership perspectives, many that I applied in this study as a way to comprehend observed student leadership development.

Case Study Limitations

The purpose of this case study is to uncover the meaning Board experience has for student participants and the impact it has on their leadership development. The selected form of qualitative inquiry is a case study in which a researcher immerses him/herself in the field studied, observing individuals in their natural setting, gathering detailed data, memos, and reflections for the purpose of better understanding a phenomenon. Through extensive data collection, including individual interviews, focus groups, meeting observations, e-mail communications, journal reflections, and artifacts collection, the case study is able to bring to the forefront the importance of such opportunities to students' growth as well as the meaning of the Board experience to its participants. The research comprised serves to open the door for other qualitative studies on statewide leadership opportunities for college students and to begin the conversation on the complexities of individual leadership development.

This case study has a sample size[32] consisting of five focus group members. Due to the diversity of interests present at the Board, I set no parameters on the sample size or demographics – it was strictly on a volunteer basis. The five participants exhibited enthusiasm towards my study from the introductory meeting between the Board and myself, and their presence was consistent throughout the SAB session.[33] The richness of their vignettes, as well as coincidental nature of their vast demographic diversity enabled

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[32] The sample size is roughly comprised of fifteen percent of the Board.

[33] In addition to the five focus group members, I interviewed two current student members, the current and former Board advisors, and the Commission staff. These additional contacts served as negative cases. I was unable to contact students who dropped out of the Board session or decided not to participate in my study after their initial interest. Thus, there might be more compelling reasons besides scheduling conflicts that contributed to some students' disengagement with the Board.

me, the researcher, to obtain in-depth data on students' backgrounds, influences, leadership development, skill enhancement, and meaning-making processes without compromising dependability of the study. Furthermore, I remained flexible throughout the study, accommodating students' meeting availability and communicating with them via e-mail and phone to collect data previously restricted due to conflict in schedules or students' academic commitments.

To ensure a thorough analysis of the phenomenon, I collected data from multiple sources mentioned above. Once collected, I coded all transcripts, conducted data triangulation, and member checks for the purpose of meeting confirmability and credibility standards. Although I was able to trace SAB documents, advisor's statements, and students' college leadership positions to original documents, other vignettes were left to the discretion of the interviewee him/herself.[34]

Another challenge in this case study was focusing massive amounts of data to the research question, students' leadership development, or the structure/function of the Board. As Merriam (1998) explains, "It is a greater challenge in qualitative inquiry to make sense of massive amounts of data, reduce the volume of information, identify significant patterns, and construct a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal" (pp. 371-372). To limit the amounts of disengaged data,[35] I immersed myself in inductive analysis of extensive data, narrowing and categorizing them into

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[34] Data that could not be triangulated consisted of students' personal reflections on their values and beliefs and some of their positional roles dating back to their high school years.

[35] Disengaged data are side conversations, communications unrelated to the topic/phenomenon researched, or logistical exchanges, trivial for the case study analysis.

meaningful patterns (Merriam; Patton, 1990). Through this process, I focused attention on the research matter rather than incorporating side conversations or irrelevant communication.

Finally, I recognize that qualitative research embraces the uniqueness of a phenomenon and shies away from external generalization. For that purpose, I focused attention on the participants and the Board at-large, observing patterns and themes and correlating them to the research questions and points of inquiry. Therefore, I used the data collection instruments as tools to synthesize the essence of my research and provide only internal patterns to students' leadership development. The in-depth descriptions of students' leadership experiences at the Board and the impact those experiences have on their development serve to help the reader understand the importance of such opportunities to higher education students and the complexities of students' leadership development.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Leadership is essential for any organization (Fairholm, 1998). Traditionally, leadership has been defined as a hierarchical core that establishes rules and goals, and provides guidelines and structure in which followers function. However, in the context of the contemporary, reciprocal paradigm, leadership is defined as a learned skill that inspires, empowers, and drives change (Landsberg, 2000). As such, leadership is about individuals who make up an organization or a team (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Fairholm), and about leaders who engage followers and team members in decision-making and goal setting. The essence of leadership can be found in three components:

- Vision – positive image of what the organization could become;

- Inspiration – use of interpersonal skills to motivate others;

- Momentum – energy and problem-solving skills. (Landsberg, p. 4)

Vision, inspiration, and momentum together create intellectual vigor, energy, and commitment towards common organizational/team goals (Jennings, 1960; Lodge, 1950). They serve to empower individuals and encourage collective action (Fairholm). As such, vision, inspiration, and momentum serve as building blocks by which leaders create relationships with followers and engage in teamwork (Fairholm).

The term leadership has over two hundred definitions (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998), depending on context and discipline in which the term is discussed (Verba, 1961). "Leadership is defined according to [their] individual perspectives and the aspect of the phenomenon of most interest" (Yukl, 1989, p. 2). Leadership, in the context of organizations "is defined broadly to include influence processes involving

determination of the group's or organization's objectives, motivating task behavior in pursuit of these objectives, and influencing group maintenance and culture" (Yukl, p. 5).

"All leadership is ideologically driven or motivated by a certain philosophical perspective" (Gini in Hickman, 1998, p. 366). Over the course of the twentieth century, leadership has evolved from hierarchical to the reciprocal models inclusive of all organizational members, both leaders and followers. Furthermore, the contemporary leadership theories have evolved to recognize the importance of teamwork, collaboration, and mutual empowerment, a bottom-up approach to organizational structure and culture. Foremost, leadership has expanded its traditional boundaries to include both positional and nonpositional posts, thus recognizing the importance of community and public service work as an important element of leadership. Hence, leadership is viewed today as a social activity (Fairholm, 2001), a relational process that requires all organizational members to take action (Kirkpatrick et al., 1991).

In the context of student leadership and public service, leadership can be defined as "a relational process of people together attempting to accomplish change or make a difference to benefit the common good" (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998, p. 31). As such, leadership "involves the initiation of actions and expediting change" (Drafke & Kossen, 2002, p. 369), and is "a function of the social situation and a function of personality" (Verba, 1961, p. 130). Leadership is thus a reciprocal exchange of leaders and followers in which leaders share their power for the betterment of the group and subordinates (Mainella, 2000; Stogdill, 1950).

Leadership is complex, diverse, and multidisciplinary. Throughout history "leadership has been defined in terms of individual traits, behaviors, influence over

others, interaction patterns, role relationships, hierarchical position, and the perception of others regarding the legitimacy of influence" (Conger, 1992, p. 18). In order to understand the evolution of leadership towards reciprocal, relational models, it is important to explore the changes in theoretical perspectives that took place throughout the twentieth century.

History of Twentieth Century Leadership Theories

The leadership framework of the twentieth century spans from the great man, trait, behavior, and contingency theories to transactional, transformational, and reciprocal theories. Diverse in their leader focus, the majority of theories seek to better understand the relationship between leader and follower as well as the leadership characteristics that make one a successful leader. The evolution of these theories shows a move towards the relational model of collective empowerment and teamwork.

1900s - Great Man Theories

Are leaders born or made? According to the trait theories of the 1900s, leaders are born with specific traits.[36] It was believed that leaders have the hereditary properties that make one an effective leader. Following the Darwinist principle, "it was believed that the intermarriage of the fittest would produce an aristocratic class superior to the lower class" (Bass, 1981 in Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998, p. 35). Despite no clear sets of traits that made one a predisposed leader, Locke (Northouse, 2001) suggested six main traits that describe, in his opinion, a true leader: inner drive, the desire to lead,

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[36] Leaders often identified with this theory are Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Mohandas Gandhi (Northouse, 2001).

honesty and integrity, self-confidence, cognitive ability, and knowledge of the business.[37]

Northouse explains the six traits:

1. Inner drive – persistence;

2. Desire to lead – taking initiative and dominance;

3. Honesty and integrity – trustworthiness;

4. Self-confidence – certainty about one's competencies and skills;

5. Cognitive ability – intelligence, verbal, and perceptual ability;

6. Knowledge of business – sociability, diplomatic, and friendly personality.

Some of the new research revives the great man theory with the addition of ten traits of

successful leadership (as found in Bryman, 1992; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991):

- Drive for responsibility and task completion;

- Vigor and persistence in pursuit of goals;

- Venturesomeness and originality in problem solving;

- Drive to exercise initiative in social situations;

- Self-confidence and sense of personal identity;

- Willingness to accept consequences of decision and action;

- Readiness to absorb interpersonal stress;

- Willingness to tolerate frustration and delay;

- Ability to influence other persons' behavior; and

- Capacity to structure social interaction systems to the purpose at hand.

  (Northouse, p. 17)

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[37] Earlier trait theories were male-oriented extenuating intelligence, masculinity, dominance, and conservatism (Mann, 1959).

Although these principles do contribute to "effective" leadership, there is no scientific

proof that genetics plays the primary role in leadership development. Furthermore, there

are no clear sets of traits that distinguish leaders from nonleaders. It is a combination of

traits and their application in situations that creates leadership (Northouse). Hence, many

contemporary leadership educators negate the great man theory, stating that anyone can

become a leader. As John Gardner (in Wren, 1995, chap. 25) states, "Many dismiss the

subject with the confident assertion that 'leaders are born not made.' Nonsense! Most of

what leaders have that enables them to lead is learned" (p. 7).

Mid 1900s – Trait Model

The trait theory, similarly to the great man theories, believes that there is a set of

innate, natural characteristics that make certain individuals leaders (Komives, Lucas, &

McMahon, 1998). Like the military theory, which focused on the leader and not the

people with whom he or she interacts (Faris & Outcalt in Faris, Outcalt, & McMahon,

2001), the trait theory states that there are particular characteristics that effective leaders

exhibit – intelligence, appearance, and eloquence (Bass, 1981). For leaders to effectively

govern an organization and all its subordinates, they must exude energy, confidence,

innovation, and initiation (Bass). To ensure decisions are made and upheld, leaders must

be assertive, well informed, and intelligent. In the business realm, leaders must be

knowledgeable about their industry and business matters, and have the charisma,

flexibility, and creativity to achieve organizational goals and move forward (Kirkpatrick

& Locke in Wren, 1995, chap. 24).

The trait theory is a leader-oriented model, focused on specific characteristics that

distinguish one leader from a nonleader. Due to the leader centric approach, the trait

theory fails to address the relationship leaders have with the followers, the situations that influence the leader's effectiveness and follower motivation (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998). Furthermore, the trait theory provides very broad characteristics of effective leaders, but fails to explain how can such leadership be evaluated, measured, and compared (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon). Finally, its assumption that only certain individuals have these particular, predisposed traits negates the notion that leadership qualities can be developed, learned.[38]

1950s/1960s – Behavioral/Style Approach

Following the era of great man and trait theories, a behavioral/style approach emerged, focusing not only on the leader's character but also his/her actions (Northouse, 2001). As Northouse points out in his evaluation of leadership theories, "The style approach broadened the scope of leadership research to include the behaviors of leaders and what they do in various situations" (p. 44). The research conducted by Ohio State was of key significance in understanding leadership behaviors.

Using the extensive Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ) designed by Ohio State and studies by Blake and Mouton, leaders' behaviors were observed for the purpose of analyzing what makes one an effective leader (Northouse, 2001). As Northouse reflected on the Ohio State studies, "Leaders can learn a lot about themselves and how they come across to others by trying to see their behaviors in light of task and relationship dimensions" (p. 44). The extensive research by Ohio State

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[38] Today, leadership is assumed to be learned; anyone can develop leadership qualities if given an opportunity to do so.

concluded that there are two dimensions of effective behavior – consideration[39] and

initiating structure[40] (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998). The study further showed

that most leaders are effective in one dimension, but not both. Those who are capable of

leading both people and production are viewed as effective [behavioral] leaders

(Komives, Lucas, & McMahon), leading the "best way" possible (Greenwood, 1993;

Phillips, 1995). However, this approach to leadership fails to show the universal style of

leadership and does not show the correlation of certain behaviors and the frequent

situations in which leaders find themselves in (Northouse, p. 45). Thus, like the great

man and trait theories, the behavioral/style approach leaves a gap for the situational and

contingency theories.

1950s/1980s – Situational & Contingency Theories

Two theories that have been most widely applied in the mid-20th century are the

situational and contingency theories. The situational approach is based on the

assumption that leaders act based on a situation and change their behavior accordingly

(Fielder, 1967). "Situational leadership stresses that leadership is composed of both a

directive and a supportive dimension, and each has to be applied appropriately in a given

situation" (Northouse, 2001, p. 55). Essentially, situational leadership recognizes the

need of leaders to adopt a style that will meet the needs of subordinates (Northouse).

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[39] The term "consideration" refers to "the degree to which a leader acts in a friendly and supportive manner, shows concern for subordinates, and looks out for their welfare" (Yukl, 1994, p. 54).

[40] The initiating structure means "the degree to which a leader defines and structures his or her own role and the roles of subordinates toward attainment of the group's formal goals" (Yukl, p. 54).

"Situational leadership is an attempt to demonstrate the appropriate relationship between the leader's behavior and a particular aspect of the situation – the readiness level exhibited by the followers" (Hersey & Blanchard in Wren, 1995, chap. 25, p. 207). "Thus, situational leadership assumes a dynamic interaction where the readiness level of the followers may change and where the leader's behavior must change appropriately in order to maintain the performance of the followers" (p. 207). Situational leadership provides flexibility in a leadership style, practical applications in the workplace and organizations, and easy transitioning in change (Graeff, 1983).

The contingency theory, much like the situational theory, emphasizes the leader-member relations, the organizational task structure, and the positional power (Bryman, 1986; Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998). Embedded in the variance of situations, contingency theory focuses both on the task and on the leader-follower relationship (Hersey & Blanchard, 1988; Hollander, 1978). As Hooper and Potter (2001) point out, contingency theory helps bring to the forefront the importance of motivation, inspiration, and encouragement of followers by their leaders. Unlike the great man or trait theories, contingency theory states that any person can become a leader as long as s/he has a continuous sense of direction for subordinates, focuses on alignment between task and people, and seeks change. Thus, the essence of leadership rests on the leader's ability to enhance both the quality of task achievement and the relationship with the subordinates (Bryman).

These two leadership categories provide valuable attributes to modern, postindustrial theories. In the situational/contingency approach, the leader is accountable to the followers and is expected to align tasks with peoples' qualifications; to maintain

quality standards, goals, and the vision of an organization; to delegate and negotiate with followers; and to work towards mutual benefit [between the leader and the follower]. These theories, unlike those before them, open the door towards leadership accountability, service, and change-agent qualities. However, one limitation of situational/contingency theories is that they do not explain why "individuals with certain leadership styles are more effective in some situations than in others" (Northouse, 2001, p. 80).

1970s/1980s – Path-Goal Theory

One model of the contingency/situational theory has been the path-goal theory, which focuses on the supervision of subordinates as well as on the goal attainment (Chemers, 1995; Hollander, 1978). "Path-goal theory is about how leaders motivate subordinates to accomplish designed goals" (Northouse, 2001, p. 89). It "emphasizes the relationship between the leaders' style and the characteristics of the subordinates and the work setting" (Northouse, p. 89). Under the path-goal theory, leaders utilize four essential elements of leadership:

1. Instrumental – correlation of organizational structure and task;

2. Supportive leadership – encouragement of subordinates;

3. Participative leadership – impact individual's productivity; and

4. Achievement-oriented leadership – encourage high standards of performance and confidence to meet more challenging goals. (Bryman, 1986)

In addition to the four leadership elements, which emphasize organizational management and leadership, there are four organizational motivators that create an environment in

which leaders and subordinates can successfully complete goals (Hackman & Johnson, 2000):

1. Directive leadership – procedure-related communication behavior that includes planning and organizing, task coordination, policy setting;

2. Supportive leadership – interpersonal communication focusing on concerns of the needs and well-being of followers and the facilitation of a desirable climate for interaction;

3. Participative leadership – communication designed to solicit opinions and ideas from followers for the purpose of involving followers in decision-making; and

4. Achievement-oriented leadership – communication focusing on goal attainment and accomplishment emphasizing the achievement of excellence by demonstrating confidence in the ability of followers to achieve their goals.

    (Hackman & Johnson, p. 70)

"The path-goal theory suggests that it is the leader's responsibility to help subordinates by removing these obstacles or helping them around them" (Northouse, p. 95). It is an untraditional form of leadership in which the leader is directly involved with the subordinates, encouraging them, providing them with rewards, and setting tangible goals that would benefit both the organization and the individuals within it. The above motivators and leadership elements allow leaders to encourage subordinates to do their best and work hard toward an organizational goal (House & Mitchell, 1974).

Path-goal theory allows a leader to focus on the objectives and strategies needed to accomplish a particular goal (House & Mitchell, 1974). It provides for a very practical model of leadership and organizational functionality. Applied in managerial settings, it

serves to examine subordinates and provides tools for leaders and workers on how

achieve (Northouse, 2001). However, in a student-based environment, this set of theories

narrowly defines the relationships of student members as well as their position towards

organizational goals.

1920s/1977 - Social Exchange & Transactional Theories

The second set of industrial theories of the mid twentieth century has been the

social exchange/transactional theories (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998) whose

primary focus is on the value exchange between the leader and the follower. According

to Hollander (1978), the social exchange theory centers on the leader and his/her abilities

to provide rewards to the subordinates, to recognize, encourage, and inspire them.

Although the relationship between the leader and the follower is assumed to be

hierarchical in nature, the leader is expected to give direction, set goals for the followers,

and share sufficient information that would lead to goal accomplishment (Hollander).

The leader is further expected to delegate powers (Bass & Avolio, 1994), to appreciate

others' needs, and to make decisions based on mutual interest (Homans, 1958; Jacobs,

1971). If a leader exemplifies these characteristics, s/he is viewed as successful, positive

individual (Jacobs).

Transactional approach, must like the social exchange theory, focuses on the

exchange between a leader and the followers (Hollander, 1978). As Hollander explains,

"A transactional refers to two-way influence, and the presence of social exchange in the

relationship, both of which have a dynamic quality" (p. 151). Under this theory, "the

term transaction is intended to indicate a more active role by followers in an exchange

relationship with the leader, including mutual influence" (Hollander, p. 40).

Transactional leadership speaks to the extent of contribution s/he can make to the group's success in achieving goals (Jacobs, 1971) as well as to the leader's ability to innovate and change stagnant goals (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Chemers, 1995). Although a leader often delegates tasks as a means of control (Bass & Avolio), s/he is held accountable by the followers to carry out organizational vision and goals (Hollander) and to be both a leader and a manager. Since all members are expected to benefit from the exchange, all share the results of the efforts as long as a leader is deemed a valuable resource to the group (Jacobs). In the Student Advisory Board, there is a minimal delegation of tasks outside the formal duties of executive committee members; thus, the transaction approach in decision-making and negotiations was insignificant.

The traditional perspectives on leadership have changed over the course of the twentieth century from hierarchical, leader-centric approaches such as great man, trait, situational, and transactional, towards postindustrial reciprocal theories, such as transformational, citizen, steward, servant, and shared leadership, where leaders and followers are viewed as team members not top-down organizational members. These theories, unlike their predecessors, focus on empowerment, change, and followers as well as on nontraditional forms of leadership. Under the postindustrial paradigm, leadership is seen as collaborative (Bornstein & Smith, 1996), as a "relationship among leaders and their collaborators who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes" (Rost, 1993, p. 99). Overall, the post-industrial models of leadership defined it as a "reciprocal relationship between leaders and collaborators" (Faris & Outcalt in Faris, Outcalt, & McMahon, 2001, p. 12).

1970s – Transformational Theory

Transformational leadership, as introduced by James McGregor Burns (1978), is defined as "a process where leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation" (p. 20). Transformational leadership is centered on shared values and aspirations (Fincham & Rhodes, 1999) in which a leader invests time and emotions into his/her followers [or team members] (Owens, 1991). As Northouse (2001) explains, transformational leadership is "…concerned with values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals. Transformational leadership involves assessing followers' motives, satisfying their needs, and treating them as full human begins. It is a process that subsumes charismatic and visionary leadership" (p. 131). According to Bass (1985), transformational leadership allows followers to feel encouraged, motivated, and goal-oriented, to look outside themselves and toward the organization of which they are a part.

To be a transformational leader, one must practice the four pillars of a successful leader: charismatic communication style, vision, successful implementation of a vision, and individualized consideration (Fincham & Rhodes, 1999). Charisma, vision, and individual attention are all attributes of what Bass and Avolio (1994) refer to as "four I's": idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. To be a successful transformational leader, s/he must be able to apply the "I's" by setting direction for an organization, leading by example, effectively communicating with all subgroups of an organization, motivating and encouraging others to embrace organizational goals, being proactive, and empowering in the time of crisis (Hooper & Potter, 2001).

A transformational leader is expected to be engaged in the tasks and goals of followers, to continuously motivate and encourage others to do their best, as well as to be him/herself a role model for an organization (Fincham & Rhodes, 1999). As Couto (1995b) points out, "transforming leadership assists a group of people to move from one stage of development to a higher one and in doing so to address and fulfill better a higher human need" (p. 103). By being actively engaged in an organization s/he leads, the leader becomes not only a head of a group, but a moral change agent (Couto). As Northouse (2001) concludes, "Transformational leaders are change agents who initiate and implement new directions within organizations" (p. 145).

1980s – Servant Leadership

Servant leadership, developed by Robert Greenleaf in 1977, focuses on leaders as servants of their organizations. Servant leadership views leaders as a significant element of an organization who hold "their institutions in trust for the greater good of society" (Spears, 1995, pp. 6-7). A servant-leader is not born but created through social and behavioral leadership actions (Klopf, 1960). A servant-leader is one that upholds the group's goals, is a visionary, and who works alongside his/her team members in order to empower them towards greater personal and organizational achievements (Greenleaf, 1977). A servant-leader is one who exhibits strong communication and listening skills, encourages other members to achieve organizational goals, and one who "makes a difference" (Bass, 1990; Greenleaf, 1995). As Fairholm (1998) and Beck and Young (2001) explain, a servant-leader is one who encourages, sustains high-quality service, works alongside his/her stakeholders, and empowers team members to innovate.

The servant-leader is always searching, listening, and expecting better from the world (Greenleaf, 1977). As such, the servant-leader is authentic, honest, competent, and forward-looking (Evans, 2000). S/he uses symbolic metaphors (Bolman & Deal, 1997) to create meaning and to provide group inclusion through individual ownership in the decision-making process. As Sergiovanni (2000) points out, the servant-leader focuses on relationships, shared goals, authenticity, and community building. Above all, the servant-leader rests on the strong commitment to values and vision (Evans).

Servant leadership is an important theoretical influence to the reciprocal models of leadership practiced in the new millennium. Its emphasis on mutual needs, values, and aspirations (Owens, 1991) encourages moral leadership (Greenleaf, 1978). Furthermore, it holds a leader accountable to the followers and organizational goals, visions, and task accomplishment. Because it is in the best interest of both parties to succeed, the new, modern leader serves to increase mutual benefits and promote moral, ethical, and good leadership (Greenleaf). The servant leadership idea is present at the Student Advisory Board in the form of the student servant who serves the Board with the intension of reaching organizational goals, behaving in an ethical and moral way, meeting mutual needs, understanding each other's ideas, and opening up to group learning for a greater good – improved higher education policies.

1990s – Stewardship Theory

"Stewardship is the choice for service" (Block, 1996, p. 6). "Stewardship represents primarily an act of trust, whereby people and institutions entrust a leader with certain obligations and duties to fulfill and perform on their behalf" (Sergiovanni, 2000, p. 285). "Stewardship also involves the leader's personal responsibility to manage her or

his life and affairs with proper regard for the rights of other people and for the common welfare" (Sergiovanni, p. 285). According to Peter Block, the author of *Stewardship*, traditional, industrial leadership characteristics need to be replaced with accountability measures, empowerment, service, and innovation. As Block states:

> Stewardship begins with the willingness to be accountable for some larger body than ourselves – an organization, a community. When we choose service over self-interest we say we are willing to be deeply accountable without choosing to control the world around us. (p. 6)

Stewardship translates into leadership through teamwork, diversity, innovation, and accountability to those served. As Ryan and Bohlin (2000) point out, effective stewardship consists of teamwork, regular attendance in organizational meetings, integration of diverse opinions, and relevant evaluation of the goal accomplishment and individual achievements. It "requires putting information, resources, and power in the hands of those people closest to making a product, designing a product or service, and contracting a customer" (Block, 1996, p. 33). Stewardship, similar to transformational and servantship theories, believes in empowerment of subordinates and the duty leaders have to serve those they represent or manage. Like other postindustrial theories, it provides a new leadership paradigm in which the power comes from the bottom up, from service, and teamwork. Nowhere is this displayed more explicitly than in a team model of leadership. In the Student Advisory Board setting, the term "steward" is applied in the reader's understanding of students' role as institutional representatives, designated by academic officials as student leaders who are most likely to serve the institutional interests as well as work with other delegates to reach sensible resolutions.

1990s on – Team Model

Throughout history, the majority of leadership theories have strictly applied to leader/subordinate relationships, often hierarchical in their approach and practices. However, with the birth of postindustrial leadership theories, leadership has become team oriented. As Hill (in Northouse, 2001) states, "leadership in organizational groups or work teams has become one of the most popular and rapidly growing areas of leadership theory and research" (p. 161). This new way of thinking has created an innovative decision-making whereby followers have direct input into the decision made, allocation of resources, and design input.

"Teams are organizational groups composed of members who are interdependent, who share common goals, and who must coordinate their activities to accomplish these goals" (Hill in Northouse, 2001). Although teams work as a collective, the role of team leader is important in determining the structure and flow of information that will then be adopted and followed by the other team members (Barge, 1996; Northouse). Good leaders need to learn to listen, process information, and decode and encode information that can then be passed on to the larger group (Barge).

"In addition to being functional and appropriately complex, team leadership also needs to be practical and focus on team needs and outcomes" (Hill in Northouse, 2001, p. 166). What makes effective team leadership? According to Hackman and Walton (1986), it is an engaging direction, structure that fosters performance, engagement, and support, and one that has adequate resources. Hackman (1990) addressed the effectiveness of team by stating that the fiber of an organization comes from clear goals,

results-driven structure, competent team members, unified commitment, collaborative climate, standards of excellence, external support, recognition, and principled leadership.

According to the team leadership model, leaders need to monitor work performance, goal alignment, and decision-making. Although team members are encouraged to provide input, leaders are entrusted with appropriate functions and skills (Hill in Northouse, 2001) that allow them to manage and delegate the task of the group. As seen from the internal levels of task and relational functions, it is the responsibility of the team leader to provide structure, intervene during conflicts, and create a sensible resolution (Hill in Northouse). In addition to the internal factors, a team must be aware of the external environment that exists and can impact one's structure, goals, and effectiveness. Together, the internal and external environments create an effective team that performs well together and reaches group goals. The team model of leadership development is an important component to understanding the relational process of a group; meaning, how students work within the Student Advisory Board.

1990s - Corporate Leadership Model

Influenced by the transformational, servant, stewardship, and team theories of prior decades, the corporate leadership models have also experienced a change from hierarchical, male-oriented approaches to more a "leaderful" approach (Raelin, 2003). Joseph Raelin finds leadership in the new millennium focused on meaning-making, concurrent, collective, collaborative, and compassionate leadership. His model of "leaderful" leadership calls for practices in which a leader is a steward of his community, a learner, and a meaning-maker. Furthermore, Raelin believes that community members have the same influences in the decision-making process as the leader, suggesting a

community atmosphere in the workplace, whereby power and tasks are shared. In fact, "power can be increased by everyone working together" (Raelin, p. 13). Because members work collectively and take ownership based on responsibility, "leadership may thus emerge from multiple members of the community, especially when important needs arise, whether preparing for a strategic mission, creating meaning for the group, or proposing a change in direction" (Raelin, p. 15).

Collective leadership promotes learning for the entire organization (Raelin, 2003, p. 113). The collective leadership model embraces individual learning, group growth, and meaning-making.[41] "Everyone becomes involved and leadership emerges out of the entire team, not from any one individual" (Raelin, p. 115). Hence, "people in the community assume leadership roles when necessary, and through this collective action, leaderful practices occur" (Raelin, p. 113).

Another element of leaderful leadership is collaboration, a notion that everyone participates in leadership (Raelin, 2003). Collaboration speaks of the sense of community that organizations/groups can have, whereby all members advocate for the common good of the community. As Raelin explains, "Collaborative leaders realize that everyone counts; every opinion and contribution sincerely matters" (p. 16). Collaborative leadership operates on the bases of community building, development, and empowerment.

Compassion is the final form of leaderful leadership model (Raelin, 2003). "Each member of the community is valued regardless of his or her background or social standing, and all viewpoints are considered regardless of whether they conform to current

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[41] Meaning-making is "the courage to attempt a framing or a reframing of the situation at hand" (Raelin, 2003, p. 114).

thought processes" (Raelin, p. 16). It is believed that workers are more productive when they feel accepted, listened to, and understood. By providing an avenue for innovation and discussion, all group members develop a sense of empowerment and endowment to the larger community in which they operate (Raelin). The leaderful model is used in this thesis as the basis of the *we – transitional stage* analysis of students as organizational learners, understanding each other's perspectives and group goals.

1990s on – Followership

As the leadership paradigm expanded to teamwork and the reciprocal leader-subordinate approach, a followership model emerged. Followership, as developed by Carnegie Mellon University professor Robert E. Kelley, is viewed as "a role people assume in the leadership process" (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998, p. 46). To be an effective follower, Kelley suggests four qualities:

1. Manage oneself well;

2. Be committed to the organization, its purpose, principle, and people involved;

3. Build competence; and

4. Be courageous, honest, and credible. (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon)

The above qualities allow one to be a "coadventurer" (Kelley, 1988), to be empowered, honored, and to have the opportunity to innovate, contribute, and take pride in his/her position.

Although the followership model provides an emergent view to a traditionally neglected population in the organizational structure, Joseph Rost (in Wren, 1995, chap. 30) finds the term "follower" demeaning. For him, it implies that certain individuals in a group are separated from the leaders "elite" and allow others to control their actions,

goals, and processes. Rather, he prefers the use of a broader term "participants" to which

leaders relate, a crucial aspect of leadership (Rost in Wren, chap. 30). Followers (a.k.a.

participants) can be passive or active. The active followers are willing to get involved in

any element of the organization and should not be viewed as doing a "followership,"

rather "leadership" work. "They are in the leadership relationship together. They are the

ones who intend real changes that reflect their mutual purposes" (p. 192). Although Rost

disapproves of the terminology, he does acknowledge the importance of followers in

organizations as a core of group effectiveness, goal accomplishment, and forward change.

At the Student Advisory Board, there are a both positional executive committee

and nonpositional institutional representatives, leaders who are responsible for agenda,

room reservations, networking, organizational goals, and who, primarily due to their own

personalities, begin and lead most of the group discussions. However, without the

support of other Board members in the decision-making process, policy writing, and

forum discussions, the Board would be unable to meet the minimum attendance

requirements, research samples for their policy study, and valuable learning moments

would be lost with the limited number of individual perspectives.

1990s on- Social Change Model

The social change model of leadership development is one of the newest

approaches to organizational leadership that embraces both the servant and steward

models, and emphasizes collaboration, service, and citizenship. The social change model

of leadership development (HERI, 1996) views leadership as "a process rather than as a

position" that emphasizes "equity, social justice, self-knowledge, personal empowerment,

collaboration, citizenship, and service" (p. 18). This nonhierarchical model emphasizes leadership in three domains: individual, group, and societal.

- Individual – refers to personal qualities and values[42] that are fostered and developed.

- Group – refers to the collaboration in an organization that influences social change.[43]

- Community/society – refers to citizenship for the purpose of specific social ends.

The social change model applies the seven elements of leadership to the three dimensions of leadership development described above for the purpose of creating a holistic leader, one who understands him/herself, others, and the organizations as whole. Furthermore, the model encourages leaders to engage others in the decision-making process and to uphold the highest moral and citizenship standards.

1. Consciousness of self – beliefs, values, attitudes, and emotions that motivate one to take action. It is an understanding of one's aspirations, interests, talents, concerns, limitations, and dreams.

2. Congruence – thinking, feeling, and behaving with consistency, genuineness, authenticity, and honesty. "Social change is most likely to occur when a leader works within a group that comes together around a common concern and for a common purpose" (p. 37).

3. Commitment – motivating others, knowledge of self, believing that one can make a difference. "Commitment involves the purposive investment of time and

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[42] Values are defined as consciousness of self, congruence, and commitment.

[43] Group values are collaboration, common purpose, and controversy with civility.

physical and psychological energy in the leadership development process" (p. 40).

"Leaders are clear about their commitments and are willing to declare them and

demonstrate them in their actions. Commitment is the fuel that drives leaders. It

links them to their values, makes others respect them, and motivates them to

achieve their goals" (Bennis & Goldsmith, 1994, pp. 32-33). Descriptors of

commitment:

    a. Knowing – "something needs to be done"… There is a gap between what

       is and what ought to be. Change is needed and can be accomplished

       through priority setting and reassured through pledge to effect change.

    b. Being – the emotional component… It means having passion, motivation,

       commitment, and an inner drive to act, go beyond "should" towards "I

       care, this matters."

    c. Doing – involvement… Doing refers to personal resources such as

       tenacity, enthusiastic engagement, perseverance, devotion to invest time

       and energy. (HERI)

4. Collaboration – working with others in a common effort. Collaboration leads to a

   common purpose. "It multiplies group effectiveness because it capitalizes on the

   multiple talents and perspectives of each group member and the power of that

   diversity to generate creative solutions and actions" (p. 48). "Collaboration is not

   only an efficient and effective way to get the task accomplished, but also a

   powerful way to learn about ourselves and others in the process" (p. 49).

5. Common purpose – share objectives, goals, and values. "Common purpose

   means to work with others within a shared set of aims and values" (p. 55).

6. Controversy – creating innovative solutions through differences. Controversy is an inevitable element of the group dynamics due to diverse backgrounds and thought processes. However, through an understanding of self and others in the group, as well as commitment to common purpose, the controversy can be used as a tool for developing wider understanding of issues facing the group.

7. Citizenship – individuals become connected to the community and society through the leadership development activity. Citizenship is the outcome of the previous six elements.

The social change model creates a multidimensional approach to leadership, exploring its core elements of effective leader and citizens. According to Helen S. Austin (McMahon, 2001), the coauthor of the model, "Leadership is a collective effort of persons who care about an issue, a situation, who feel passionate about it, and who work together toward change, change that benefits everyone, change for the common good" (p. 3). The model, since its publication seven years ago, has become a widely used tool in higher education leadership curricula as well as in managerial training.

The social change model has multiple parallels to the *we* approach of the relational model of leadership development applied as the theoretical basis of this thesis. For that reason, the social change model is applied in the analysis and understanding of group dynamics during political discussions as well as the Board's policy project. The emphasis on collective work, collaboration, and citizenship are the three keys emphasized in the *we* evaluation of student members as statewide student leaders and policy developers. Finally, the social change model's emphasis on knowing-being-doing is

equivalent to the relational model's understanding of student leadership development and will be used interchangeably in the analysis of Board members as whole individuals.

Twentieth Century Leadership Theories – A Critique

James McGregor Burns (in Wren, 1995, chap. 2) believes that leadership theories have mainly been focused on the leaders' profiles, styles, and character, thus leaving the theory of leadership "one of the most observed and least understood phenomenon on earth" (p. 9). Cronin (in Wren, 1995, chap. 41), in his article "Thinking and Learning About Leadership," agrees. "Leadership is one of the most widely talked about subjects and at the same time one of the most elusive and puzzling" (Cronin, p. 27). In fact, "leadership as a concept has dissolved into small and discrete meanings" (Burns in Wren, 1995, chap. 2, p. 9). Although theoretical assumptions of leadership have evolved into reciprocal models, the societal view of leadership remains traditional. Cronin explains:

1. Although less accepted today than in twentieth century, many people continue to believe that leaders are born, not made, that they are accidental and emerge from circumstance.

2. Leadership is viewed in American culture as elitist, reserved for government officials, CEOs, and top managers, and unattainable by the general populace.

3. Leadership training is often preoccupied more with means and less with the end.

4. Americans view leadership as a "vocational topic" that can be learned through a business setting or an internship.

5. Leadership is messy, political, and controversial.

6. Leadership is all-encompassing, touching on most social sciences, thus making it difficult to fully understand.

7. Higher education is focused towards training specialists and "leaders have to learn to become generalists" (p. 29).

8. Leadership is often seen as a mysterious discipline, hard to define, intangible.

9. "Virtually anything that can be said about leadership can be denied or disproven." (p. 30)

10. Leadership is creative; thus, most colleges are not comfortable with teaching it or promoting it. (pp. 28-30)

The ten assumptions above exemplify the difficulty in implementing theoretical models in traditional organizational practices. They point to the traditional practices that have been upheld in the American workforce and academia and the reluctance of both educators and corporate leaders to embrace the reciprocal theories of the post-1970s era. However, as our society becomes more diverse[44] at the top of the corporate ladder, the more accepting it becomes of team-oriented workflow, follower/subordinate empowerment, and open[45] organizational structure. Academia, like the corporate world, has began to acknowledge the importance of leadership training, creating curricular and cocurricular programs and courses that would apply leadership theories into practice as well as challenging college students into thinking outside the traditional, hierarchical parameters of leadership.

Since the late 1970s, leadership research has been turning away from traditional, hierarchical, industrial theories and toward a new paradigm that combines frameworks of both service and leadership. According to Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (1998),

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[44] In this context diversity is referred to as both demographic and positional.

[45] Open structure refers to the web system of networking, free communication flow, and bottom-up organizational innovation and decision-making.

contemporary theory of leadership combines transformational, servant, steward, and emergent leadership into a conceptual framework of reciprocal leadership. The combination of these leadership perspectives creates a unique blend of characteristics that enhances the leader's ability to empower his/her group members, to interact with team members/ followers, and to successfully manage group goal attainment (Block, 1996; Rost, 1993). The paradigm shift from hierarchical to relational leadership has changed not only the theoretical framework of leadership, but also its application in higher education, in particular, in student governance.

Defining Leadership in the New Millennium

Leadership is "a socially constructed phenomenon" (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998, p. 16) that serves to explain organizational change, structure, and relationship between the people engaged in a group process. Leadership models of the late 1990s and the new millennium define leadership as a reciprocal, relational, organic process (Matusak, 1997) that focuses on teamwork, empowerment, and meaning-making. "Leadership is a social role – not a mere personality trait" (p. 5). Today, leadership is both positional and nonpositional, available to all levels of an organizational structure. "Leadership is everyone's option and everyone's responsibility" (p. 11). In practice, this notion of relational leadership has translated into a powerful motivational concept that has opened doors to unconventional leaders, such as public servants, citizens, community advocates, and nonpositional members of organizations/groups. Furthermore, in the context of student leadership, this new paradigm has empowered students to engage in community service, campus activities, and public governance, and to identify these positions as "leadership."

The leadership process, in the context of leaders, occurs in three stages:

1. Knowing – "You must know - yourself, how change occurs, and how others view things differently than you do."

2. Being – "You must be - ethical, principled, open, caring, and inclusive."

3. Doing – "You must act - in socially responsible ways, consistently and congruently, as a participant in a community and on your commitments and passions." (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998, p. 5)

By knowing oneself and others, a leader is able to work "collectively smarter" (Vaill, 1989), to collaborate as a team to accomplish goals. Secondly, by being ethical, a leader is entrusted with upholding the expected values, principles, and with making meaning of the organizational work taking place. Finally, by doing, a leader has the opportunity to show his/her commitment to the organization, to guide the actions, and to engage his/her participants/followers in the process. As Komives, Lucas, and McMahon explain in their book, *Exploring Leadership for College Students Who Want to Make a Difference*, "Leadership should attempt to accomplish something or change something. Leadership is purposeful and intentional" (p. 14).

Leadership as a relational process also carries a sense of civic responsibility. "Civic responsibility is the sense of personal responsibility individuals should feel to uphold their obligations as part of any community" (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998, p. 15). Civic responsibility means engaging in the community/organization one is a part of, taking on a leadership role and making a difference in that environment through innovation, teamwork, and goal accomplishment (Komives, Lucas, &McMahon).

Finally, leadership, in the new millennium, is about learning. As Komives, Lucas, and McMahon reflect, "Leadership today shows that there is great wisdom and energy in the group. Everyone in the group has a great deal to learn from each other" (p. 19). By being a learning organization, both leaders and followers/participants are able to more effectively embrace change. Learning also means focusing on the new opportunities, pulling together resources, skills, and ideas, and motivating one another to innovate, to learn, to bring about positive change (Watkins & Marsick, 1993). This sense of teamwork, collaboration, and leader-follower engagement towards the good of the organization has revolutionized the conventional way embraced by industrial theories of the twentieth century.

In this case study, leadership is defined as "a relational process of people together attempting to accomplish change or make a difference to benefit the common good" (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998, p. 68). "The model provides a frame of reference or an approach to leadership in contemporary organization" (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, p. 68). This leadership model contributed to the emergent reciprocal leadership theories of the post-1970s era through a recommendation of five philosophical assumptions that can help guide organizations to successful goal accomplishment. The five components of the relational model are exemplified in Table 1.

Table 1.

Relational Model Components

Component	Clarification of the component
Inclusive	Knowing self & others; understanding one's responsibilities as a citizen of a community as well as understanding the organizational culture; Being aware and believing that everyone can make a difference and creating/upholding an organizational web structure in which all individuals can thrive; Listening, building coalitions, framing/reframing, and engaging others in discussions.
Empowering	Knowing the power dynamics, sharing the power over tasks and procedures, allowing each individual to contribute in the decision-making process; Being aware that everyone has something to contribute to the organization and that their contributions are valid, important, and valued; Sharing information, learning from each other, promoting learning and self-leadership in others.
Purposeful	Knowing the mission and vision of the organization, having commitment to the organizational goals; Being positive, helpful, providing feedback, and steps necessary for the goal to be accomplished; Identifying goals, setting the goals, involving others in the process, and collaborating as a group to accomplish goals.

Component	Clarification of the component
Ethical	Knowing the value of self and others, making ethical decisions; Being social responsible for the group, developing character in self and others; Behaving in the way that benefits others, being responsible, trusting.
Process-oriented	Knowing the group process, understanding the organizational perspective; Being process-oriented and encouraging others; Collaborating, working as a collective, making meaning, and giving/receiving feedback.

The relational model of leadership development is a team centric framework that focuses on participants' interaction in an organizational setting. The relational model assumes that in any given organization a relational approach can be applied when participants engage in a web like structure and are inclusive, empowering, purposeful, ethical, and above all, process-oriented. Meaning, the participants: understand each other's perspectives; empower each other to share information and participate in the decision-making process regardless of one's role in an organization; have a positive attitude during goal setting and implementation; behave in an ethical and respectful manner; and are process-oriented, focused on producing a high-quality outcome. Through these processes, participants develop strong listening skills, practice renewal and meaning-making, become more reliable and responsible for their actions and those of their peers, and learn to work in diverse and challenging settings. The relational model teaches organizational participants how to work as a team, to respect and appreciate each other, and to collectively achieve goals. The relational model also encourages individual reflection, meaning-making, and connection of leaders to their experience, to other participants, and to the organization as a whole.

Student Leadership Development – Setting the Stage for Case Study Analysis

"The concept of leadership and the educational goals of leadership development have been given very little attention by most of our institutions of higher learning" (Astin & Astin, Eds., 2000, p. 3). In Arthur's Levine's (*Change magazine*, 1989 in DeZure et al., 2000) interview with Robert Cole,[46] entitled "Learning by Doing through Public Service," Cole emphasizes community service in education, "Education is not only a

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[46] Robert Cole is a Harvard professor and an author of *Children in Crisis.*

function of books, but a function of experience and connecting what one reads with ongoing observations and experiences" (p. 165).

"Leadership development should be a critical part of the college experience" (Astin & Astin, Eds., 2002, p. 17). According to Frank Newman's (in DeZure et al., 2000) article "Students in Public Service – Honoring Those Who Care," community service and extracurricular participation is an integral ingredient of students' success in higher education. As Newman states, students learn by doing, and through doing they realize that they can achieve much more than they previously thought. In addition, Newman fights the common stereotype that college students are self-focused and unengaged with their community and argues that, once given an opportunity, students respond and enjoy their community involvement; thus, it is essential for students to have opportunities and be introduced to diverse elements of service.

The current statistics, as expressed by Arthur Levine (in DeZure et al., 2000), indicate that two out of three students participate in volunteer activities. The primary community service activities include fund raising, working with children, and church-sponsored projects (Levine). A considerable number, around thirty percent, volunteer for environmental causes, the homeless, hospitals, and special-needs individuals (Levine). Students want to get involved and expand their service duties, but view this element of their lives as separate from their academic and on-campus involvement. In addition, the majority of American students feel disconnected from the government and higher education policy and have made an independent effort to engage in activities that support students' individual beliefs (Levine). Thus, as Greg Clark (2001) points out, "Currently,

there exists a gap between expectations for skilled leaders and comprehensive programs to train and develop leadership skills among students at the college level" (p. 1).

The need to educate students about leadership and engage them in leadership development is essential for students' growth as public servants and citizens. According to the Kellogg report *Leadership Reconsidered: Engaging Higher Education in Social Change*, "Our belief that producing more effective leaders is essential to building a better society and better world suggests that leadership development should be a critical part of the college experience" (Astin & Astin, 2002, p. 17). "…Even if students are not particularly interested in developing leadership skills, virtually any of activities can be viewed as an opportunity either to provide service to others, to enrich their group experience, or to initiate some desired change" (p. 19).

As the result of this movement, more higher education institutions have began to tie in their academic curricula with the service element[47] (Levine in DeZure et al., 2000). "In colleges whose curricula provide undergraduates with meaningful service activities, students report that service has become a more central part of their lives. The quicker colleges act to provide service learning, the brighter are chances that, this time, voluntarism will be more than a fad" (Levine, p. 169).

Leadership literature of the 1990s strongly focuses on reciprocal leadership and on the notion of the service-oriented leader; however, its emphasis is primarily on campus cocurricular opportunities. The literature, although rich in student on-campus affairs, lacks more extensive research on off-campus programs, in particular, the cross-

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[47] These elements include leadership academies, living and learning communities, volunteer organizations, and community and public service-oriented cocurricular activities.

institutional boards that deal directly deal with governmental policies. Furthermore, the extent to which student organizations are evaluated is limited to bylaws, meeting observation, and general surveys. Thus, there is a gap between our understanding of the roles students play in higher education and our awareness of the leadership development skills they obtain as a result of that participation. In the modern paradigm that searches for meaning and community building, very little has been written on statewide organizations and the impact they have on students' leadership development. The Student Advisory Board is one such example. Unique in the powers and positions it offers to students, the Board offers valuable public policy experience and encourages student leaders to demonstrate their leadership on a public-service level, to develop teambuilding skills, and to grow as individual leaders. As Klopf (1960) states, referring to student leadership development through group involvement:

> Being a member of a group gives a student status and acceptance as well as opportunities for fellowship and comradeship. Many of these group experiences can be learning experiences in human relations and understanding human behavior. Through sharing responsibility for group progress and programs he learns the skills of participating effectively in groups and leadership. (p. 16)

Being a member of the Student Advisory Board fulfills this notion of leadership development through group interaction. The Board, as explained in previous sections, serves to clarify one's leadership identity (Woodard, 1994) and helps individuals make a difference (Greenleaf, 1995) in higher education. For students at the Student Advisory Board, the Board experience is a journey into leadership, public service, and citizenship. According to the *Bylaws* (Higher Education Commission, 2002) and the former Board advisor (Booker, personal communication, April 2003), the Board provides a great leadership opportunity in which the students can grow as leaders, as citizens, and serve

their institutions and fellow students. The Board provides a unique opportunity for college students to practice public service by encouraging teamwork, collaboration on public policies, and thorough discussion and assessment of higher education students' [at-large] opinions, goals, and visions.

However, due to a lack of research on students' leadership development over the course of the Board session, it is unclear how students utilize their previously developed skills and apply them in decision-making and teamwork. Also, it is unclear how student leaders develop a sense of representative public service as a result of this experience, and what the experience means to them as student leaders. The purpose of this case study is to explore the meaning of the Board experiences and students' leadership development towards greater public service. In order to understand their organizational development and meaning-making, the relational model, as described in the previous section, is used as a theoretical framework to which analysis is correlated. The five assumptions – inclusive, empowering, purposeful, ethical, and process-oriented – are used to connect individuals to their peers, to further explore the nature of leadership development in a web-structured organization. The five components combined create a sense of collective leadership in which the followers/participants play an active role in goal setting, innovating, decision-making, and goal accomplishments. The relational model of leadership encourages the active role of organizational members and promotes a shared value of leadership. Although the relational model has traditionally been incorporated in a campus-based research, its conceptual framework directly correlates to this case study's findings and serves not only to shed light on the Board phenomenon, but to transcend its traditional applications to off-campus service practices.

Leadership is "meaning making in a community of practice" (Drath & Palus, 1994, p. 4). Leadership experiences are learning opportunities providing new tools and enhancing current skills practiced by student leaders. Leadership experiences are also about collective and individual improvements, learning moments, and inner reflection. As students' experience new leadership challenges, they are faced with diverse environments, group dynamics, and tasks that require them to look to their teammates for community building and shared leadership, but also to learn from within, making meaning of these experiences, and spiritually reflecting on their personal and professional goals. Leadership development is for that reason essential in the creation of an authentic self in one's community, as well as uncovering the meaning that is already embedded in one's mind, helping one "see what they already know, believe, and value, and encouraging them to make new meaning" (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993, p. xv). "In this way, leadership generates leadership" (p. xv).

CHAPTER 3

Methods

To understand the student leadership development in the Student Advisory Board,
data were collected from multiple sources: Board observation notes, individual
interviews, focus groups, participants' journals, Student Board members e-mail
reflections, and artifacts.[48] Data were organized in a chronological order beginning with
students' leadership backgrounds, institutional selection processes that selected these
individuals to participate in the Board, as well as students' initial reactions to the Board
as a structure, collaborative body, and to members that make up the advisory. Following
the introductory section, the findings explore the student commissioner selection process,
students' political discussions, as well as students' group dynamics during the main
policy projects – student advising in the Atlantic state. The findings conclude with a
reflective piece on students' perceptions of themselves as public-service providers,
institutional representatives, higher education change agents, and the meaning this Board
experience had on them in their leadership development.

The levels of analysis adopted derive from the relational model of leadership
development (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998), exploring students' leadership from
the I-You-We dimensions (Buber, 1958). The *I* is applied in the introductory analysis
and serves to explore individuals' leadership backgrounds, lessons learned, internal
reasons for participating in the Board, and the students' initial reactions to the Board.
The *you* explores the learning process that took place in the first half of the Board

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[48] Artifacts include: the *Bylaws*, handouts from the Board meetings, reports, policy
recommendations, interview logs with Higher Education Coordinating Commission staff
and advisor, newspaper articles about the student participants and their policy
projects/legislative involvement, school catalogs, and newsletters.

session, in which students learned about each other's backgrounds, institutions, interests, as well as engaged in policy discussion on both the political and education climate of the Atlantic state. In this stage, students were also engaged in the selection process of the next student commissioner to the coordinating commission through which Board members had to work as a team to create interview questions and a set of criteria by which to judge the prospective candidates, as well as to collaborate in the decision-making. The final dimension, *we*, was developed through the Board's project on academic advising in which students were challenged to work in segmental groups and survey higher education students of the state in order to make policy recommendations that were later presented to Coordinating Commission. Through this process, students moved away from learning about self and others and engaged in a collective work for the purpose of accomplishing a key organizational goal – policy recommendations. Through the three dimensions of analysis, the reader will be able to see the progression of students in their leadership development, skills adopted, lessons learned, and their advancement as public-service providers.

Student leadership development is best assessed through a qualitative methodology that seeks to understand leadership development from the students' perspective. In the higher education environment, where students have become an integral part of the on and off-campus political realm, the need to provide further governance and advisory opportunities, as well as to comprehend the significance of the existing roles that students' play, has escalated. This case study serves to provide an insight into student leadership development by focusing on a phenomenon of student public service in the Atlantic State Higher Education Coordinating Commission.

The purpose of this case study is to uncover the meaning Board experience has for student participants and the impact it has on their leadership development. As such, the study uses rhetorical words (Creswell, 1998) such as "understand," "define," and "meaning" to describe the phenomenon. This language is further characterized through the analyses of students' vignettes, observation memos, transcripts, and artifacts, and through the theoretical application of the relational model of leadership development. Themes, patterns, and meaning that emerged from the data serve to illuminate the phenomenon and tell the story of the Student Advisory Board. "Leadership research should be designed to provide information relevant to the entire range of definitions, so that over time it will be possible to compare the utility of different conceptualizations and arrive at some consensus on the matter" (Yukl, 1981, p. 5). By carefully crafting the language and "attaching significance to what was found, offering explanations, drawing conclusions, extrapolating lessons, making inferences, building linkages, attaching meaning, imposing order, and dealing with rival explanations, disconfirming cases, and data irregularities" (Patton, 1990, p. 423), I was able to uncover the significance of this leadership opportunity as well as to answer the research question – the meaning of the experience to the Student Advisory Board participants. The implications of the study have been left to the reader's interpretation.

The case study data were collected over the period of four months, consisting of Student Advisory Board observations, individual interviews, focus groups, and artifacts.[49] Following the tone of qualitative methodology, personal voice was used throughout data analysis in order to interrelate key student leadership components and reflect on the field

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[49] Artifacts include: meeting agendas, handouts, reports, newspaper articles, *Bylaws*, interview notes with Coordinating Commission members.

experience. The standards of quality applied within this philosophical assumption are Lincoln's and Guba's (1985) validity measurements of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Research Design

The method of inquiry applied is a qualitative case study. A case study, as defined by Creswell (1998), is bounded by a specific interval of time and by a particular setting (physical, social, or other) that combine methods of triangulation in order to obtain rich data on both theoretical and practical aspects of the study. In this case study, a group of thirty students was observed from January until April as they selected the next student commissioner for the Statewide Higher Education Coordinating Commission and created a set of policy recommendations on academic advising. Five volunteers from the Board were interviewed individually and in the focus groups within the same time frame for the purpose of understanding their development as student leaders and public servants. These interviews, focus group meetings, and observations were combined with the artifacts for the purpose of creating diverse data sources that would provide a collection of rich leadership materials that would enhance the reader's understanding of students' leadership development. Overall, the time-bounded framework, the nature of the setting, the composition of the group, the data collection methodology, the role of the researcher as an insider/observer, and the theoretical application of the leadership concepts all point to the appropriateness of the case study as the mode of qualitative inquiry.

Research Relationship

As a former Student Commissioner and a former Student Advisory Board ex-officio, I have background knowledge of the research setting and procedures; thus, I entered the study in a role of insider/observer. As an insider, I have familiarity with the Board Bylaws, the general Board and executive committee structure, as well as the protocol of projects that take place each year. Hence, I am aware of information resources, individuals who have worked with the Student Advisory Board in the past, as well as the level of artifacts available to the general public, which were incorporated into the data analysis. However, due to change of advisors and the regular induction of new Board members, I possessed no prior knowledge of the individuals I observed, nor did I know which of these students would be interested in participating in my case study as focus group participants. By creating clear boundaries on my role as a researcher and an insider, I was able to balance my relationship with the students and with the advisor.

As an insider, it was important to create a mutual understanding between the students observed and myself that I was serving at the Student Advisory Board in the capacity of a researcher/observer, not a "former student commissioner" overseeing this year's project. By conducting an initial introductory presentation at their November meeting and by e-mailing interested students with more in-depth information[50] about the case study, the students had time to assess the information provided to them as well as to become familiar with my study, data requirements, and time commitment involved.

As a researcher, I was in constant communication with students interested in participating in my case study. I set up interviews and focus group meetings and ensured

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[50] See Appendix B for the introductory packet.

that the conduct of the meetings remained theme-oriented, focusing on students'

leadership development. Because of my unfamiliarity with Student Advisory Board

members, I was not viewed as a coadvisor; rather, I was treated as a researcher/ observer.

Thus, during formal meeting observations, I was not asked questions or asked to

participate in the discussions or selection processes. I remained a "fly on the wall"

during the meetings, giving me a more honest view of the students' interactions,

communications, and project management.

My role as a researcher was, however, balanced with my former title of the

student commissioner. As a former student commissioner for the Atlantic state, I was

requested by the current Board advisor to aid in three tasks: 1) distribution of nametags

prior to each meeting; 2) lunch discussion with student commissioner candidates; and 3)

minutes creation after the March meeting. Each of these tasks required a minimum

amount of time and did not interfere with my role as a researcher. For example, when I

was requested to distribute the nametags, it was during the peer meeting, at which time

students were seeking morning breakfast, greeting each other, or looking over the agenda.

Considering that the nametag distribution took less than five minutes to complete, I felt it

was a good exercise in learning students' names.

During the February student commissioner selection meeting, I was asked once

again to step back into my role of a former student commissioner and meet with the

position candidates during the informal lunch to answer any questions they might have

about the position and my past experience. Due to the importance of the selection

process as well as the Board's eagerness to find the upcoming student commissioner, I

felt that I could aid the process by providing insider information about my own

experience. However, to remain true to my task as an observer, I divided the lunch hour between the informal conversation with the candidates and my observations of the Board interaction with each other and the candidates. During my conversations with the candidates, I shared the project I was involved in during my tenure in 2000, as well as the role that the student commissioner plays in the state. The candidates were receptive. As candidates were called by the Board to meet with students individually, I was able to step back into my role of a researcher/observer and continue taking attentive notes on the group dynamics and leadership development.

Finally, during the March meeting, the secretary of the Board was absent. As an observer of the Board meeting, I had taken careful observation notes and tape-recorded discussions. Thus, towards the conclusion of the meeting, I was requested by the Board to create objective public minutes from the meeting. I accepted the position, feeling confident with the request. Over the course of the next two weeks, the Board advisor e-mailed me the past minutes composed by the secretary to give me an idea of what he was looking for. Following my observation notes, I was able to successfully complete the task, and the minutes were made available to all Board members at the beginning of the following meeting.[51]

As an insider/observer, I carefully balanced my roles as a former student commissioner and a researcher, having an opportunity to not only observe the student interaction and collect valuable artifacts, but also to serve as an "insider volunteer," helping the Board in small tasks. In fact, by volunteering in these three tasks, I opened the channels of communication between the advisor and myself, as well as added to my

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[51] See Appendix E for the March Student Advisory Board minutes. Students' names and location were changed to their case-study-appropriate pseudonyms.

researcher status as someone who possesses thorough knowledge of the structures, functions, and dynamics of the Student Advisory Board.

Ethical Issues

In my case study there were three possible ethical issues: 1) generalizations of main leadership principles; 2) the use of recording devices; and 3) my role as insider/observer. Case studies, as part of the qualitative method of inquiry, have two forms of generalizations, internal and external (Maxwell, 1996). As Cook and Campbell (1979) point out, internal generalization refers to the ability of the researcher to focus his/her observation on the entire group studied, not only on the focus group. Maxwell explains, "The descriptive, interpretive, and theoretical validity of the conclusions all depend on their internal generalizability to the case as a whole" (p. 97). By staying objective and recording the points made by all students during their discussions, I remained true to the subject area and the research question.

In this case study, the main focus was the Student Advisory Board, their general interaction during political discussions, student commissioner selection, and project completion. In fact, all students were given pseudonyms for the purpose of representing student voices, views, and opinion as expressed during the [observed] Board meetings. However, in order to better understand the profile of the students as well as the meaning the experience had on individual students, a diverse body of Board members was studied in-depth as the means to providing insight into the student leadership development, and for the purpose of explaining to the reader the type of students who get involved/selected for the Board, what skills they develop along the way, and the meaning/importance of this experience as a leadership opportunity. To ensure that the internal generalization is

maintained, observation notes focused not only on the five individuals studied, but also on the group at-large, providing the reader with a clearer sense of team dynamics. The patterns of the themes generalized from the group meetings and interactions served the purpose of understanding the phenomenon, and were not modified to fit external parameters.

The second form of generalization is external. Qualitative research embraces the uniqueness of a phenomenon and shies away from external generalization. Qualitative inquiry, unlike quantitative, allows for the omission of external generalization to the extent that the phenomenon presented is unique and does not translate to the general college student population. As Maxwell (1996) explains, "The value of a qualitative study may depend on its lack of external generalizability, in the sense of being representative of a larger population; it may provide an account of a setting or population that is illuminating as an extreme case or ideal type" (p. 97). Generalization exists within the parameters such as "respondents' own assessment of generalizability, the similarity of dynamics and constraints to other situations, the presumed depth of the phenomenon studied…" (p. 97).

The purpose of this case study is to uncover the meaning the Student Advisory Board experience has on students' leadership development. Due to the presumed uniqueness of the experience, students' perception of the experience, the skills enhanced, and leadership development expanded is embedded within the general group and thus cannot be generalized to all students involved in a leadership experience. Further, due to the unique extent of powers given to the Student Advisory Board on the state level, the experience students have cannot be replicated. However, the hope of the study is that

readers will find this statewide student opportunity to be a means of sharing student experience in the hope that other states will reform or enhance their existing systems to allow their students to partake in a more active role in higher education.

The second ethical issue, as presented in the proposal, was with the use of tape-recording devices (Cresswell, 1998; Maxwell, 1996) in order to more accurately capture the essence of dialogues between the participants and me, the researcher, as well as to analyze how individuals apply their leadership skills within the group. Initial concerns were around these questions: Will a recording device affect personal behavior of the participants? Would they be open and truthful about their experience, knowing they are being recorded? However, both questions were alleviated through the use of the following: 1) agreement contract; 2) application of pseudonyms; and 3) availability of transcripts and observation notes for member checks. By taking these precautions, boundaries were set in the case study, making all individuals comfortable with the recording process.

Following the guidelines of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Maryland, a three-part contract was designed to clarify the use of recording devices, as well as to explain the protocol of data collection to the students interested in participating in the study. A consent form[52] was applied specifically for the use of a tape recorder, stating the identification of the project, purpose, procedures, confidentiality, and risk/benefits of the study. Once interested, students agreed to the terms of the study and were asked to sign all the forms. All five focus group students signed the form.

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[52] See Appendix C for the consent forms.

As a researcher, I also wanted to make sure that I could tape record certain elements of the Board meetings that I deemed to be important leadership data. After an open discussion with the Board members and the advisor, I was granted permission to selectively tape-record the March and April Board meetings. According to an agreement with the advisor, his Institutional Review Board signature signaled the approval for using a tape-recorder of the entire Board. Secondly, all political discussions on higher education were to be omitted in the transcripts and addressed only in general topical terms. Finally, all names on the tape recording were protected in the transcripts.

In addition to the Institutional Review Board forms, students were made comfortable through the use of pseudonyms. As an observer, I assigned pseudonyms to the Board at-large. Names were given to match the gender of the Board members. By using pseudonyms, I, as an observer, could more easily record full dialogues and give credit to individuals during the discussion periods. In addition, pseudonyms provided means of citation of otherwise unprotected sources. In addition, I gave all actively involved participants, five focus group members and two additional students who shared their vignettes with me, the opportunity to create pseudonyms of their names and colleges. Students were instructed to select a first name "that they always wanted to have or that carries a special meaning" and to create a college name "that reflects institutional mission, as it pertains to student development." The five students in the focus group gave themselves the following pseudonyms:

- Jesse – University of African-American Leaders;

- Michael – Career Design University;

- Henry – Jesuit Ideals University;

- Marcus – Western Institute of Higher Learning; and

- Bob – Institute for Comprehensive Academic & Technical Studies.

In addition to the five students, there were two students, the Board secretary (female, Latina, 21-year-old student) and the current student commissioner (male, African-American, mid-twenties) that shared "end of the session" reflections with me and were thus, protected through pseudonyms:

- Alicia – Education Without Boundaries College (self derived); and

- Taiowa – University of African-American Leaders.

By giving students an opportunity to create their own pseudonyms or allowing me to assign one to them, students felt a sense of ownership and identity protection, knowing that the "external public" would not be aware of their true identity.

Finally, students interviewed were given the opportunity of member checks. That is, as transcripts were completed, they were made available before the meetings for students to look over. Transcripts were also made available via e-mail upon request. The purpose of transcript availability was to make students comfortable with the recorded material, to understand that the transcripts serve to ensure accurate quotation and description of discussions and dialogues, and for students to feel in control of the personal data collected. In addition to member checks, students were given the opportunity to comment on the research methodology, provide suggestions on what they would like to see with the study short term and long term. The feedback provided includes such commentary as:

> I think that you can get a fair cross section of the [Student Advisory Board], and what we all feel affected us and what we can do to improve, and as long as you put that in your report, elaborate on suggestions, what has been done so far, and what we plan for the future, where [Student Advisory Board] has come from,

where it started, and where it is now, why it may be better, stronger, bigger, that is important. (Michael, personal communication, April 3, 2003)

Furthermore, upon the completion of my thesis, I made copies available to all five individuals involved in the focus group, the executive committee, the advisor, and key Coordinating Commission members, as the means of honoring them for their participation and support.

With the protection methods such as contract forms, pseudonyms, and member checks, students felt comfortable that their identity was protected and were thus open during personal interviews and focus group meetings. In fact, all students examined felt comfortable with the use of tape recorders. As I observed during the individual interviews, students possess strong communication skills and did not feel threatened by the tape recorder. In fact, on more than one occasion students helped me monitor tapes. By feeling comfortable in a protected environment, students remained open, focused, and truthful, sharing personal vignettes and providing a candid view of the Board's individual perceptions, student issues, and their own leadership development.

The third ethical issue is of an insider/observer. As addressed in the researcher relationship section, my role during the data collection months was that of both a researcher and a former student commissioner. As a former student commissioner, I felt that it was my duty to aid the Board advisor by distributing nametags, answering student commissioner candidates' questions during lunch, and preparing minutes from one Board meeting. Although my predominant role as a researcher/observer dominated my actions with the Board, my former position was recognized by both the advisory and the Board as a reliable resource for student commissioner information.

However, to remain true to my commitment as a researcher, I refrained from any participation during Board meeting discussions, project management, policy writing, and the new student commissioner interview and decision-making processes. I also refrained from any political commentary on higher education and answered only questions related to my research. Because of the introductory meeting in November, where I presented my research proposal and distributed introductory packets, as well as the researcher-participant guidelines, the Board members understood my role and my background; thus, the level of communication established was strictly research-oriented. Students felt comfortable with my presence at the Board and gave me room to observe their discussions without interfering or modifying their behavior. Finally, I had regular communications with the gatekeeper, the Board advisor. For example, we discussed how the Institutional Review Board consent forms should be signed for the purpose of general Board observation.[53] By keeping him up to date on my data collection, Jearim felt comfortable with allowing me an individual interview, as well as inviting me to observe the last meeting, where students discussed their leadership development and their vision for the next year's Board project.

The qualitative inquiry requires a researcher to immerse him/herself in the culture s/he observes. However, through this process, a researcher can influence his/her participants. Meaning, students engaged in the case study are likely to become more active in the organization in which they are observed. In this case study the five focus group participants indicated their interest in my study, as they wanted to learn more about their own leadership development and the influence

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[53] The result was the Board's verbal approval during a March meeting and the advisor's signature, on behalf of the Board, for the use of recording devices.

they have on higher education policy. Through their participation in my focus group and individual interview discussions, they became more active on their campuses, working with their student government associations to bridge the gap between the Board and their institutions. However, in the level of engagement within the Board, only one student increased his participation. Michael, the vice-chair of the Board, found our conversations enlightening and brought up the issue of leadership to the Board. Additionally, Michael, unrelated to our communications, brought up the issues of Board's role on individual campuses and an idea for a transition meeting between two sessions for the purpose of continuous engagement of students in higher education policy. All students embraced these discussions,[54] and there was no correlation between my engagement with the Board and their conversational directions.

The initial ethical concerns, as elaborated above, were alleviated through the use of consent forms, pseudonyms, transcript availability, as well as through open communication with all Board members and the advisor, which provided for mutual understanding of my role as an insider/observer and former student commissioner/researcher, as well as a high level of comfort with my research area, student leadership development.

Risks & Benefits

The purpose of this study is for the participants to engage in self-actualization as public officials and to look into their experience at the Student Advisory Board in order

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[54] At no time was my name or my role as an insider/observer mentioned nor compromised. Students saw Michael's ideas as important discussion points that were addressed as follows: leadership was addressed as an important quality during the student commissioner process; a state-wide college forum was embraced as a structure that needs to be created independent of the Board; and the idea of intermediary group was a shared thought by Michael and Katherine, a public-college student.

to gain a better understanding of their leadership development opportunity and the meaning this experience has on their role as student leaders. Additionally, all data collected was clearly presented, identities protected, and channels of communication/ feedback provided. With these precautions and triangulation of data, students faced no direct risk during this study.

The nature of this case study is focused on the students' leadership development, statewide opportunity for student empowerment, and the meaning this form of experience has for students. As such, the study provided three essential indirect benefits. First, the participants had an opportunity to get to know more intimately other fellow Board members as they shared their views, experiences, and skills learned during the Board session within the environment of a focus group. Secondly, the students had an opportunity to assess their leadership philosophy, their role as public officials, and to reflect on leadership moments via personal vignettes. Finally, the study participant had an opportunity to analyze the meaning of leadership in the context of Student Advisory Board experience. At the end of the data collection process, during the last Board meeting, I gave each of the five focus group participants a thank-you note, along with the Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (1998) book *Exploring Leadership for College Students Who Want to Make a Difference* as a token of my appreciation for their time, input, and support.

<div align="center">*Sampling & the Selection Process*</div>

The nature of this case study is to understand the meaning statewide higher education opportunity has to students in their leadership development and skill enhancement. Artifacts collected in the study were a combination of personal journals,

newspaper articles, Board papers, agendas, and vignettes. To understand students'

profile, diversity of experiences, importance and uniqueness of the Board, as well as the

meaning of their position with the Board, it was important to create a sample comprised

of volunteers, willing to actively discuss Board issues and open to sharing their own

background. For that purpose, the sample was self-determined, meaning the size of the

sample was dictated by the number of individuals interested in the study. Furthermore, I

did not discriminate on the basis of age, sex, race, ethnic origin, religion, or socio-

economic status. All Board members were qualified for the study. Due to volunteers'

ethnic, racial, gender, leadership, and Board position diversity, the sample was

representative of the heterogeneous environment that exists in the Student Advisory

Board.

In the academic year 2002-2003, there were thirty members of the Student

Advisory Board. In November of 2002, I was invited by the former Student Advisory

Board advisor to present my research to the students and to solicit volunteers. I was

given five minutes to address the Board, distribute the introductory packets,[55] and answer

any questions students might have had. Due to time constraint, I handed out packets at

the very beginning of my presentation along with a sign-up sheet for the focus group.

The experience was exhilarating, and time passed quickly. Students expressed interest in

the study right away, and at the end of the meeting I had twelve signatures, five "yes" and

seven "maybe" of students interested in participating in the focus group.[56]

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[55] See Appendix B for the introductory packet.

[56] The November meeting was attended by 26 students. Attendance varied between 14-24 students throughout the rest of the Board session.

Following the meeting, I established communication with all twelve individuals, informing them further of the questions they could expect during the first individual interview as well as the general format of the focus group. In the month of December, due to final exams and a winter break, where over half of the individuals traveled outside of the state, all interested students requested postponement of data collection until the end of January. In the last week of January I e-mailed all volunteers and began scheduling the first individual interviews. Seven of the twelve individuals declined due to schedule constraints. For some, academic expectations proved overwhelming, for others it was lack of sufficient time due to other extracurricular activities.[57] The five remaining individuals continued to express interest in my study and remained active participants throughout data collection period.

In addition to the five focus group members, I solicited support of the Board advisor, current student commissioner, and the Board secretary, due to her leadership in the political realm of higher education and her organization within the Board, for the purpose of gathering additional perspectives on the Student Advisory Board. Although they had time constraints, and thus could not participate in the full data collection, they provided me with powerful vignettes that gave me additional perspectives[58] on the meaning of the Board experience. Together, the eight individuals, along with the general Board observations, provided rich data on the meaning of the Board experience.

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[57] Although academic constrains were provided as a reason for not participating in the study or the Board at large, there might have been other factors that influenced students' decisions not to engage in this process. These factors could be explored in a follow-up study.

[58] The Board advisor granted me an individual interview while the two students provided me with written e-mail reflections on their Board experiences, why they got involved, what they learned, and what the opportunity meant for them as student leaders.

Data Collection

The data collection process took place over the course of four months, from January to April 2003. After an initial two-month negotiation period in September and October of 2002 with the gatekeeper, a former Student Advisory Board advisor in association with one Commission director and the new Board advisor, the study was approved under the following conditions:

1. Initial study presentation – I attended the November Student Advisory Board meeting, where I presented my study and passed out a sign-up sheet for those interested.

2. Board observations – Initial agreement called for two observation periods, February and March; however, due to the nature of the April meeting – project presentations and a discussion of the Board as a student leadership opportunity – I was permitted by the Board advisor, Jearim, to attend and tape-record key leadership discussions.

3. Three focus group meetings – the meetings took place before [or after] the scheduled Board meetings, thus making it convenient for the participants to attend. The meetings took place in the same rooms as the Board meetings and refreshments were provided [by me] as part of the accommodations. Students were e-mailed questions ahead of time, so that participants had an idea of what would be discussed. It also allowed those absent to provide timely input. Meetings were timed, formal, and followed the question protocol. It is important to note that focus group protocol was designed by the students during the preliminary communications and was followed during all meetings.

4. Individual interviews – the five focus group members were each interviewed twice. Meetings took place in public libraries' study rooms, accommodating students' weekly schedules. In the beginning of each interview, questions were read, explained, and additional questions were added during dialogues in order to clarify or elaborate on a particular theme.

5. Protections – all observations, focus group, and interview meetings were transcribed using pseudonyms for the participants, institutions, and places. All recordings were kept confidential and destroyed at the completion of the case study.

The conditions provided for concise data guidelines, opportunity for in-depth analysis of student leadership development, and increased the level of the commission's is comfort with my study.

Data collection in this case study was completed through the triangulation of methods from multiple sources including focus group sessions, individual interviews, Board meetings observations, e-mails, leadership journals, and artifact collection. As seen from Table 2, field notes, interview transcripts, observation protocols, journal logs, and e-mails were used to record the data and were utilized for the purpose of case study analysis.

Table 2.

Data Collection Methodology

Methodology	Clarification
What was studied?	Student Advisory Board at-large; five individuals in-depth; three individuals as additional data sources
What were access & rapport issues?	Access was gained in November after two months of negotiations with the former Board advisor and top Commission employees
What type of information was collected?	Triangulation of methods was applied: focus group discussion, individual interviews, Board observations, journal logs, and diverse hard artifacts
How was information recorded?	Field notes, tape recordings, transcripts, observational memos, and e-mails
What were data issues?	Confidentiality associated with recorded material. (See the previous section)
How was information stored?	The information was stored in an e-mail folder, computer hard drive, protected CD-ROMs, and three-ring binders.

Observation Notes

There were three observations of the Student Advisory Board – February, March, and April. The purpose of each observation was to witness first-hand students' group dynamics as they selected the next student commissioner, worked on a policy project, and discussed important higher education issues. The observation also provided a venue where student leadership skills could be assessed through listening to their discussions, speeches, questions, and through the observation of their roles in segmental groups. "The data from observations consist of detailed descriptions of people's activities, behaviors, actions, and the full range of interpersonal interactions and organizational processes that are part of observable human experience" (Patton, 1990, p. 10). Each observation was accompanied by field notes, memos, room diagrams, and seating charts.

Focus Group Meetings

"Focus groups are interviews with small groups of people… who participate collectively in an interview for one-half to two hours" (Tyree in Outcalt, Faris, & McMahon, 2001, p. 245). There were three focus group meetings, each in duration of an hour. First and last meetings were attended by two participants[59] and the second one by four students. All focus group meetings were tape-recorded with multiple tape recorders and transcribed for the purpose of accurate quotation. The purpose of each focus group meeting was to uncover how students felt about the Board's structure and function, as well as their group dynamics and leadership skills developed. The focus group sessions gave students an opportunity to meet each other on a more informal level, have open

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[59] In this case study, the term "focus group" will be applied when two or more volunteers gathered for a discussion beyond their individual interviews with me, the researcher.

discussions about their work at the Board, and learn from each other's experiences and rich discussions.

The three focus group sessions were conducted in order to collect data pertaining to the Board's functions and students' roles within these projects and discussions. The first focus group session, attended by Michael and Henry, served to begin the conversation about the skills students were developing as well as to share the student commissioner selection process. The focus group discussion centered around the students' perceptions of what they were gaining from the experience, such as the impact perceived collaboration has on their learning and the impact student diversity has on students' ability to understand each other and honor different viewpoints. In addition, it was important to address the structural and symbolic meaning of the Board. As a statewide advisory board with clear bylaws and parliamentary rules, the Board carries a sense of symbolism – students' engagement in higher education and service as institutional representatives. To Michael and Henry this line of questioning provided them with a base on which further sessions would be built. As the first session came near the end, Michael shared a vignette on the student commissioner selection process, what student were looking for in the candidate, how students collaborated with each other, and the importance the selection process had to students as institutional representatives.

The second focus group meeting was attended by Jesse, Michael, Marcus, and Taiowa.[60] The purpose of the meeting was to discuss group dynamics, the policy project,

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[60] Bob arrived late and the focus group questions were incorporated into the after-Board individual interview.

students views of themselves as public servants and student leaders, as well as to explore

innovative ideas into the future of the Board and what students would like to see happen.

The questions were divided into three tiers, one set following the other. The first set

served to engage students in a discussion about Board group dynamics, overall

relationships and interactions that exist among all members, how focus group participants

communicate without their institutional segment groups, and finally, what roles do these

individuals play in segments as well as within the Board.[61]

The final meeting[62] was in April, attended by Michael and Marcus. I asked

questions and received responses one by one. In order to fully answer the research

question, I asked questions about different dimensions of the meaning this experience has

to the students as well as to spend time on reflection about this leadership opportunity.

The focus group session gave participants a chance to look inside themselves and ask

themselves why they are part of the Student Advisory Board, what it means to them to

have a statewide public office and to represent interests of students in higher education,

as well as to ask where does this drive comes from. Their responses and personal

vignettes are captured in the findings chapter.

Due to the open design, I asked students during the first Board observation to give

me suggestions on what type of focus group meetings they would like to have. I gave

them options of incorporating icebreakers, team building, and reflection pieces into the

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[61] A role is defined according to Komives, Lucas, and McMahon's (1998) book on *Exploring Leadership*, where students are information seekers, opinion seekers/givers, summarizers, clarifier, gatekeeper, encourager, mediator, or follower.

[62] Other participants had to leave early, but they reflected in journal logs about the overall Board experience.

meetings, but all interested students suggested a format of question and answer.[63]

Honoring their requests, I assembled focus group questions, available in Appendix D,

that would get to the core of students' group dynamics, Board responsibilities, and the

meaning of the experience. All participants felt comfortable with the format, my role as a

mediator and a guide during the discussions, as well as with talking to each other and

voicing their opinions.

Individual Interviews

 "Interviews are one-on-one interactions which provide participants the ability to

respond on their own words and express personal perspectives on the topic of interest"

(Tyree in Outcalt, Faris, & McMahon, 2001, p. 244). Questions are open-ended and

follow particular themes/patterns. The themes are well planned and similar for each

individual (Patton, 1990), providing continuity in data collection.

Each of the five focus group members met with me, the researcher, twice, once in

the period of January/February and the second time in the period of March/April for the

purpose of discussing their leadership background, their initial involvement in the

Student Advisory Board, their leadership role and group dynamics experiences within the

Board, as well as the meaning of the opportunity and skills learned or enhanced along the

way.[64] The individual interviews took place in public and university libraries' study

rooms, providing for a convenient meeting place with acoustic, quiet rooms.

To make students feel comfortable, I began initial interviews by asking students

to define leadership and what it means to be a leader. Then, I proceeded to ask about

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[63] The question/answer format consists of an open-ended question to which each student
provides an answer, one by one.

[64] Please see Appendix D for the outline of all interview questions.

student leadership. As students explored these questions, they began bringing in their personal examples of leadership, their philosophies, and lessons learned. At this point, the interview moved into a more intimate phase, where I asked students to look back at their high school and college extracurricular activities and share what they considered leadership opportunities, and why. To correlate the background question to the Student Advisory Board, I asked them how they got involved with the Board, why they wanted to experience this position, and what skills and qualities they bring to the Board. Towards the conclusion of the interview, I asked students to discuss the Board, what leadership themes do they see playing out, what roles they play within, and why it is an important leadership opportunity.

The second individual interview was focused on the evaluation and assessment of the Board experience, lessons learned, and the meaning of this public service experience. Unlike the first interview, the questions in the second session were more flexible, and there were variations from one to another participant for the purpose of addressing personal vignettes or to revisit previous questions. However, the general themes were preserved for the purpose of collecting key data that corresponds to the research question, ranging from the Board's group dynamics, its effect on students skill enhancement, their role as citizens and public servants of the state, and finally, the meaning this entire experience had to them.

All interviews were tape recorded[65] with the individuals' permission and a set of questions was followed. The duration of the meetings depended on the individual

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[65] The tape recorders used were the Olympus S921™ and J500™ models with uni-directional microphone, three-mic modes, sound system, markers, three speeds, playback speaker, pause switch, and battery check.

responses ranging from forty-five minutes to three hours. At the end of the first

interviews, students were given an opportunity to create their own pseudonyms and a

name of their institutions. Interview transcripts provided an excellent source not only for

the students' background information, but also a collection of powerful leadership

vignettes that reflected students' development prior to the Student Advisory Board.

Journal Writing

The final element of data collection was a series of journals and e-mails students

completed towards the end of the Student Advisory Board session. The purpose of the

journal was to give students an opportunity to reflect on their experience at the Board and

to share stories they found profoundly influential in their student development and/or

skill enhancement. Due to the personal nature of journal entry, there were no formatting

requirements. The main guideline was to take some time either throughout the Board

experience or at the end of the session and write down key moments that occurred,

students that made a difference to the participants, or general reflections about the group

dynamics, structure, or Board reforms. Journal entries received were brief and contained

leadership vignettes and general reflections of their roles at the Board. Out of five

student participants, four submitted one to five page papers. In addition, the Board

secretary and the student commissioner shared their Board vignettes through a single

journal entry that reflected on their purpose and meaning within the Board. All journal

entries were incorporated into the Chapter 4 findings.

Artifacts

In addition to the observations, focus group sessions, individual interviews, and

journals, hard artifacts were collected during each Board meeting and outside research.

Such artifacts included: Board agendas, *Bylaws*, project guidelines, segmental project reports, the final policy report, handouts on legislative bills, institutional brochures, and newspaper articles that dealt with issues students discussed, supported, or that were written about the students at the Board. The structural artifacts of the Board provided strong background information on the functions and protocols of the group. Group reports served to showcase students' collaborative work and their views on higher education. Finally, the newspaper articles informed on the political climate of the states and bills students were supporting, as well as highlighted students' initiatives with which participants were involved. By collecting data from diverse resources, the reader can gain a well-rounded picture of the Board's structure, function, student profile, group projects, and political initiatives taken for the purpose of enhancing students' political activism and improvement of higher education in the state.

Data Storage

Data collected were stored in five different ways for the purpose of easier oversight, material protection, and preservation: 1) e-mail inbox folder; 2) tapes; 3) computer hard drive; 4) three-ring binders; and 5) CD-ROMs. The e-mail inbox folder served to store all thesis correspondence with the participants, advisor, Commission members, and thesis committee professors. The tapes served to store individual interviews and focus group meetings. At home, my hard drive served to store all transcripts, journals, memos, and thesis drafts.

The final two data storage units, the three-ring binders and the CD-ROMs, were kept post-thesis and will be preserved in a lock box. There were three binders: 1) transcripts – a collection of individual, focus group, and observation transcripts and

memos; 2) artifacts – containing consent forms, students' journals, e-mail

correspondence, as well as handouts, reports, and newspaper articles associated with

individual Board meetings; and 3) thesis – containing separate thesis chapters for the

purpose of easy overview and proofreading. To preserve the data, a non-rewritable CD-

ROMs were utilized, each with the contents mimicking the binders. By creating an

electronic and hard data storage system, the essential data were preserved.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a very important and serious issue in qualitative case studies;

thus, every measure was taken to ensure protection of all individuals, organizations, and

institutions. All student names and their affiliated institutions were changed. Their

organizational affiliations were also protected, and the names of extracurricular

organizations were generalized. The purpose of pseudonyms was to protect students

studied and their respective institutions. Furthermore, the purpose of the study was to

uncover students' leadership background, their involvement with the Board, and the

meaning the experience had on their leadership development. It was important to find

commonalities in student leadership development by categorizing the type of leadership

skills/opportunities obtained prior to or during the Board experience.[66] As such, the

names of particular extracurricular clubs were not important; rather, the roles, skills, and

leadership opportunities gained from those experiences were analyzed and applied in the

students' evaluations. In addition to the pseudonyms of individuals, organizations, and

affiliations, tape recordings were not shared with anyone and were used strictly for the

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[66] Board experience includes positional and nonpositional leadership, lessons learned
from past experiences, and life-changing vignettes on the evolution of leadership
styles/approaches.

purpose of transcribing data. Finally, any special, of the record requests were honored.

By applying these confidentiality methods, along with the signed consent forms, students

had an understanding of the study's purpose and the use of their personal data.

Information and Consent Forms

The key to good qualitative research is for the researcher to keep participants well

informed. As a qualitative researcher, I used a four-step plan that kept the participants

informed during each stage of data collection. First, during the November Board

meeting, I provided participants with the introductory packet that explained the case

study, requirements, and benefits of joining the focus group. Secondly, after the

volunteers were selected, they were provided with data collection interview and focus

group question templates and consent forms. Thirdly, after data transcriptions,

individuals were given the opportunity to go over the transcripts as well as to provide

verbal feedback on innovative ideas on research presentation and content. Finally,

students were given access to my e-mail and phone number, providing them with an

opportunity to contact me with any research questions or concerns they might have. By

following these four steps, participants felt comfortable with my presence and role at

their meetings, and the open communication system gave them an opportunity for

member checks as well as direct contact with me, the researcher.

Data Analysis

Data analysis serves to show the way the researcher makes sense of data collected

and to show how the data answers the research question. Table 3 exemplifies data

analysis procedures.

Table 3.

Data Analysis Layout

Data analysis	Case study
Data managing	Electronic storage: e-mail inbox file; CD-ROMs; computer hard drive; Paper storage: three binders (transcripts, artifacts, drafts); Tape recordings
Memoing	Coding system corresponding to the leadership themes
Describing	Vignettes, discussion points, and observations were incorporated into data analysis and leadership literature
Classifying	Data (w/in storage) was classified by type: interviews, focus group sessions, observation meetings, journals, and artifacts
Interpreting	Internal generalization from field notes, observations, transcripts, journals, and memos was applied
Visualizing	Causal and loop maps, multicell descriptive matrixes, and diagrams

Data Managing

As described in the "data storage" section, data was managed through three sources: electronic, paper, and tape recording. The purpose of the multitier data management was to allow for the duplication of the materials, cross-referencing, and easy overview of data collected. The electronic data served to hold e-mail correspondence, all transcribed recordings, matrixes, thesis drafts, and journals. The paper storage contained

all the electronic data in addition to artifacts collected during the Student Advisory Board

meetings and newspaper articles. Finally, tape recordings served as temporary data

management of individual interviews, focus group, and observation discussions. Except

the three binders and CD-ROMS, all other data management methods were eliminated

after the thesis defense for the purpose of identity protection and duplication.

Memoing

Memos are a critical part of the qualitative data management and analysis.

During the four-month data collection, memoing took place before and after the

observations as part of the field notes, as well as in the form of notebook notes and briefs

on data collection, leadership themes, and stratification of data. Memos, once completed,

were coded[67] for leadership themes, students' background information, and for multi-

dimensional analysis of their experience at the Student Advisory Board. The coded

memos were then categorized by the descriptive codes into separate Word documents,

and the analysis began. Related descriptive codes or vignettes were grouped together as

the analysis process progressed. All memos created were incorporated into the final

thesis.

Describing

The case study provided rich data sources, which created a clear picture of

students' background, their initiation into the Student Advisory Board, the role they

played within the Board, as well as their leadership skill enhancement and development

over the course of the public session. Through personal vignettes that addressed

students' lessons learned, focus group discussions on Board projects and selection

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[67] See Appendix G for the descriptive coding table.

processes, and through researcher observation, a composition of students' leadership

development moments was created through a string of data analysis, cross-referencing,

and first-hand assessments.

Classifying

Data were classified through a stratification process of thematic narrowing.

During the data collection, data, both electronic and paper, were classified by a source

type: interviews, focus group sessions, observation meetings, journals, and artifacts. Data

were then grouped by its source and put into electronic and paper folders for easy access.

Following the initial source classification, I began reading transcripts and artifacts and

coding them for major themes. Once data were classified, personal vignettes, newspaper

articles, and Board artifacts were added to the analysis to provide triangulation of

resources. Finally, leadership literature was added to provide theoretical data support.

Interpreting

"Qualitative data are descriptive; they pertain to the qualities or characteristics of

people, places, events, phenomena, and organizations" (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999, p.

6). Qualitative methodology relies heavily on researcher's personal data interpretation, in

particular, his/her understanding of participants' communications, written material, and

group observation. Interpretation of data "involves attaching meaning and significance to

the patterns, themes, and connections that the researcher identified during analysis;

explaining why they have come to exist; and indicating what implications they might

have for future actions" (p. 5). It means "seeking information from as many sources as

possible; knowing how your own work supports the organization's overall strategy;

analyzing how well the members of the group work together; knowing the capabilities

and motivations of the individuals in the work group; and knowing your own capabilities and motivations" (Conger, 1992, p. 136).

Interpretation within this case study was embedded in internal generalization based on field notes, observations, transcripts,[68] journals, and memos. Each piece of data was carefully coded, and general patterns were grouped together across data sources. In order to show the uniqueness and the meaning of the Board experience to its participants, the analysis chapter was focused on three main dimensions:[69] 1) I – understanding students' backgrounds, reasons for their Board involvement, and their internal goals for the session; 2) You – understanding of other Board members, their goals, interests, institutions [they represented] as well as the initial organizational stages, which included the selection of the next student commissioner for the Statewide Higher Education Coordinating Commission; and 3) We – the collective teamwork by the students on a policy project, which was presented and passed by the Atlantic State Higher Education Coordinating Commission. Within each dimension, study participants' leadership roles, lessons learned, skills enhanced, and the meaning of the experience were discussed. Finally, in order to answer the research question, a set of subquestions, as adopted from the *Analyzing & Interpreting Ethnographic Data* (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999) was used to guide the data analysis and its relation to the theoretical base of relation model of leadership. Questions indirectly adopted were:

- Why were students interested in joining the Student Advisory Board?

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[68] Transcripts were used for the purpose of proper quoting and minimalization of paraphrasing.

[69] The I-You-We framework was adopted from Buber's (1958) work as addressed in Komives, Lucas, and McMahon's work (1998).

- What was good/bad about the Board session (structure, function, agenda)?

- Why is the Board a meaningful experience?

- What did students and I, as a researcher, learn about the experience?

- What new insights were gained from the leadership opportunity?

The purpose of these questions was to find out the level of leadership experience students had prior to the Student Advisory Board, why they felt this statewide opportunity was significant, and what level of involvement they had in the Board. In addition, these questions served to uncover and create understanding of why this leadership opportunity enhances students' leadership skills, has meaning in their development, and why students are and should remain an integral part of the higher education statewide system.

Visualizing

Qualitative data analysis is primarily presented through vignettes, dialogues, and observer interpretations; however, to help the reader understand the contextual elements of the case study, visual aids were represented throughout the analysis as the means of reviewing general components discussed in each section, timelines, and students' backgrounds. Visual models were primarily adopted from Miles and Huberman's (1994) sourcebook *Qualitative Data Analysis*. Tables included multicell descriptive matrixes, causal loop maps, dimensional analysis diagrams, and a metamatrix.[70] The causal loop maps served to show the relationship and effect one variable has against/with the other such as the relationship between students' roles on campus and their role in the Board. The multicell descriptive matrixes were primarily used to outline students' backgrounds,

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[70] Terminology was adopted from Miles and Huberman; however, all matrixes have been renamed "tables" and "figures" in compliance with the University of Maryland *Thesis and Dissertation Style Guide* (2003-2004).

to break down project steps, as well as to show differences/similarities in skills enhancements, made by five student participants. Finally, the dimensional analysis diagrams and metamatrixes served to show correlations and differentiations among the five focus group participants' Board experience and the diversity/similarity in the meaning-making process. All these elements served not only to introduce data, and correlate it with the five individuals, but also to provide the basis for internal generalization on the overall Board patterns, relationships, and meaning-making.

Validity

Validity in qualitative research serves to show that "results of the research are 'right,' 'accurate,' and could withstand scrutiny from other researchers" (Mills, 2000, p. 73). As qualitative research gained recognition in the 1970s, Guba (1981) published an important article, "Criteria for Assessing the Trustworthiness of Naturalistic Inquiries," explicitly addressing the need for qualitative criteria for validity[71] (Mills). According to Guba, there are four standards of validity in case studies: 1) credibility; 2) transferability; 3) dependability; and 4) confirmability. These four validity standards were adopted as evaluative components of this case study. A crucial element of qualitative inquiry, validity serves to show that a researcher is aware of both reaffirming and conflicting data and that s/he portrays them without bias (Maxwell, 1996). The purpose of this section is to show the validity protections set forth by me, the researcher, for the purpose of avoiding biases, inaccuracies, and misrepresentations.

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[71] Prior to Guba's theoretical development, qualitative data was based on quantitative inquiry (Mills, 2000).

Credibility

Credibility is founded on the rationale that "the way the respondents actually perceive social constructs" correlates to "the way the researcher portrays their viewpoints" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989 in Mertens, 1998). "The credibility of the study refers to the researcher's ability to take into account all the complexities that present themselves in a study and to deal with patterns that are not easily explained" (Mills, 2000, p. 73). To enhance the credibility, it is important that the case study has the following protections:

- Prolonged and substantial engagement;

- Persistent observation;

- Peer debriefing;

- Negative case analysis;

- Progressive subjectivity;

- Member checks; and

- Triangulation. (Mertens, p. 298)

Prolonged/substantial engagement allows the researcher to understand his/her environment, to immerse oneself in the setting, and engage with individuals connected to the study. As a former student commissioner and ex-officio of the Student Advisory Board, I have spent a significant amount of time with a former Board, actively engaging in their next commissioner selection, policy project, and other initiatives. In addition, the following year I advised the [then] incoming student commissioner, as well as surveyed the Board at the end of the session as a pilot study for a qualitative methodology graduate course, asking them about their experience. Finally, this year I have spent six months

with the Board, observing their meetings, coordinating focus group sessions and individual interviews, and collecting artifacts connected to students' interests and political issues discussed within their meetings. The data collection itself spanned from late January until late April; however, my involvement with the Student Advisory Board as an entity dates back to three years ago.

The second component that ensures credibility is persistent observations that serve to identify qualities and characteristics (Mills, 2002). Observations were one of the key components of my data, presenting the depth of discussions, students' interactions, roles developed, decision-making processes, unique internal experiences influenced by group dynamics and special issues, and finally, leadership development that occurred among the student case study participants and the Board at-large. As an insider/researcher, I was granted permission to enter the site for two observations in February and March. However, to gain a better insight into students' leadership development, I attended November and April meetings and observed students' interactions, skills enhanced, and group dynamics progression from the first to the last meeting. During each observation, I took careful notes and recorded discussions in order to understand group dynamics and leadership development through standard Board protocols as well as through unique moments.

The third issue is one of peer debriefing. According to Guba (in Mills, 2002), peer debriefing gives a researcher an opportunity to share his/her qualitative study with other professionals in the field. As Mills points out, it is having "somebody who is willing and able to help us reflect on own situations by listening prompting, and recording our insights throughout the process" (p. 74). As a novice qualitative

researcher, I found three sources of peer debriefing: 1) a professor's research group; 2) presentation of the case study during a Graduate Research Interaction Day (GRID); and 3) through peer reading.

As I began data collection, I joined a higher education faculty member's research group comprised of a dozen doctorate students. The purpose of the group was to give students an opportunity to present their qualitative proposals, methodologies, and drafts and receive objective criticism, suggestions, and to brainstorm ideas on how to improve the study. As I began collecting data, I came to the research group to present my methodologies and ask for ways in which to present both positive and negative findings. The research group was supportive, encouraging, and stated that my research methodologies would enhance the depth of the case study. They also suggested that I continue to uphold the highest ethical standards and feel researcher freedom to present the findings as they are without external pressure as an "insider" to the Board. Their support was comforting and gave me the confidence to take off the predisposed leadership lens and immerse myself in students' discussions, vignettes, and developmental moments.

The second peer check came from the University of Maryland Graduate Researcher Interaction Day (May 2003), where I was given an opportunity to present my case study, theoretical bases, and preliminary findings to the audience of student affairs professionals and graduate students. The presentation allowed me to articulate my case study, present it in a timely manner, and take questions from the audience that ranged from the methodology to the leadership development observed in students, as well as the importance of students in higher education.

The third way peer briefs were conducted was by giving my thesis drafts to graduate students to read. Can a reader who is not familiar with the subject matter, leadership theories, or student development understand the case study and the meaning of students' experience at the Student Advisory Board? What conclusion would they draw from my research? The feedback received made me reevaluate the language I was using, in particular, technical terms applied in the qualitative inquiry and leadership studies as well as the application of theoretical background that is specific to the field of study.

Negative case analysis means the ability of the researcher to revise existing findings based on "the discovery of cases that do not fit" (Mertens, 1998, p. 182). Due to the unique nature of the phenomenon, the additional cases were based on the personal reflections dating back to the previous Board session and through interviews with the former Board advisor, current advisor, and two current Board participants. The past and current advisors' interviews revealed their favorable perspectives to the Board's structure, function, group dynamics, as well as the premise that the Board is a leadership development opportunity. Alicia and Taiowa, two students from the observed Student Advisory Board, also served as negative cases. Unable to fully participate as focus group members, I asked them to share in an essay the meaning of SAB experience, lessons learned, and their personal thoughts on group dynamics. Their responses were also favorable to the Board and matched focus group members' sentiments. Through the observation of both the positive and negative experiences[72] the Board has been through and combining them with my own past experiences with previous Boards, I was able to

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[72] I was unable to gain access to the students who decided not to participate in the Board during the second part of the session. It is possible that there were cases in which students found the experience overwhelming or in conflict with their academic schedules.

draw internal generalizations on what it means to be part of the Board and to gain new leadership experiences on a statewide level.

Progressive subjectivity refers to the researcher's ability to develop "constructs and document the process of change from the beginning of the study unit it ends" (Mertens, 2000, p. 182). As an insider/observer, I originally carried preconceptions about what students might think about the experience, where they come from, or the level of leadership skills they had prior to the Board; however, as I began individual interviews, I was challenged to think outside of my own past experience, and use the previous observations as the means of creating background information on the structure and function of the Student Advisory Board. In addition, with the peer feedback provided through the research committee and the graduate research day, I was able to gain valuable input into my research, correct any biases I had coming into the field, as well as change my perception of what my role is in the Board. Qualitative research carries an expectation that the researcher's analysis will incorporate his or her interpretations of the field and participants. In this case study, the element of progressive subjectivity interpretations and controlled bias was applied as a means of balancing of data and personal interpretations.

According to Guba (1981), member checks serve to "test the overall report with the study's participants before sharing it in final form" (pp. 84-86). Member checks are an important element, because they provide the opportunity for students to have an input in the case study, to feel part of the writing process. To ensure participants had an opportunity to voice their opinions, I presented them with my transcripts and artifact folder before the March and April meetings, giving them the opportunity to read over the

transcripts and look over the data collected. The students had the option to look through

(one did) or to omit the opportunity (majority did). During the last focus group meeting,

I asked each student to share with me his/her views on what the final product should look

like. Their responses were considered and provided valuable input into the necessary

modifications.

The last element of credibility is data triangulation, whereby the researcher

compares a variety of data sources and different methods with one another in order to

cross-check data. In this case study a number of different elements were incorporated

into data selection, as seen in Table 4.

Table 4.

Credibility – Data Sources and Recording Methodologies

Data source	Method of data recording
Individual interviews	Tapes/transcripts
Focus groups	Tapes/transcripts/memos
Journals	E-mails and journal logs
Artifacts	Handouts (agendas, reports, bylaws, newspaper articles
Observation	Field notes from the 3 Board meetings

To cross-check the diverse data collected, I applied multiple data sources to the

case analysis for the purpose of cross-referencing the initial findings. By incorporating

personal histories and leadership vignettes with field notes and project instructions, I was

able to gain an understanding of how students interact with one another as they go about

creating policy recommendations that would affect higher education in the state. Combining multiple data sources helped clarify my view of the Board and its tasks as well as understand the phenomenon of leadership development at the Statewide Higher Education Coordinating Commission's Student Advisory Board.

Credibility is "the researcher's ability to take into account all of the complexities that present themselves in a study and to deal with patterns that are not easily explained" (Mills, 2000, p. 75). By observing the Board over a prolonged period of time and by consistent field notes, data triangulation, and structural coherence, I was able to gain an in-depth sense of students' leadership development at the Student Advisory Board and the meaning it had to them. In addition, through sharing my work with participants and the research community, I gained valuable feedback on the questions I needed to answer, the language I should use, and the essential analysis elements that should be present.

Transferability

Transferability is qualitative inquiry's way of testing for external validity. Unlike quantitative methodology, qualitative studies do not require generalization of data for the external public, and they validate phenomenon for their uniqueness and for the perspective they bring into our understanding of the subject matter. According to Guba (in Mills, 2000), there are two methods of data collection that a researcher should uphold in order to meet the standards of quality:

- Collect detailed descriptive data that will permit comparison of a given context to other possible contexts to which transfer might be contemplated.

- Develop detailed description of the context to make judgments about fittingness with other contexts possible. (p. 74)

In this case study, detailed descriptions have been collected, including interview and focus group transcripts, observation field notes, and memos for the purpose of accurate analysis of students' leadership development and the meaning of the experience. All descriptions and transcripts were kept in a binder labeled "transcripts," allowing for easy data access and comparison. In addition, data were compared and contrasted against each other not only for the purpose of cross-checking but also for providing in-depth analysis of the phenomenon. Through extensive data collection and description, the reader will be able to familiarize him/herself with the Board, the structure, function, and students' background, as well as to understand the importance of statewide leadership opportunities for students.

Dependability

Dependability, as specified by Lincoln and Guba (1985) is achieved when researchers take into account the nature of change in naturalistic settings. A study can be considered dependable when the researcher takes into account the likelihood that change will occur during data collection in a natural setting. In this case study the structure and function at the Board remained constant. However, there were changes in the composition of the Board as some students discontinued their participation in the first half of the session. The primary reasons, as vocalized by the participating members, were academic commitments, additional extracurricular responsibilities, and transfer of some students to other colleges. Their absence was noted in the observations. The absence of these students caused shifts in segmental groups' leadership, as community colleges and private universities had to find replacements. Fortunately, new volunteers

stepped up to the role of segmental leaders, and the overall goal achievement was only shortly interrupted.[73]

To increase dependability of the study, Mills (2000) suggests the use of multiple collection methods and an audit person, who would read the research and provide objective assessment of the study. As mentioned in the previous sections, I applied multiple data collection methods as a way to triangulate data as well as to gain a full picture of the Board experience to students. In order to ensure my research received proper assessment, I hired a professional editor to look over the language, grammar, and style and worked with my thesis chair on the paper organization and content. Both served to provide an objective critique of my case study's methods, findings, and discussion points.

Confirmability

Confirmability is the last validity threat identified by Lincoln and Guba (1985). It means "that the data and their interpretation are not figments of the researcher's imagination" (p. 184). To alleviate uncertainty, Mertens (1998) points to the importance of data origin, meaning that the researcher must be able to trace his/her data to the original source. In this case study, all interview and focus group data were transcribed as a means of proper quoting and rich informational resource. In addition, a binder was created of artifacts collected. With the two data collection methods, one can easily go back to the spoken words and print media/public documents to cross-reference data analyzed and described.

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[73] This case study experienced no changes in the composition of the focus group. Furthermore, no focus group students experienced family or social trauma that would impact their ability to participate and share their thoughts and ideas.

Mills (2000) points to two additional confirmability protections as designed by Guba, triangulation and reflexivity. Reflexivity is the ability of the researcher to intentionally reveal "underlying assumptions or biases" (p. 75) in question formation. As an insider/observer, I formulated questions that related to students' background, skills, leadership development, and group dynamics. However, considering my familiarity with the structure and function of the Board, I framed technical questions in a way that provided internal information on how students felt about these processes, how they took on different challenges, and what lessons they learned from these experiences. As seen from Appendix D, the questions were divided by themes, and progressed towards the main research question, *How does the experience at the Student Advisory Board create meaning to Board members in their leadership development?*

The validity threats presented in the case study are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Through triangulation of data, internal generalization, reflexivity, and peer briefing/member checks, the threats were minimized. As a case study, the focus of the data collection was to address different aspects that make for a meaningful experience at the Student Advisory Board, to understand the importance of student involvement in higher education, as well as to explore the phenomenon that is the Board. Through personal histories, vignettes, and open discussions, the five participants provided vivid and insightful information into the student leadership development. By incorporating public artifacts and journal logs by participants and additional members, and field notes from Board observations, I was able to draw on major leadership themes experienced by all Board members and understand how a diverse group of students can

come together to represent not only their institutions, but to collaborate as a group to achieve statewide policy goals.

Case Study Framework

The purpose of this case study is to gain an understanding of students' leadership development at the Student Advisory Board, the meaning the experience had to them as student leaders, institutional representatives, and statewide policy makers. In order to understand the meaning of the experience, students' development was analyzed through the lens of the relational model of leadership, which recognizes the importance of student development on three levels, the I-You-We structure (Buber, 1958). The initial data collection was focused on the *I* – students' background, general demographic information, students' self-discovery, character building, and internal reflections of students as citizens and leaders. Once the background information was established, the findings refocused on students' initial involvement with the Board, the selection process, and motivating factors to partake in the experience, as well as formal adjustment, role development, and understanding of others, the *you*. In order to understand leadership skills developed during the Board session, each project was evaluated as a separate entity analyzed through the relational model of leadership development components as well as through the *we* dimension. The sum of these experiences, as well as students' continuous self-assessment, led to the research question and the final discussion. Through the use of the Board's project management timetable as the general guide of the analysis process, the reader will be able to better understand the progression of students' leadership development. Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual map of this case study.

Figure 1. Conceptual map of the case study.

- Each text box shows a level of progress in data analysis and findings.

- The purpose of each progression level is to get closer to uncovering the main

  research question.

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                        ┌─────────────────────┐
                        │ Understand students'│
                        │ past leadership roles│
                        └─────────────────────┘

┌──────────────────────┐                    ┌──────────────────────┐
│ Document past leadership│                  │   Define the concept of│
│ experiences, backgrounds│                  │   leadership; id students'│
└──────────────────────┘                    │ leadership characteristics│
                                             └──────────────────────┘

            ┌─────────────────────────┐
            │    Research Question     │
            │ Leadership development &  │
            │  The meaning of SAB       │
            └─────────────────────────┘

┌──────────────────────┐                    ┌──────────────────────┐
│ Understand the Relational│                 │   Observe students'    │
│   Model of leadership    │                 │ development through each│
└──────────────────────┘                    │  SAB project/process   │
                                             └──────────────────────┘

            ┌─────────────────────────┐
            │ Observe group dynamics during│
            │  each organizational stage  │
            └─────────────────────────┘
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Figure 1 exhibits the interaction of data and theory. In the beginning of the data collection, I, the researcher, was focused on individual students' background, leadership experiences, and their motivations to join the Student Advisory Board. Through these personal interviews, I also uncovered their leadership roles within the Board, their definitions of student leader/leadership, as well as the level of interaction and depth of understanding they have towards others. Each of these components helped me uncover a piece of the research question answers and the correlation between the variables.

Once the background information was complete, I observed the Board session as a means of uncovering the correlation between individual students, organizational stages, and the meaning of this leadership experience. The findings not only helped guide me to the research answer, but also uncovered dimensions of student leadership development.

At the completion of data collection, the relation model was explored as the means of explaining the data and answering the research question. The relational theory served to inform my data and to provide terminology, dimensions, and levels of analysis used in my findings. This circular pattern of data analysis contributed to my understanding of the phenomenon, the relational theory, the interaction of the two with the research question, and how all these components contribute to students' leadership meaning-making.

The Student Advisory Board provides not only a place for students to further their leadership skills, but to explore their roles as public servants and organizational team members, working in a unique higher education entity on behalf of all college students toward a common goal – better services and opportunities for all students (Varlotta, 2001). As Max De Pree (1992) stated in his book *Leadership Jazz*, leadership

development in young leaders is crucial for practice of public service. Thus, all leadership opportunities that provide such experiences ought to be "understood, believed, and practiced" (p. 10).

Student Participants

The case study was conducted through the general observation of the Student Advisory Board, focus group meetings, and individual interviews. Although the advisor, the Board secretary, and the current student commissioner have been interviewed for the purpose of better understanding the meaning Student Advisory Board has to student leadership development, the main data collection came from the focus group comprised of five student members: Jesse, Michael, Henry, Marcus, and Bob.[74]

Jesse is a twenty-year-old African-American woman attending the University of African-American Leaders, a historically black quasi-public, urban, mid-size college as a junior in political science. Born and raised in Jamaica, Jesse comes to the Board bringing an international perspective to higher education, open to new experiences and learning. Jesse (personal communication, January 29, 2003) views herself as an outsider, someone different who brings a new perspective to the Board:

> I am from the Caribbean. I am Jamaican. I am not a citizen at all. And, in a weird sort of way, I bring in a sort of flavor. ... Because of my background in this sort of thing, there is that expectation as well. There is just this need for someone to be different, to bring in a flavor, and encourage others, who may be like me, being from a different background and all of that….

For Jesse, being in the Student Advisory Board is an honor not only because of the uniqueness of the position, but also because her skills have been recognized by her institution.

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[74] Students have been assigned pseudonyms derived on their own during the preliminary interviews.

Michael is a Caucasian student in his sophomore year attending a small, suburban four-year private college, the Career Design University, majoring in pre-law. Michael is the vice chair of the Student Advisory Board, and thus, a member of the executive committee. As a positional leader, he takes great pride in the Student Advisory Board as a unique experience and has worked tirelessly throughout his Board experience to bring awareness of this opportunity to the students of his institution.

Henry, a Caucasian student, is a senior majoring in English at the Jesuit Ideas College, a small, private, urban institution. Henry is an institutional representative to the Student Advisory Board and has been actively involved in most of the meetings. Stretched between community service, institution wide student positions, and officer posts, Henry finds little time to devote to the Board, but finds the experience valuable in his leadership development.

An African-American male, Marcus is a second-year student at a small, rural community college in a mountainous area, the Western Institute of Higher Learning. Coming from a military family, his travels bring a plethora of unique experiences to the Board. As a segmental chair for the community college sector, Marcus has been actively involved in all Student Advisory Board projects and has found the experience empowering.

A Caucasian male in his second year at a suburban community college, Institute for Comprehensive Academic and Technical Studies, Bob majors in international studies. Although he is a nonpositional leader within the Student Advisory Board, he plays an active role in his segmental project as well as in all Board discussions.

In addition to the five active participants, there were two student Board members who provided written reflections on their experience: Alicia, a female Latina student from a private Learning without Boundaries College; and Taiowa, the current student commissioner to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, an African-American student from the University of African-American Leaders. Demographically, the seven students who participated either as focus group members or by providing additional input had the following profiles:

- Race – three African-Americans, three Caucasians, and one Latina;

- Gender - two female and five male;[75]

- National origin - one international student (Caribbean) and one permanent resident (born and raised in South America);

- Special needs - one student with a physical disability;

- Age - range from 19 to 23;

- Institutional type - two from four-year public institutions (one of the institutions is a Historically Black University), three from four-year private institutions (one small, rural; two from a Jesuit, urban), and two from a community college.

The seven students represent the diversity of the Student Advisory Board. Comprised of undergraduate and graduate students from all types of higher education institutions, the Student Advisory Board is a microcosm of the Atlantic state. Table 5 shows the demographics of the Student Advisory Board in the school year 2002-2003.

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[75] Student Advisory Board has an equal gender representation (15 males, 15 females).

Table 5.

Student Advisory Board Diversity

Institutional type	Number of students from each type	Students' race composition	Number of students from each race
4-year public	10	African-American	10
4-year private	10	Asian/Middle Eastern	2
2-year community c.	8	Caucasian	16
Professional schools	2	Latino/a	2

According to Table 5, the student population shows even representation among public, private, community colleges, and universities.

The demographic diversity of the Board as a whole is also representative of the general population of the state. Caucasians represent the majority, closely followed by African-American students. Latino and Asian students represent a minority in the state, and thus, at the Board. However, on gender, the Board is split half and half between male and female students. Finally, the age of the students is primarily undergraduate two to four-year students ranging in age from 19 to 22. However, due to representation of graduate schools and adult students from community colleges and professional schools, there are six adult students over the age of twenty-five. The Board, as a heterogeneous group working together towards common goals, serves not only as a symbol of

teamwork and collaboration, but also as a sign of student activism and the importance of student involvement in higher education.[76]

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[76] The Student Advisory Board is a heterogeneous group with both traditional students and nontraditional students from professional schools.

CHAPTER 4

Findings

The case study examines student leadership development through the eyes of five focus group and individual interview participants who spent four months with me, the researcher, discussing their thoughts and reflections on the Student Advisory Board experience. Their vignettes guide the findings and serve as anecdotal documentations of the Board experience. In addition, the Board secretary's essay, the Coordinating Commission student commissioner's reflections, and the advisor's interview-based commentary have been incorporated in order to provide diverse perspectives and enrich the reader's understanding of the phenomenon.

In this case study, leadership has been explored in great depth through the individual interviews and focus group sessions with five Student Advisory Board members and study participants. In order to understand the meaning of their own leadership development, the following elements were explored:

- Students' definition of leadership;

- Students' definition of student leadership;

- Students' definition of a student leader (qualities/characteristics).

By building on each concept above, students had the opportunity to articulate their own views on leadership, share their positional and nonpositional leadership backgrounds, and uncover their own definition of service,\ as they went through the Student Advisory Board experience.[77] Their leadership discussions created an atmosphere in which

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[77] Students' vignettes and concept analysis are provided in the second part of this chapter.

personal statements on citizenship, public service, and student activism could be further

developed and challenged.

Students' Concept of Leadership

The Student Advisory Board of the Higher Education Coordinating Commission

has addressed the concept of leadership on several occasions.[78] Their understanding of

leadership and how they define the theoretical meaning of leadership serve to provide a

contextual framework throughout these findings. Here are examples of leadership

definitions provided by the Student Advisory Board:

- Leadership is the ability to recognize a certain goal, and also, the group persons that have common interests, and who essentially accomplish the goal. (Jesse, personal communication, January, 29, 2003)
- Leadership is an act. It is the ability to work with others in order to achieve the goal. A leader is one who has the urge and/or ambition/motivation to achieve a good, a goal, as a concept on how to reach that goal, the steps needed in order to achieve a certain good or goal; is able to carry out the steps needed to achieve the goal, and also, inspire people to help, lead themselves and others as a collective group to reach a goal. Just being able to work with people and collaborate with people, direct people, give people focus towards something that they collectively desire. (Henry, personal communication, January 30, 2003)
- To me, leadership is taking the group, seeing what the group needs and wants, then, getting a vision where best the group should be, get them to fulfill their needs and their wants, leading and guiding the group to getting what they need and want, fulfilling their hopes, their dreams, their needs, their everything. Part of it is, the leader has to take charge and got to say, "we got to do this and that," but the leader is nothing without their group. So, part of it is that you make sure that the group is being served. Leadership is setting the goals, setting priorities for the group, and leading them to fulfill those goals. (Marcus, personal communication, March 8, 2003)
- My concept of leadership is an action that you do. Essentially, it's forming a vision of something that you feel needs to get done or you want to get done, and then it's your ability to get it done, to lead people, to organize resources. For example, it's my vision; it's my goal to eradicate hunger. The leadership concept out of that is somebody has a goal and somebody goes further and takes initiative

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[78] Such occasions include focus group meetings and one-on-one interviews with the researcher as well as conversations during the Student Commissioner selection process that took place during the February board meeting.

to do it, then follows it through and watches it through its completion. That's the leadership concept. (Bob, personal communication, March 8, 2003)

- Leadership in my opinion is making such good decisions that others don't mind following you. The best example is Michael Jordan because aside from his talent no one ever questioned him when it came to taking the game-winning shot. (Taiowa, personal communication, April 6, 2003)

The above definitions of leadership provide an important insight into how students from the Student Advisory Board view the conceptual framework of leadership. As seen in the above vignettes, the initial definitions of leadership fall into two categories, the leader-centric definitions and the more reciprocal perspectives, all based upon students' former influences and perceptions of leadership observed. Common in this stage of students' development, prior to the Board experience, the term leadership contains both ideas of leader-follower form of leadership and the relational, process-oriented leadership.

Leadership, for the purpose of this case study, can be thus defined as having the following dimensions:

1. Leadership is understanding the group's needs, wants, and taking the initiative to focus the organizational vision.

2. Leadership is about recognizing, setting, and creating goals, and motivating/ influencing others to work towards these goals.

3. Leadership is a group process. It is about common interests, collective collaboration, and group empowerment.

4. Leadership is ultimately about the ability of the leader to guide the group towards goal accomplishment/achievement.

These four dimensions correlate most closely to the relational model of leadership development, as created by Susan Komives, Nance Lucas, and Timothy McMahon (1998).

In accordance with the relational model of leadership, the term "leader" is thus defined as an empowering individual inclusive of all organizational members, willing and able to work as a team player in order to accomplish organizational goals. A leader should be ethical, moral, continuously sharing and innovating for the good of the collective, finding avenues through which to be reflective, and making meaning of the organizational and individual goals and accomplishments. An effective leader is one who is a good listener, thinks creatively, is responsible, reliable, and who acts as an equal and provides others with opportunities to achieve and succeed. In this case study, the term "leader" applies to all Board participants. Engaged in an organizational web structure, there is no distinction between positional and non-positional leaders at the Board in relation to innovation, discussion, goal-accomplishment, or decision-making.

Defining Student Leadership & Student Leaders

Student leadership has historically been defined within the parameters of student governments, athletics, and in the classroom. Michael (personal communication, January 31, 2003) explains:

> You can have student government leadership where you need knowledge of certain areas; good organizational skills will be a definite. Then, you have leaders in sport where you have more so a playing field, where they would have a good knowledge of the game, good motivational skills, being able to motivate everybody else. Then you have classroom/academic leadership where you have someone who just knows material and can act as a leader that way.

Today, with the expansion of student opportunities in higher education, student leadership has become redefined from the positional group/club leaders to community servants, political activists, and policy makers. Table 6 shows how this case study's participants define student leadership.

Table 6.

Case Study Participants' Definitions of Student Leadership

Participant	Participant's definition of student leadership
Jesse	Student leadership – it is a student who excels not only academically, but the student who has that drive…it's just the ability to actually achieve a practical goal, the ability to, whether it be voicing the concerns of the group or working with the group, to rectify problems or just representing the group, generally… encouraging them, and keep the group together. (personal communication, January 29, 2003)
Henry	Student leadership is unique because there are a lot of students that are ambitious, involved in causes. A lot of times, you will recognize leaders coming from that portion. But, real student leaders are able to reach that larger sect of students who are more difficult to motivate, get involve in things. In my mind, a student leader is someone who can include and inspire as many students from different areas, in different diversities, across the board…different interests. You really have to accommodate people, everyone in college. (personal communication, January 30, 2003)

Participant	Participant's definition of student leadership
Michael	Student leadership is being able to step up and stand for the students, to give them a voice. Any student who takes a leadership role, who is involved in leadership. (personal communication, January 31, 2003)
Marcus	Student leadership is basically trying to make sure that students' basic needs are fulfilled. (personal communication, March 8, 2003)
Bob	Student leadership is basically students taking charge, taking initiative to go and carry a vision of what they think is better. It starts in the brain, starts with an idea or maybe even a mentality like, I think that I can better help somehow serve. Then you take the initiative. You follow through. Then you make it happen, and you see it through to its completion or if it's a long-term goal and you're gone, you think long term as well, then think of how you can make it so other people coming after you will continue in your endeavor. (personal communication, 2003, March 8)

Student leadership is the ability of a leader to be accommodating, representative of the group, fulfilling of their needs, and understanding of diverse interests, meaning that student leadership is about inclusiveness of all group members and [if applicable] of students at-large. Words such as drive, encouragement, motivation, inspiration, and vision create a sense of team and individual empowerment; that is, student leadership is

about empowering other students into action, learning, and achievement. As participants

further acknowledge, student leadership is about goal achievement, standing up for

students to fulfill a goal and make a vision a reality. Through goal orientation, the leader

and the group are able to focus on the process as well as the purpose, to make meaning of

the processes and to create a legacy. Finally, by focusing on the good of the group,

embracement of diversity and creation of positive change, student leadership serves to

uphold the high standards and values that would drive both the student leader and the

group members.

Under the reciprocal paradigm of leadership, student leadership can be both

positional and nonpositional. Jesse (personal communication, January 29, 2003)

explains:

> In terms of different types of student leadership I referred practically to a more
> active leadership role, a more visible role, say, the head of any student leadership
> organization… That person represents or is the bridge between the student
> population and administration, one student body and the next. It is not that that
> person leads those that they represent, they just represent. There are also leaders
> without titles. Just in basic initiative, in subgroups. Student leadership even in
> the regular settings, the classroom or social groups... that element, almost like an
> impulse, a drive, a force, that one person may have to organize, to communicate,
> to facilitate, whatever it may be, in order to achieve some objective, some goal.
> There is that type of leadership that takes a title and that others would defer to
> because that person has that title, has to come up with ideas, orchestrate whatever
> means it needs for a particular group.

Student leader, as it is derived from the concept of student leadership, can be best

understood through the case study participants' perception of what qualities and

characteristics embody a student leader, be that positional or nonpositional. See table 7

for students' vignettes.

Table 7.

Case Study Participants' Definitions of a Student Leader

Participant	Participant's definition of a student leader
Jesse	Level of motivation of that person, the dedication, the dynamics of that person; also, the ability to communicate. Student leaders just stand up, they just always do! They just motivate, go-getter type. (personal communication, January 29, 2003)
Henry	There are a lot of qualities that one develops, but initially, you just need the desire to work with others in order to achieve the good. That urge, that motivation qualifies you. There are things that can make that effort easier, but they are ones that leaders will develop as they go along: being outgoing, being able to motivate people, being organized, taking risks… You don't need exceptional qualities. You just need a desire to achieve, and be willing to work with that. Once you are able to do that, working with other people and inspiring other people comes along. (personal communication, January 30, 2003)
Michael	Strong personality, have to have good social skills. (personal communication, January 31, 2003)

Participant	Participant's definition of a student leader
Marcus	The overriding priority of the student leader is that student is in the best environment to work. A student leader has to be also a bridge builder because oftentimes what the student wants would be in contrast to what the faculty wants, so compromises have to be made, and those are all parts of being a leader. Sometimes in order to obtain your goal, you have to give up something that you may not want to give up but you have to give up. A student leader is insuring that students have the best opportunity to make the most of their education. (personal communication, March 8, 2003)
Bob	A student leader needs to be someone who is willing to take the initiative. A leader also needs to be able to lead themselves. First, to know what their priorities are and have a clear-cut goal of what they're doing. Then, once they know what they're doing, they can mold and see what other people are doing, collaborate with other people who have other ideas. A student leader needs to also, act as a student advocate, needs to know their audience when they speak. They need to get a full understanding of the office that they work in and the potential prejudices or potential ways that people might favor them and use these to accomplish their goals. (personal communication, March 8, 2003)

The above definition focuses on three main elements[79] of a student leader:

1. Understanding of self, others, organizational goals, and the environment in which the student leadership operates;

2. Having motivation, dedication, and desire to work with others; to be a student advocate, as well as being outgoing, having a strong personality, good social, communication, and organizational skills to move the group/team forward;

3. Taking initiative, risks, giving the best opportunities to others, sharing, negotiating, compromising, and communicating goals/ideas with all organizational members.

These three elements strongly correlate to the knowing-being-doing concept as well as the relational model components[80] further showing the correlation between the theoretical paradigm of reciprocal leadership and the practical application as found in student leadership. For the purpose of this case study, student leadership is defined as inclusive, empowering, purposeful, ethical, and process-oriented, which leads to an improvement, service-oriented advancement, and positive individual and organizational change. A student leader is defined as one who is dedicated, motivated, inspiring, and encouraging of others to do their best as students, organizational members, and community servants.

Students' Leadership Background

Leadership development in students stems from multiple factors: family, religion, culture, demographic background, among others. Leadership development is also influenced through a series of positional and nonpositional roles students have throughout

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[79] The terminology of the three elements is based on participants' responses as well as on the relational model of leadership development.

[80] See Chapter 2 for the full theoretical analysis of these components.

their academic careers. With each opportunity, be it within school parameters or community, students are given a chance to challenge their thoughts, to learn about other people, issues, and processes, and to enhance their skills as leaders. All these factors develop an individual, an *I*.

"Leadership means self-discovery, getting a better yield out of your attributes" (Haas & Tamarkin, 1992, p. 6). The life experiences and leadership opportunities students have had prior to the Student Advisory Board bring a rich diversity of perspectives into the organization. To understand the spectrum and depth of students' leadership characteristics, qualities, values, and interests, it is essential to explore their leadership background.[81]

Origin

External factors that shape leadership identity originate from family, religion, and environmental/cultural factors. These factors have played an important role among focus group members. Although each individual had unique life experiences, these factors served to challenge, encourage, and shape their identities as leaders, and in the process, help them define personal leadership and the importance of involvement.

According to Gardner and supported by James David Barber, the most important influence on individual's development to be a leader is family (Conger, 1992). Family sets expectations for achievements and success and creates a sense of self-esteem. Family provides a structure through which values, morals, beliefs, and character develop. Dynamics brought out through daily interaction, support, conflict, and resolve "give life

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[81] Leadership background will be explored through three stages: origin (early development), high school experiences (primarily, positional roles), and college (combination of positional and nonpositional leadership roles).

to the quest for leadership by shaping these esteem needs early on in life" (Conger, p. 24).

Family has been an important building block not only in increasing self-esteem but also in creating a support structure that motivated Student Advisory Board members into action and service. Marcus' vignette on family support shows the power of family on an individual's leadership development:

> I am a very family person. My family is been from the bottom of the economic ladder, typical family stress, conformity over free thought, and I never bought into that. My parents never bought into that. We are kind of outsiders of our own family, but we don't care… My grandmother lives on the same plot of land that the slave master gave freed slaves way back when, and that is on my mom's side. On my dad's side, they grew up in [a city], so they were free blacks, but they never really held any kind of decent job, worked on the docks, on railroads, and it was very much a conformity idea. But my parents rebelled against that and said, "Look, we are going to give you any opportunity. If you want to go and be conformist – that's fine. But, we are not going to let you do something and be unhappy about it." They said, "We will go into debt for the rest of our lives, but our child is going to have the opportunity to be all that he can be." Personally, my parents just said, "We will do anything to help you, and we will never hold you back!" (Marcus, personal communication, April 5, 2003)

As Marcus spoke, his facial expression began to beam with pride. The love, care, and support of his family provides a constant source of motivation and encouragement. As Conger (1992) confirms, "Families may prove to be the source of motivation to lead" (p. 23).

However, families often face adversity. As Marcus[82] (personal communication, March 8, 2003) expressed during an individual interview, his concept of leadership, his understanding of self as a leader, and the realization of what leadership means to him, came out of a family trauma.

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[82] Marcus adopted this pseudonym in memory of his lost brother.

The defining leadership in my personal life was the loss of my mother's third child. I was about 14 years old, in my freshman year of high school. The day that my mom had the ultrasound that confirmed the loss of Marcus, I was at the movies. When I got home, I saw something that I had never seen before or since – my mom was too upset for words. When she saw me enter the room, she never said anything; all she kept doing was crying "why." My father calmly told me what had happened and then joined my mother in grief. I think that they sat in their chairs for at least three hours straight, crying, praying, and reflecting in somber silence. They took at least three days off of work. At one point in time, they even questioned the faith and religion, something that had never happened before and hasn't happened since. For all intents and purposes, my parents' drive and determination had disappeared, they went through all the motions of getting back to normal life but they never quite got back to normalcy for a few weeks. While they were still out of their "shell," I had to do something. Life had to go on, so I took it upon myself to try and "snap them out of it." I took it upon myself to inform the entire family of the recent loss, but I also began to question my parents' faith in the hopes that by defending their faith, they would be able to grow in their faith through this experience.

For Marcus, this emotional family trauma was the most significant leadership experience that has followed him through high school and college. During this experience, Marcus was emotionally challenged, questioning his faith, his values, the meaning of life. However, Marcus also understood that he needed to focus on his family, his "team," and make sure that his parents could heal and move on with their lives. By calling the extended family, comforting his relatives, and being there for his parents, Marcus was able to guide his mother and father through this trauma and back to their path of faith.

During my discussion with Marcus (personal communication, March 8, 2003) about this defining moment, he shared with me how he used to look at leadership prior to the traumatic experience:

Leadership was essentially taking the group's thoughts and feelings and trying to push them one way or another so that they can eventually agree to, but after just one hard life experience after another, a leader has to take charge. They have to do something for the group's good even if they don't like it sometimes. A leader has to be more willing. In my opinion, my leadership has changed from not wanting to use my authority to now, asserting authority as a leader.

With a redefined theory of leadership, Marcus was able to expand his leadership roles by taking on new challenges, taking risks, and working collaboratively with organizational and community groups. The family trauma not only redefined Marcus' view of leadership, but it also helped him alter the roles he played within organizations, especially within his church, "That was the most defining moment of leadership because that caused me to get heavily involved in church. My opinions on leadership have been shaped by the church more than anything else" (Henry, personal communication, March 13, 2003).

Faith, like family, represents another important leadership identity factor. For Marcus, Michael, Henry, and Bob, Christian faith has been the source of support, guidance, and values, and it was brought up during individual interviews as a significant influence on their leadership identity. As I spoke individually with Henry (personal communication, March 13, 2003), he shared with me that Jesuit ideals have been the cornerstone of his development. From his high school days throughout college, Henry has been immersed in Jesuit tradition, practicing core beliefs in both his academic and social life. As an outcome of his faith, Henry has developed a personal philosophy that "actions speak louder than words" and that those who talk but never actually involve themselves in service "cannot be trusted."

Community service and giving back have been the lessons Bob learned through his Christian faith. As an active church youth member, Bob learned the importance of service by engaging in global projects with his parish, in which he traveled around the world building school playgrounds. In addition, he has helped establish a church, and has

been active in Boy Scouts. Through his faith he learned the importance of leadership,

servantship, and has learned about benefits of active team leadership.

The third factor that influences students' definition of leadership has been their

national or geographic origin. Jesse, a native of Jamaica, has been shaped by her origin

and brings "an international flavor" to the Student Advisory Board. Jesse (personal

communication, 2003) explains:

> My nationality has influenced both the manner in which I approach my position
> and the perspectives that I take unilaterally and as a representative of my
> institution being as multicultural as it is… I bring the "international flavor" to the
> table – a perspective of a resident alien.

She regards her nationality as a source of the unique perspective that she brings to all her

leadership roles, in particular in the Student Advisory Board, where she contributes in

shaping higher education policy.

Marcus (personal communication, March 8, 2003), like Jesse, sees the influence

of his geographical origin as a significant factor that shaped his leadership concept.

> Decisions are made by those who show up! That was always said, so wherever
> the decisions are made, I want to show up. Just being out in California where a
> lot of people don't show up, but decisions are made there that they are usually
> unpopular, I just made a little pact with myself that where there is a chance to
> make a decision, I will show up, because decisions are made by those who show
> up!

Marcus' presence in California during the Rodney King trial sparked an activist, self-

driven obligation to be politically involved in his community, be that his family, school,

or state. The statement "decisions are made by those who show up" has become Marcus'

life motto. For him, this statement means: leadership is important, there are personal and

social benefits to it, and to ensure the "right" decisions are made, one has to take the civic

responsibility and get involved in his/her community.

The second stage of development comes from conceptualization of leaders through training in different leadership opportunities, both positional and nonpositional (Conger). It is through these experiences that individuals learn what it means to be a student leader, how to be an effective leader, as well as how to develop character through these experiences. Due to the active engagement of Student Advisory Board students, in particular the focus group members examined, their leadership experiences have been broken down in high school and college stages.

High School Leadership Background

Student leadership development during the high school period provides students with multiple opportunities to learn what it means to participate in a group/club/organization/ sports team, to take on positional roles, and to learn the lessons that one can learn through these experiences. High school extracurricular involvement provides for an introductory base of knowledge that students can advance and expand as they continue their academic journey to higher education. For the five focus group members, high school was an important element of their leadership development. Not only did the students participate in traditional school roles, but they also took advantage of service-oriented opportunities inside and outside of the classroom. The range of activities the students have experienced speaks to the diversity of leadership opportunities open to students, as well as interests students possess.

Table 8.

High School Leadership Background

Jesse	Michael	Henry	Marcus	Bob
VP of SGA	Producer	Salutatorian	Sunday school	Patrol leader
	TV director	School rep	leader	Eagle Scout
	& president			
President	Captain	Baseball team	Minister	Boy Scout
Science Club	Track/Field	member	in a church	Sunday school
Finance director	Firefighter		& musician	JRTC leader
Cheerleading	Lifesaver club			Drama club
captain	member			SGA PR
Intramural sports	EMT			Commission
captain	Co-captain			on Youth
Choir member	Christian athletes			member
Model	Leadership club			
	member			

According to Table 8, it is obvious that students had multiple leadership experiences. The sources of leadership stem from many types of organizations: sports teams, student government organizations, special interest/hobby clubs, religious groups, and service providers. Henry (personal communication, January 30, 2003) explains:

> I went to a pretty small high school, guys' school, and you were a leader if you are bigger than the rest of them, and you played sports really well. I could do both because I stopped growing in the 8th grade, so I was a fully-grown person. It was different. In that respect, you learn to be assertive in a way, it is helpful, not a requirement, but something one eventually develops. When I graduated high school, I was salutatorian. It was in terms of ideals of the school, what the school wanted students to exemplify. The faculty, administration, and fellow classmates thought that I was the student that exemplified those ideals well. So, that was great, a motivation for me, taught me it is not what you say, but what you do. What a great lesson to learn before you enter a college!

The lesson he learned "it is not what you say, but what you do," not only inspired Henry to continue his dream of baseball throughout high school and early college, but it prompted him to focus his leadership skills on civic and community service.

Jesse, the only female in the focus group, shows a wide range of leadership positions: vice president of the Student Government Association, president of special interest club, captain in sports teams, member of choir, and a model for a modeling agency in Jamaica. While upholding high academic status, Jesse has focused on a well-rounded plethora of activities that provided her with experience on all school levels. Through her leadership opportunities, positional and nonpositional, Jesse has learned how to run the student government programs, speak on the behalf of students, work as a team and manage her sports groups, as well as how to be an active member in special interest areas such as finance, music, and modeling.

When I spoke with Jesse in January of 2003, she shared with me a vignette on her high school leadership development:

> I don't think I have every once told myself, "I am going to be a leader." It just happened. I do remember specifically my mom saying to me... She said… um, I think she came in and saw me at Miss Teen Jamaica, a nationwide pageant we have back home. I entered it in 1999, yeah… And, we are having a fashion show... And, we are just taking photographs, and I was leveling everybody up, according to height. And, my mom came in and said, "Look here, [Jesse]… I am not a least bit surprised!" And, at that point, I think it had occurred to me that I always do things like that just because I think it needs to be done!

Through this vignette, Jesse expresses her "regular" leadership behavior, which she exemplified throughout her life. Themes to note: 1) Jesse has a strong personality and is not afraid to try something new and public such as a national beauty pageant; 2) she likes to organize people to help a process; 3) she finds it a "natural" behavior to step up to the plate and aid people and processes; and 4) as an individual she exemplifies strong personal relationships.

Michael, like Jesse, has multiple leadership experiences, ranging from the captain of track and field and co-captain of the CFA to service/volunteer positions of a firefighter and an EMT. Michael (personal communication, January 31, 2003) explained his leadership background during our first individual interview, "I have always considered myself a good follower and a good leader. And, I think, they go hand-in-hand." As Michael looked back at his high school activities, he shared with me his climb to the top of his school's TV station:

> In my junior, actually, end of my sophomore year, I was a producer of my high school television studio. And, in my junior year I was the producer, and at the end of my junior year I was the producer and the director for a short period of time. My senior year, I became the first president of the studio, in an effort… We had a producer and a director who took care of things in the studio. I was the president, which kind of overlooked at…work with faculty to expand our program.

Michael shows initiative, enthusiasm, and persistence as he worked diligently each year at the TV station in hopes of advancing to "the next higher-up position." As a result, he

went from a producer to director to the president of the studio, each time gaining more experience not only in the logistics of running a station, but also in leadership and management. With a balance of extraordinary activities, Michael came away from his high school experience ready to expand on his leadership skills.

Marcus and Bob, like the other focus group members, also had a balance between school activities and volunteer/community service positions. Although Marcus, like Michael and Jesse, was a captain of a sports team, his high school years were spent in a religious community advancing his leadership through music, teaching, and preaching. Not only is it exceptional for a young man to possess [and practice] multiple talents, but to reach a status of a church minister shows commitment, dedication, and leadership skills impressive enough to be given the key role in a church.

Bob, like Marcus, spent his high school years committed to community and school organizations such as the Scouts, Junior Reserve Training Corp (JRTC), or his church. Like Michael, Bob worked his way up in both the Eagle Scouts and in JRTC, each year taking on new leadership roles that required more advance knowledge of the organization and expanded supervision:

> In high school I was in Boy Scouts. I am an Eagle Scout. I was a patrol leader of ten or twelve scouts then became a senior patrol leader in charge of a hundred scouts, making sure that things are coordinated, being in charge of camping events, being sometimes put into situations where you need to make some decisions and at one point, I had to make a life and death decision and that's when I realized that I liked leadership and being in charge. I was in Junior Reserves Training Corp in high school, a squad leader, Public Affairs Officer on the staff of the battalion level, and assistant commander of the drill team. I learned military leadership from JRTC, practical hands-on experience, and leadership in the Boy Scouts. (personal communication, March 8, 2003)

Bob's climb to the top of JRTC and Eagle Scouts shows dedication to the organizations, commitment to civic and community service, and a focus on voluntary groups who serve

to train students in life skills as well as self-confidence and teamwork. An intriguing example of his commitment to service was the statement that when he found himself making a life/death decision, he learned what it means to be a leader and that "he had it." In our individual interview, I inquired about the life and death incident he mentioned. Bob stated that the incident took place during a Scouting raft trip when a raft overturned on a whitewater rapid. Bob, realizing the seriousness of the situation, ran toward the troops and began delegating group and individual tasks on the rescue mission. As the result of his firm, quick thinking, his organized delegation of orders, and teamwork, everyone was pulled out safely. Bob not only exemplified a resourceful, innovative leader but showed characteristics of a strong, confident individual who believed in himself and in choices he makes because, as Bob points out, he is "part of the team."

The five individuals above not only show diverse positional leadership, but also their commitment to public service through community volunteering and civic duties. However, their successful high school leadership development was not without lessons. From the interviews and focus group discussions collected, all five students at some point faced tough choices, lost elections, and missed opportunities. However, it is also from these "hard lessons" that students developed their leadership skills, personal character, and renewed their commitment to student activism. Table 9 represents key vignettes that changed student participants' view of leadership and self as a leader.

Table 9.

Students' High School Leadership Lessons

Student's vignette & leadership lessons and skills learned

Jesse – class monitor

Vignette:

I can think back to 8th grade, so long time ago, and before…certainly, I still remember all that right now, but 8th grade it just occurred to me. I realized that there was not the same level of willingness from the persons in my group (whatever that might be). I was class monitor for a couple of years, and it just didn't work. I was not exactly accomplishing that what I set out to do. I was not being that effective, so I said, "All right. Maybe, if I actually listened some more and show them that yes, they are a person just as I am then, the whole collaborative effort would actually work." And, I think that that is the characteristic that I carried throughout. (personal communication, January 29, 2003)

Leadership lessons:

Leadership is not a "one-man show." Positional leadership is not a dictatorship. Group members do not respond to authoritarian leadership. Leadership is about sharing and teamwork. Leadership involved organization, delegation, and oversight, not control.

Leadership skills:

Positional maturity; teamwork; communication with the group members; leadership style reframing; self- development; transformational leadership

Student's vignette & leadership lessons and skills learned

Henry – baseball team captain

Description:

Henry played baseball throughout high school. He was taller than the other boys, athletic, and popular. However, once he began college he tried out for the baseball captain (his dream at the time) but "it didn't' work out, they had a team…" The college team was rigorous and Henry was not selected as a captain, but his love for baseball never stopped. (personal communication, January 30, 2003)

Leadership lessons:

Follow your dream. Continue extracurricular participation. Circumstances change/ transition can be difficult. Reframe, and put energies toward new venues.

Leadership skills:

Commitment; involvement; risk taking; taking nonpositional roles; expanding leadership opportunity base

Michael – president

Description:

Michael spent all high school years involved, in different capacities, in the school's TV station. During his junior year he wanted to be the president, but a senior was elected instead. So, Michael persistently continued to work as a producer, and writer, gaining experience in all elements of the TV station. The following year he was elected president.

Student's vignette & leadership lessons and skills learned

Leadership lessons:

Seniority can at times overshadow aspiring leaders. Developing new skills through

multitasking builds ability to lead an organization/group. Never give up.

Leadership skills:

Multitasking; directing; managing; confidence building; followership;

Renewal; motivation; dedication

Marcus – class officer, treasurer, and vice president

Vignette:

In high school, I ran for a class officer one year, treasurer one year, and for the vice

president the next year, and lost both times. (personal communication, March 8, 2003)

Lessons learned:

Commitment; new approach; reframe/renew

Leadership skills:

Campaigning, learning diverse positional descriptions

Bob – class president & student member of the Board of Education

Vignette:

I ran for class president twice or three times and never won once. I ran for student

member of the board of education two times, the second time I made finalist, had to

manage my own campaign getting a lot of experience with public speaking, politics,

advocacy, and church activities. (personal communication, March 8, 2003)

Students' vignette & leadership lessons and skills learned

Leadership lessons learned:

Persistence is a good characteristic. Managing campaigns provides experience with public speaking, politics, advocacy, government, student body, and church activities.

Leadership skills:

Persistence; campaign management; public speaking; election politics; advocating for student issues; commitment to service & civic duties

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Jesse's vignette about a hard lesson learned was not in a traditional sense of an "election lost;" rather, it was about educating oneself about what it means to be a leader, a student leader. In 8th grade, when Jesse held a top class position, she felt a sense of power and used it in an authoritarian way in order to get organizational goals accomplished. However, her strong attitude created negative energy within the group she was in "charge of." Jesse (personal communication, January 29, 2003) further explains:

> I realized that leadership itself is not a "one-man show." For most of the positions that I can think of, of more positive groups… and of course, depending on your group… you are always leading people, you got to lead somebody, and they have just as much input as I would. I might organize it, I may put it all together, but I realized that I am not the "be all," and there has to be a mutual sort of respect and with the authoritarian type of regime… - it does not work. People do not want to come by, they do not want to work with you. I guess I had this view of very strict definition of being a leader, always being upfront, always having the last say of what I thought of course, was right. But of course, that does not work. I realize that.

As Jesse eloquently explains, for her, leadership lessons came early, in middle school/high school. As an active, energetic person, she has been a positional leader from a very young age; however, she not only wanted to preserve that role, but also be a better

leader. Thus, from early on she has learned key leadership lessons: 1) leadership is not a one man show, it is teamwork; 2) leaders do lead, delegate, and manage, but they do so by empowering others to participate, take ownership for the organization; 3) the more team-oriented the leader is the more responsive will group members be to the leader and more will be accomplished; and finally, 4) there has to be mutual respect between the leader and the group. As the result of this 8th grade experience, she lived her high school years as a multi tasking, multipositional leader who not only had the recognition and formal role, but respect, trust, and admiration by her peers. In return, she understood that great leaders share their power and encourage others to take on tasks as well as leadership [and management] positions, and thus, she learned to motivate her teammates to be innovative, hard working, but to work together.

Michael, in his journey through the TV station, learned the value of followership and significance of positional leadership. Due to his experience level, each year of high school he knew that he was getting closer to his goal of being the president, but he also understood that he had to work through the ranks, participate in all job descriptions, and be a good follower. That meant following the president's delegation of tasks, innovating new approaches within his job description, making sure others feel comfortable with his work, and remaining dedicated to the organization. As he learned more about the TV station and continued to work on diverse projects, he not only showed his commitment to the organization but also his successful ability to follow the leader and instill trust and respect. By not giving up and taking risks each year with higher and higher leadership roles, Michael learned to: 1) build up his confidence and skills; 2) experience different jobs, thus making him more understanding and supportive of others who came after him

into those positions; 3) be dedicated and committed to an organization, its goals, and values; and finally, 4) be motivated to keep pushing ahead towards the presidency and empowering those around him to follow his lead.

> Certain amount of skills, basic skills, if you are going to be a leader in a classroom, you have to know things in order to be able to answer to the questions. You have to know skills in sports in order to be a leader on the field. You have to know the right time to say something, the right time to lead when you are needed. You don't want to overexpose yourself. That has been true in all the leadership roles that I have had. They are crucially important. Especially in a TV studio, you had glitches go off every day. People getting down, and I had to somehow come up with a way for them to stay, or to want to stay or to know that we can come through, to figure out… There are a lot of critical glitches. I had to find an interesting way to turn it into something positive, make it humorous. When they see you do that, then they trust you. And then they feel safe now, because they know what is going on here, they'll know that this guy over here will know that to do. And then, through that, you create other leaders. (Michael, personal communication, January 31, 2003)

Henry, as discussed earlier, was a star athlete and a model student, popular, and admired in high school. His physical strength and presence gave him the respect and friendships he needed to move ahead in baseball. With his hard work and dedication to the sport and his team he reached the position of a cocaptain his senior year of high school. However, as he changed venues and began college he learned that sports teams in college are too different from what he was used to. As he shared with me during his first interview, the baseball team in college was corporate, focused on competition, numbers, and professionalism. There was little of group dynamics and sportsmanship as he knew it in high school, and his loss in the election for the captain served as an opportunity to evaluate who he wanted to be as a person and as a leader. Using the key lesson learned in high school, that "actions speak louder than words," he reframed and refocused his energy towards the Jesuit model of education, dedicating his extracurricular life to ethics and values of civic and community.

Marcus, unlike the other members, did not have a long resume of extracurricular activities within the school realm. For him, leadership growth came out of his religious convictions, where he served as a minister, head musician, and lecturer, making sure that his church runs smoothly and that it is a community-oriented place. Due to his commitment to the church, his positional leadership in school was minimal. According to the interview conducted with Marcus, he shared with me that at the time his energy was not focused on school but on religion; thus, even though he had a desire to run for a class officer, because of his underlying commitment to help fellow students, he was unknown to the student body and his voice was not heard. However, as the result of this experience, Marcus learned how to campaign, how to reframe his mission towards leadership, and renewed his commitment to student issues, which now, during his college years, has become his primary focus.

Bob, like Michael and Jesse, balanced his high school extracurricular activities between sports and student-oriented positions. However, his leadership lessons came more than once, after he lost elections for a class president and as a finalist for the student member of the Board of Education. His vignette speaks of this time period in his life, why he was not elected for the positions, and the opportunities that came from this experience:

> I have learned a heck of a lot. So, I ran in 10th grade, but what I found was that I just transferred to that school and also at the same time I had a back surgery, I had very serious back surgery that semester… What came out of that was a stronger faith in God, stronger confidence in my ability to do things, and here comes this opportunity to get involved in politics, which was something that began to interest me all of the sudden, so I jumped on it. Missing school for a month, not knowing anybody, I ran and failed miserably. I practiced my speech before, and I had this whole mentality that my speech would be on the top of my head, and I froze. It was messy, but I learned a lot. At this point I made some contacts, put my foot at the door, and got appointed to the Commission on Children and Youth on the

county level, where I got some hard-core knowledge about HSS and budget, how things work in reality. How do you speak? How do you address people? What is the mentality of the people that are doing it? So, it was more experiential. I ran and I guess I was nervous, but persistent. I didn't lose horribly, but made it to the finals, which was pretty decent.

At the end, I had some issue with the question on the televised debate, and I sometimes I hear some things… and I asked them to repeat the question – they said something, and my opponent responded and took time responding, and by the time it came to me I had a momentary blank. I asked them to repeat the question, and they said "no," and I said "ok." I paused; I thought what I was going to say, and then bam. But, at the end I got 11,000 votes, but it made me look like an idiot. It is not like I got crushed, but I got some 30 percent, but I learned a lot. (Bob, personal communication, March 8, 2003)

The vignette not only points to the personal commitment and perseverance, but also faith and commitment to himself to continue on his path of political achievement and leadership development. Each time, Bob was faced with running his own campaigning, learning how to create a platform, getting his key organizational goals across, rallying students behind him as well as learning how to communicate with the student body and in the world of political debates. As the result of these experiences, he learned to: 1) manage campaigns; 2) speak publicly in an effective manner; 3) understand election politics; and above all, 4) be persistent – never give up. His courage to continue on with his career dreams right after a major surgery speaks volumes of his personal commitment to student issues, politics, and his own goals to make a difference in public policy.

College Background

The focus group members' leadership development and skill enhancement continued into their college careers. As they entered the higher education realm, all five members turned to service and civic leadership as the centerpiece of their leadership development. For some, the new academic venue was a sign of a different path, while for others it was a continuation of their earlier commitments/passions. Similar to the pattern

in high school, the students were engaged in extracurricular activities, balancing service and positional leadership experiences, and taking risks to fulfill their own goals. As a result, they not only became exceptional leaders, but were also recognized by the institutional community as valuable service members and were honored with the invitation to serve on the Student Advisory Board.

Jesse, as she moved from Jamaica as an international student to the Atlantic state's University of African-American Leaders, she continued her trend of multitasking and actively participating in student life; however, unlike her high school years, she began to turn towards career-oriented opportunities and counseling, serving as a Political Science Association representative, International Association coordinator, a model, National Honor Society member, and a peer counselor. Her confidence, strong personal goals, and dedication to service have been the key characteristics of her success:

> I always put myself in a position. Sometimes without a specific title, I just kind of emerged. What I can mention is that once the dedication is there, it is intricate, not inspired by what I can achieve from this, but something you want to do, you want to help others, you want to represent others. I think that is what brings out leadership qualities. Of course, you need to be well organized. You have to deal with different kinds of people, to unify them in some sort of way... (Jesse, personal communication, January 29, 2003)

Jesse's words speak to the view that the students observed have in regards to their personal drive for leadership. For many, the drive to work with other students has been embedded through family influences as well as an inner drive for positional and nonpositional opportunities. As Jesse (personal communication, January 29, 2003) explains, it is not only the dedication and commitment to organizations; rather, it is simply something "you want to do, you want to help others, you want to represent others." She understands the peer pressure, the academic and life dilemmas, and tries to

give back to her new community – the university. Jesse explains her extra curricular

choices as a way to be an active nonpositional leader and an effective follower. It is

because of her commitment to fellow students that she was selected to be institutional

representative to the Student Advisory Board.

Michael, like Jesse, continued his multiple activities, joining academic teams and

entering the world of higher education politics through the on-campus student advisory

program, SGA, and Justice Society, where he served as a treasurer. Michael has been

involved in these three main organizations, but his volunteer service continues with his

position as an EMT and internship opportunities in politics that have replaced multiple

high school activities. As he showed in high school, he is persistent, committed, and

knows how to move up the ranks, one year at a time:

> I am the treasurer of the Justice Society, and I will be running for office for
> president of that this year more than likely as I will be running for SGA. I am a
> general member of SGA, but am going to be running for a vice president this
> year. (Michael, personal communication, January 31, 2003)

As seen from his high school achievement record, Michael always strives for the top

leadership positions, because he sees top positions as the way to make the greatest

difference, not only delegate but innovate and have the power and authority to push his

organization forward to new arenas or approaches that have not been tried before.

Henry, like Michael and Jesse, also changed the nature of his leadership

experience when he began his college career following his mantra that action is louder

than words. His main involvement has been in two places, the Honor Council and the

Pens for Friends, a volunteer service he founded in his early years at the Jesuit Ideals

College. Henry (personal communication, January 30, 2003) reflects on his freshman

year of college and his involvement through a vignette, which signifies his commitment

to service and his view of what it means to be a student leader:

> I didn't know what to do with myself. I went to class and came home like many students, and received a letter in a mail one day that I was recommended by faculty to be nominated for the Honors Council. We handle academic integrity at [Jesuit Ideals College] and have an honor code. It is something that is really important to the school, is important to many students, and is of course, a problem for many students at many schools. I accepted the nomination, and was lucky enough to be voted in.
>
> Sophomore year…it was difficult. We had hearings for students who have violated the honor code, and it was very challenging thing to be involved in, eye opening, but it has taught me a lot, this was something that I could really get involved in and be a "leader," that would be great. I saw a lot of things that the school can improve upon in terms of their honor code; inspire people to understand the value of community and trust. So, that is my experience in leadership roles.
>
> I went on to be a chair of the Honor Council my junior year, and again, this year, and it is a great opportunity because you can work with a lot of people who share interest, direct new initiatives. One of the things that we did was focus our attention towards freshmen. I think that we were getting to people too little too late, and it was too difficult to reach them. But when they are all in a auditorium during an orientation, it is a great opportunity to do that, and freshmen are always interested in the school that they are going to, and it is important to get them then. That is a traditional leadership role, and the other program is called "Pens for Friends."
>
> It really took off. I was at this conference, the National Jesuit Student Leadership Conference in Spokane, Washington, and I was sitting around with another friend of mine that goes here, and proposed an idea to collect school supplies for students in [my college town], … it worked out great! We talked to the bookstore, got raffle tickets for each school supply a student donated…. And if that raffle ticket gets pulled, they win a full reimbursement of all their books. The bookstore writes them a check. So, that is great, a $500 is phenomenal, and it is that extra urge that pushes people to buy a couple of extra supplies for us. It is really easy to do. We were able to get our SGA members and Honor Council members to work the table, and that gave them an opportunity to be involved with this, and of course, it gave each person who bought books during the semester, at least in the times that we were out there, the opportunity to be involved in this program. So, it encompassed a lot of people. Pretty untraditional I think and something that I could do. I am sure someone will continue it, hopefully, with a better name. They can change the name, less original, but it is theirs and that is great. It does not take a lot of work but it adds a tremendous benefit. Those are my experiences in leadership roles.

Henry's vignette shows his focus on two main organizations that reflect his values, ethics, and beliefs. Henry, committed to making a difference, enhanced his leadership through community service, reaching out to freshmen and encouraging them to get involved in school, aiding students in the honor council process, educating them on ethics and values the institution upholds, and that students should also. Finally, inspired by a leadership conference, Henry decided to start his own community program for the less fortunate. Through this program, he learned to manage a program, seek sponsorship and public interest, recruit volunteers, teach students the value of community service, and lead the program towards bigger supply drives.

From additional research I conducted as a researcher/observer, I uncovered two articles that speak to his commitment "Junior Wins Free Textbooks in Fundraiser for Needy Children" and "Pens Drive Again Successful" (*The Greyhound*, 2001; 2002). According to Sara Jerome (2001), a news editor for *The Greyhound*, "The campaign collected over 1,000 school supplies, which will be donated to Beans and Bread, a local organization that will give the supplies to needy families" (p. 1). When asked about the event, Henry stated, "It was a success through the people who donated and the people who volunteered. They really made it happen" (Jerome, p. 2). A year later, the success of the "Pens for Friends" was addressed once again in the school papers. As Youngpeter (2002) reported, "Judging by all the success so far, this looks like it will become a regular event. This is the only joint venture of Student Government and the Honor Council, which provided a highly motivated group of students from Pens for Friends." Henry went further in thanking all volunteers for their dedication. As the University bookstore

owner concluded, "We at the bookstore wanted to do everything we could to help, and we're looking forward to making Pens for Friends a bi-annual event" (Youngpeter, p. 2).

Marcus, unlike the other members, had a different start. After finishing high school, he was accepted into a major research university. Unfortunately, due to national circumstances he became distracted and needed to renew his sense of academic and leadership purpose by returned home to a community college:

> I was going to the University of [Atlantic] and I guess, having to give up all that I had… I have always been a person that didn't have a lot of friends, but had a close-knit two or three and giving that up and moving away, the terrorist attacks and how that affected that whole area and the college campus. That kind of messed up my head, and my grades just went south, and I knew I was not up to it. That kind of woke me up to say, "Marcus, this is not who you are!" And, I was always a type of person that if the opportunity is there, I take it. So, now where I am at, at my school now, when the [Student Advisory Board] position was offered, I immediately took it. That is where my biggest leadership thing is so far, and as a result of that, I became… Last meeting we didn't have a community college segment chair, so I kind of jumped into that. And then, I have become a student government representative for the Board of Trustees, and I actually got them concerned with advisement on campus, so we are trying to incorporate that idea…

Marcus was faced with a life decision during his first semester of freshman year – should he continue in the place he did not feel comfortable or should he return home and start over? For Marcus the choice was going back home, reframing his personal goals, and reestablishing himself as a student leader. From the same conversation, he further shared:

> Churchwise, still a lead musician, not a lead, lead musician… Still a minister... I am quite busy. I have attended multiple training workshops for the church and the school. And I am in the consideration to be an intern for the local politician in my county. I have always kind of had an interest in politics. In what I am involved in, even if it is not a leadership position, I try to assert my thoughts, my feelings into it. I don't have that many leadership experiences per se, people just tell me that my leadership comes through. (Marcus, personal communication, March 8, 2003)

As seen from his statements, he used his "new start" as a way to expand on religious experience as well as to learn new skills by following his passion for politics and higher education. Now, he expresses that passion not only through the Student Advisory Board, but also through institutional board of trustees, a political internship, and an active role in his classes and student government.

Finally, Bob, an active student in politics and civic service, continued his quest for new leadership experiences by taking part in multiple activities: founding member of the Christian ministry, church ambassador to China, Senate treasurer, International Board of Trustees member, and Foreign Policy Council intern. Bob (personal communication, March 8, 2003) shared a story with me a vignette during one of our interviews:

> Out of high school I was pretty solid with leadership experience, went into college, and this is my second year. I helped start a ministry... I was one of he founding members. I traveled to the People's Republic of China through the People to People's ambassadors program. I coordinated it… I found out my personality type is ENTJ. I am extroverted and a go-getter. I have always pretty much been that way. So there are probably some internal reasons why I would take the initiative to go get that experience.

Bob connected to his church involvement, innovation, and dedication to global service with his Meyers-Briggs personality type ENTJ. As Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (1998) state, "Understanding how you express your values through your preferred interactions or decision making helps you understand yourself and serves as a bridge to exploring diversity within group" (p. 121). As an extrovert, intuitive, thinker, and judger, Bob represents qualities of a "natural leader." "The special combination of preferences gives this type the right mixture of basic leadership qualities: enthusiasm, vision, objectivity, and accountability" (Kroeger, Thuesen, & Rutledge, 2002, p. 120). A natural leader, Bob exemplifies people-oriented energy (Kroeger, Thuesen, & Rutledge) as well

as his drive for strategy, order, and systematic accomplishment. Bob is a strong-minded

individual who understands organizational goals, stays on course, and works hard to be

successful as a person and within a group. Due to his interests in functionality, protocol,

and achievement, he sees his leadership development as a string of opportunities:

> I have many opportunities. Right now I am interning for the Foreign Policy
> Council, because I took the initiative to apply, which is probably a common
> theme. Right now I am helping them with the research for publications to come
> out. I helped the president do stuff and network with people. That is critical –
> networking. Other things I am looking… I met somebody at the State Department
> when I went to the meeting I signed up for. I was ironically led to the wrong
> room, but the meeting I was led into ended up being run by a man who runs a
> group that is focused on terrorism, and I am taking class on terrorism. I stayed….
> What happened was that I did some research and found out that this group offers
> to send you to Tel Aviv in Israel for a little while.   So that is one opportunity.
> (Bob, personal communication, March 8, 2003)

Bob's vignette not only speaks to his personality but also to his view of student

leadership. Bob, similarly to other focus group members, sees his student-leader

development as a pattern of initiatives, learning through the process, doing the best job

possible, but continuing to look ahead to a next opportunity.

Nonpositional Backgrounds

Student leadership development not only takes place in positional roles but also

through representative, community service [volunteer] roles. As Jesse (personal

communication, January 29, 2003) explains:

> They are "leadership" because somebody has to do something. More often than
> not, it is a representative kind of role. You work for the masses. Most of the
> time, there is this, I don't want to say defiance, but an expectation of me, of others
> as well, that we achieve whatever we set out to achieve. They always wait for us
> to do stuff. Although we might not be a "president," there is always this
> dependence as well. I consider them leadership, because you are a mover and a
> shaker. You get things done.

To understand why all focus group participants view community and civic service experiences as leadership, it is important to share individuals' vignettes about key examples of nontraditional, positional leadership. For example, Jesse, as she described her college background, explained why her involvement in peer counseling is a key leadership position she currently possesses:

> Well, take for instance the position that I do have here, that of a peer counselor… that is service; that is service-oriented. You don't tell everybody what to do; you are there for everybody else. In the sense that you defer to them, but they defer to you. Being a counselor they expect you to have the training, the knowledge, that stability, so in the sense you have to be a leader. You are providing a service because it is requested from you, but you are deemed to have those qualities that the leader would possess. It flows both ways. You wouldn't dictate, you facilitate, but you are held accountable too. Yes, you can be a leader in this position if you know what you are doing, but you don't tell people what to do. (personal communication, January 29, 2003)

According to Jesse, nonpositional leadership is leadership because, as in peer counseling, one is expected to possess certain skills that qualify one for the service. After training in peer counseling, Jesse had the knowledge and stability to assist her fellow students. Further, she is a leader not only because of the background she has, but also because of the expectations students have of her. As a peer counselor, she is expected to facilitate, listen, create dialogue, help in problem resolution, and provide skillful, qualified advice that will aid a student. As such, Jesse is held accountable by the university to provide a quality service as a volunteer in the institution.

Michael, like Jesse, values community and civic service as the key component of his leadership development. Since mid-high school years, Michael has been interested in rescue missions, participating in the lifesavers club, followed by full certification for the emergency technician/firefighter. For Michael, leadership is not only about positional

roles, about running an organization, it is about helping and assisting others, making a

difference. He explains:

> I guess I can go back to my EMT class. In the EMT class you are a team, and you do your work separately the whole eight months you are in class, seven hours a week I believe it is, and you do tests separately, until it is time for practical exams, which there are nine. You have a team, you and your partner. If your partner does not know what they are doing, you fail. And if you don't know what you are doing, your partner fails. So, that is a real good example of a nonpositional leader. Because when it comes to the final exam, you have to take a leadership role. For instance, if your partner does not know an answer to a question, and I know this from personal experience on my test… My partner did not know how do practitioners administer activated charcoal, and we would fail. However, I took on a leadership role to help her memory, as I am not allowed to tell her the answer, but to be able to get done what we needed to get done. It is not an academic example, but it is how it works in the field. There are two of you in the crew. You are there with somebody's life in your hands. If one of you doesn't know what they are doing, or does not remember how to do something, which is completely plausible because you can't remember how to do everything, especially under stress like that, it is your role to help them out. So, that is definitely a good example of leadership in a nonpositional way. (Michael, personal communication, January 31, 2003)

Michael points to some key leadership words in a relational model: teamwork,

cooperation, empowering one another, working together to achieve a goal. Although not

a "positional role," EMT is a service-based, team-oriented experience that tests

individuals in high-stress situations, encouraging them to work together in order to do

their personal and group "best." The understanding, help, and partnership Michael feels

towards his teammates shows the responsibility, accountability, and vision he possesses

as a leader.

Henry lives by the motto "action speaks louder than words." From his examples

of the "Pens for Friends" volunteer program Henry set up at his college, as well as his

work with the Honor Council, it is clear that Henry has a strong commitment to

community service and believes in reaching out to others as the best leadership

experience. When Henry (personal communication, January 30, 2003) and I first talked,

he shared with me his view of students in higher education and what it means to have a

leadership opportunity:

> For a lot of leaders that aren't the ones who go out, "SGA is what I want to be
> involved in and eventually, I want to be a president of SGA," there are a lot of
> other opportunities! Those opportunities, such as working at our Center for
> Values and Services… You can be head of a program that goes and tutors once a
> week, twice a week at the AIDS house. Those are being filled by the students
> who are somehow exposed to the cause of the Center for Values and Services, and
> probably just started out tutoring or giving out services and got involved in it, and
> saw themselves really liking what they were doing, and they were inspired, and
> wanted to help facilitate this mission that is going on. They developed those
> qualities of leadership that they are now in charge of that, so that is an example.
> They saw an opportunity to do good, and decided to act on it. In my mind, those
> are trends of a leader…

Henry, following the Jesuit tradition of reaching out to serve others over oneself,

identified leadership as community service, helping those less fortunate, facilitating civic

programs, and upholding the highest ethical standards in the process. "As long as you

know what you are doing is good, even if you don't see the results, that's fine. If you

don't see it as making a change, it is fine too, as long as it is a good thing" (Henry,

personal communication, January 30, 2003). Although Henry acknowledges the

importance of the Student Government Association (SGA), he expands the traditional

leadership roles students have historically aimed for to include public service and

community programs that benefit both the student body and the college neighborhood.

Marcus, as seen in previous sections, has been dedicated to public service since

his high school days. As a minister and a head musician, he has provided community

service to all church members by preparing and delivering Sunday services, organizing

community events, and always being there for others, to council, to assist, and listen.

Bob's nonpositional experiences, like those of Jesse and Henry, revolve around his community and civic duties. During our first interview, I asked Bob to explain why he mentioned Boy and Eagle Scouts as well as church-related activities as significant leadership experiences. Bob (personal communication, March 8, 2003) explained, "It gave me outlets to start developing skills and gave me confidence to believe that I was good at. It comes with faith, confidence, and trying not to be too proud of what I have done. Always needing humility..." Through Bob's vignette, it is evident that nonpositional leadership can carry significant developmental lessons on what it means to be service and people oriented. He did not have a positional role, but believed that he could make a difference by taking action in his organization.

Nonpositional leadership opportunities are important roles through which students build their sense of public service and civic responsibility. Jesse (personal communication, March 7, 2003) explains, "The service is a dedicated role, going beyond the call of duty. It defines the positional boundaries because it is taking yourself with the responsibilities of addressing student issues, addressing their problems, giving all your efforts as the medium through which the goal can be achieved. Whereas, if you are not directing a goal, you are facilitating it." Service leadership means giving oneself to the greater cause while in process strengthening one's values, ethics, and character.

> All leadership should be servant leadership. The idea of serving others should be part of the leadership. I think there are leaders who are doing it for themselves, some who are doing it for others, and then there are probably a whole majority that is doing it for both." (Henry, personal communication, March 13, 2003)

Service and civic leadership is a main component of the nonpositional roles that focus group members have held (and continue to hold) and is the main path through which they practice their core values.

Core values[83] are the bedrock of student leadership and their decision to engage in positional and nonpositional roles. "These core values [will] enable individuals to work toward a common purpose and provide a common understanding of the organization's principals and standards. Members are empowered to hold each other accountable, participate in moral talk or dialogue, and work together to sustain an ethical environment" (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998, p. 250). For focus group students in the Student Advisory Board, values are an important element of their leadership, in particular, with regard to civic and service duties. Their preexisting value system is an important element of students' backgrounds because it explains the framework under which students operate as negotiators and decision-makers. Here are selected vignettes that portray the significance of the core values in the context of service and civic duties:

> I think that there are values that I wouldn't compromise on. There are certain values, especially in the Honor Council, integrity and truth, that are not a matter of opinion for me, for anyone, I think. Those are absolutely necessary for an effective leadership, to effectively inspire people. (Henry, personal communication, March 13, 2003)

Michael, who has also been influenced by his religion, shares some of the same perspectives as Henry:

> I do have a strong set of values. I come from a religious background. I have very strong values; however, I don't press my beliefs on other people. Most people have values, so what I would do is look at everyone's values, and we can come up together with something that is a mean.

Values students have in their institutional lives as student leaders do translate into the way students view their roles as civic and service providers. Bob (personal communication, March 8, 2003) reflects:

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[83] Values guide actions. Values are an integral part of character development. Understanding what one's preferences are in the construct of the value system helps students understand themselves and others (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998).

> I value integrity, honestly, that is what I do value; otherwise, the world would be filled with emptiness. You conduct it with respect. If I am renting and raving, I ask for apologies. I come with passion to get things done, and with everyone's interest to do good to better our community. The question is not if we do, it is always "how." We are diverse, so the values that I hold on to are willingness to take a risk even if that is unpopular, but also kindness and humility. I am passionate, and I want to let that show.

As seen from these examples, students have a strong set of values, often derived from their religious backgrounds, which guide their service and civic roles. However, functioning in organizations, both in positional and nonpositional roles, means not compromising one's values, while opening up and being receptive to other people's beliefs, passions, and ideas. It is a delicate balance but one learned through multiple experiences.

The "I" – Understanding Self Within the Student Advisory Board

Understanding oneself during the forming stages of an organization is crucial in the success of both the individual and the group as a whole. In the case of the Student Advisory Board, students arrived at their first meeting excited about the opportunity to serve on such a high state level, but also with individual interpretations of what their purpose is, how other students would conduct themselves, and what their role should be as institutional representatives. These questions, complex and diverse, are best understood through the observation of their first planning meeting, in which students, not yet familiar with one another, began to negotiate on the Board's goals, agendas, meeting locations, and preliminary ideas on their policy project. It was also a time in which an old and new Board advisor transitioned, symbolically staring a new chapter. [84]

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[84] This section includes students' vignettes, as collected during the individual interviews, and my memos from their first meeting where I presented my proposal for the purpose of recruiting volunteers for this case study.

Selection Process

      The five students observed for the case study exemplify superb leadership skills in both positional and nonpositional [service] roles. Although they are in different years of college education,[85] all were deemed by their institutions as qualified representatives to the Statewide Higher Education Coordinating Commission. Due to lack of an inter-institutional selection process, each student was selected by different means.[86] As presidents of institutions received an official invitation from the Coordinating Commission to select a student representative to the Student Advisory Board, they [presidents], if they choose to have one, selected diverse processes by which to find an institutional representative. The selection methods by which the five students observed were selected are reflective of the general student body that comprises the Student Advisory Board.

      Due to students' involvement on campus in honor societies and departmental organizations, as well as community and civic service, students were well known to the student affairs professionals, faculty members, and student government members as involved, dedicated students committed to the institutional mission and higher education issues. Four out of five students were invited to the Student Advisory Board by a high-ranking student affairs professional be that at a vice presidential, dean, or directorial level. Marcus, due to the small size of his institution, found out through his government

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[85] Michael, Marcus, and Bob are in their second; Jesse and Henry in their last/senior year.

[86] Jesse was selected by the VP of Student Affairs; Michael by the Director of Student Services; Henry by the Dean of Students; Marcus by a government professor; and Bob by the Director of Student Life.

professor as his institutional president passed on the opportunity to politics and government faculty to decide.

The Student Advisory Board selection is a process designated for individual institutions. As stated in *Bylaws* (1998), "Each [Atlantic] institution of higher education, which is authorized by the [Statewide Higher Education Coordinating Commission] to operate in the state of [Atlantic], will have one representative to the [Student Advisory Board]. The method of selection will be determined by the president of the institution in collaboration with the student government(s)." One of the main problems with this selection process is that it has no general protocol on how students are selected; thus, many institutions neglect the letter from the Commission, depriving students of experiencing the Student Advisory Board and the opportunity to serve on the state level of higher education. However, having presidents, student affairs professionals, or faculty select students by personal choice or on a volunteer basis means that students selected are those that are most visible on campus as positional leaders, community servants, or exceptional academic students.

Why Did Students Accept This Opportunity?

All students selected, in particular the five individuals observed, accepted the offer to represent their institutions because they viewed it as a unique opportunity that could enhance their leadership skills. For some, the opportunity was a way to learn more about higher education, while for others it was a steppingstone into public service and student activism.

Table 10.

Student's View of SAB as a Leadership Opportunity

Student	Vignette
Jesse	It is a unique opportunity. The students do have a voice, a considerable [one]; a lot of leverage in the decisions that are made regarding our own education. We are more likely to be knowledgeable of the flaws, what needs to be corrected, and what is really good too. And our feedback is totally invaluable. There should be more opportunities for us to be involved in policies that directly affect us, particularly, education. Since they are really gearing us to move up and further affect the policies and everybody in the state itself, we leave school to go to the workforce and from then on, we will be more involved in policy too, if we vote or not, whether we join unions or not, it is all politics from there! It is very important. (personal communication, January 29, 2003)
Henry	I thought it was a great honor, and basically, what I read about it, I thought it was a tremendous opportunity to meet other student leaders from different schools throughout, that was really cool. I was just asked, and I accepted. (personal communication, January 30, 2003)

Student	Vignette
Michael	I find the SAB as a great forum to come and try to take an active stance to get students more involved – a big issue at my college. Being a student, you learn a lot quickly. As an American, and I consider myself to be a patriotic American, a crucial part of that is taking a civic responsibility and trying to voice your political opinion, and that is the only way to strengthen government is to criticize it. Those are the two parts of the culture that really influence how I think of the SAB. I think that SAB is a great place to come and trying to get something done. (personal communication, January 31, 2003)
Marcus	I joined this because I see that my school has a lot of needs. There is a lot of work to be done. I don't think that I can immediately bring sweeping reforms and make my school the best in the world, but I would like to think that if somebody sees me taking a step and getting involved, I can inspire other people to get involved. I am trying to make people look reflectively at themselves and see, "Ok, am I truly happy with the way my school is right now." I do that for myself, I do that for my school, and I do that for my fellow students. That is why I got involved. (personal communication, March 8, 2003)

Student	Vignette
Bob	I was afraid that it would be like those committees with a lot of talking but not enough action. As much as I love to talk and think it is effective, talking and enthusiasm with the solid plan, which goes back to leadership, having a solid plan produces success or at least knowing that you are on the path to some sort of a goal or agenda, and less broad, student education, which everyone is doing, "trying to save the world," you are glad they have passion…. (personal communication, March 8, 2003)

According to Table 10, focus group members engaged in the Student Advisory Board because they wanted to have a voice on behalf of college students, to learn about higher education, and to achieve individual policy goals. For Jesse and Michael, the motivating factor for accepting the Board's position is their connection to their nationality. For Henry, Marcus, and Bob, it was a matter of volunteering at the right time and interpreting the opportunity as leadership/public policy position in which they as students could make a difference.

The Planning Meeting – Forming Stage of the Board

The five focus group members joined the Board fully understanding the uniqueness of this state entity. However, as they arrived at their first meeting, they entered a natural, first form of organizational growth – the forming stage. During the

forming[87] stage, students questioned their role as institutional representatives as well as

logistical questions on agendas and meeting locations. A lot was accomplished during

these two meetings: the negotiations and understanding of self within this process

reaffirmed students' commitment to the Board.[88] Focus group vignettes best speak to

initial thoughts of students towards the Board. Jesse (personal communication, January

29, 2003) explains her concerns:

> I did not believe that I was incapable of executing the role for which I have been
> called for; however, I really did not know much about [AHECC] or the world of
> [SAB]. Once I learned about it, I was fine. My initial response was, in the sense
> that, "Yes, I am really honored that you realize that I have that potential." Not,
> "Of course," not that either. I do believe that I do posses certain qualities, and
> even those that I don't possess that I would need them; I would have found them
> somewhere. I would have acquired them to function in that role. What I can
> mention, is that, once the dedication is there, you know, it is intricate, not inspired
> by what I can achieve from this, but something you want to do, you want to help
> others, you want to represent others. I think that is what brings out leadership
> qualities.

For Jesse, entering the Board was a great honor, and she was confident that she was

capable of fulfilling her obligations as an institutional representative. However, not being

familiar with the Board as a state entity, she was skeptical about her de facto Board role.

Michael (personal communication, January 31, 2003) shared a similar reflection:

> Going into the [SAB] I was a little nervous, especially during the first meeting.
> For a lot of people, there that was their first time there, including mine. I tried to
> break the boundary a little bit, relate to everyone. I think I helped along with
> some people in the council to break that ice and to get people more comfortable.

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[87] The forming stage lasted from October to November, during the first two meetings of
the Board, in which students planned agendas and policy papers, and elected executive
board members.

[88] Five individuals, who were present during the forming stage decreased attendance or
all together dropped out of the Board as months went on. Although I did not have an
opportunity to meet with them, especially those who first indicated being interested in
participating in my study, Board members interpreted these students' parting as one of
academic conflict.

> Also, innovation is another thing that I bring to the [Board]. I have unique ideas that I like to bring up and discuss that inspires other people to be a leader, to say, "It is ok to come in here." You have Bylaws of the [Students Advisory Board] that says what we do. Basically, we issue a report to [Atlantic State Higher Education Coordinating Commission] and suggest who the Commissioner should be. Other than that, it does not say anything at all. So, what I think is important is that people come with an idea that, "Ok, if I have an issue at school, that student body had, it is ok to bring that up here," and we will find the means to get it heard by somebody. I think that by me speaking out and making those points, even it is irrelevant; it allows people to know that it is ok to bring those types of issues to the [Board]. It is ok to bring other ideas to the [Board].

Michael, a well-experienced positional student leader, was nervous coming into the Board not knowing people around him or the Board's objectives. However, in order to make himself comfortable within the Board as well as to begin accomplishing his own personal and institutional goals, he decided to begin open communication with all students present, to establish himself as an active member, and furthermore, to create an atmosphere in which innovative ideas could be brought up and discussed. Judging from comments made during their second meeting in November, at which I was present, Michael was an inspirational member and was elected a vice chair of the executive committee, and thus, the Board as a whole because he showed commitment to the Board.

Bob, another accomplished student leader, expressed his initial thoughts. Like other members, Bob (personal communication, March 8, 2003) was unsure of what level of commitment he should have towards this position:

> Initially I didn't think this was very serious. I thought things are done by the administration not by students, just a thing… Then, I came back because it was first of all my main responsibility to do it, so like it or not, I said I was going to do it, so I came back, got to know people, and began changing leadership, and it was kind of interesting… If anything, if people don't take ownership they are not going to be as involved, as concerned. They would just be those people that show up on a Saturday.
> I was very skeptical and excited about the first meeting, and came a couple other times, and then every single time I didn't regret it. My only problem that I have had was my own personal tendency to over commit myself. All the

opportunities happened at once. It is funny when you are in that balance of student and leader, it is personal leadership, but when you are in the zone, you are in the personal zone… You focus from A to B and what is my personal goal. And instead of being dragged into things and getting things halfway done, you get them together… I got this opportunity and yet I am so focused on the future, which I think a lot of people can be, they don't spend enough time in present, and so I want to spend, make use of what I have, hammer away at this opportunity.

The forming stage of any organization is comprised of a series of planning tasks from the dissemination of information, and mutual introduction, to the type of commitment each individual is willing to have. The forming stage of the Student Advisory Board was guided by the *Bylaws* and the former advisor, who was present during the first couple of meetings. From the conversations with Marcus and Michael, the first meeting was very intense. In just a couple of hours, students were asked to introduce themselves, and the school they represent, and tell what they hope to gain from this experience. Jesse (personal communication, January 29, 2003) expresses her position during the first meeting:

> It is leadership by virtue of the fact that I have to work with others. If I am voicing [University of African-American Leaders'] concerns, then I need to know what they are. I need to go and work with others. I really am honored to have the opportunity to represent [University of African-American Leaders], because we need a voice just like any other university. The point is, we are working towards a goal, a specific goal, and I am that middle person, and to that extent, I believe that is leadership. I am not just relaying views, but I am making recommendations on my own and with others, to find similarities among our universities and colleges, and take it back here, before there is a major recommendation to [ASHECC] and a major recommendation to the Secretary of Higher Education.

Following the introduction, students were asked to elect an executive Board comprised of a chair, vice-chair, secretary, and segmental[89] chairs that would serve as guides, creating

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[89] Segmental chairs are representatives from each type of higher education institution. In Atlantic state they are divided between four-year public, four-year private, and community colleges/professional schools.

and assembling agendas and keeping other members on task, and making sure that by the end of the session that all initial goals are set. The protocol was that students raised their hand to volunteer for a particular position. Then, right before a lunch break, they gave a minute statement on why they would be good in that position, for which students vote through anonymous paper voting. The winners were announced after lunch. This year, according to the former advisor's reflections (personal communication, May, 2003), very few students volunteered, just enough to fill each position slot, thus, the voting was simple and quickly filled all necessary executive positions. Finally, students volunteered to host the meetings and voted on the policy project they would be working on throughout the year.

Coming into the Board, students saw themselves in the role of an institutional representative and had their own ideas on what the policy focus should be for this year's project. However, to unify students and refocus them towards a statewide issue, a former advisor, Lola Booker, offered a couple of choices. Although students agreed on one of them, some felt skeptical about the decision put forth, "We were told what to do. 'You would either do a project on civil service or student advisement.' Well, what if there wasn't a problem in these areas, then our project would be totally pointless (Marcus, personal communication, March 8, 2003). Despite the initial concerns, students agreed on a topic, student advising, and agreed to spend the next meeting discussing the project. By November, a couple of things happened: 1) Some Board members made individual decisions to drop out of the Board,[90] and 2) the remaining students began preliminary

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[90] Students who decide to drop out of the Board are reported by the Board advisor to the institutional members (vice president, student affairs professional, etc.). An institution then has a choice to find a replacement or opt out of further participation. This academic

drafts of the policy study. Being present at the November meeting, I noticed that students felt more comfortable in their positions as institutional representatives, and the chair of the Board was ready to guide the meeting.

The meeting was two hours long, and the pace was productive. Lola Booker introduced the new Board advisor, Jearim, who would guide the Board for the rest of the session and distributed surveys from the 1979 advisory data collections. In addition, Bob shared his preliminary report reflecting on the policy project, "At the first meeting of the Student Advisory Committee, we discussed a report that indicates that students are taking longer to earn an academic degree than in the past. As a result of this report, the SAB decided to review academic advisement in each of the higher education institutions. As a result, I have begun to study the Counseling and Advisement Department at [Institute for Comprehensive Academic and Technical Studies]" (Bob, 2002, p.1). After his brief presentation, the Board grew more enthusiastic, and students began to discuss a survey they would each take back to their campuses for the purpose of gathering quantitative data on students' advising. Each student had questions they felt should be on the survey because they reflect concerns of their individual campuses. After negotiations, students decided to create one survey and distribute it evenly among all members present who will go into classrooms and also randomly distribute it to students passing by on campus, and gather information about how students really feel about their academic advising support system.

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year, those who dropped out of the Board found no institutional replacements. The reasons behind their leaving the Board and the lack of replacement have been attributed to the students' academic commitments.

The forming stage at the Student Advisory Board was marked by dissemination of information ranging from Board's *Bylaws* and previous policy studies conducted to contact information, meeting locations, and opportunities to tour the Capital City higher education department, as well as visit other campuses. In addition, students had time to introduce themselves, to share their ideas on the policy project, and to begin meeting in their segmental groups, again for introductory purposes. As a result of the vast amount of information distributed and the open atmosphere created from the first meeting, the Board members felt comfortable about their tasks, individual agendas, timeline with which all were working with, and they made an effort to begin understanding each other and to build relationships.

The "You" – Understanding Others at the Student Advisory Board

Being a good student leader means understanding others. As Parker Palmer (1990) states, "Great leadership comes from people who have made that downward journey, who have touched the deep place where we are in community with each other and who can help take other people to that place" (p. 7). Understanding others means being open and accepting of human diversity, valuing each other's differences, and taking time to communicate and listen to one another in order to grow as an organization (Covey, 1991). In heterogeneous organizations, this process can be challenging. "One challenge, then, is to understand yourself well enough to know how you are seen by others and to modify your own behaviors and attitudes to encourage a spirit of openness and connection with others. The second challenge is to engage in the hard work of understanding others so that together you can form meaningful community and engage in coalitions for group change" (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998, p. 139). To

overcome these challenges, students participating in an organization must have a deep understanding of self as leaders and be willing to embrace other's points of view.

According to Dinkmeyer and Eckstein (1996), "successful team members are those individuals who understand others, and encourage them through listening, reflecting, giving feedback, focusing on strengths and resources, developing perceptual alternatives, identifying similarities, focusing on efforts, encouraging commitment and movement, improving self-encouragement and skills, among others" (p. 8). As leaders, group members encourage and understand others through:

- Seeing situations as challenges and opportunities;

- Identifying positive potential;

- Communicating recognition of individual movement, progress, and contributions;

- Communicating openly; and

- Seeing themselves and others as equals (Dinkmeyer & Eckstein)

Leadership in organizations is about open dialogue, equal decision-making, empowerment, and horizontal collaboration (Dinkmeyer & Eckstein).

Nowhere is that more evident than in the Student Advisory Board. Jearim (personal communication, March 8, 2003), the Board advisor, explains his perspective on the *you* dimension of leadership development in the Student Advisory Board:

> I view the student leadership development at the [Board] as an important tool, an important outcome of the Student Advisory [Board]. A lot of these students are already leaders in their traits and personalities. Some even know in their mindsets where they want to be, but when they get here, a lot of people have similar ways that their leadership skills are pulled out. At the Student Advisory [Board] they have to learn how to deal with other people with dominant personalities. They have deal with learning how to address other people's viewpoints, how public policy or school policy, they are the only one's that have that… They also have to deal with people who have goals in their lives that are stellar, who want to be future politicians, a public policy major. The Student Advisory [Board] puts them

in the position to figure out who they are, who they want to be, to expand, grow upon. It forces the growth! Every month they are forced to grow.

The Student Advisory Board is a pluralistic group, stratified in multiple layers of diversity: institutional type, college major, college year of attendance, personal background (geographic, ethnic, religious, family), age, race, gender, and in some cases, physical disability. The heterogeneous nature of the Board is unique and allows students to learn how to work in diverse groups as well as to communicate, negotiate, and make decisions with other individuals, who might have different policy perspectives than students themselves. Due to such strong dynamics of personalities and backgrounds, the perspectives and ideas brought into the Board only enrich the discussions and broaden the scope of higher education policies and political discussions/activism. As Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (1998) emphasize, "Pluralistic leadership results when heterogeneous groups of people work together to accomplish change" (p. 140).

As the Student Advisory Board entered the storming stage of organizational development, the students also began to learn about each other. Differences of opinion began to emerge as well as negotiations and open communication to resolve conflict in order to move forward with organizational goals. The primary example from this stage of organizational growth is the selection process of the next student commissioner to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, whereby Student Advisory Board conducted multiple interviews, following group-generated criteria for the purpose of finding the best candidate for the job. During this process, students negotiated selection criteria, discussed their personal opinions on candidates, and made tough choices to continue the selection process beyond the state-designated time frame. They vowed to each other to uphold the highest leadership criteria for the student commissioner and to

find a candidate they would agree on, as well as one that the Secretary of Higher

Education would find acceptable. This selection process not only marked a successful

transition from the storming to the norming stage (Matusak, 1997), but helped the

students become interdependent and embrace each other as a group.

 Student Commissioner Selection Process

The Student Advisory Board serves three main objectives: 1) to select the next

student commissioner to the statewide coordinating commission; 2) assist the Secretary

of higher education by providing feedback on current issues facing the coordinating

commission and state at-large; and 3) to produce a report with recommendations on an

education policy affecting students statewide. In December, students are responsible for

selected the next student commissioner to the Higher Education Coordinating

Commission. During the selection process, the Student Advisory Board members are

engaged in the following stages:

- Pre-selection process –selecting candidates for a Board-wide interview – the role
  of the vice chair

- Interview process – coordinating question among institutional segments
  Discussion process – debating candidates' responses against Board members'
  standards and individual [member] observations

- Decision-making process – creating a voting method and election results
  procedure

- Meaning-making process – evaluating the selection process, roles undertaken, and
  the leadership skills developed.

In order to examine the leadership development process through the student commissioner selection, the researcher's observations and artifacts have been incorporated to provide background information on the student commissioner position, preceding the selection process analysis.

Student commissioner background. The Higher Education Coordinating Commission is Atlantic state's planning agency for higher education institutions: 13 public four-year colleges and universities, 26 independent institutions, 16 community colleges, and 125 private career schools (Higher Education Commission, 2001).   As the state document "Student commission member position description" (Higher Education Commission) explains, the Coordinating Commission's major functions include: establishing operating and capital budget guidelines; approving institutions and academic programs; conducting research and policy analyses of post secondary education; administering State aid to independent institutions and community colleges, State financial aid programs, and educational grants; performing various regulatory functions; and ensuring the accountability of all institutions to its ultimate constituency - the citizens.

The student commissioner is an equal member of this Coordinating Commission. As the *State bylaws* (2001) dictate, "One member shall be a regularly enrolled student in good standing at a [Atlantic state] institution of higher education to which the Commission has issued a certificate of approval under this (Education) title or that may operate without a certificate of approval under §11-202(c) of this article and shall be a resident."   According to the Student Advisory *Bylaws* (1998), the student commissioner:

1. Serves as the voting student member of the higher education coordinating board, and has all the powers of the Student Advisory Board member;

2. Informs the Student Advisory Board president and the Board of the coordinating board's actions;

3. Serves on the Student Advisory Board Executive Committee as an ex-officio member.

Thus, the student commissioner is a vital link between the Student Advisory Board and the Higher Education Coordinating Commission.

Pre selection process of candidates. The selection process for a student commissioner is extensive. The first step in selecting the next student commissioner is gathering applicants from across the state. Every fall, all state institutions receive [addressed to the president of the institution] a letter from the Student Advisory Board advisor informing them of the statewide leadership opportunity for students [undergraduate or graduate] to represent student population interests to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission. Depending on the institution, the president might select a student s/he views as active on campus or pass along the nomination to the Vice President of Student Affairs or faculty members to make that decision. Because this process is voluntary, the number of interested students varies from year to year. This year, the initial interest generated only three candidates.

The initial screening process of interested student commissioner candidates is in the hands of the Student Advisory Board vice chairman. According to the *Bylaws* (1998), "The Vice Chairperson shall establish a committee to review nominations and select the top candidates for interviews" (p. 3). Considering the selection process takes place early in the Student Advisory Board session, the selection committee has one meeting opportunity before the at-large interview process to analyze resumes and essays in order

to determine if candidates have some leadership (positional or voluntary service) experience, good academic record, and written commitment to students and the higher education structure of the state.

Creating comprehensive interview questions. Since the creation of SAB *Bylaws* in 1998, there has been a generic questionnaire used during the student commissioner interviews. The questionnaire is divided into six questions, two per institutional type. The Student Advisory Board chair serves to provide an introduction and a closing for each fifteen minute interview. The generic questions are:

1. What experiences have you had in your college career that you feel have prepared you for this position? Specifically, leadership experiences.

2. What skills do you bring to the position that would enable you to represent all students – students at community colleges, public four-year colleges, independent colleges, students of different race, sex, age, etc.?

3. How would you balance your commissioner duties with your other personal, extra curricular and/or academic responsibilities?

4. What is the one issue that you feel is most important for all college students?

5. As the only student on the Commission, how would you make sure the views of the students are represented?

6. What do you see as the vision for this position, and what do you hope to accomplish by your participation as the student member?

The questions serve to allow the candidate to express his/her leadership background, interest in the position, as well as to express ideas for higher education and the student commissioner position. Michael (Group communication, 2003) explains:

> We ask questions, trying to get knowledge on how much they know about the government. We think that they should have a little bit of knowledge about government, a little bit of political knowledge. They should know a little bit about what is going on so that they could go into the meetings well informed. We ask them questions regarding that. For example, we asked them questions like, "What was the biggest issue for higher education?" Our preconceived answer would be "budget," but we are a little flexible if they had a good reason.

Michael's reflection shows that the Board has certain expectations of a "qualified" student commissioner candidate. According to the passage above, the qualified candidate has to have leadership experience and an understanding of politics and students' need, but not possess a strong personal political agenda that would overshadow students' views or, on the other hand, lack sufficient leadership experience in government or student affairs.

Interview process. The interview process for the incoming student commissioner is the first opportunity for the Student Advisory Board to build leadership skills, to learn and understand each other, and to coordinate the interview process. This year, the commissioner selection process was spread out between two meetings, December and February, each with its own set of candidates.[91] As a researcher in the proposal stage, I was not present during the December meeting; however, I did observe the February meeting and the final selection of the commissioner.

According to the minutes assembled by the Board secretary Alicia, the December meeting was a learning experience about expectations, standards, and alternative choices. Prior to the interviews, the advisor distributed student applicants' resumes and essays and requested that the Board to come up with a question that would be asked at the end of the interview. As stated in the December minutes (Alicia, 2002):

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[91] In December, students were not satisfied with the quality of candidates and the Secretary herself rejected the nominations. Thus, students opened the candidate process again, this time in February, gaining three new candidates.

> He [advisor] provided the applications of each of them, which included their resumes and essays. We were given a set of questions to ask the candidates during the interview… We came out with an open-ended question to be asked by our Chair.   The question stated: "What is the biggest political issue affecting higher education policy"?

The artifact shows that the Board advisor received the applications, reviewed them, and made them available during the meeting, minutes before the actual interviews; meaning, the students had to be quick on their feet, assessing the candidates' qualifications on the paper and compare them to in-person communication. The artifact further shows that students agreed to ask a question that has been facing all of their institutions – budgetary cuts. Once the question was selected, the Board felt, as the minutes indicate (Alicia, 2002), that the chair should present the last question followed by the closing remarks [for each interview].

Based on Michael's remarks during the first focus group meeting, the December interview process was a learning experience about hard choices, when candidates' portfolios and issue articulation did not match the Board's standards of quality. Michael (personal communication, February 8, 2003) explains the interview process from the Student Advisory Board perspective:

> We first looked to see if they showed up. One didn't. When they showed up, we wanted to see their attitude. When they first walked in, how did they act? How did they look? Did they act excited, nervous? Of course, they are going to be a little nervous, but whoever wants this job will have to have a lot of effort. They might be able to skate through it by going to the meetings, but we want somebody who is active, who comes to the [Student Advisory Board] meetings, who lets [the Board] know what is going on, communicates with their school, other schools, other schools' governments. We really want somebody who is passionate about it, who really gets involved. Not somebody who is looking to do this to boost their resume or to do this just for their own personal experience. They have to do it for everything, because they have to be passionate about it. We used pretty strong standards for them, so that we can get a quality person for the job because we think it is very crucial.

Michael's vignette speaks to two very important elements of the Board's storming stage.[92] Students, from the very beginning, were open to the idea of sharing, parliamentary procedures, and respectful discussions in which differences could be voiced and understood. As a result of such cooperation, collaboration, trust, and respect, the students began to recognize not only each other's difference, but to see their commonalities.[93] From Michael's reflections, one can see the continuous usage of the word "we" when referring to the Board. This is significant because it is the first time that students began to recognize that they are not only institutional representatives, but part of something larger – a statewide student-run policy board that has legal power to make a difference through such practices as the student commissioner selection process.

The second important element of Michael's vignette is his remarks on the quality standards applied in candidate evaluation. Michael's remarks infer, as seen from Table 11, that the Board members had clear expectations and standards that they felt a positional student leader should possess.

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[92] There was no data on why one student failed to appear at the December commissioner interview. This area could be explored in future research.

[93] Commonalities included standards of quality students want to see in the student commissioner, pressing questions facing their institutions (e.g., budget cuts), and the importance of working together through adversity to pick the best candidate for the state job.

Table 11.

Desired Standards for the Student Commissioner

Desired standard	Unfavorable standard
Positive attitude	Indifferent attitude
Confident presence	Nervousness
Active in his/her institution	Not active on campus
Committed to attending all meetings	Over- or undercommitted
Communicates with all constituency	Political
Passionate about student issues	Personal agenda present
Involved in higher education issues	Lacks policy experience

According to the standards outlined in Table 11, students were looking for a candidate

who had leadership experience in extracurricular activities, was confident, committed to

higher education and Student Advisory Board, and was passionate about student issues.

However, the candidates that attended the December interview did not, in the opinion of

the Board, have the necessary standards of "quality." As Michael concluded, "Our

standards are very high. So, we decided to go for more candidates because we wanted

more options." Alicia's (2002) minutes reflect the same Student Advisory Board

sentiment:

> Due to the low number of applicants (only 3 students applied and 2 of them
> showed up for the interview), we discussed if we should get more applicants and
> have more interviews in our next meeting in February. We will keep in mind that
> the people who applied on time will have "extra-points" in this selection process,
> but our priority will be to select the best candidate that will represent the student
> body of all the colleges and universities of the state.

Over the course of the next two months, the institutions were sent the same letter inviting more candidates for the January 13th deadline. This time, there were two additional candidates.

The interview process for a student commissioner is an intense experience for the candidates. The former Student Advisory Board (SAB) advisor explains:

> The interview process can be daunting for the six candidates. To be interviewed by 30-35 student leaders seated around a large table is quite an experience. However, the students want to make sure that the candidates are strong enough to stand up to the other eleven commission members in representing the students' view. They also know that the student commissioner member acts as a liaison between the Student Advisory [Board] and the Higher Education Commission. The student commissioner serves as the voice of Student Advisory [Board] and all students of higher education. It is important that the Student Advisory Board identify a candidate who has a broad enough view to not only represent his or her own segment of higher education but all segments of higher education. (Fitzwater, 2002, pp. 3-4)

The February interview experience was a wonderful opportunity for me as the researcher to observe the entire process from the Student Advisory Board's perspective.

The February Board meeting took place in the Alternative Health Institute's acupuncture classroom. Following the *Bylaws* (1998), the vice chair, Michael, took over the meeting agenda as the "second in line of authority" due to the chair's absence. The advisor, as he did during the December meeting, distributed candidates' resumes a half hour before the interviews were to start, which caused a debate among the members. Some felt that they could make a sound decision based on the candidates' interviews, while others felt they should have been sent the resumes and essays prior to the interview so that they had time to evaluate the qualifications. Michael suggested a compromise. He allowed for a few minutes for each member to read over the two page resumes, which was to be followed by the interview question discussion.

Minutes before the interview process was about to start, Michael took out the question template and read it question by question, asking students to raise their hands if they wanted to ask the question. For example, as he read a question that should be asked by a community college student, Michael asked community college students to raise their hand if they were interested. As he read, students were raising their hands, one at the time, creating a flawless distribution procedure. In fact, at no time did the students have to negotiate who would ask a question, as one per question raised their hands. With all questions assigned, the interview process was ready to start.

With the question handout, resumes, and notepads in front of them, the Board was ready to begin. As Michael went outside the room to invite the first candidate, Jearim reminded students to "smile." The first candidate was from a community college. As the interview started, the candidate moved quickly through the answers, indicating his discomfort. Michael reassured the candidate that the Board was there to make him feel comfortable and that all Board members understood that the experience can be intimidating. As the interview finished and the candidate left the room, the Board began discussing initial thoughts of the candidate, waiting the other two candidates to arrive at the site. Bob (personal communication, February 8, 2003), a community college student, felt that "the candidate was too nervous to state what he really knew." Following Bob's remarks, a community college representative, whose attendance at the Board meeting was a first, spoke:

> I am a friend of the [candidate]. He goes to my school and has made a difference in our student government. I understand your possible concerns, however, I do want to say that he is goal oriented and an incredible person. However, I also know that he was nervous…. (Anonymous, personal communication, February 8, 2003)

Following her remarks, which were acknowledged by Michael, who thanked her for providing her viewpoint, Darnel spoke up, concerned about the candidate's leadership ability, "He speaks a lot of himself, less of 'we' - a key aspect of leadership. Commission is different than us. He'll sit there and be an equal, speak up in front of others for all student voices" (Darnel, personal communication, February 8, 2003). Jose, a four-year public college student, who sat directly next to Darnel (personal communication, February 8, 2003) agreed, "I don't know if he is strong enough in his delivery. In his time commitments, he seems overwhelmed. Good leaders are able to balance!" Jearim, the Board advisor added, "Have you seen it? It is huge. Everybody is in front including the student commissioner. They question those who testify. It is an important position. It requires a strong leader" (Jearim, personal communication, February 8, 2003). Jearim refrained from making a personal remark about the candidate. Michael (personal communication, February 8, 2003) concluded the discussion with a compromise, considering the other two candidates had not been interviewed yet:

> He seems like a nice guy, but his answers were choppy and hollow. Even if you are busy, don't tell us you are overwhelmed or not fully interested! (*the members laughed*) Maybe we should give him a chance. There might be something there that we didn't get a chance to see? Let's make sure he stays for lunch so that we can talk to him! (*all nodded*)

From the discussion that took place, the following observations can be made:

- Board members continuously make an effort to understand one another and discuss issues, even if they disagree.

- They are open about their views and opinions and not afraid to share with the group (e.g. candidate's friend who spoke about candidate's character).

- Each member that wants to speak is heard. They simply raise their hands or just jump in when one person finishes. The process appears flawless.

- The vice chair served as a mediator and requests compromises when discussions get heated and resolutions do not seem possible.

- The board is very focused on their mission to find a qualified candidate who meets their standards, and their comments seem to compare their leadership expectations against the candidate's responses.

Right before lunch, the second candidate appeared, delayed by traffic.[94] She was an African-American. Michael began the introductory speech again, reading from the handout, welcoming her and explaining the question process. Unlike the first candidate, she took her time answering the questions. She spoke of her organization skills, her love for politics and student issues, and her commitment to make a difference in the state. As the interview ended, she gracefully walked into the hallway. The Board looked at each other smiling, they knew she was "the one."

Before they had a discussion on the second candidate, the Board broke for lunch. Jearim, the advisor, asked me and the current student commissioner Taiowa to talk to the candidates. As we spoke about student commissioner responsibilities, the first candidate shared with me that he had applied outside the state to continue his education and that he probably would not be in the state next year. Although a "red flag" came across my mind that this individual might not be able to commit to the position, I did not comment because I felt I needed to keep my distance as a researcher; thus, I continued on a lighter note, such as the higher education political realm.

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[94] The third candidate never showed up or called to inform the Board of her decision.

As an insider observer my role is to balance my interaction with students as a researcher and only take on the role of a former student commissioner when requested by the advisor or students. Although students are aware of my past role in the Student Advisory Board, I have been given proper space during the meeting, treated as an observer. In fact, they seemed unfazed as I carefully and quickly wrote down my notes during the meetings. However, the advisor and current commissioner see me as a former public official and ask for my assistance, with the assumption that although I am just observing I can also provide valuable input to the Student Advisory Board. Personally, I find both roles equally important to my research, the level of understanding I have towards my topic of study, and the aid I can provide to the advisor or students. However, I do not want to be actively involved in the developmental process of this student group because I want to protect the validity of my research as well as the findings from my observations.

After lunch, the candidates left as the Board returned to their meeting room for the conclusion of the selection process. Jesse (personal communication, February 8, 2003) began by stating that the candidate was sincere, but that she had a reservation towards the second candidate because "she didn't understand her position fully and was more focused on her institution." Alison (personal communication, February 8, 2003) interjected, "The candidate had attributes of a leader. She was acceptant of change, vision, responsibility, time management – all qualities of a leader." Another student spoke up, "The purpose is to push for students' concerns. She shows that she was aware, honest that she can't solve other people's problems, but that she can try to improve the situation." To that Bob (personal communication, February 8, 2003) stated that he was

impressed that someone from natural sciences cares about public policy. "She was very tactful. And the reason why she talked only about her school is because she only had that experience, but she will be moving to another university and get a more diverse perspective."

The discussion now expanded to all the candidates the Board heard at their last meeting, as well as today. The members discussed the dangers of having too political candidate or one that is overcommitted. As the conversation wound down, it was clear that students favored the last candidate interviewed.

Decision-making process. After the interview process and candidate discussion finished, it was time for students to look back at December and February interview outcomes and determine their selection. Michael asked the Board if they wanted to vote by raising their hands, where the majority wins. Students did not respond, so the advisor recommended that each student write on a piece of paper their number one and number two choice, and hand the papers back to him. Alicia, the Board's secretary, took on the role right away, passing pieces of paper to each student. The voting process was quiet and quick. As soon as members finished, the advisor stated that he would e-mail them results, to stop the discussion on the selection. There were no objections to the suggestions, and the students were visibly ready to conclude the selection process.

Discussing the selection process with Michael (personal communication, February 8, 2003) after the fact, he shared his thoughts about the decision-making process:

> I think that we all held very high quality. The decision was reached by the consensus in the group, by a majority. We discussed each one after they came in for their fifteen-minute interview. Maybe we were too harsh on them, so we

invited them in to lunch so that we can talk to them, sit down with them, and converse with them, and find out what type of person they really are.

Consensus was evident throughout the decision-making process. To students the decision was clear – the female, African-American student, the last candidate interviewed. This nomination will be sent on to the Secretary of Higher Education. Once the Secretary selects the student commissioner, the state Senate must confirm the nomination before the Governor officially confirms the appointment (*State Bylaws*, 2001).

The "I" & "You" – Recognizing Individual Leadership Within the Focus Group

Understanding oneself and others are two crucial steps in the success of an organization. Over the course of the first half of the Student Advisory Board session, students were challenged to elect an executive board, select their policy projects, and were given an opportunity to voice their concerns in the segmental and at-large groups. In addition, students were challenged to negotiate, debate, and compromise within a heterogeneous group of students, the Board, in order to select the best candidate for the student commissioner position. Through these processes, students were encouraged to bring in their own unique leadership styles and utilize them through a variety of leadership roles in order to develop new skills, learn about other students' institutions and ideas, and make a policy difference as public servants and citizens of the Atlantic state.

According to the leader-member exchange theory (Graen, 1976), effective leaders relate to others by utilizing their own traits and characteristics in order to create a culture of teamwork. In the Student Advisory Board, students brought to the experience their perspectives, which contributed to the group dynamics. Table 12 reflects the students' views on their own contribution to the Board.

Table 12.

Students' Characteristics at the SAB

Student	Vignette
Jesse	Leadership characteristics… Right now, the most important thing for me is that I am receptive, I am open, and I am willing to listen to others because I am not authoritative at all. (personal communication, January 29, 2003)
Henry	My leadership style is one who observes initially, understands what people are saying and later on offers suggestions. I am not outspoken in terms of SAB. I think there are too many people and too many expectations, suggestions, and needs to just throw your suggestions out there without understanding what other people are saying. So, I think it is good for people to express what their expectations and needs are in terms of the project, and then other people can respond. I definitively try to sit back, observe what people are saying, and offer suggestions considering what has been said before. (personal communication, March 13, 2003)
Michael	My leadership style - I use to help other people… I am certainly passive and what I love to do is lead them by letting them believe in themselves and allowing them to do things for themselves. And, at the end of the day, although, you might have not seem to do things actively, they will come back to you and say, "Well, he made me do it, he believed in me." That is my leadership style there. When I get into politics that is a whole different story.

Student	Vignette
Michael	Then, it is the rough game, the beast… I am definitely much more outspoken; however, I'd rather, instead of doing work that needs to be done by myself (writing papers, doing reports), I much rather be a philosophical leader, coming up with ideas and delegating the group. (personal communication, January 31, 2003)
Marcus	I am a very quiet observer on these things. I look at this not so much as, "what I can do to affect the [Board]," because my school is very small, I don't want to be pushing a lot of my schools thoughts and ideas in here, because we are a very small portion of school population, but, what I am trying to do here is hear what happened here and tell everybody at my school about it. (personal communication, March 8, 2003)
Bob	I consider myself to be an individual that pretty much has his hand up not because I want to hear myself talk, but because it stems from the part that I am extroverted. When they say something, I think, "I got something to say," or I am thinking something along that line, but I learned to write it down so that I can contain myself from "I got the idea! I got the answer!" Instead, I would write it down, so when it comes my turn, I will say it. I also consider myself as de facto, although I am not elected to any posts, but what I find myself doing is being the one that says "what about this and that," not saying that that is wrong, but trying to avoid the group think scenario, and if it is a solid thing then I am for it and there is consensus.

Student	Vignette
Bob	But if there is a possibility that maybe somebody has not thought of, I try to bring it up. And the reason is that you don't want to recommend a program that everyone is on board with for the sake on being on board. Somebody can come up and say, "What about this," and the other would say, "Well, I don't know." And the other would throw things at you, arguments that they would want to argue against, and deal with. I see myself as that checker in this group. (personal communication, March 8, 2003)

Each individual brings his/her unique qualities into an organization and thus leads from a personalized perspective. For Jesse, it means being receptive, open, and listening to others before providing input. Michael sees himself as a "philosopher leader" who, like Jesse, listens and aids others through motivation, and only then, when the group feels a sense of accomplishment, he provides them with his own ideas, and innovations. Henry and Marcus exhibit more reserved characteristics in the group. They like to observe, listen, understand others, and relate the ideas gathered at the Board to their individual institutions, which they view as their primary duty at the Board. Finally, Bob, an extrovert, finds his role with the Board as one of active participation, a "checker" of ideas, who wants to feel that all options are explored and that the decision made is one that is deemed "the best" by the collective.

In addition to the pervious perspectives brought into the Board, students learn

from each other and gain a sense of empowerment and motivation to enhance or alter

their actions in order to be more effective at the Board. Jesse's (personal communication

January 29, 2003) vignette speaks to that component:

> There was a particular young man that had this extremely, extremely high level of energy. When he spoke of level of involvement…. I mean, I am very involved here, but he seemed to have a wider spread. He was able to draw from so many different aspects of school life that I really thought about it, "Wow, that is really impressive!" As I said before, I can't be everything for everybody, and trying to spread myself too thinly, but having knowledge and connection and that rapport with so many different persons from so many different aspects, whether it be different schools or different clubs, or people from different backgrounds. I mean, I have that too to a certain extent. I could see that what he was saying, and the feedback that he would get from others, and I was like, "Hmm, I should try that." He really exemplifies that ability to not only communicate but to connect to people, so that he can better portray whatever the concept…

The above vignette shows the influences other Board members have had on the focus

group members and the empowerment that occurs within the Board sessions. From

Jesse's words I learned that her motivation to participate in the Board not only came from

her internal commitment to service and civics, but was influenced by other members.

Furthermore, the student in question helped her see another angle of student leadership in

which one draws from previous and current experience in order to make a difference in

the world.

Although individual styles differ in their approach, it is important to note that all

of them see themselves as delegates. They see themselves as equal to other members and

respect each other's opinions and viewpoints. In fact, all of the focus group members

stated that they like to listen to others first, hear what other students have to say,

understand others, and only then speak up, so as not to impose their personal, subjective

opinion on the rest of the group. It is a diplomatic way of functioning in the group, but a

way that has made for successful organizational development in both the forming and storming stages of the Student Advisory Board.

Leadership development is further enhanced through the roles students play at the Student Advisory Board. Through both position and nonpositional opportunities, focus group members, who are representative of the Board as a whole, have worn many hats, and within each of those positions played particular roles that they believed enhanced the experience for themselves and others. With each unique experience, students reacted in a different way, becoming more active or reserved depending on their perception of organizational expectations. Over the course of the first half of the Student Advisory Board session, students have transformed from stranger to partner. Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) explain:

- Stranger – roles are scripted, influences are directed from positional leaders, there are minimal exchanges, and interest is on self.

- Acquaintance – roles are tested, influences are coming from every individual, the conversations begin to be more complex and interests are broadening towards others' needs in the group (learning about others).

- Partner – roles are negotiated, the influences are reciprocal, democratic, and empowering; exchanges are high and diverse and the interests are towards the goal accomplishment, toward the group, including oneself and others.

The role students play in one group does not necessarily reflect their roles in other groups. As Klopf (1960) explains, "The social behavior of the individual depends upon the group, its purposes, its setting, and its personnel. A student may be a dominator in one group and in another group be very shy and quiet" (pp. 19-20). However, Klopf

warns that individual roles may not overshadow the group's goals; rather, "individual goals must be supplemented by group oriented goals" (p. 20).

"In understanding roles that individuals assume in groups it is necessary to recognize that the tasks performed in a group are associated with the personalities of the individual involved" (Klopf, 1960, p. 18). Thus, there are two types of roles, task roles and group-building roles. "Task roles focus on accomplishing the purposes and moving the group along on tasks by summarizing and by using various decision-making strategies. Task roles are focused on the content of the group discussion" (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998, p. 173). "Group-building roles are actions that focus on the group as people, including the relationships among members. Group-building roles attend to the process of group" (p. 173). As Hackman and Johnson (2002) explain, there is specific set of roles for each type.

Task-related roles:

- The initiator – defines the problem, establishes agenda and procedure, proposes innovative strategies and solutions in times of difficulty.

- Information/opinion seeker – solicit ideas, asks questions about information provided by others, asks for evaluations of information and procedure.

- The information/opinion giver – presents and evaluates facts and information.

- The elaborator – provides examples and background as a means of clarifying ideas, speculates how proposed solutions might work.

- The orienter/coordinator – summarizes interaction, looks for relationship among ideas and suggestions, focuses group members on specific issues and tasks; and

- The energizer – stimulates or arouses the group to achieve excellence, promotes activity and excitement. (Hackman & Johnson, 2002, pp. 78-79)

Group building roles:

- The encourager – supports and praises the contribution to the development and maintenance of open, supportive, and healthy interpersonal relationships among group members.

- The harmonizer/compromiser – mediates conflict, reduces tension through joking, attempts to bring group members with opposing points of view closer together.

- The gatekeeper – encourages the involvement of shy or uninvolved group members, proposes regulations of the flow of communication through means such as time and topic limitation.

- The standard-setter – expresses group values and standards, applies standards to the evaluation of the group process. (Hackman & Johnson)

These types of roles determine the group dynamics, the *we* of an organization. They shape individuals' actions, how they approach organizational tasks, interact with other group members, and how they adapt to change.

At the Student Advisory Board the focus group members not only held their role as institutional representative or in case of Michael, an executive committee office, but they also held nonpositional Board roles in line with those mentioned above. Table 13 shows how focus group members described their roles at the Student Advisory Board.

Table 13.

Focus Group Members' Roles

Student	Vignette
Jesse	More often than not, I am not the one of the more vocal members. I listen a whole lot, I really do. Normally, I think that I bring a very unique aspect to the Student Advisory [Board], because I am an international student. I would have a different perspective of course, and also, not being a resident of Atlantic for long, not being an American citizen, there are a lot of data I don't know, or even if there are things I know, I don't quite understand. What I find myself doing is gleaning over the nuances, stuff that is happening, the inputs of some other students who have been here all their life, who are very active in the political arena. I am the one who listens and learns from everybody and wonders, "Well, where did that perspective come from? I didn't think of that before." And of course, if there is an issue that I can immediately relate to, I have no qualms about voicing that at all. The thing is, there are so many different perspectives there. Everybody has something different to say. Sure we have some common parallels, but it is such a mix that it is hard to picture [SAB] without any one person. It is just that difficult. Because, they always bring something that you don't think of, and I am very appreciative of that. (personal communication, March 7, 2003)

Student	Vignette
	Task roles: elaborator, coordinator
	Group role: encourager
Henry	I like to hang back initially and find out, digest what is in front of me, and what I think needs to be done and what people are saying needs to be done, people's concerns and ambitions, and then, understanding that environment, and then, do what I can do to facilitate what people are trying to say, trying to do. That is my leadership style. You need to be very considerate about other people's needs and concerns and schedules, and kindness goes a very long way. But, ultimately, you want to be a servant, make sure people have direction. Make sure the [Board] has the direction it needs. (personal communication, March 13, 2003)
	Task role: information/opinion seeker
	Group role: standard-setter
Michael	My position generally is one of bringing up new ideas. I like to play devil's advocate, and I would disagree with someone just to put the new side on the argument. If there is something important to say, I'll say it, but I definitely want to give everybody a chance to talk. Actually, at the last acting as a chairman, I saw a total difference.

Student	Vignette
Michael	Instead of adding to the conversation, building it up and adding material, I was definitely more of a listener, directing the conversation, directing the argument, and I think it is a very different role. From that I realized that it is crucial that everyone has their own role. (personal communication, March 8, 2003) Task roles: initiator, opinion seeker/giver, coordinator, and energizer Group roles: encourager, compromiser
Marcus	My role is… I am a person that watches and then when I see something that I have to speak out on, I will say something. My role is just to quietly observe and say something that stands out, just to go ahead and do something about it. That is how I am. I am quiet until I see something. (personal communication, March 8, 2003) Task roles: information/opinion seeker and giver Group role: standard-setter
Bob	I tend to be a person who likes to dream, plan, and want to make a better world, that is good. And at the present I know I am doing something too, doing public service. I am doing what I am doing, and so my role, the role I took on, I don't attach too much glory or too much introspection into it, I just kind of do it. Is it public service? Yes.

Student	Vignette
Bob	Would it affect others? I hope so. If it affected me it would affect other people as well. I learned that you serve when you help. The person that gets involved tends to get more out of their involvement than what they put into it. (personal communication, March 8, 2003)
	Task roles: elaborator, information/opinion seeker
	Group role: gatekeeper

Table 13 shows a similar pattern of role development in all five focus group members. According to the vignettes in Table 13, it can be inferred that all students begin their position with the Board as quiet students, sitting back, listening, and observing. Then, as they get familiar with other students and tasks at hand, they open up and become active. The three stages of role development within the Board correlate to the stages of organizational development[95] as well as to the understanding of self, others, and the group as a whole. In the beginning of the session, students were strangers, uncovering who they are and why they are at the Board; thus, they felt more comfortable listening and learning from others. As students learned about each other, they began to delegate, facilitate, and negotiate in order to accomplish organizational goals. Invested in their roles as student representatives as well as Board members, towards the end of the session, students engaged as partners and provided hands-on work on policy project and discussions.

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[95] The stages are: forming, storming, norming, and performing (Tuckman, 1965).

Jesse, as an international student, provided a different perspective, focusing on the education and its effects on foreign students. Her willingness to learn translated into her active participation and inquiry into the education system, institutional politics, and students' views. By asking questions, she was able to open dialogue into important sub-questions that might have been forgotten otherwise.

Michael, as a positional leader of the Board, saw his role as all-encompassing. He was always present, on time, ready to follow the agenda and cover all necessary issues. He encouraged communication, discussion, and acquired commentary from quiet students, making sure that everyone felt welcome and appreciated. Further, Michael served to motivate and encourage members, asked for student participation in supporting educational causes, institutional movements, and active lobbying in the Capital City. During times when the group had conflicts, Michael negotiated, summarized key points and looked for a resolution. His strong presence was noticed by all students, and his passion for the strengthening of the Board will have impact for the years to come.

Henry and Marcus, unlike Jesse and Michael, were quiet and reserved during most meetings. However, if they found the topic of discussion relevant to their institutions or the causes they were involved in, they spoke up freely and in fact, at times, triggered further discussion. In the times of conflict, the two often spoke of ethics and values of the Board as a way to reengage students towards the common goal and vision of the organization. Although not in a function of a "peacemaker," they offered friendly reminders in order to help the group stay on task. An example of this is Marcus, who, when faced with no leadership in his community college segment after the chair abruptly stopped participating in the Board, stepped up among his peers and volunteered to lead

the group in hopes of keeping the group on track and reassuring his group that ethical

standards would not be compromised by the change of leadership.

Bob, an active member, was one of the most vocal, outspoken members.

Passionate about political history and philosophy, Bob engaged in all discussion by

providing metaphors, historical facts, and quotes that correlated or enhanced students'

understanding of the subject matter. In addition, he enjoyed discussing issues, both

seeking information and relaying his own views and those of his institution.

> In SAB, referring to our little group, our clique, if you are not productive…
> productive is kind of maintaining a service mentality. That is essentially who we
> are – we are serving. It is a thought pattern of not necessarily "what my friend
> needs," but as a whole, what does everybody need. It is your job to advocate for
> that, to motivate, to encourage people to say this is why, then if other people think
> that it is it… As long as you present it with passion and motivate people, it
> works. It is not like one person makes a decision. Sometimes it happens, but in
> SAB you get multiple individuals, you have to contend with many different
> opinions. If you try to persuade and you succeed, you are a leader. If you try to
> persuade, and you are passionate, and you didn't succeed… sometimes the results
> may not be what you want in the short end, but I believe that you will see things
> happen. (personal communication, March 8, 2003)

Although his initiatives were not always embraced by the group at-large, his passion for

the subject matter served to motivate others and acknowledge the importance of the

Board as a whole. In addition to the in-depth conversations, he never lost sight of the

task at hand and often called for motions, regrouping, and conclusion of negotiations in

the interest of time and the goals ahead.

The task roles that students played reflect the personal characteristics, traits, and

leadership style students had at the Board. The group roles transcend these actions into

relationships individuals have with the rest of the group. As Jesse (personal

communication, January 29, 2003) states, "There is mutual respect and everyone seems

to have equal leverage." From Henry's point of view, the Board provided a unique

experience that he did not encounter during his leadership positions at Jesuit Ideas

University. His relationship with the Board was, thus a learning experience.

> The interaction with the board has been a new experience in terms of meeting different people from community colleges, colleges, universities; learning from different requirements, interests of those respective institutions. A lot of times, being a leader in one particular school you have the benefit of just focusing on the needs of that school, of the college. There is a certain, pretty finite demographic, and you can become pretty comfortable and to a degree, an expert on what that school needs, likes, wants to be. You can incorporate leadership into that. At any rate, my interaction with the other members of the board is cooperative. It is a learning experience that you haven't really considered before. That is how I would define interaction with others. That is where it has been really enjoyable, learning from others' leadership styles and about the requirements, their needs for their schools, what they personally want to get out of SAB… It is within the focus groups that you really get to know and you get to see other people's leadership skills at work. So, I guess that is my distinction in the role – learning from others. (Henry, personal communication, March 13, 2003)

Similarly to Jesse, Henry views the group interaction at the Student Advisory Board as

one of collaboration, cooperation, and mutual respect. His willingness to learn, to

challenge his past leadership experiences, and be a public servant speaks to the unique

leadership development opportunity the Board provides to college students.

Students at the Board present a plethora of roles and perspectives they have

towards the experience. A non-student whose role plays a crucial link to all Board

members is the advisor, Jearim. Jearim has been present at all meetings, leading

discussions, refocusing students on the agenda, and encouraging students to innovate, to

participate in higher education politics, and to support each other in legislative

movements. When I interviewed Jearim (personal communication, March 8, 2003) after

the March Board session, he shared his view on the Board experience.

> I have been involved in public policy. I know what it takes to track policy, and I think that I can relate to the student in the fact that I enjoy teaching, and I want to share with them what I know. A lot of what I know they can learn and run with it. One person can affect twenty, twenty can affect higher, and so on…

Jearim views his role as one of a teacher, relaying his knowledge of public policy processes and civic advocacy to student leaders, who he believes are on the path to greatness, success, and true public service. Furthermore, Jearim feels passionate about the Board, the opportunity students are given and the politics to which they are exposed. It is a learning experience in which Jearim is the guide, the anchor that encourages, motivates, and advocates for the students and higher education policy.

Leadership roles students have at the Board are dependent on students' leadership background, past experiences, current college-level positions on and off their campus, and the perspective students have on their role as Board members. For some, the experience is about representing their institutions, for others, it is about higher education in the Atlantic state.

> Everyone comes to the table with very different views, with very different backgrounds, and they have their own role in the [Board]. Some need to be quiet because they are absorbing everything, and they'll know what somebody said, while others would have no idea because they are all talking. Some people are constantly filling in with new ideas, which other people can build on the new ideas, but can't fill the new ideas, but when they hear one they can build on it, elaborate. They can make it work, make it practical. That is another type of person. You have all the people that are bringing up new topics, and then you have the overall leaders, who actually direct the meeting and where the argument goes. (Michael, personal communication, March 8, 2003)

This web structure in which all students have equal access to information, decision-making, discussion, and innovation on the state level provides a perfect opportunity to develop unique policy perspectives as well as new leadership skills and better understanding of self and others.

The "We" – Norming Stage – Collaborating Through Political Discussions

Leadership development is best experienced through unique, nontraditional opportunities (Woodard, 1994). The Student Advisory Board represents such an opportunity, providing college students with a state-level, executive-level outlet through which to shape public policy and to encourage specific legislation that would aid one or many institutions of higher learning. During the first half of the Board session, students developed a firmer sense of self, why it is important to them to represent their institutions as well as to understand others' backgrounds, concerns, and institutions. Through the introductory meeting, student commissioner selection, and political discussions, students progressed from being strangers to partners, peers, and now, group members (Knefelkamp, 1981). In the second half of the Board session [February through May], students continued developing individual skills as well as collaborating as a team, discussing and supporting higher education legislation and working on a public policy initiative for the improvement of student advising.

The overarching element of the SAB's collaboration as a team has been an active participation of fifteen[96] devoted students who, over the course of the Board session, showed both physical presence and mental engagement in the discussions and decision-making. Their "ability to engage involvement in the community and its purpose, and to articulate those purposes as a means to prompt change" (Rogers in Komives, Woodard, & Associates, 1996, p. 314) shows a significant level of leadership skills, service and civic orientation, and commitment to student advocacy. As Fairholm (2001) clarifies, "Full

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[96] Most meetings had fifteen to twenty participants. The three meetings in which important decisions were made (e.g., student commissioner selection process) drew thirty students.

involvement increases members' sense of duty and ownership in the group and its results. It produces an atmosphere that welcomes challenges and encourages input. It is one characterized by active listening and open discussion and one that recognizes spirit and emotions as essential and right" (p. 171). Furthermore, participation and active engagement evoke team building, that is, "taking deliberate action to identify talent, discover and remove barriers, and help people change their behavior and replace it with the actions that can lead to successful leadership" (Matusak, 1997, p. 73).

In order to accomplish goals, as pre-designed in the *Bylaws* and directed by the advisor, students as a group underwent all four stages of organizational development (Tuckman, 1965): forming, storming, norming, and performing. As students approached their policy papers, they entered the norming stage, working together, supporting and motivating each other not only on the policy paper but in their personal initiatives. For the Board, the primary tasks were to work in segmental groups towards the completion of the policy project as well as to join efforts to promote student issues in the legislative hearings. Through these processes, the group established clear parameters, collaborated on task accomplishment, and provided it's members with the opportunity to build conceptual understanding, feedback, and skill (Conger, 1992).

Jearim, a former executive branch public policy lobbyist, has taken on a role of the Board advisor not only with a desire to guide them through the requirements, but to instill in them a sense of civic duty as public servants. Jearim feels that students should be directly involved in the process, that they should follow state bills, testify in front of different committees, and involve their campuses in the public policy (personal communication, March 8, 2003). In addition, Jearim feels that political discussions

during the Board meeting can bring valuable insight into the issues facing institutions and allow for a candid and open discussion of the political climate facing the state (personal communication, March 8, 2003). His innovation to set up a public forum portion in every Board meeting for the purpose of prompting a discussion on political issues, has proven to be the key element of students' learning as a group and their collaboration as a team. The opening hour of each meeting was thus allocated to students' views on higher education politics as well as the impact on other public policies on students and Atlantic citizens. The discussions were directed by Jearim. The encouragement, learning, and activism that originated [from these discussions] helped enhance the level of commitment students have towards their campuses and higher education at-large.

The political discussions, from my observer standpoint, presented an interesting group dynamics. Jearim would open with the key state issues of the month and then open the floor for a discussion. Students would begin by voicing their personal opinions on the presented issue, followed by a more in-depth discussion on the impact a certain issue would have on students and the local communities in which students live. At times, the discussions turned into arguments, while at other times, they served to motivate students to support a particular legislative bill or a student rally. The outcomes of these discussions were: 1) Learning about public policy processes and issues; 2) understanding students' viewpoints; 3) active engagement in state politics through lobbying, testifying, and/or protest; and 4) the collective motivation to elevate the role the Student Advisory Board plays in the state.

Public Policy Discussions

The monthly Board meetings were structured into three key areas: political policy discussions, Board at-large projects, and segmental work on the student-advising project. The public policy discussion was guided by the advisor, monitored by the Board chair, and lasted for an hour, on average. These discussions captured the Atlantic political scene from budget cuts, slot-machine initiatives, higher education funding and student aid, to local community concerns with capital projects. The political topics not only sparked energetic discussions, but also served as learning moments for students. Marcus (personal communication, March 8, 2003) explains, "I like politics. I have always been interested in politics and having a legislative advisor to the group has been a godsend, so great, because I like politics, and Jearim has always had a way of keeping us anchored in the politics with everything that we did, which is what I liked the most and came away with."

One of the first political discussions[97] has been on the state budget and its impact on higher education. Concerned with possible tuition increases, and service and staff cuts, students found this discussion crucial. Jearim opened the discussion with budgetary figures to which students responded with shock and discomfort. According to Jearim's reports, private funding derived from the state is tied with the public college funding; thus, if one gets cut the other one follows. The response of students to this comment created a heated discussion dividing the Board between the public and private college

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[97] The following discussion took place on February 8, 2003 at the Alternative Health Institute.

students. Lisa,[98] an African-American student from a public university, opened the

discussion, "The students made a choice to go to private college, and the money gets

taken away from the public. Now, it is split, and it should not be that way!" As Lisa

spoke, Jose, a Latino student from a large public university, agreed, reaffirming her

statement. However, as they began the discussion, a Caucasian female "Amy" from a

small, all-women's private college interrupted, "Students are struggling not to go

bankrupt. Some are on the five-year plan due to lack of funding. I had to go private

because I couldn't find any other institution to have the environment that I wanted." Lisa

responded by stating that she understood the importance of private institutions but that

budget cuts need to protect public colleges. Jen, another Caucasian female from a rural

private college disagreed, "Students needs the public money to be able to afford private

colleges. I do value my liberal education, but I am sure glad I am graduating!" Darin, an

African-American student from a rural public college added, "I don't want to see small

private schools going under, but why are we giving tax money to those who don't want to

be part of the state?!" The advisor, wanting to calm down the discussion, abruptly stated,

"We need to support all! That is why we are one of the top states in higher education,"

ending this discussion.

A second topic, addressed during the March 8th meeting, tied the budgetary

concerns to a new initiative to install slot machines in the state as a way to generate

revenue for higher education, among other areas. Jearim's remarks, as they did in the

previous meeting, sparked a debate on slot machines and their impact on societal morals

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[98] Students not participating in the focus group have been assigned pseudonyms for the purpose of correctly attributing quotes to individuals. They are distinguished by pseudonyms and institutional types.

and ethics. Bob began by stating that the plan goes against conservative beliefs, and expressed his concern that this movement was about special interest. He pointed out that the governor had already altered his funding formula to include the slot machine initiative, but defended his statement as one of pure concern only, and not an attack on the governor.

The Board chair, an African-American male from an urban community college, build on of Bob's argument, pointing out that during the student advocacy day in the Capital City he listened to the governor speak, and his impression was that the governor assumed that people are adults and as such they have to take responsibility for their actions, thus, controlling themselves against gambling addiction. The chair made a statement saying that he disagrees with the governor's view and sees slot machines as a 'get rich quick' plan that might not have positive effects on higher education funding. Bob commented that some people feel that a tax increase might be better and that slot-based revenue can "stomp growth." Katherine, a Caucasian female student from a private college, agreed stating that the state should tax the people who use its resources and that she would willingly pay knowing she is using those valuable resources and that might "encourage government to develop alternative resource." Jearim concluded the discussion by reiterating the importance of student engagement and understanding of this issue and the conflict that exists between the executive and legislative branches.

The third topic addressed by the Board was brought up by Taiowa during the April 5th meeting, in which he, a student commissioner to the Higher Education Commission, brought up international students and their tendency to be more involved in political and policy processes than American students. Alicia, an immigrant Latina,

agreed stating that she came to this country to pursue the "American Dream" and as an outsider saw social problems and ways in which students can make a difference. Thus, she made it a personal mission to empower other students to see her vision of student activism. Taiowa added, "The first institution is family. If that is unstable, there wouldn't be any progress." Other students agreed and pointed to social problems, influence of media on student development, and the general apathy towards politics.

The three topics touched on the political issues facing this state as well as social perceptions that students had. Although there have been many side conversations, it is these three topics that evoked the most discussion. Jearim, the advisor, served as a discussion mediator, who wanted students to discuss political issues, but wanted them to refrain from further conflict and division. Hence, in times of wide disagreements, Jearim shifted focus to another topic or encouraged compromise. Although limiting, this form of monitoring created clear boundaries and made students comfortable about voicing their concerns and understanding other's viewpoints. The discussions also encouraged collaboration and cooperation among students to unite for or against particular policies that affect all students. The social change model of leadership development refers to this group dynamic as one of "controversy," in which innovative solutions are created through differences (HERI, 1996). The "controversy" process emphasizes heated discussion and opposing ideas as the means of learning, debating, and enhancing group skills.

Communication and collective knowledge provide a variety of perspectives to be voiced, understood, and acknowledged by a group (Yukl, 1989). "Each member of a group brings to a meeting certain needs, attitudes, values, knowledge, and experience"

(Yukl, p. 235). During the norming stage, a group begins to work together as one to accomplish goals; however, their cohesiveness is in developmental stages, encouraging critical thinking about issues and disagreements (Yukl). At the Student Advisory Board, this stage was marked by a series of political discussions that encouraged students to tackle controversial budgetary issues, represent their institutional interests, as well as to learn from each other. Adjusted to one another's personal leadership style and organizational roles, students were able to actively engage in the political discussions, debate issues, confront points, but at the same time, they respected each others' right to opinion.

The policy/political discussions, as crafted and facilitated by the advisor, served to give students an opportunity to work as a team, to learn from each other, and to gain a sense of their civic duty to be a part of the Atlantic state politics. Jesse (personal communication, March 7, 2003) reflects:

> Through this medium, I definitely realized that leadership is collaborative. I realized in being a service or student leader, although you might have your own perspective, your own agenda, your own needs; one has to be all encompassing respectful of different needs, agenda of others. You might not comply, but I do believe that that is one thing that is integral to the accomplishment of that goal. As I mentioned before, we are always allowed to express not only our interests, concerns, but our own perspective, our own manner of achieving the common goal that we have. So, the mere fact that we have the right to express it, the mere fact that we can show the skills that we already have, the vision that we might have for the SAB, for the project, the means by which we can go about accomplishing that objective, I believe that we have an opportunity to be the leader.

The team model of leadership, as developed by Hill (in Northouse, 2001) and Barge (1996) gives an insight into the importance of this initial *we* stage of group development. The team model reflects the reality of early team dynamics – difference of opinion, ideological conflicts, and increased viewpoint advocacy (Hill in Northouse).

Although Board discussions seemed to initially divide the group, the end result of these

political discussions was collaboration and team-building. The structure, function, and

end goals remained unchanged before and after the discussion took place. In fact,

through these political discussions, students gained a deeper understanding of the general

higher education climate, the commonalities their institutions are facing, and how

important public participation is in the state government – they became collectively

smarter (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998). Henry's (personal communication,

March 13, 2003) reflections on group dynamics help clarify this point:

> It is an interesting dynamic, because there are so many people from so many
> different diversities, colleges, and there are different needs. Like, I never
> considered Graduate University. They have a forty-year old student, and that is a
> completely different deal than an 18 year old…. I guess, in leadership there, I like
> listening and seeing what you think and where that fits. It takes a lot of listening,
> and there will be plenty of people to take action there, but the person that is able
> to see the whole picture and understand what everyone is saying offers a lot of
> benefit.

Learning as a team was another important outcome of these policy/political discussions.

Jesse (personal communication, March 7, 2003) explains:

> I also realized that we can learn – that it is always interactive. I may have a
> perspective that I may not have walked in with that day, but leaving, I might see
> things different, and indeed, I should because the form allows for that. On the
> other hand, one has to stay his/her own ground in terms of having your own
> perspective, being respectful of perspectives of others, but realizing that your
> reality is your reality, and it doesn't change regardless of all that surrounds it.
> Yes, you might accommodate, and you might facilitate, color, but once there is
> some truth that impels you some sort of way, to share, to take a part in that, you
> have to keep it.

Raelin (2003) refers to the learning component as a key to the "leaderful" approach to

effective leadership. "Learning is mobile, continuous, and collective process" (Raelin, p.

121) that allows students to project their individual knowledge onto others and empower

each other to search for new ideas and breakthroughs (Kanter in Hesselbein, Goldsmith,

& Somerville, 2002). Through the Board conversations, students not only get their point across but learn from each other about politics, education, and institutional issues, as well as students' ideas on how to resolve these problems.

This form of learning can also be defined as organizational double-loop learning, whereby implicit procedures and assumptions are used to explore the issues at hand (Raeling, 2003), meaning that a policy discussion format was introduced and upheld at the Board for the purpose of exploring political implications and students' viewpoints. Furthermore, "learning is tied to a collective consciousness that encourages a constant re-examination of meaning" (Raelin, p. 132). At the Board, this was accomplished by the collaborative discussion on the ways higher education policies could be modified, supported, and reformatted, as well as by group discussions on changing and increasing the student involvement at the state level. Jearim (personal communication, March 8, 2003), the advisor, explains:

> As a group, their strengths are debate. They speak clearly, which I think is strength. They have the opportunity to think before they respond. Another strength is that they don't mind disagreeing. Another strengths as a group is that they bring their own ideas, backgrounds from schools, from where they are from and it makes for a better conversation. Another strength is their energy. They are very energetic! They are seeking knowledge constantly, so they really soak up information that they didn't have when they walked in. That is strength also. The diversity is also a strength of this group. They are diverse not only ethnically, racially, religiously, but also from where they are from, geographically, so that is a strength of this group.

In the words of Morgan (1998), the Student Advisory Board provides an environment that embraces the idea of rapidly changing discussions, "encourages dialogues and the expression of conflicting points of view; recognize that legitimate error, which arises from the uncertainty and lack of control in a situation, can be used as a resource for new learning; recognize that since genuine learning is usually action based, organizations

must find ways of helping to create experiments and probes so that they learn through doing in a productive way" (p. 85). The policy/political discussions were an important piece in aligning the goals of the organization with the internal and institutional passions of the SAB members.

Active Engagement in State Politics

The policy discussions at the Student Advisory Board not only brought about internal learning and teambuilding, but encouraged and motivated individual students to take action in state politics, supporting education bills and rallying Board members to join them in public testimonies, and protests. The organizational web structure allowed all members the freedom to voice their institutional concerns as well as to take time to brainstorm solutions. Furthermore, the diverse collective of student leaders provided a strong base for legislative advocacy and initiatives. As Daniel Weber (in Fairholm, 2001) once stated, "We can do as partners what we cannot do as singles" (p. 61). The embedded culture of student advocacy, legislative involvement, and public service, provided "virtual kaleidoscopes and encourage their use" (Kanter in Hesselbein, Goldsmith, & Somerville, 2002, p. 73), meaning that the Board emphasized [through both the advisor and students as a whole] an environment of innovation and action.

Participation is a core for organizational creativity, growth, development, and satisfaction (Fairholm, 2001). Throughout the SAB session, the legislative public policy participation was evident as students engaged on behalf of either their institutions or the Student Advisory Board in public testimonies and rallies on higher education bills. Such examples included: Katherine and the Board chair, who participated in the advocacy day sponsored by the Atlantic state for the purpose of giving students a full day of discussion

with state legislators about higher education issues; Michael, the vice-chair, who attended

the Independent Higher Education Day in the Capital City for the purpose of supporting

state funding of private institutions; Jearim, the advisor, who took a group of general

Board members for the tour of the legislative offices; Bob, who testified on behalf of the

community colleges for increased/sustained funding during the budgetary crisis; and

Alicia, the Board secretary, who promoted and testified for a bill giving nonpermanent

residents in-state tuition for higher education. These examples show the great depth of

interest students at the Board have for public policy. For some, this was a continuation of

political activism they have done through their lives, for others it was for the purpose of

representing their institution, but for those like Bob and Alicia, the motivation came from

the Student Advisory Board.

Bob, from a community college, and Alicia, the Board secretary and a student

from a private college, have, like other Board members, been recognized by their

institutions as student leaders and education advocates. As such, they were

knowledgeable of the legislative procedures and organizations/groups that supported

initiatives of interest. However, although never directly participating in public

testimonies or rallies, the two used the Board experience as a motivating factor that

encouraged them to speak on behalf of their fellow students. Bob's (personal

communication, April 5, 2003) vignette exemplifies the importance of student

participation in legislative public testimonies.

> It was a long wait for me to testify before the budget and tax committee on
> proposed legislature on future funding for community colleges. The bill was
> called the CADE bill, named after the [Atlantic] legislator that developed a
> formula to determine funds that community colleges get. Unfortunately due to
> budget crunches, the CADE formula has been slashed. The current CADE bill I

was testifying on was only to help community colleges gain a portion back of the funding they would have received if the CADE formula was not abandoned.

I sat through the rest of the hearing and then it became my group's turn to testify. A president of a community college spoke, than a male student, than a female student, then I spoke. My testimony was off the top of my head. I did this because I wanted to provide a human face to the numbers. I wanted them to see me as I was. I talked about how I moved up the ranks from developmental English to honors English. How it was important to support community colleges due to swelling enrollment. That in the end, all I asked was that they look at me, and see that I was a product of their budget. I wanted to be the voice for all community college students, young, and old – to say, don't forget about us. Then we concluded and little bit later I received a letter from the president of the [Atlantic] Association of Community Colleges, thanking me for my testimony.

Bob's experience, as he recalled during the one-on-one interview, was one of the most important events he had as a student leader because it was an example of public service, group effort, and youth empowerment, that through participation in politics one can make a difference (personal communication, March 8, 2003).

Alicia, the Board secretary, is another example of public service, student leadership, and political activism. A Latina and a permanent resident of the U.S.A., Alicia has fought throughout her years at the Education Without Boundaries College, a private urban institution, for the rights of nonpermanent residents who are citizens of the Atlantic state to receive in-state tuition.[99] Her presentation during the February 8th meeting was an inspirational call for student activism. As students prepared for a session in their segmental groups in which they were to develop the policy recommendations on student advising, Alicia stood up in front of the entire Board and asked the group if she could make a short presentation about an issue she has been passionate about ever since she entered college. Students approved, and she began.

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[99] Alicia was not part of the focus group or individual interviews; however, I asked her to reflect on her experience at the Board as well as on her leadership development.

During her presentation, Alicia spoke of her distress for immigrant children who under the current law cannot afford higher education due to out-of-state tuition costs. "Each year, hundreds of immigrant students, many of whom were brought here at a very young age by their parents and thus had no part in the decision to enter the country, graduate from high schools in the state. Almost all of them speak fluent English and consider themselves Americans. However, without permanent residency, these individuals, primarily Latinos, are treated as international students and denied in-state tuition" (personal communication, Alicia, February 8, 2003). To combat this perceived injustice, Alicia stated that she has worked with a state delegate and Latino organizations to create a bill that would allow all children raised in the United States a right to pay in-state tuition. The intent of the bill was "to provide an opportunity for all individuals who are citizens of a country other than the United States and have attended their last three years of high school in the state of [Atlantic] to be charged in-state resident college tuition rates" (Alicia, personal communication, February 8, 2003). As she passed fliers, "Noche de accion Latina," sponsored by the Latino Coalition for Justice, Alicia invited Board members for a rally in the Capital City in support of this bill. While students glanced at the flier, Jearim reminded students that the governor can overturn the decision, but stated that "students have so much energy. They bring ideas and friends, make a difference. They are informed, know how to campaign" (personal communication, February 8, 2003). As Alicia extended her invitation for the February 24th rally, students began to applaud her efforts and promised her that they would show up for the public testimony.

Indeed, a group of Board members did appear at her testimony in front of the

State legislature and soon after an article addressing her bill was printed in the local

paper. The article "300 Latinos Rally for Bills in [the Capital City]" stated that the

gathering for higher education was very significant because it was the first time that it

was backed by many legislators (Penn, February 25, 2003). A month after that report the

same paper announced a victory in the legislature "House Oks Tuition Break for Aliens"

(Penn, March 22, 2003). Unfortunately, as Alicia announced during the last Board

meeting in April, the governor of the Atlantic state vetoed her bill, ending her efforts for

in-state tuition for immigrant children. Although she lost a fight this year, Alicia vowed

to come back next year with the same Latino group and try again. Her efforts, personal

drive, and Board's support showed the importance of student activism, engagement in

higher education, and served as an example of collaboration, teamwork, and leadership.

Following Alicia's bill, I have come to know her as a vibrant, enthusiastic, hard-

working woman who was very much loved and supported by the Board. Not only did she

keep the session organized with her secretarial duties, but she was a symbol of a student

activist, servant, and leader, who not only supported the interests of her institution or

Board initiatives, but rallied for social causes that would potentially affect thousands of

students in higher education around the state. Impressed by her leadership, I asked her to

share a written reflection about her experience at the Board and her legislation. Below is

her vignette.

> With confidence, I can say that my passionate sense of social justice and social
> responsibility has always connected with my pronounced need to direct contact
> with other individuals. I have always felt the enthusiastic desire to being active in
> my community to create social change by organizing individuals around one or
> many issues. My concern with having equal access to education for everyone
> under the same conditions has been one of my major drives to work towards

social justice. For that reason, I decided to join the [Student Advisory Board]; furthermore, I went on to seek an officer position as the secretary… With no doubt, my participation at [SAB] has definitely been worthwhile. The stimuli I have received from this council impelled me to expand my knowledge of higher education issue, and provided me with the impetus to communicate this knowledge to the student body of my institution.

[SAB] offered me the amazing opportunity of working side by side with students from schools around the state, with students of different backgrounds and perspectives. This experience showed me that being purposeful requires having an attitude of hope, an ability to make a commitment; it builds on a sense of personal and group empowerment. It was very interesting to see different viewpoints between students from community colleges, four-year public institutions, and private institutions. Critical questions such as why private institutions get money from the state government, why some institutions get an immense amount of money while others are basically ignored, and why the students' voice is not being heard as it should, were raised through our meetings. In essence, [SAB] demonstrated that sharing vision requires insight into one's own actions, the skills to listen to find common objectives, the ability to develop strategies needed to set purposeful goals, and the open mind to imagine possible outcomes. These elements in conjunction created a positive and warm environment where leadership was made known. As a group, we all managed to express our views, discuss them, and reached to a consensus shared by all. We created a bond based on trust, support and encouragement; for example, as the secretary of the group, I always received e-mails and even phone calls by the members of [SAB] congratulating me for the job that I was doing. That was a great motivator for me to keep working hard and it was also an expression of teamwork. Without that feeling of true membership, no organization can stand and grow, no leadership can ever flourish. (Alicia, personal communication, April 5, 2003)

Alicia's vignette speaks to true student leadership, one of public service, stewardship, and

teamwork. Alicia's inner cultural and moral obligation to social justice, her ability to

express the injustices found in her community, and her hard work towards a resolution

without looking for self-promotion, gain, or acknowledgment is a sign of a true servant

leader. As Klopf (1960) and Greenleaf (1977) emphasize, servant-leader is one whose

social and behavioral actions speak to his/her true leadership, his/her concern for the

development and well-being of the world, and his/her focus on community building.

Alicia is one such person, focused and determined to aid not only her Latino/a

community, but also all immigrant children who currently are abstaining from higher

education due to their financial inability to pay for academia.

As seen from Alicia's example, as well as those of Bob and other Board members,

once students know who they are and understand the environment in which they are, they

are able to take action, engage in social causes that would elevate the status of students,

empower them, aid them, and inspire them. Alicia's eloquent words reflect themes

commonly found in vignettes of other Board members – inner passion, commitment,

community, service, making a difference, teamwork… Board members are first and their

foremost stewards, entrusted by their institutions to represent students' and administrative

interest at the state level (Block, 1996). Secondly, Board members are servants, working

on legislation and policy recommendations that would benefit all students. Thirdly, they,

through their on and off campus commitments as well as through the Board's structure

and function, are active citizens, connected to their community and society (HERI, 1996),

working in collaboration with other students, legislators, and community members to

make a difference. Together, these elements servant-steward-citizen have elevated Board

members to public service and political activism.

Elevating the Role of the Future Student Advisory Board

The Student Advisory Board, as based on its formal *Bylaws*, serves to gather a

representative group of students from around the state for the purpose of selecting a

student commissioner to the State Higher Education Coordinating Commission, to aid the

Secretary of Higher Education on the political front, and to provide a set of policy

recommendations on a pressing issue facing state higher education. However, with only

fifteen to twenty students attending any given Board meeting, the scope and power of the

Board has been limited. Fortunately, the open web structure as well as the independence given to the Board allow students to go beyond their given assignments and develop further initiatives to empower the student voice in the state.

During the observed session, students, motivated by both policy discussions and members' direct political involvement on higher education bills, felt the need to discuss the current function of the Board as well as to create a set of ideas on how the Board should be improved (Jearim, personal communication, March 8, 2003). Furthermore, throughout its existence the Board has been changing education policies and introducing legislation that has added senatorial and delegate scholarship in the state, changed policies about credit card solicitation on the campuses, among other initiatives (Smith, personal communication, April 23, 2003). However, this unique opportunity has remained a hidden organization to the general student population, who have been turning to their student governments for all political and policy battles. The reasons behind the lack of Board recognition to the wider higher education audience stems from the following: 1) a lack of uniform selection process; 2) an elevated importance of the student government associations as the primary political vehicle for students' concerns; and 3) an emphasis on the segmental boards rather than the statewide. As Jesse (personal communication, March 8, 2003) explains:

> My major concern was that students were not aware of [the Coordinating Commission]… If students don't know, and you have to go up to six thousand students and say, "look…" – it is kind of tedious for one person. If there is some way to disseminate that sort of information… We have the right to know who makes our policy, who recommends our policy. In terms of improvements to SAB, I do believe that our current structure is good, in terms of us being given the opportunity to make some recommendation, formal recommendation, that I do believe they'll consider to the full extent.

Jesse echoes the reality of the Board. It is an important student body in the state, but its presence on campuses is nonexistent, creating an atmosphere of apathy, misinformation, and frustration. To alleviate this problem, Jesse (personal communication, March 7, 2003), along with other focus group members, offered her suggestion:

> I think that we could take on that responsibility of us sending correspondents, whether former SAB members having some sort of correspondents with universities and other colleges and tertiary level institutions, and sharing with them exactly what SAB is. I am sure that they probably receive information, but they don't know what it is. But, having been on the inside, you know, we can shed some light on the situation, hopefully, that would spark back that enthusiasm to participate.

It is evident from Jesse's comment that focus group students believe that the Board should self-promote more. While she does not believe in the structural changes, she would like to see increased student involvement.

> In terms of taking on more than one project, I think that would make all of them not come to the meetings. I mean, yes, we are focusing on just one issue so when we are through, the issue will be well addressed, and if it is deemed very pertinent, an issue that needs addressing, especially from the student perspective... I mean, the other topics, funding... the education policy in the sense of graduation times and the whole transition from community colleges to universities... Those are topics that [the Coordinating Commission] deals with on the regular basis. It is an ongoing process, so for us to jump on their work is almost like – that is what the student commissioner is there for, to bring the student perspective for those various issues.

Keeping the format as is, but increasing student awareness of the Board, is a difficult task. Henry (personal communication, March 13, 2003), equally frustrated with the lack of students' [in the state] awareness of the Board, vented his frustrations during a personal interview:

> SAB needs to be an important influence on the [Atlantic] Higher Education [Coordinating Commission]. It all depends on the quality of the students, their commitment to SAB, and the quality of the final product. That is what is going to ultimately influence the quality, and the quality of the commissioner. It is going

to influence the Board, and the commissioner in his/her ability to communicate the voice of the students throughout the institutions.

Henry thus offered a solution, based on Jearim's idea, to create a legislative reception – a one-day event where Board members can meet with the legislators and discuss higher education issues, unrehearsed and unstructured. Henry concludes, "So, why not have a group reception, show the connection between what we are doing and the people who are making the decisions based on the suggestions we are making. I don't think that that connection is made as well as it could…" (personal communication, March 13, 2003).

While Jesse and Henry echo the general Board frustration with the lack of public awareness of their positions, they do not believe further structural changes are necessary. However, Bob and Marcus disagree. According to Bob (personal communication, March 8, 2003), the Board should be more policy-oriented:

> My vision for SAB next year would be for a substantial issue being discussed, attendance being record-setting, interests being high, and the way to make interest and attendance high is to have substance, see how they can be interested, how they can be motivated, encouraged. Being president, you need all these chairs, and that is great. Those individuals will take it seriously and learn from it, but for everyone else to get them motivated to come, that motivation stems from an issue where they can testify on a bill, but the role that you embark in is the role that benefits other people. So, it is the mentality from me onto other people. Hopefully we get bunch of people who are dedicated and realize that we need action and that we are willing to do what we have done, compile reports, lobby on behalf of someone. Each person adds a spark. And when you get a whole bunch of sparks, you get a fire, and you get a lot of things done.

Marcus (personal communication, March 8, 2003), like Bob, supports the idea of reforms, suggesting that the Board should take on more responsibilities:

> I would empower it so that it could take on more responsibilities. I don't know how well it would be attended, but having more than one meeting a month where we could discuss more than one issue. I mean two meetings were taken up with the Student Commissioner. While that is very important, it had very little to do with what we were doing, and that took up a lot of time. I think that the [Board] should be more focused with the issues at hand.

Reforming the Board was one of the key political issues discussed during the second half

of the session, encouraging students to innovate, debate, and make changes in the

structure and function of the Board. During my data collection, I raised this question and

sparked additional ideas from students. Michael (personal communication, March 8,

2003) reflected on his forum idea:

> My vision for SAB is much more than what it is right now. I think that there is an
> amazing potential on how truly unique the council is, and I did do my research on
> it, and this doesn't occur in ninety percent of the states, and I think that is very
> interesting. I wish there is somewhere where you can go to find out everything
> there is to do with students and how they speak up about student government
> because I still don't know.   I hear bits and pieces, student advocacy day, about
> community colleges, about independent college day in [the Capital City], but I
> would like to see what exactly, on the aggregate form prevails, is being done. I
> think there has to be a forum on that. I definitely see more involvement with the
> student commissioner, with the SAB, and updating SAB, what is going on…

Over the course of the winter meetings, students exchanged ideas in an informal fashion

solidifying the discussion for further consideration. Thus, during the last Board meeting,

as students were turning in their collective policy project, they began planning for the

next year. Michael opened the conversation by presenting his forum idea. Students liked

the idea and built on it by suggesting a working conference, sponsored by SGAs and

colleges to educate student leadership on education policy. Michael responded, "We

want to do something proactive this year. We need to write projects that would resolve

issues. We should have a kick-off meeting where a report idea would be presented."

Michael's comments ended the conversation, with the majority in approval of the

conversation.

The Student Advisory Board has been in existence in its current form since the

mid-1990s. Although the *Bylaws* do leave room for reforms, the annual rotation of

student members has made this step impossible. However, this year, the non-graduating students felt that they should be more proactive than their predecessors and find a way to bring change into the Board's function while upholding the current law. Guided by Michael and Taiowa, the students have agreed that the Board should not only make policy recommendations to the Coordinating Commission but be a forum for student voice. By hosting a student-run legislative conference in the Capital City, students hope to gain the interest of student governments, independent student associations, and individuals interested in political activism. As Michael voiced on more than one occasion, it is the responsibility of current Board members to take the initiative to let the general public know about the Board, its policy recommendations, community service, and legislative role in the state.

Debating controversial reform ideologies, collaborating on the ways in which to enhance the role of the Board, and finding a common purpose and initiative could be attributed to the role the new advisor played on the Board. Jearim, a former lobbyist, has been a driving force of energy, ideas, and political conversations. As an advisor, he ensured that students stay on course with their duties; however, he never lost sight of a bigger vision – influencing the higher education policies. As seen from the vignettes, Jearim motivated Board members, ensuring them that their voice would be heard and acted on, that students can make a difference as political activists, and that their role at the Board is more than just one of an institutional representative, but also one of a citizen of the state and public servant. Never willing to surrender to tradition, Jearim introduced the Board to political discussion and pushed every student to articulate him/herself better

in both their written and spoken word. Jearim (personal communication, March 8, 2003)

explains:

> I think that each of these students have to become ambassadors of their universities, some stronger than others, but we must make a commitment to continue the process of the Student Advisory [Board]. As far as some of these institutions that are not participating on the same level, they get a letter and a call from the Higher Education Secretary, the staff, and myself to make sure that they participate, and more importantly, actively participate in this process because it is very important. We will continue in the next meeting to talk about the presentation they must make to be strong ambassadors, they must pick somebody who can fulfill these duties. We must set guidelines in terms of who you want to take the spot. It must be someone who is conscious of the time and once they start something that they want to finish it not quit, that will follow it through. Most of these students are who are in the group, but for the most part we get 80 percent of the people in the group when you should be able to get a hundred. At only a few meetings where we able to conduce that if we work hard… They have to understand the roles not just for themselves but for the continuation of SAB.

Rules were an impetus on which Jearim focused at every meeting, reminding students

what their purpose was and keeping them on track. At the same time, Jearim believed in

change, reform, and open discussion of ideas, and encouraged all students to freely voice

their opinions. As a result of his guidance, students felt compelled to brainstorm ideas, to

collaborate, take action, work through controversies, and find a common purpose that

would continue to elevate students' role in politics.

The "We" – Performing Stage – Collaborating Through the Policy Project

The final stage of students' leadership development at the Student Advisory

Board came during the second half of the session. After the student commissioner

selection process, Board members allocated the second half of each monthly meeting for

segmental[100] groups in which they worked on the policy project,[101] developing a survey,

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[100] The segmental groups included four-year public colleges and universities, four-year private colleges and universities, and two-year community colleges working together with professional institutes and colleges.

brainstorming ways in which to collect, analyze, and present the data as well as working

with the Board at-large to create one concise document, to be presented to the Statewide

Higher Education Coordinating Commission. This process of policy development was a

crucial element in strengthening the students as a team, a *we*. Furthermore, the close

relationships from sharing a common goal encouraged the students to work together and

blend their roles as public servants, institutional stewards, and citizens of the Atlantic

state. Finally, the organizational structure allowed students to perform as a collective,

independent of their individual interests; rather, they were focusing their attention on how

to engage the higher education public on the issues of academic advising and convince

the Coordinating Commission that the lack of a solid advising structure had a negative

impact on the students ability to graduate on time (Bob, personal communication, March

8, 2003).

The public policy project at the Board-wide level served as a crucial element of

the performing stage, giving students a common goal to work towards as a team.

However, on the segmental level the public policy project underwent all stages of

organizational development, each month increasing in intensity, collaboration, and

project management. This organizational growth on the segmental level is captured in

Figure 2.

Figure 2 exemplifies the relationship between the subgroup, "segmental group,"

and the Board at-large. As the Board entered its norming and, later on, performing

stages, the need to quickly develop a survey, gather data, and put together a policy project

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[101] This year's project was focused on academic advising of all students, in particular, the relationship between students and their advisors, the expertise of the advisors, and the overall structure of the advising system in individual institutions and educational systems.

increased. Under the *Bylaws* (1998), during each monthly Board meeting, after the

student commissioner selection process was complete, students were asked to break into

institutional-type groups where they select a project manager, "a group leader" who helps

the group move along in the policy-writing process. An intense, exciting, and significant

experience, the policy project allows students to get to the grassroots level of policy

making as well as to develop more personal relationships with the Board members. In

addition, the policy project itself, aided by the Board at-large political discussions,

presented an opportunity for all Board members to work as public servants and citizens,

serving not only institutional interests, but those of all higher education institutions.

Figure 2. Organizational stages of the segmental group.

- The Board's performing stage consists of four organizational stages exhibited within the segmental groups.

- Each segmental stage added to the overall Board experience during its performing stage.
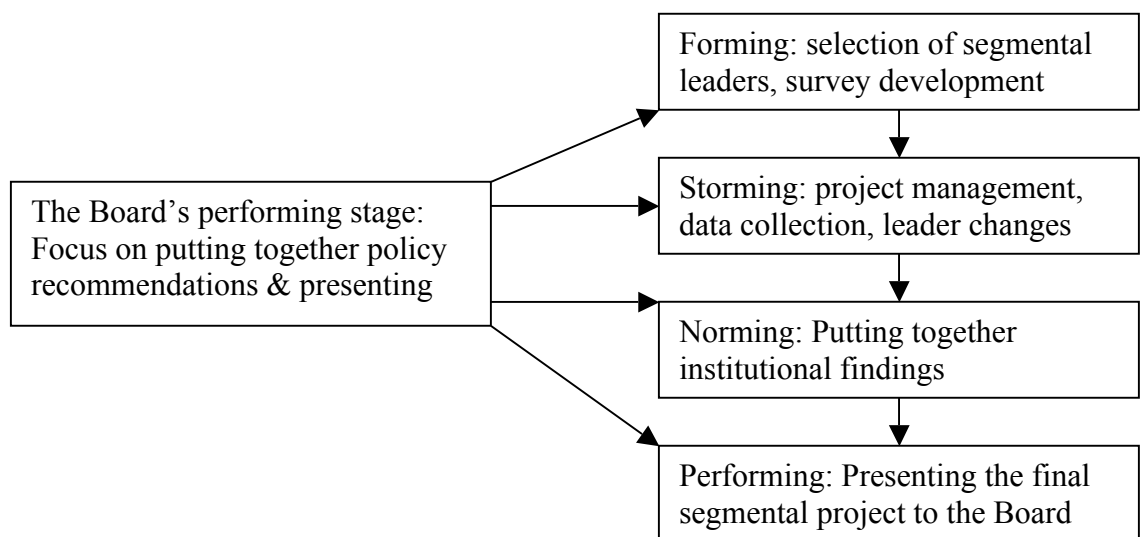
Figure 2. The organizational stages have been adopted from Tuckman's (1965) work "Developmental Sequence in Small Groups."

The following chapter section is divided into the chronological and structural segments addressing: 1) the segmental forming stage – including survey development and data collection; 2) segmental storming stage – addressing the segmental group dynamics during policy project writing; 3) segmental norming stage – putting together segmental policy recommendations and presenting them to the Board at-large; and 4) the Board's performing stage – assembling one concise document for the Coordinating Commission and selecting a representative delegation to present the report to the Commission.

The Segmental Forming Stage

In November of 2002, the Student Advisory Board advisor encouraged students to get together into their segmental groups, introduce themselves, and elect a segmental leader, a student who would report back to the Board at-large on the segmental progress as well as to moving the policy project along. Due to the limited time allowed for the introductions, students quickly elected a group leader on a volunteer basis, and began discussing the purpose of the survey they had to develop. As a researcher in the proposal stage, I was not present during the December meeting when students developed survey questions, but from the individual interview with Jesse, a third-year student from the University of African-American Leaders, she clarified that each segment developed its own one-page open-ended survey to allow for a quick student response. Working with the premise that a majority of students do not have significant time to allocate to the data collection process, no formal collection structure was enforced, leaving individual

students to make their own decisions about how to gather information on college

students' perception of the academic advising system in their institution.[102]

The interview with Jesse exemplified one form of data collection. Jesse, a

political science major, requested ten minutes of randomly selected departmental class

time to distribute surveys to four hundred of her peers and answer any questions they

might have about SAB. What she uncovered was that students were not familiar with

SAB, but that they were opinionated on the student-advising issue. Although Jesse could

have chosen to hand out the segmental survey to the minimal amount required, set by the

Board at twenty, she took the initiative to access political and social science classrooms

and request professor collaboration in the distribution of the survey. Jesse, who was

familiar with political science department, felt that this environment might spark the

largest interests of students and yield a large sample. Furthermore, she felt that this

environment would be open to learning about the unique policy opportunity – the Student

Advisory Board.

The issue of student advising was not only a hot topic at Jesse's institution, but

across the state. Henry (personal communication, March 13, 2003) explains:

> There is little familiarity. The only requirement they have is simply them signing
> off on the class information every semester; one of the things that needs
> adjustment. It is not a very strong system. There have been attempts to change it,
> but it is one of the things that I am attacking on "how I can change that." It is a
> real issue here. Just in terms of my own work with the Honor Council, there are
> lot of violation of students forging advisor signatures on class registrations and
> basically that comes from a couple of things. One, overall, if there is a good
> relationship between advisor/advisee, that would be dramatically reduced. The
> fault there lies in both sides. I think that there are advisors that don't care too
> much about meeting their advisees other than necessary, not taking initiatives to

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[102] Institutions who do not have a Board representative were not included in the policy
study.

> get to know them. And then, there are students who don't care much. They see them as just a person that they need it to sign in order to register for class.

Henry, as an institutional leader, president of the Honor Council, and as a community service activist, felt that the topic of academic advising was a timely issue that accounted for the majority of unethical misconducts by college students. Thus, he saw the Board's opportunity to study this issue as a personal call for action on his campus as well as a chance to bring awareness to the Board of the ramifications poor advising has on students' success.

The issue of advising, although imposed on students by the former Board advisor (Marcus, personal communication, March 8, 2003), was viewed by the Board members as crucial. During the February Board meeting, students addressed the key issues gathered from preliminary data collection. The points raised suggested that poor advising leads to additional years of college education, increased financial burdens, and loss of interest and/or academic performance by students. Furthermore, the Board felt that the inconsistent advising structures across institutions burdened professors who have an overload of advising responsibilities. The final point brought out during that meeting was that the career-center advising system often lacks qualified advisors, causing numerous mistakes in students' schedules. Energized by the advising issue, by the data collection process, and the possible ramifications of the Board's recommendations, the segmental groups began to actively work together in putting together preliminary data and the project management outline for the remainder of the session.

The forming stage of the segmental groups coincided with the student commissioner process, giving students little time to adjust to the segmental teams or to properly set the project outline and the expectations that each student was to meet. The

initial reaction to the project and segmental groups was greeted by students with much excitement, and during the November and December meetings they worked diligently on a survey development and data collection; however, as their focus shifted to the student commissioner process, so did the students' priorities as student leaders within the Board and on their campuses. As a result, the students entered the last three months of the Board session, February through April, experiencing leadership fallouts, over- and under-enthusiasm in regard to the project, and were faced with inconsistent data collection samples across institutions.

The Segmental Storming Stage

The February meeting was focused primarily on the policy project, data collection completion, and analysis. During this Board meeting, the advisor emphasized the importance of positive group dynamics, effective conflict resolution, and professional writing. This storming stage exemplified both group conflict and resolve through which segments went through leadership shifts, and lack of cooperation, followed by successful regrouping and goal accomplishment.

Observing the February meeting, I spent ten minutes observing each segmental group. The private colleges seemed well focused and organized on the surface, discussing how the project should be written. Although each student had a say in the was the report should be presented, Michael took on the role of main summarizer and leader, concluding that he would ask the group at-large for their views for the final report. However, not all students have collected data up to that point or felt comfortable with the data analysis process, requesting from a group additional meetings, primarily via e-mail.

Henry (personal communication, March 13, 2003), in a later individual interview,

addressed this element of the segmental group dynamics.

> My impression outside of our own formal meetings, focus meetings… was to communicate by e-mail… There was an idea to meet in a setting that is more conducive to getting to know each other on the personal basis, which is very important to me as a leader, knowing the people that I am working with and to some degree on a personal level. I think it is difficult. People live in different part of the state, and they are busy. It is difficult.

Henry points to important barriers that some segmental groups faced: 1) Students made

an initial effort to communicate with each other outside the formal Board structure and

bond on a personal level, but their physical distance prevented them from meeting;

however, they did communicate via e-mail planning for upcoming meetings; and 2) The

segmental group played an important place for policy project analysis, but the insufficient

time allocated during the Board meetings prevented a more in-depth discussion among

the members.

The public colleges and universities faced some of the similar challenges to those

of the private segmental group. Lead by Darnel, an African-American from a rural

college, the group was working as a team on data collection and analysis, feeling

comfortable with each other and the task at hand. Due to the restriction of official time

set aside for the segmental meetings, the group felt the need to meet outside of the

specified times, complete a project timeline, and present its findings as soon as possible.

However, much like the private colleges, meeting as a team outside of the Board proved

difficult. Jesse (personal communication, March 7, 2003) clarifies the group's

sentiments:

> It is words, people, "I sent it to you. You look over it. You agree or disagree. I sent it to somebody else." Outside the hour we meet in our groups, there isn't much. Yes, we are from different ends of the state, we have different, many other

activities that we are involved in, but it still has that impersonal aspect to it. I believe that meeting to come will be more interesting because it is there where we bridge the reports. It is at that point that we decide, "Ok, what essentially are we recommending?" And writing, that is just presenting them with what we are trying to achieve… It is going to take a lot of compromise, a lot of understanding on everyone's part to come to that one common conclusion.

Jesse's comments express a high level of frustration she felt toward the group members, who initially wanted to meet outside the Board meetings in order to progress on their segmental reports; however, they failed to do so when the meetings were arranged. As in the case of private colleges, students, although committed to fulfilling their duty as Board members, did not find sufficient time to travel around the state in the off-Board times for segmental meetings. However, as both Henry and Jesse stated during the focus group, they utilized the e-mail as a means of collecting and analyzing data and drafting a segmental report on the findings. Impersonal in member connection to each other, the e-mail did provide for a higher rate of communication and helped students stay on track.

The community colleges were the third segmental group facing perhaps, the biggest challenges. The leader of the community college segment dropped out of the Board due to academic commitments during the first half of the Board session, leaving the group without a leader.[103] In addition, due to the diversity of this segment, which also includes professional institutions, no common survey was developed, which limited the consistency of data collected by the few students that participated. Due to the lack of leadership and data collection system, the group fell behind the other teams, and many discouraged by the process, dropped out of the Board. To aid the team, Marcus, who also

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[103] It is possible that students dropped out due to discomfort with the Board's structure, function, or composition. I was unable to gain access to these students for the purpose of uncovering internal reasons for leaving the Board. For the purpose of this study, the academic rationale provided by the Board members will be accepted as the main reason.

participated in this research focus group, volunteered to be the segmental leader and began working with the group to encourage data collection on their institutional advising systems. As a result, during my February observation, the team seemed more relaxed about the task at hand, although remaining members were visibly worried that their setback would cost the Board a valid, concise, inclusive report on higher education advising. Marcus' actions of stepping up into a leadership role for the good of the group is defined by Yukl (1989) as emerging leadership where by an individual comprehends the complexity of group dynamics and issues with which the group is grappling and uses his/her innovative skills to deal with critical task problems.

The storming stage of the segmental group not only brought up the need for students to collaborate outside the formal Board meetings, but the importance of strong leadership within a group. The Board members, although institutional leaders themselves, played a range of roles within the Board, including those of a followers. From the observation notes, it was clear that a strong leader brings a group together and encourages a strong group work ethic.

The segmental concerns faced by the students were further expressed during the February Board meeting, where students discussed the policy project. As students reconvened from an hour of segmental discussion, a student from a community college sector opened, "We are not getting anywhere! We need structured time for the report. I want to have meetings on the web and a final draft by March! How are we going to do that?" As he made these comments, Jose, a student from a four-year public university stated, "Why are people arriving late? Why are we still in the beginning stages?" (personal communication, February 8, 2003). Michael (personal communication,

February 8, 2003) responded, "I guess in order to look at why people don't show up, you have to look at why they would want to come first of all, because there are a lot of members who don't come at all, who are suppose to be here but aren't. The main reason for that might be distance, lack of interest when they get to the first meeting – not what they expected, lack of warm welcome, which I don't think was the case."

It was clear that some segments felt pressured and stressed over their progress in the advisory report and were looking for structure and general guidelines. To prevent an escalation of comments, Michael (personal communication, February 8, 2003) suggested, "I am looking at the last report as my guideline on the elements, structure, type of font, margins, all that stuff." Alicia (personal communication, February 8, 2003) warned, "Although it can be used as a starter, it may not be applicable for our findings?!" Michael continued, "Public and community college segment chairs have dropped out and new people were appointed. We have two months, one meeting, and sixty pages to pump out. We need to step it up!" To that Jose (personal communication, February 8, 2003) asked, "How do we compile surveys?" Michael answered, "We need to take an initiative. We need to start with strong and weak points of the college advising system in the format that the state can understand. I don't know how to do it, but I'll make sure I find the way." A graduate student stated, "I'll give my academic advising team to look at my survey to give me feedback and help me synthesize."

Jearim (personal communication, February 8, 2003), observing the discussion, spoke out, "You need to find out why does it take six years for one to graduate and how budget cuts are reducing the number of advisors. I don't care about the length. I don't care how you write it. I'll give you suggestions but that's it!" Students nodded their

heads in understanding. As students began packing, Michael (personal communication, February 8, 2003) echoed a message, "Challenge your segmental chairs to be leaders. As leaders they should push forward, get stuff done." Advisor (personal communication, February 8, 2003) concluded, "Leaders should not write the whole thing the night before. You shouldn't carry the load. You are leaders in your own right!"

The storming stage within the segmental groups was a good example of leadership challenges that students face while working in small focus groups. The strong dynamics among all Board members to create a most informative and effective proposal for the revitalization of academic advising shows students' commitment to a common cause, their willingness to speak up as institutional and student leaders, and their strong work ethic to find effective solutions that would satisfy mutual interests. To alleviate further conflict, students quickly found segmental leadership, set rigorous data collection and analysis timelines, and mutually expected full commitment from one another. However, as often found in the storming stages, leaders drop out of the group, student members lose interest or use their efforts in another program, and pieces of a project begin to fall apart. Fortunately, the storming stage of segmental groups corresponded with the norming and early performing stages of the Board at-large bringing quick compromise and solutions to individual concerns. As segmental groups voiced their concerns, the Board at-large listened, asked questions, and brainstormed ways in which to aid individuals in their data analysis, positive group dynamics, and strong teamwork. Thus, students shifted from disconnect and lack of direction in project management, and leadership changes, to a functional set of subteams with a clearer vision of what their next steps should be towards the completion of the academic advising project.

The Segmental Norming Stage

The norming stage, as defined by Tuckman (1965), is adopted by Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (1998) as the time when "the group sets up formal or informal procedures for which things come to the whole group, which reports are needed, who is involved in what, and how people interact" (p. 169). The norming stage allows individuals to establish group identity, better understanding group dynamics such as timeliness of the meetings, delegation of tasks, and production of assignments, among others (Tuckman). Within the Student Advisory Board segmental groups, the norming stage was signified by the collaborative work of the individual segments in data analysis and recommendation writing.

The Student Advisory Board's norming stage was one that primarily took place during the March Board meeting and continued until the conclusion of the April meeting. During this time, the segmental groups worked together on creating a data analysis template with which to outline their findings and recommendations. Furthermore, each segmental group had to work with the Board at-large, keeping them up to date on their progress and requesting aid with the project formulation. All students were clear on both their task and schedule; hence, after the stormy February meeting, students felt a sense of purpose and renewed commitment to a strong, unified set of recommendations to be presented to the Coordinating Commission in late April.

During the March meeting, students showed a strong work ethic as they presented their preliminary data analysis, compiled over the course of the previous three weeks. Michael stood up in front of the Board to address the highlights from the private colleges segment. Michael (observation, March 8, 2003) pointed out that private colleges have

diverse agendas and that each student participating in the segment provided in the report a clarification of their current advising system, methods used to guide students, and individual findings from their institutions. The Board seemed satisfied and relieved by Michael's comments, creating a sense of commitment and nearing closure.

Darnel rose up next, delivering the public colleges segmental report. Proud of the report's early completion, he began to read the executive summary. Darnel's segmental report was greeted with applause by the Board and an acknowledgment of his hard work. Darnel pointed out that he could not have completed the report ahead of other segments if it wasn't for quick data collection, analysis, and formulation by individual institutional representatives (observation, March 8, 2003).

Darnel's leadership as a segmental leader and report writer serves as a good example of norming. Aware of the tight schedule and the need for a concise report, Darnel encouraged his team members to gather their institutional data and current advising procedures early on in the session by giving them clear guidelines on time constraints and key points all students should focus on in their research. In his attempt to conclude the segmental reports ahead of all other segments, he took it upon himself to merge all individual institutional reports into the final set of recommendations by public colleges and universities. His hard work was an example of good leadership and group trust.

Trust is an essential leadership element in which a leader encourages his/her group to actively participate in a task (Rogers in Komives, Woodard, & Associates, 1996). "Trust is necessary to encourage members to take the risks necessary to bring about real change. Trust develops when leaders model and encourage openness,

vulnerability, and self-disclosure" (p. 312). In Darnel's segmental leadership, he

instilled trust in others by delegating data collection and analysis tasks by individual

institutions and giving students full freedom to choose their collection methods and

discretion in preliminary institutional reports. By being task- and time-oriented, the

group itself trusted in Darnel to put together their data into one segmental report. Raelin

(2003), explains this phenomenon, "People learn to count on others because they have

learned that each member, even the weakest, will be kept in mind as decisions are made

and actions are taken" (p. 81). Indeed, Darnel incorporated all individual reports into

one, clearly stating in his presentation the hard work of his teammates.

The norming stage of the segmental groups served to prepare the Board at-large

for its final stage – the performing stage, in which segmental reports were merged into a

set of policy recommendations. In the interest of time, the norming stage was quick and

efficient as all students felt individual responsibility to gather institutional data on

academic advising, group responsibility to meet and work together on creating segmental

reports, and Board responsibility to complete the task before the end of the designated

session. To better understand the ability of segmental groups to work quickly due to

adversity and tight timelines, I posed a question during the first focus group – How does

your collaborative setting influence your leadership development? Michael (personal

communication, February 8, 2003) responded:

> The collaborative setting is something really crucial; the leadership setting at SAB
> is different than anything I have been in before. Especially, with the crunch time
> coming up for the report… we don't have a lot of time, and you have to take a
> leadership role in a small group to get a lot done. It is hard to pull that out of
> people at the short notice... So, that really develops leadership skills. Work with
> people; convince them that needs to get done, and we got to do it now.

Henry (personal communication, February 8, 2003) agreed:

> It does change the way you conduct a leadership role. You have to work with other people. It is more specialized, so you have to tailor your leadership to accommodate special interest. Since it is a small group, there is more than just a selected view to lead. Everyone can take on a really strong leadership role; take on a lot of responsibility. There has to be some sort of focus, some people need to lead as some point and vice versa. I think that collaborative setting makes everyone tailor their leadership abilities to various needs within the group.

The focus group discussion on the segmental norming stage and collaborative setting points to important aspects of the Student Advisory Board as a unique leadership experience: 1) working with a diverse group of individuals under a constraint timeline; 2) accommodating individual interests in order to be more efficient and effective in the project completion; 3) sharing leadership responsibilities within a segmental groups allowing each individual to voice their opinions, present their ideas, and take on responsibility to delegate tasks if their idea is accepted by the group; and 4) taking on a strong leadership role, standing by the group and seeing the project completion. Yukl (1989) points to this form of collaborative teamwork as one of task-oriented leadership. "Task-oriented leadership behavior in a meeting is essential for group effectiveness" (p. 239). Keeping on-task and completing a project in steps allows a group to be effective and remain goal-oriented (Yukl). The norming stage of segmental groups is a visible example of task-oriented group leadership, close collaboration, and goal focus.

The Segmental & Board's Performing Stage

The segmental performing stage coincided with the Board's performing stage, whereby all segmental groups finalized their institutional-type reports and merged them into a policy recommendations presentation for the Coordinating Board. The at-large April Student Advisory Board meeting at the School Without Boundaries College, a small private urban college, served as the final student encounter where all segmental

reports were presented. The outcomes of the segmental reports not only exemplified teamwork, but also the challenges associated with pressing timelines in highly diverse groups.

The presentations started with Michael (personal communication, April 5, 2003), who began with his private colleges and universities report. "Basically, we started off in our report naming who we are, what we are doing, and what the exec report is. Then, we explained how each institutional process works, how many people were interviewed…" Michael continued on to explain that in his segmental group, each student had the opportunity to write recommendations that would not only improve their institution's advising system, but also what the Board should comprise in the final report. One of the main ideas was to create an advocacy group that would allow all advisors to network together across institutions on the flow and changes in their systems, requirements, and students' needs. Jearim, the advisor, thanked Michael for guiding his group towards the completion of the project and suggested that private colleges gather for biannual conferences for advising.

Darnel, who had already presented his public segment report during the March meeting, stated that he had fine tuned the report, and reread the executive summary. All were satisfied, and the Board chair stood up to introduce the community college report. He stated that community colleges face a unique advising challenge because they are seen as transition schools; thus, they have advising for students transitioning from high school to college and only two years later another transfer from community college to universities. Despite this complex system already in place, the segment felt uneasy with the current advising system's failure to monitor students' requirement fulfillments.

Marcus (personal communication, April 5, 2003) followed these comments with a segmental report, "I always have a hard time communicating with people, but essentially I tried to follow the format from last year and try to keep it short, no more than 1,000 words. I talked about why we are doing this and how it is not a scientific study and that our results are relative, not set in stone, like numbers, number of responses, and what they had to say." Marcus nervously flipped pages and stated seven recommendations on how academic advising could be approved. He stated that a lot was done on his own findings due to lack of data from other community colleges. As Marcus flipped through the pages, Bob, who was sitting next to Marcus, stood up to add to Marcus' reports by providing an advising overview of his own institution. Jearim listened carefully but seemed confused about the dual reports, asking why they did not put their findings together. Marcus responded right away by stating that he did not receive the reports in time to include them in his report; rather, he combined three institutional findings into his as a segmental report, but would gladly add Bob's report.

Michael seemed agitated about the results and asked how the report would be synthesized if each person had different ways of representing data and analyzing it. Marcus stated that he summarized what he had. Bob defended the research methods by stating that he only received six surveys back because students in his school did not seem interested in this type of work. Bob stated that the quality and quantity of the surveys was good, and he noted that there couldn't be any generalizations about the results, considering the diversity of advising styles and issues. Jearim took a moment to assess the reports and stated that as long as they are merged into one within a week, their data should be a valuable addition to the policy report.

The April meeting was an example of the performing stage, in which all segments pulled together to formulate reports that were to be merged by the advisor into one report. This stage, however, also showed the challenges a time-constrained group might face. Although two segments had no trouble working together on data collection and analysis, community colleges struggled due to the challenges they faced throughout the Board session. From the change in leadership to the lack of consistency in students' attendance, the community college segment struggled to attain a significant sample size, find proper methodologies by which to interpret and analyze the data, and the time necessary to put together a report. Fortunately, Marcus and Bob found the time to not only collect data but to create a report that would provide insight into the advising system of community colleges.

The performing stage of the segmental group ended with the conclusion of the April meeting. Following the meeting, a delegation made up of Board volunteers attended an Atlantic State Higher Education Coordinating Commission meeting in hopes of presenting their academic-advising findings. The Board advisor and chair, along with Michael, Jesse, Darnel, and Marcus attended the meeting, appropriately dressed in business suits. They presented first on the session agenda and were allocated fifteen minutes for their presentation on academic advising in higher education. Although not coordinated ahead of time, Michael, Darnel, and the Board chair conducted the presentation one at time, each addressing their individual segments.

The students were visibly nervous; however, they conducted themselves professionally and presented their information in a clear and concise manner. As each of them sat down, they listened carefully to their teammates and silently cheered them on.

At the conclusion of their presentation, the Coordinating Commission members began to address the students. The Commissioners were impressed with the findings, the careful data analysis, and with the recommendation on how to improve the quality of academic advising provided on Atlantic campuses. The Commissioners thanked the students for their hard work, acknowledging the importance of the Student Advisory Board as a government entity, the need for further student voice in state politics, and unanimously voted on the resolution to adopt the recommendations set forth by the Student Advisory Board, requesting that all higher education institutions in the state use the Board's recommendations as guidelines on how to improve and/or enhance their academic advising and therefore improve the quality of students' scholastic careers. Their remarks officially closed the Student Advisory Board session – successfully. The Board members remained for the duration of the meeting, taking pictures with the Secretary of Higher Education afterwards. The delegation was happy with the work they had accomplished and agreed to get together in the summer for an informal planning session for the upcoming year.

The Meaning of the SAB to the Participants

Leadership is "meaning making in a community of practice" (Drath & Palus, 1994, p. 4). Leadership experiences are learning opportunities providing new tools and enhancing current skills practiced by student leaders. Leadership experiences are also about collective and individual improvements, learning moments, and inner reflection. As students experience new leadership challenges, they are faced with diverse environments, group dynamics, and tasks that require them to look to their teammates for community building and shared leadership, but also to learn from within, making

meaning of these experiences and spiritually reflecting on their personal and professional goals. Leadership development is for that reason essential in the creation of an authentic self in one's community, as well as uncovering the meaning that is already embedded in one's mind, helping one "see what they already know, believe, and value, and encouraging them to make new meaning. "In this way, leadership generates leadership" (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993, p. xv).

The Student Advisory Board is a phenomenon giving its participants an opportunity to spend a college year representing their institution to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, writing policy recommendations that could potentially affect all students, and communicating in a forum on issues that touch lives of all college students. A unique experience, the Board indirectly enhances students' leadership skills, team-building techniques, broadens the scope of political engagement student can be active in, and serves as a reframing stage in students' college careers, inspiring new ideologies of what service and student leadership concepts mean to them individually.

During the data collection process, in both individual interviews and focus groups, I asked the student participants to reflect on the Board experience, what they have learned about the Student Advisory Board and group dynamics, as well as to make meaning of this experience from the perspective of individual and collective lessons learned. Three patterns emerged:

1. Students reflected on their perception of the Student Advisory Board, its purpose in higher education and as a team-building opportunity focusing on the areas of organizational structure, diversity, and service leadership from a collaborative perspective;

2. Students made meaning of this experience on an inner level, reflecting on the uniqueness of this opportunity and its outcomes; and

3. Students reframed their past leadership experiences with the newfound lessons on student leadership and empowerment.

The three patterns, collective, reflective, and spiritual, create a holistic picture of the Board experience, the leadership development that took place, and the meaning it has had on the individual students as they encounter new opportunities on and off their campuses.

Collectively Smarter

The Student Advisory Board provides students with an opportunity to experience a heterogeneous environment with complex group dynamics, diverse opinions, and multiple tasks constrained by fast-paced timelines. The Board is challenging, promping negotiation processes during debates, effective decision-making, follow-through, and goal achievement, enhancing individual leadership skills and helping participants understand the importance of teamwork and collaboration. Thus, it can be inferred that the Board demands strong leadership and, in the process, develops shared vision, active listening, and embraces diversity (Matusak, 1997). Hence, the Board, through its web structure, encourages a collaborative environment and enhances the ideology that a group is collectively smarter than one individual, or an elite (Vail, 1989). As Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (1998) share, "coalition can accomplish more than single groups; collaborative practices build more community and commitment than isolated, individuals actions do" (p. 7).

Interviewing the focus group participants, I grew to understand the importance of the Student Advisory Board as a collaborative place that encourages active engagement

and diversity, two qualities often neglected de facto by traditional, hierarchical student

organizations and boards. Jesse (personal communication, March 7, 2003) observes:

> To think of having a voice in higher education policy statewide is just totally
> overwhelming sometimes; however, it gives you that impetus to work even
> harder, because you realize that what we say counts! I am probably not only
> speaking of the experience of my student body, but so many others who can
> readily identify with our situation. To know that we can propose this to the
> central body that can execute all the policies, it is like "wow." It gives you more
> drive, it gives you to make the resolution more effective, to make your resolutions
> effectual, to make them meaningful…

Jesse's quote addresses the uniqueness of the Student Advisory Board as a leadership

opportunity and the impact this realization has had on group dynamics and goal

accomplishment. The "impetus" to work hard and to create meaningful resolutions that

will impact college students shows the motivating force behind the Board's positive and

forward-thinking group dynamics and thorough goal accomplishments at the end of the

session.

The collaborative and unique setting of the Student Advisory Board creates

collectively smarter[104] teams. Henry (personal communication, March 13, 2003)

explains, "I have been impressed by the ability of a lot of people to get other people to

focus, work on achieving steps towards an ending goal." This setting also enhances

individual leadership development. Michael (personal communication, February 8, 2003)

elaborates:

> The collaborative setting is something really crucial; a leadership setting at SAB
> is different than anything I have been in before. The whole idea that all people
> from other colleges coming together to discuss something in a committee, you
> have to deal with consensus, work with everybody else, and come up with
> compromises. That is something that is very unique than anything else I have
> ever dealt with… Here, everybody is shooting ideas, and generally, they come up

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[104] Collectively smarter means recognizing that a group can accomplish organizational
goals more effectively and efficiently than individuals acting on their own.

with some type of compromise. It builds your leadership skills immensely, ability to work together. You are coming in, knowing no one. And you have six weeks to get to know them, to learn how to work with them, to be able to communicate with them, decide on the Commissioner, and come up with a finished product to send to the Commission, the report. I think that that is extraordinary difficult to do. So basically, you are taking this group that is completely diverse and does not know anyone, and in few months and only few meetings, turning it into a machine that can pump out this report that has to be a high-quality report. I think that is a tremendous accomplishment. By the end, you can really say you have something there by being able to accomplish this goal. It is crucial for the development of leadership skills and your ability to work with other people.

Michael's vignette confirms the uniqueness of this collective setting, also addressed by Jesse and Henry, and further explains the active engagement of all participants to work as a collective, and, in the process, build leadership skills while accomplishing organizational goals. Henry's (personal communication, March 13, 2003) remarks reaffirm this phenomenon, "That is where it has been really enjoyable, learning from others' leadership styles and about the requirements, their needs for their schools, what they personally want to get out of SA[B]… It is within the group that you really get to know and you get to see other people's leadership skills at work."

Diversity is another collective component that impacted students' goal-accomplishment processes and individual leadership development. Table 14 shows student participants' reflections on the Board's diversity.

Table 14.

Impact of Diversity on Group Collaboration

Student	Vignette
Jesse	The collaborative setting, of course, lends itself to the open display of personalities, attitudes, and skills possessed by an extremely intelligent yet diverse group. From such a display, I can gain different skills that I may not yet possess but deem commendable or I may be able to discern ways in which I may better display skills I may already possess. In so doing, I will better execute my role for the benefit of those whom I represent. (personal communication, February 20, 2003)
Henry	It really is essential for leadership to have a diverse group of people working on a project, a final product with which they are satisfied. I also think it is something that tests leaders, you don't just work with people whom you are comfortable with and you normally work with, but maybe with people who beforehand didn't appreciate what they have. I think that it is a really good learning experience for any leader to be able to work with and appreciate diverse groups. (personal communication, February 8, 2003)

Student	Vignette
Michael	I think that diversity is the key, essential part of leadership development in SA[B], because it is something that SA[B] has that not everyone else does. You get a leader, from every one of colleges and institutions, coming from different backgrounds, and I think that our group especially is very diverse (*private colleges*). You have people from many different schools, backgrounds, all around the state. From personal experience, I think it is very interesting to hear what other people have to say, their experiences... When you can learn to come together, to be a leader in the environment that is very, very different, it enhances your abilities even more because you learn how to deal with people with different problems all at once. And that is much more difficult than catering to people just like you. (personal communication, February 8, 2003)
Marcus	I took in a lot of political knowledge… Just seeing different aspects, points of view. This was a very diverse group for which I am very thankful for, and being from California, a very diverse area, and coming back from California to an area that is less diverse, I enjoy this diversity. (personal communication, April 5, 2003)
Bob	You see how different people come from different backgrounds and make things happen…. If something didn't work, we'll do it again, and make it happen, get it done. (personal communication, March 8, 2003)

Student Advisory Board is a unique experience not only for its web structure and students' role in the state government, but also for the diversity present in the organization, exposing students to a heterogeneous environment traditionally absent from on-campus activities. Diversity in the Board is stratified on multiple levels, race, ethnic background, nationality, age, school type, institutional size, college mission, and geographical location, among others. The multiple personalities, opinions, and backgrounds present were not only noticed from my research perspective while observing the Board session, but also acknowledged by the focus group participants. Henry (personal communication, January 30, 2003) explains, "Working with a diverse group, understanding a variety of perspective, understanding a variety of needs. It is that diversity of opinions and needs that you need to be able to understand and work with." Figure 3 addresses the complexity of diversity at SAB as expressed in Table 14 vignettes.

Figure 3. The meaning of diversity.

- The figure shows two patterns of influence diversity has had on students' leadership development.

- The figure is based on students' vignettes found in the discussion chapter.

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                    ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
                    │  Diversity – a unique experience │
                    └─────────────────────────────────┘
                       │                          │
                       ▼                          ▼
      ┌──────────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────┐
      │ Test leaders' skills/    │   │ Open display of          │
      │ abilities                │   │ personalities            │
      └──────────────────────────┘   └──────────────────────────┘
                  │                              │
                  ▼                              ▼
      ┌──────────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────┐
      │ Work with different people│  │ Learn about others       │
      └──────────────────────────┘   └──────────────────────────┘
                  │                              │
                  ▼                              ▼
      ┌──────────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────┐
      │ Learn to collaborate     │   │ Learn from other's       │
      │                          │   │ experience               │
      └──────────────────────────┘   └──────────────────────────┘
                  │                              │
                  ▼                              ▼
      ┌──────────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────┐
      │ Create collective goal   │   │ Expend political         │
      │ focus                    │   │ knowledge                │
      └──────────────────────────┘   └──────────────────────────┘
                  │                              │
                  ▼                              ▼
      ┌──────────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────┐
      │ Accomplish goals         │   │ Appreciation/thankfulness│
      └──────────────────────────┘   └──────────────────────────┘
                  │                              │
                  ▼                              ▼
      ┌──────────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────┐
      │ Gain/enhance leadership  │   │ Better represent the     │
      │ skills                   │   │ colleges                 │
      └──────────────────────────┘   └──────────────────────────┘
                       │                         │
                       ▼                         ▼
                    ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
                    │     Leadership development       │
                    └─────────────────────────────────┘
```
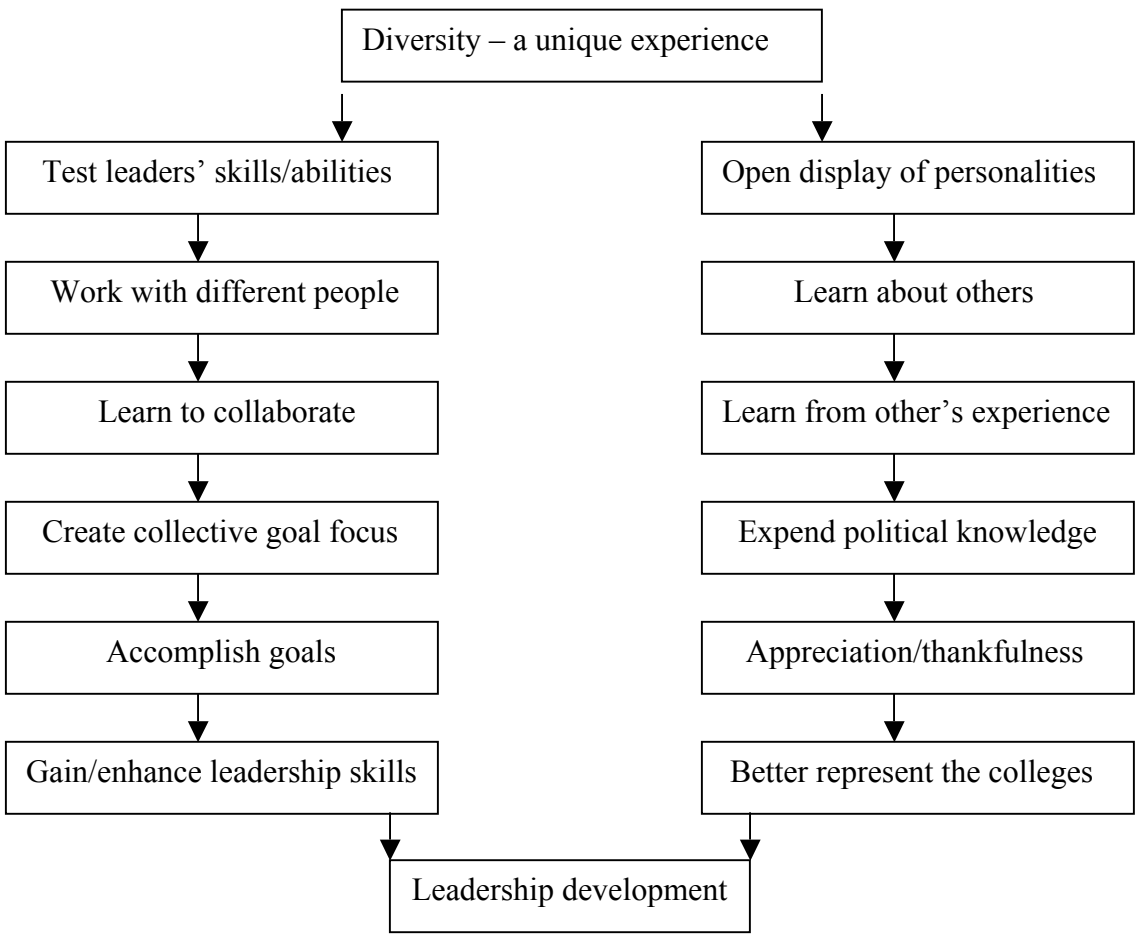
Figure 3 shows two main ways students interpret and make meaning of the Board's diversity. For Henry, Michael, and Bob, diversity serves to test their leadership abilities and skills. It gives them an opportunity to work with people different from themselves and through group work learn to collaborate together, create collective goals, focus on what needs to be accomplished at the Board level, and ensure that all deliverables are met in the timely fashion. Through this experience they are able to enhance their existing, and gain additional, skills pertaining to group dynamics. For this reason, diversity in a collective Board setting is directly correlated to students' leadership development.

For Jesse and Marcus, diversity also means learning about others, through a plethora of students' backgrounds, personalities, and abilities, and learning from other's experiences on how to be effective leaders. Through this mutual learning pedagogy in a policy-conducive environment, students learn valuable political knowledge and feel a deep sense of appreciation and thankfulness for the diversity present. Through this experience students develop new leadership skills and also enhance their ability to be effective institutional representatives. Jearim (personal communication, March 8, 2003), the Board's advisor, during a personal interview after the second observation, acknowledged the importance of diversity in students' leadership development as a collective and as individuals:

> In SA[B] you learn how to relate to different racial backgrounds. A lot of times in schools you only deal with the same folks. If you go to black schools, it's only the black folks. If you go to private school, you all have a similar economic background. But this group, it is all different. It shows you how to interact with all walks of life. From the beginning you don't have that, but by the time it is over you have built relationships with people you come in contact with, different than yourself, and have learned skills, exhibited leadership qualities, showed your leadership widely changing in the changing environment.

Collectively smarter means engaging a group in organizational tasks, accepting each other's differences, embracing diversity, and learning from the experience how to be a more effective leader on, and beyond, the represented campus.

Another key aspect of collective leadership development that has had an impact on individual students has been the premise that the Student Advisory Board is a form of public service giving higher education students a voice on a state level and power to make policy recommendations that can change colleges across the state. Table 15 exemplifies the students' interpretation of the Board as a public service experience.

Table 15.

Student Advisory Board as Public Service

Student	Vignette
Jesse who	I do believe that we provide public service, that it is inherently a public service, whether it is known or not, it is public service. There are those, who I believe, once they do know, would jump at the opportunity once they understand the influence that they have, that we are there representing students, that our voice is actually heard at influencing public policy. The key issue is letting people know and going a bit further than knowing, allowing them to understand. (personal communication, March 7, 2003)
Henry	As a leader, you have to be there to serve others; that is the only way to get things done. A position of leadership is a position of service ultimately, because you are trying to help other people. (personal communication, March 13, 2003)

Student	Vignette
Michael	I think that it is very important to be a student leader that actually serves the community. Students at colleges don't have another voice. They are a huge group of people that have a small voice… I mean, you actually have a situation where you can actually have a real voice, directly to government through students, official positions, like student commissioner, SAB representatives. I think it is crucial important. It gives student representatives that if they have a problem, and even if they don't have a problem and they never, ever, ever, ever, see a representative, they know they can at some point. That is really interesting, really exciting I think. It is fun. I love working with people. The whole idea is really interesting. I love government, that students really have a say in the government. (personal communication, March 8, 2003)
Marcus	We are doing a public service because how else will the lawmakers know what my school feels about the issues before the [Board]?! It is a very good public service. (personal communication, March 8, 2003)
Bob	I tend to be a person who likes to dream, plan, and want to make a better world, that is good. Is it public service? Yes. Would it affect others? I hope so. If it affected me it would affect other people as well. I learned that you serve when you help. The person that gets involved tends to get more out of their involvement than what they put into it. (personal communication, March 8, 2003)

The correlation between public service and the Student Advisory Board presents five key points: 1) Yes, the Board is an important part of public service; 2) The Board is the only statewide organization that has direct influence in Atlantic higher education policy; 3) The Board, because of its unique structure, gives students a say in government matters; 4) The Board, through its function, allows its participants to help each other achieve institutional and collective goals; and 5) Being a place where students serve their institutions and the general student body, it can be assumed that the Board provides an opportunity for public service. Jearim (personal communication, March 8, 2003) agrees:

> What is interesting today, these students represent citizens themselves and where they are from in [Atlantic]. They represent their schools. They are stewards of the name of the school. And they are doing it without…they are not getting paid for this. They are not getting jobs out of this. As far as public policy is concerned, where they are, they would do it no matter what school they are with. They are of service. They are about service. They are stewards, and I definitely think that each of them is doing public service. Once again, they give up their Saturdays, constantly; beautiful days, not getting paid, and they are discussion things from higher education, public safety, all things that would affect students.

The focus group's perception of public service stems from their interpretation that the Board is a unique experience and the only outlet for student voice in the government, thus adding to their commitment as servants. From the advisor's standpoint, it is also the students' collective commitment to be institutional stewards, active citizens, and most importantly, public servants who see great value in the higher education public policy process. Bob (personal communication, March 8, 2003), when interviewed about his perception of the Board as a public service domain, expressed this analogy:

> …I see it as my responsibility to serve others. I think everyone, despite what their talent is, even those who don't know what their talent is, even if it is not the official public role, should serve in some way, helping out, opening the door. If the society is focused on other people that that will benefit themselves. The more you give the more you benefit. I kind of use this analogy… If everyone is

focused on themselves and whatever they are doing is focusing on themselves, we are community of people that are related. If you are with two people and you hold each other's hand, if you fall back, you will be held up, because everyone is interrelated. If everyone served, everyone would be served. In other words, you can go through the society, where everyone was serving others, not mandatory but out of goodness of their heart, that all of the sudden, "I don't have to do as much," you would have to spend all this money on programs because people would take ownership for them, well intended… If people came to things like this and see, "This is how I can participate. I am motivated to do this, maybe I can motivate other people…." Start this domino effect of getting people interested, giving people ownership for their community…

Bob's quote not only addresses his own commitment to the Student Advisory Board; he also presents a philosophy of interrelated public service. According to his analogy, all students should feel a personal sense of obligation, "responsibility" to contribute to the higher education public policy process, to get involved beyond their classrooms and serve the larger community, be the voice of all students. Using the Student Advisory Board as the environment through which this philosophy can be achieved, Bob reiterates the importance of service as a way to make meaning on an individual level as well as the society at large.

Jesse (personal communication, March 7, 2003) reframes Bob's analogy in the positional student-leader terminology, "The service is a dedicated role, more, going beyond the call of duty. It defies the positional boundaries because it is taking yourself with the responsibilities of addressing student issues, addressing their problems, giving all your effort as the medium through which the goal can be achieved." As Alicia (personal communication, April 5, 2003), the Board secretary, concluded in her leadership journal entry:

[SAB] offered me the amazing opportunity of working side-by-side with students from schools around the state, with students of different backgrounds and perspectives. This experience showed me that being purposeful requires having an attitude of hope, an ability to make a commitment; it builds on a sense of

personal and group empowerment... In essence, SAB demonstrated that sharing vision requires insight into one's own actions, the skills to listen to find common objectives, the ability to develop strategies needed to set purposeful goals, and the open mind to imagine possible outcomes. These elements in conjunction created a positive and warm environment where leadership was made known. As a group we all managed to express our views, discussed them, and reached to a consensus shared by all. We created a bond based on trust, support, and encouragement; for example, as the secretary of the group, I always received emails and even phone calls by the members of [SAB] congratulating me for the job that I was doing. That was a great motivator for me to keep working hard, and it was also an expression of teamwork. Without that feeling of true membership no organization can stand and grow, no leadership can ever flourish.

Alicia's vignette echoes the sentiments of other student participants. The Student Advisory Board, through its diversity, provides a positive group environment, purposeful and empowering. As a collective, the group enables students to express their views, share a common vision, discuss issues and concerns, and create mutual trust, support, and encouragement to achieve the goals set through the *Bylaws* and forums.[105] The collective environment also enhances individual leadership skills, instilling hope, commitment, and belief that through collective work, positive organizational outcomes can be achieved.

The Board is a collectively engaged community, one of teamwork and trust (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998). The focus group vignettes shared above show patterns consistent with Gardner's (1990)'s definition of an effective community:

1. "Wholeness incorporating diversity;

2. A shared culture;

3. Good internal communication;

4. Caring, trust, and teamwork;

5. Group maintenance and governance;

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[105] Further research is need to determine the sentiments of students who opted out of the Board prior to the end of the session.

6. Participation and shared leadership tasks;

7. Developing of young people [or new members];

8. Links with the outside world." (pp. 116-118)

The Student Advisory Board exemplifies these elements of an effective community: embraced diversity, a shared culture for positive college change, trust and teamwork, collaboration through policy projects, active participation in forum discussions and shared leadership within segmental groups, individual leadership skill development, and public policy engagement for the betterment of the higher education system in the Atlantic state.

The community environment present during the Board's observed session helped participants gain new leadership skills, thus reaffirming the central premise that the Student Advisory Board is a unique phenomenon providing college students with an opportunity to enhance their leadership skills while working in a diverse environment. The vignettes explored throughout the research show in-depth understanding of the institution and its structural and functional boundaries, as well as the meaning of this opportunity on individual skill enhancement, policy understanding, and meaning-making. Jearim's (personal communication, March 8, 2003) vignette speaks to the uniqueness of the opportunity, diversity, and public service the organization provides to student participants:

> It is a small microcosm of what I like to think of as General Assembly of current and future leaders of the state and local politics at the same time. Most of these students will be leaders after this group. This group makes them better. This group also provides them an avenue in which to share their view and to think about their idea on public policy whether it be higher education, budget… This group allows them to serve as a soundboard, brainstorm other ideas, how to administrate public policy, how to actually make it happen, how to testify, how to organize, who do you need to contact, and how do you go behind closed doors to

make things happen. This group not only pulls this information, but clarifies for some, solidifies, majority know how to drive it home, but ultimately, these students represent other students to better the campus lives, academics. I think this group will continue to do that, and they will continue to do that not only through the Higher Education Commission but through public policy.

The SA[B] is a place where students can be representatives, can share the viewpoints of those students that come from their campuses. They bring each region's viewpoint to this group to be shared with the commissioner member to be taken to the Higher Education Commission. But also, provides for a sounding board, not the political discussion, on major issues and concerns to students that they can take back to their schools and heightened and raise the awareness and consciousness of the ability of universities or colleges about the issues so that they can testify on certain bills, write to their legislator or governor. As far as public policy is concerned, a lot of these students find out that they know about major issues on higher education or budget or things that affect them, they choose to testify, write a report, a written testimony during the General Assembly, legislative sessions, as well as express views through the commission member of the Commission. I think these are things that strengthen their role; their role is to be representative of their students, to represent schools, and take back not only ideas and thoughts of the Commission, public policy, and makers of the public policy, but take back thoughts and ideas back to the campuses to heighten the awareness and consciousness of the campuses.

Reflectively Smarter

Meaning can also be created through an individual reflection of an experience (Wheatley in Hesselbein, Goldsmith, & Somerville, 2002). Making meaning is about associating prior knowledge with new, building additional connections, developing linkages, and extending the meaning to make new correlations (Glatthorn, 1990). In essence, making meaning entails taking time to assess what is happening or has happened and gain a perspective and understanding accordingly (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998).

This case study asks one fundamental question, *How does the experience at the Student Advisory Board create meaning to Board members in their leadership development?* Leadership development at the Student Advisory Board occurs on multi-dimensional levels, from collaborative learning and collective smarts, as addressed in the

previous section, to individual reflections, analysis of the Board as a unique public service experience,[106] and an environment in which student empowerment can be enhanced. During the focus group discussions, all participants addressed the uniqueness of this experience, the Board's contribution to the individual comprehension of the higher education system, political processes, networking, and enhancement of leadership qualities. In addition, the experience has motivated students to engage others in this leadership opportunity. Table 16 illustrates students' reflections on the uniqueness of the Student Advisory Board.

Table 16.

SAB as a Unique Leadership Experience

Student	Vignette
Jesse	It is a unique opportunity. It is leadership; the students do have a voice, a considerable, a lot of leverage in the decisions that are made regarding our own education. Our feedback is totally invaluable… So, there should be more opportunities for us to be involved, in policies that directly affect us, particularly, education. (personal communication, 2003, January 29)
Henry	We usually come from leadership roles in which we have a certain degree of leadership expertise. You come to SAB not knowing what your project is, with whom you are going to work with, and really a good idea of what the final product needs to be, but a difficult idea of how to get there.

[106] Public service as a collective outcome has been addressed in the previous section.

Student	Vignette
Henry	I think that makes this experience uniquely difficult, but an experience that one can really grow from. I think it gives you a unique perspective of the big picture in higher education, get you out of your own comfortable leadership environment and put you in a place where you are subject to completely new ideas, new people, new task, that might not be in your specialty. You are subject to new ideas and new things that probably you are naturally strong, but those are necessary qualities in my mind… (personal communication, March 13, 2003)
Michael	It is a pretty unique experience. It is something that I find very interesting. It is very unique around the country. I didn't know about it, and to find about it, it opens your eyes to a whole new world. I had no idea that there are students on a state level. I thought that they might be, but I had no idea, so to find out that there is something like that where students can have a voice in higher education is tremendous, much needed, definitely an experience. (personal communication, April 5, 2003)
Marcus	It is a unique experience. (personal communication, April 5, 2003)
Bob	I do see it as a unique experience. It is a bunch of people that are from diverse group of linkages, and you get to interact… It's healthy. You get to see the dedication. Hard work breeds hard work. (personal communication, March 8, 2003)

All focus group participants, as seen from Table 16, deem the Student Advisory

Board experience unique. Different than traditional college opportunities, focus group

participants see this experience as new and eye opening, allowing students to have a

voice in public policy and learn first-hand how to engage in the political process.

Michael's (personal communication, January 31, 2003) vignette elaborates on the

Board's experience as a unique public policy opportunity:

> This experience is like none other. Already, I had the opportunity to work with
> other people from different schools, with the head of the [Board]. He already
> took us to a fieldtrip, introduced us to members of House of Delegates and many
> Senators, and gave us a tour of Governor and Lt. Governor offices. That provided
> me with a lot of experience. It allowed me to be comfortable with [the Capital
> City], with the State House, how Governor works in [the Atlantic] state. To be
> able to do what I did yesterday with my school, going down with my school to
> lobby for higher education and the Salinger program. We talk to several senators
> and House of Delegates about our program, trying to gain their support. I was a
> leader of my school's delegation because I have been to the State House and met
> several of these senators and delegates. I knew my way around, and I saw
> [Jearim] when we were down there, and he took us all around, showed us a little
> bit more. That has definitely helped a lot. It has definitely improved my
> leadership skills.

Michael's reflection speaks to the depth that the Board experience has had on his

leadership development. Through personal meetings with heads of the legislative branch

and his Board position, Michael has developed a network that he utilizes to aid his

institution.

Jearim, the Board advisor, also played a unique role. Taking time out of the

designated Board schedule, he gave students tours of the legislative and executive branch

facilities and introduced students to policy makers. Encouraging active citizenship,

Jearim has always asked the Board to support one another and individual institutions in

higher education bills and reforms by testifying, being present during political meetings

and rallies, and participating in letter-writing campaigns. Michael's reflections show that

Jearim has had a positive influence on his leadership development and that the Board's

unique opportunity to be engaged in the political process has opened a door for him to be

an institutional representative, a leader of his college delegation, and to stand out as the

only student who has thorough policy and network knowledge among his institutional

peers.

Reflection also comes from acknowledging the impact the experience has had on

students' motivation and engagement in the political realm. Jesse begins her journal

reflection by exploring the uniqueness of this experience and its impact on her perception

of higher education:

> Bright-eyed and eager, I started the SA[B] experience. What it meant for me was
> working within my own school environment as assiduously as I could to uncover
> the truth about our academic advisement system as experienced by our student
> body. It meant finding the truth, embracing it, be it good or bad, and sharing it
> with others. By no means did I think that the [Board] would be all about my
> institution and our problems but I did anticipate the opportunity to voice our
> perspective and to have it respected. At no time did I believe that my input was
> meaningless. At the onset, I was not too certain what to think of SA[B], as I had
> not been exposed to the framework of higher education in its fullest sense. I knew
> what it meant but little did I know of the process of decision-making and of the
> distribution of power and jurisdiction within higher education.
>   I can think of two incidences that aided me to clarify my perception of
> higher education. The first was a visit to [the Higher Education Coordinating
> Commission] meeting where the pivot of discussion was financial policy. I got a
> bird's-eye view of the manner in which proposals or requests are deliberated by
> the entire commission after being examined by the respective committee and the
> impact that testimonies have within this process. I heard many at school plead its
> case and the fact that that opportunity has provided means for those who are
> affected. A total operating budget for higher education for the fiscal year was
> proposed to the commission to be recommended to the governor himself. That
> allowed me to see directly the relation between the commission and gubernatorial
> authority. The other incident was that of a political discussion at a SA[B] meeting
> regarding the state's funding of private institutions. This led to a very interesting
> debate because seemingly such a decision would affect students within all ambits
> of higher education, be their institution private or public. Though there existed
> the ideological debate of the meaning of private and its inherent proscription of
> public funding, the argument was extended to demonstrate the very reasons for

funding private institutions whether for social or economic reasons. (personal communication, April 5, 2003)

Jesse makes meaning of the higher education system by observing the Board, by actively engaging in institutional discussion, and by participating in the Coordinating Commission public hearings. An international student, Jesse finds the Board experience enlightening, providing her with an opportunity to learn about the higher education system, political activism, and the students' role in these processes.

Jesse's reflection reveals a distinct pattern through which she makes meaning of her experience as a Board member. She began by working within her institution on academic advising improvement, assessing the current system and brainstorming ways to improve the existing structure. Armed with institutional information, she actively participated in the Board, bringing her findings to the forefront and learning from other student representatives about the ways their colleges are handling academic advising. To gain additional perspective on this topic and the higher education system as a whole, she also attended the Atlantic Higher Education Coordinating Commission's meetings where budgetary and policy issues were debated. Through this collective work of the Board and her individual research, Jesse was able to "uncover the truth," meaning, to gain an understanding of the ways academic advising can be improved in all Atlantic colleges and universities. Finally, she used this message and applied advising reforms to her college. By going through this process, Jesse was able to make meaning of her role as an institutional representative and a student leader, to learn about higher education and in particular, academic advising, and to become a policy maker herself, a role she has not experienced in the past.

Michael (personal communication, April 5, 2003), like Jesse, also finds the

experience engaging:

> I think I have confidence, knowledge, and experience. Being at this Board has
> showed me that you can really make a difference, that you can take a leadership
> role and really voice your opinion. I have confidence that students can make a
> difference, that I can make a difference. I think that is very important. It is also a
> tremendous experience. I have met an incredible amount of people, learned about
> committees in general, about legislature body, about government, and how the
> general bodies like these work. So, the experience is something that I can chalk
> up as well as knowledge. With our half hour discussions on politics every month,
> I have learned an incredible amount… I also got a lot of experience and
> knowledge.
> Before this, I knew nothing about any student empowerment on the state
> level, constructively at least; I knew something on a technical level, nothing
> concrete. This has opened my eyes. Coming here, I heard websites, other
> organizations, internships, and tons of opportunities to voice the students'
> opinions on the higher level. It has also motivated me, giving me motivation to
> involve the students from my campus. Being a representative of SA[B] is not just
> sitting on a committee meeting. It is something I take back to school with me,
> explaining what I do to other students – it motivates them. Taking this to my
> school has made my student government much more involved. It has allowed me
> to be more involved. And, I can honestly say, conclusively, in the past year, from
> my involvement in SA[B], the students are more active in the state government.
> Definitely, and I can say this definitely as a fact. SA[B] has motivated me and
> enthused me to make other people excited about government. It has not been a
> complete 180, but there is definitely more involvement, more interest. There are
> lot of people that want to take this position next year, and that is exciting.

Michael's reflections show the multidimensional impact the Board has had on his

leadership development. Confidence, knowledge, and experience, the three outcomes of

Michael's participation in SAB, are powerful tools that Michael has used throughout his

experience to make a difference in public policy, to learn more about the state

government, and to empower his college students to engage in traditional student activist

roles such as the Student Government Association (SGA), and in unique experiences

such as the Student Advisory Board. Due to Michael's commitment to empower the

student voice in the state government, his institution has seen record numbers in applications for both traditional and community service-based organizations.

Henry (personal communication, March 13, 2003), like Michael, views the Board's unique structure and function as a learning opportunity whose lessons he uses to relate to his student body:

> It has been a great learning experience. Our discussion on the budget has been interesting. It has taught me a lot about budget in all the schools and in Jesuit Ideals University. Personally, it has been a great learning experience, and I just enjoyed it. It has been interesting to understand about their schools, the work that they are doing, and from the leadership role, it has really been a lesson on understanding the needs of the people that I haven't considered before. Working on a project I didn't have a lot of experience on and understanding people's needs and hopefully helping them achieve that in the final project. It has been a diversity and a larger project than I have ever been involved in an institution, much less in all the institutions of the state, and have a final project that is going to the education board that will hopefully have influence.

Henry's quote expresses his enjoyment and empowerment received from the Board experience, as well as knowledge he acquired on budgetary issues facing higher education. The understanding of the budgetary situation and academic advising issues have created a deeper knowledge of Henry's own campus climate and have influenced him to make a difference in his school, much like Jesse and Michael.

Marcus (personal communication, April 5, 2003), expressing his reflections on the overall Board experience, shared with me the impact this opportunity has had on his personal view of leadership:

> On the personal level I learned that it is ok not to be a conformist, because everybody here is shaking up things on their campus… I took it very personally that it is not only ok to try to change things, but it is a good thing. If you don't try to change things, you do disservice to yourself, to others, to the nation, because people's ability to change things is what we claim as Americans is our moral authority over other nations.
>
> The most important thing that I have learned is that everything you do has an impact on everyone else. Everything you say in this report will be heard by the

legislature. Simply by doing this research, I have made the school advisement department rethink some things. By asking them questions, simply by asking students questions about what they talked about with their advisors, and then [advisors] coming back to me and saying, "Well, gee, maybe I have to start thinking in a different way. What if other students said about this?" And I made a point not to give a lot of information because I wanted to keep people's responses private. I learned that by just simply being there and being seen, what you do affects everybody. It affects – people see it, and whether they know it or not, it impacts them and changes them!

Marcus' points are crucial in understanding student leadership development. As an institutional representative, Marcus, like his fellow participants, views the Board as a unique and important experience through which change can be accomplished. His reflections point to key elements of this position:

1. It is not ok to be a conformist;

2. Everyone can make a difference;

3. Change is a good thing;

4. It is one's patriotic duty to create change; and

5. One's actions have an impact on others.

Determined to make a difference on his campus, Marcus took a personal initiative to take the Board's academic advising issue deeper, exploring the reasons behind the current system on his campus, to get students' and faculty's opinions on the current advising practices, and to bring to his campus advisors students' opinions in hopes of opening a dialogue between the two on a system improvement initiative. A nonconformist, Marcus views change in a positive light and reflects on the Board's experience as a place that confirms his prior beliefs and reinstates his motivation to stand up for all college students.

These students' reflections correlate closely to the meaning-making process outlined by Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (1998): Data > Information > Knowledge > Understanding > Wisdom > Thought and Action (p. 98). Board participants used their institutional knowledge on academic advising, public policy, and student activism and applied the data to inform the Board, as well as to gain feedback and create knowledge on how to improve their campuses. This knowledge becomes wisdom that students apply to bring reform to their campuses and motivate other students to engage in political activism. To quote Bensimon and Neumann (1993), "In this way, leadership generates leadership" (p. xv).

"Reflection is the process of pausing, stepping back from the action, and asking, What is happening? Why is this happening? What does it mean? What does this mean to me? What can I learn from this?" (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998, p. 99). The case study participants, through the focus group, one-on-one meetings, and journal entries, took time to retreat, to uncover the meaning of the Board experience to them as a collective and as individuals, to regain a sense of renewal, and to continue on with the performing stage of the session, hoping to extend their participation and political engagement after the Board concludes for the school year. Through their reflections they have learned the importance of collaboration, working in diverse environments, and the importance of public service.

Meaning-making through learning is the key theme found in individual reflections. For Jesse participating in the Board meant having a voice in public policy, learning about higher education, and "seeking the truth" – answers on how her campus could improve its academic advising structure. For Michael, the Board experience meant

confidence, knowledge, unique experience, and motivation to encourage others on his campus to participate. For Henry, it meant acquiring new knowledge about higher education issues and transferring them to his institution. For Marcus, the Board experience meant embracing change, not being a conformist, and making a difference that would positively affect other students on his campus. These reflections show both a cognitive and emotional side of meaning-making whereby individuals tie in their knowledge to feelings about the experience and through this process create meaning – what does it mean to them to participate in the Student Advisory Board? Their reflections show honor that they have participated in this unique experience, pride that they have acted as institutional stewards, public servants, and active citizens, and motivation gained through political discussions and the academic advising group project.

Spiritually Smarter

This last dimension of meaning-making is about spiritual renewal, connecting back to self, to the represented institution, and to the organization – the Student Advisory Board. Spirituality, in the realm of student leadership development, is an interpersonal cycle of self and individual values (Hall, 1986). It is an examination of internal values, relationships to others, and commitments made (Drath & Palus, 1994). In the words of Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (1998), "When something is of value, one can make a commitment, find personal purpose, and risk personal involvement – it matters, it has meaning" (p. 98). Being aware of one's values and principals, actively committing to a cause, and serving the greater good builds character and furthers the leadership development of students.

The Student Advisory Board is an opportunity that enhances students' leadership skills through active policy engagement, teamwork, and individual initiatives. As focus group participants engaged in the Board's activities, such as the political forum, commissioner selection, and the policy project, they began to make spiritual connections between the experience and their own leadership development as well as to examine their values and relationships within the Board and their respective institutions.

Connecting to self. Inner reflection, meaning-making, and spiritual connection between an action and self are essential in an individual's leadership development. It is a process through which students examine the overall experience, reflect on what happened and why it happened, but they can also analyze the meaning of this experience to the inner self, their ideologies and values. While conducting individual interviews I asked focus group participants to share with me the internal connection they felt during this experience and the meaning of Board processes on their individual identities as leaders, college students, and active citizens. The quotes below reflect thoughts shared by the focus group members…

> It is, it is developmental, because you always learn. Opportunities arise, and it never stops. There is never a ceiling on improving the skills that you already possesses, and of course, obtaining new ones. It all depends on the environment within which you are required to operate in, in which you are required to function as a student leader, as a service provides, as a case may be. For me, I just jump on opportunities. As I do exude this confidence, I am always willing to, not to measure myself against others, in essence, that is what I am doing, because I need to learn as well, I need to share, I need to learn. And, in terms of the influence that the position takes of the Student [Board], it is right about my alley. It is giving me that inside view on what you are actually going to be dealing with… It is just a consolation of my aspirations, and whether I am more capable of achieving them. (Jesse, personal communication, March 7, 2003)
>
> I have learned that I have the capability to succeed. I learned about myself that I can deal with things that arise. I have learned that I can step up to the occasion when necessary. I learned to step up to the position. It is a lot of work, but I learned that I can do that, manage them, and manage my time as well. I

have learned my leadership capabilities to an extent that I can do things now. (Michael, personal communication, April 5, 2003)

        Character. To not only represent what you personally feel, but what people in your school… When might disagree with you, you still have to bring their views to the [Board], to the meetings! It takes character to do that. All these different leadership experiences, it is always about conflict, about problem solving, but if you don't have character – you can't do it… All the leadership experiences can help you get a well-rounded character, what it means to be a good person. (Marcus, personal communication, April 5, 2003)

        I value integrity, honesty… that is what I do value, otherwise the world would be filled with emptiness. How do you conduct yourself? You conduct it with respect. I come with passion to get things done, and with everyone's interest to do good to better our community, our schools. The question is not if we do. It is always "how." We are diverse, so the values that I hold on to are willingness to take a risk even if that is unpopular, but also kindness and humility… I am passionate, and I want to let that show. (Bob, personal communication, March 8, 2003)

The Board experience, on the inner developmental level, is primarily about self-confidence, a passion for student activism, and leadership growth. Jesse is a strong student leader, able to compete and collaborate with the best, to exude confidence, and go after leadership opportunities. The Board opportunity accentuates these personality traits, but also challenges her to achieve her best and go beyond her initial goals and aspirations. As Jesse mentions in the statement above, the Board experience has challenged her to incorporate all past leadership skills and apply them effectively to achieve institutional and organizational goals. For these reasons, Jesse sees the Student Advisory Board as an opportunity to challenge her leadership and growth alongside other student leaders.

Michael, similarly to Jesse, sees the Board as the place that encourages self-confidence, inner development, and challenges students to think differently about leadership. Through the Advisory Board, Michael gained a sense of courage that he succeed, that he is capable of coping with stress within a group and that he is competent to step up into a positional role and apply his managerial skills to accomplish

organizational goals. Michael concludes that the Board experience has given him a boost in self confidence, his inner capabilities, and taught him new leadership skills.

Marcus and Bob also reflected on the inner meaning of their Board experience. Marcus focused on the importance of strong character, his most important leadership attribute. Through his religious upbringing, activist family, and passion for politics, Marcus saw the Board as an experience that challenges leaders to succeed through character development. Bob, similarly to Marcus, saw the Board as the place where goals can be reached through passion for policy issues. Bob stated that he entered the position with a passion to achieve, to accomplish goals, and do a good job. He followed on these promises through risk taking, inner focus on institutional and organizational goal accomplishments, and a strong work ethic. Through his passion to make a difference on a statewide level, Bob learned the value of integrity, honesty, respect, kindness, and humility. A man of great faith, he incorporates his Christian values in all aspects of his life, but also embraced diversity and learning opportunities, such as the Student Advisory Board. The Board, through its structure, allowed Bob to balance his individual commitment and values with those of a great group, because all students were equally leaders of their schools working together to make a difference in their schools and communities.

These examples of spiritual reflections go beyond the lessons learned about organization and managerial skills; rather, they focus on the inner self, personal attributes that contribute to the satisfactory fulfillment of duties at the Student Advisory Board, as well as attributes that are developed due to SAB. Such attributes include higher self confidence, ability to achieve, belief in individual leadership capabilities, integrity,

respect, passion for college issues, kindness, humility, and risk taking, among others.

The focus group participants, representative of the larger Board, all feel that the Board is

a unique experience where leadership skills can be enhanced, but also where students can

grow individually. Jearim (personal communication, April 8, 2003) echoes the inner

connection students experience at the SAB:

> I viewed the student leadership development at the [Board] as an important tool, an important outcome of the Student Advisory [Board]. A lot of these students are already leaders in their traits and personalities. Some even know in their mindsets where they want to be, but when they get here, a lot of people have similar ways that their leadership skills are pulled out. At the Student Advisory [Board] they have to learn how to deal with other people with dominant personalities. They have to deal with learning how to address other people's viewpoints, how public policy or school policy, they are the only ones that have that… They also have to deal with people who have goals in their lives that are stellar, who want to be future politicians, a public policy major. The Student Advisory [Board] puts them in the position to figure out who they are, who they want to be, to expand, grow upon. It forces the growth! Every month they are forced to grow. And now, we have the politics section where they have to think about public policy and debate their policy amongst colleagues with different racial and ethnic backgrounds, different schools, different goals… It does help them grow.

The advisor's vignette makes a clear connection between leadership and the Board,

stating that the outcome of the SAB experience is leadership development. Furthermore,

his statement supports those reflected by students' vignettes that the Board teaches

students valuable leadership skills, such as how to work in a diverse environment, but

also gives them room to grow as student leaders, policy activists, and citizens. Through

the political discussions and intense group work, the students are given an opportunity to

see who they are as leaders, where they want to be, and what they have to do to get there.

Connecting to others. The other spiritual connection is one between individual

members and other Board participants and the represented college students. The Board,

as a unique web structure, provides student participants with a diverse membership of

successful leaders with equal decision-making powers and parliamentary rights. Unlike

traditional campus organizations and community service formats, the Board members

have extraordinary rights and responsibilities, which they equally share during both at-

large forums and segmental groups. Furthermore, the students are entrusted with passing

the message of activism on to their student governments and other college organizations.

For those reasons, the exposure to new ideas, skills, and values is significant, making the

overall connection to others an important element of individual leadership development.

Henry's (personal communication, March 13, 2003) reflection explains this correlation:

> I think that I like to learn as much from the fellow members there. There are a lot
> of impressive people there, really enjoy talking with them. And, on a personal
> level, learning from their experience, and their schools, and their leadership
> experience. So, that is one. Two, I guess, be able to bring something back to
> [Jesuit Ideals University] from SA[B]. So, in our focus group for colleges, if we
> come up with five good ideas for improving advising, bring back those five ideas
> and bring back here and meet with people that nominated me to be on SA[B], and
> tell them what I learn, and hopefully, that is of help to them. Three, from a
> personal note, begin to be able to learn the policy process, understand the bigger
> picture that I haven't considered before I got involved. Also, most importantly
> and lastly… brining something back here is a big obligation and achieves the
> mission of SA[B] so far.

Henry makes a strong correlation between the Board and his institution. As a devoted

Board member, Henry actively participated in the monthly meetings, segmental groups,

and political forums. On a personal level, the Board experience exposed him to new

leadership challenges and enhanced his abilities. However, his primary concern was to

bring back Board ideas, policies, and recommendations to his institution and aid his

cohort of both undergraduate and graduate students.

Michael (personal communication, April 5, 2003), similarly to Henry, reflects on

the importance of this dual connection – with the Board members and his constituency:

It has opened my eyes to something totally new, in which, I believe, I am just beginning in. I would like to stay involved with the Student Advisory [Board] next year. It is tremendous. I think that student involvement in higher education is crucial, and I've seen that first hand… I think it is a fantastic, fantastic idea, and I think it is brilliant that it is unique, and allows, gives students a real voice. SGA students don't have a true voice in the State. They can bring issues to the president, to the [Board], so much gets done at school, but no one is there to hear them on a state level other than the president of the school. And the president of the school is many times not accessible to students, he is not really a student himself, it is kind of a different level. SA[B] gives students a place to go. I think it needs strengthening.

[The experience] has also motivated me, giving me motivation to involve the students from my campus. Being a representative of SA[B] is not just sitting on a committee meeting. It is something I take back to school with me, explaining what I do to other students – it motivates them. Taking this to my school has made my student government much more involved. It has allowed me to be more involved. And, I can honestly say, conclusively, in the past year, from my involvement in SA[B], the students are more active in the state government. SA[B] has motivated me and enthused me to make other people excited about government. It has not been a complete 180, but there is definitely more involvement, more interest. There are lot of people that want to take this position next year, and that is exciting.

Michael's vignette expresses his enthusiasm for the Board as a unique and empowering experience and, moreover, as an opportunity that needs to be addressed on individual campuses, motivating other students to participate. Through empowerment, Michael has brought positive change to his campus, applying recommendations found in the academic advising report to his campus and sharing his networking knowledge of the state legislature with the academic leaders of his campus. Michael (personal communication, January 31, 2003) shared his reflections with me during our first personal interview:

I believe that most certainly, that I have a much more capability of making changes at my institutions because of SA[B]. That is without a doubt. First of all, holding the position itself. My faculty sees, "He goes here. He represents us," so when I bring up an issue, they listen. As a vice chair, it makes them listen even more… The perfect example of one where the head of academic advising at my school is using me through the Student Advisory, to basically set up a network of academic counselors across all different schools, maybe an internet site were they can post their ideas/problems, so that they are all tied in together. They could maybe have a conference a year to fix all the problems, get the bugs out of the

> system, so that academic advising is something that works with less costly, which is really crucial with the upcoming budget crisis, when we will be losing a lot of money. That is something where you don't need a lot of money, but it really improves quality… The only way we can get more out of less money is to have more innovative ideas. I think that SA[B] is a perfect forum to house those ideas.

Through his reflection it can be inferred that direct involvement at the Board and participation in public policy has brought innovation and student voice to his campus. With the Board experience under his belt, Michael has become a spokesperson for his institution on higher education issues, but has also encouraged his fellow college students to engage in political activism on and off campus, to learn more about the Student Advisory Board, and see the importance of the students' voice in the Atlantic state.

Meaning-Making Overview

Leadership development in college students is an ongoing process empowered through traditional and unique opportunities for both positional and nonpositional leadership. Through these experiences, students develop valuable skills on how to work with others, communicate ideas, empower others through active engagement, and make a difference within their community. Zimmerman-Oster and Burkhardt (1999), on behalf of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, studied student development initiatives such as personal and societal values, leadership skills, leadership understanding, civic responsibility, and community orientation. Their findings show that students who participated in extracurricular activities gained greater leadership skills than those who did not participate in activities (Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt). In addition, the findings concluded that students who have a leadership background are more likely to "develop civic responsibility, leadership skills, multicultural awareness and community

orientation, understanding of leadership theories, and personal and societal values"

(Clark, 2001, p. 7).

Motivating students to participate in campus programs and activities has been a successful tradition. However, engaging students in political processes through empowering positional roles has not been a traditional practice of higher education administrations. According to Phyllis Mable and David DeCoster's (1981) article "The College Environment," students throughout the history of higher education have felt powerless on their campuses, separated from public policies that impact their lives. When asked by Mable and DeCoster about a campus administration and its relationship with student leaders, a male student responded, "The administration does not listen to the student government. Everybody is laid out, and plans are made for ten years in advance" (Mable & DeCoster, p. 19). Other student leaders who felt that their scope was limited to small community projects, internal campus affairs, and social event planning have often reflected this sentiment. The Student Advisory Board provides a breakthrough avenue to this traditional perception, allowing students to represent the interests of their campus, but to go beyond their classroom and student government and actually create public policy recommendations that could potentially affect all college students in the state. This unique experience, therefore, serves to motivate individuals into political activism, but also allows each student to be a student advocate, and institutional steward, to practice public service through a formal organization, and to strengthen their own presence as active citizens willing to stand up for the rights and ideals of all students.

Leadership development, along with the above mentioned skill enhancement and goal achievement, primarily lies in students' ability to make an activity meaningful to

themselves and those they serve (Pondy, 1978). The phenomenon of the Board elevates this need to reflect and make meaning for the sake of individual growth and collective benefit. Making meaning of this experience for the focus group students interviewed meant correlating past experience, to the existing one, comprehending the task accomplished and its uniqueness, embracing the experience, and connecting it back to self and those represented. Strong institutional leaders with a plethora of positional and service-oriented experiences, the focus group participants were aware of their leadership styles, personality traits, general group dynamics, and project management skills prior to their Board experience, but saw SAB as a unique opportunity to learn about higher education, to make a difference statewide on policy and student affairs issues, and to learn new leadership skills from each other.

Being collectively, reflectively, and spiritually smarter meant understanding the uniqueness of the Board experience, embracing its diversity, and learning to work in heterogeneous environment, as well as learning the importance of activism, non-conformism, and service. Individually, students connected this experience with confidence building, project and stress management, leadership challenge, and success. Finally, on a spiritual level, students saw the Board as a developmental process in which one could feel self-confident, preserve their core values and beliefs, exhibit strong character, integrity, and honesty, and be passionate about student issues, politics, and public policy. As expressed by the Board advisor, the Student Advisory Board encourages growth, demands leadership skill enhancement, and creates an environment in which students can develop themselves further as student leaders, public servants, and active citizens.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

The purpose of this case study is to understand the leadership development

processes that take place at the Atlantic State Higher Education Coordinating

Commission's Student Advisory Board. Unique in its web structure, student diversity,

leadership opportunities, and its role in state public policy, the Student Advisory Board

embodies an empowering environment through which students' political voices can be

heard, policy recommendations developed, and relational leadership skills enhanced. The

central research question is, *How does the experience at the Student Advisory Board*

create meaning to Board members in their leadership development? Understanding

individual leadership backgrounds prior to the Board session, as well as the interaction,

teamwork, collective growth during the session, and meaning-making, are crucial steps in

comprehending the contextual and conceptual dimensions of leadership development that

occur within the parameters of the phenomenon explored.

The Student Advisory Board is a phenomenon. Although the higher education

community recognizes the importance of student voice in college affairs, for the majority

of states that role remains within the realm of student government associations and

college senates.   In some instances, students have a nonvoting representative on the

higher education state governing or coordinating boards, but their direct impact on public

policy is often minimized by the lack of de facto powers. In the Atlantic state, students

do have a statewide voice. Due to the lack of research on student leadership development

in policy-oriented high-level positions, this case study seeks to understand the

phenomenon (see Figure 4).

Figure 4.   Students' leadership development at SAB.

- The arrows show developmental relationship between the variables.

I Understanding self	YOU Understanding others	WE Collectively smarter
Self growth	Feedback	Teamwork
Knowing-being-doing	Knowing-being-doing	Knowing-being-doing
Origin > Beliefs Positional leadership > Character Nonpositional leadership > Values/Ethics	Respecting others Communicating Debating Decision-making	Working in diverse environment Learning organization Goal-accomplishment
Forming stage of organizational development	Storming stage of organizational development	Norming and performing stages of organizational development

Steward ⟶ Public-servant ⟶ Citizen

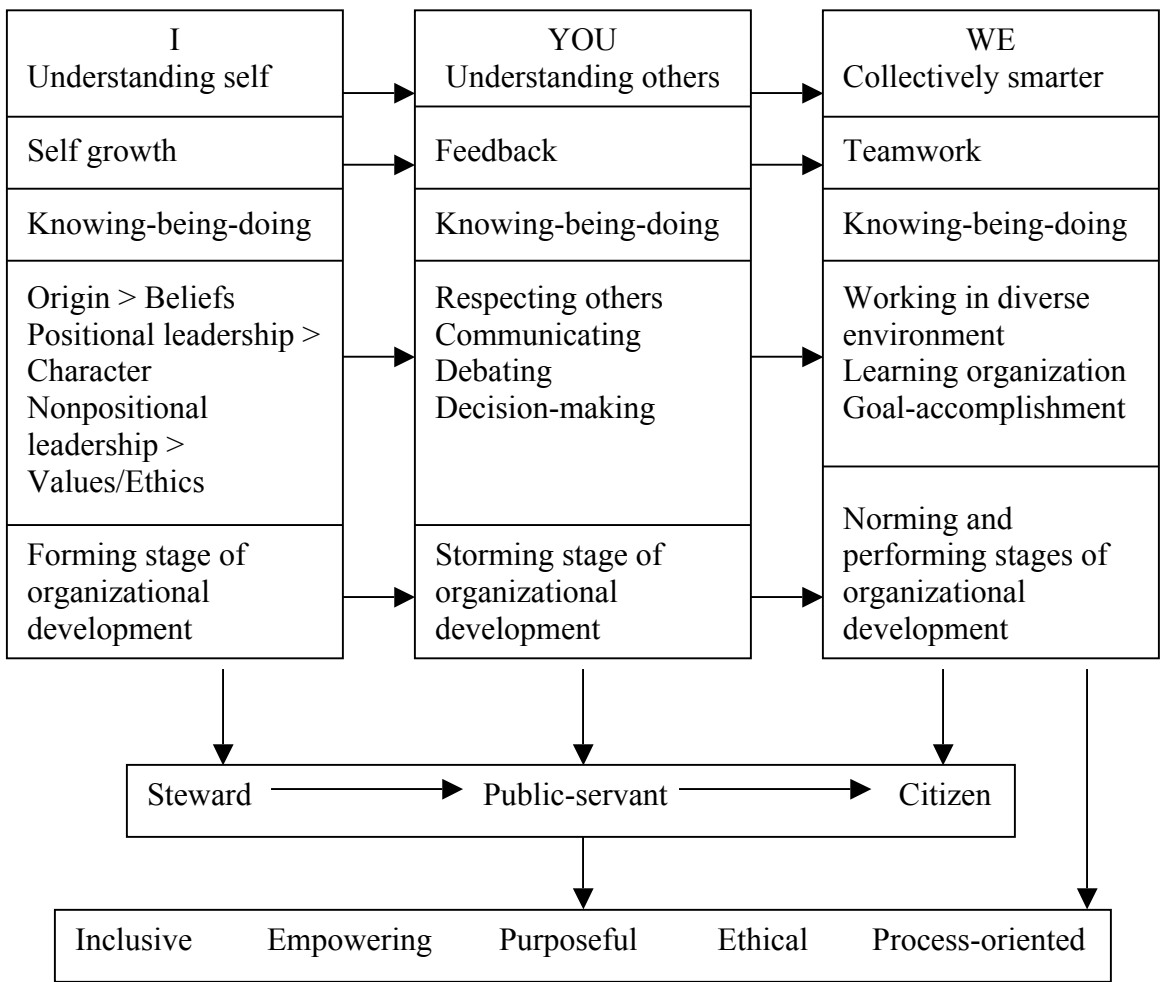| Inclusive   Empowering   Purposeful   Ethical   Process-oriented |
|---|

Figure 4 shows the three main levels applied in this case study, I – You-We (Buber, 1958). Figure 4 also shows two primary dimensions used to enhance understanding of students' leadership development in the Student Advisory Board, the individual development as institutional representatives – stewards, Board members – servants, and policy advocates – citizens and the group development through the five pillars of relational leadership. Through the stages[107] of organizational development, students not only enhance their understanding of self, others, and the group as a collective, but follow the pillars of successful group dynamics: being inclusive, empowering, purposeful, ethical, and process-oriented. The three levels[108] and the key individual and organizational dimensions provide a contextual framework of student leadership development, creating an understanding of what a unique statewide organization means to students in their leadership development.

The I-You-We levels of analysis applied in this case study have been adopted from Buber's work (1958) as found in *Exploring Leadership* book (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998), which addresses students' development through an organization. The three levels show exponential growth of an individual as a team member and his/her development and/or enhancement of leadership skills that enable them to actively and

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[107] Stages of organizational development are: forming, storming, norming, and performing (Tuckman, 1965).

[108] Levels referred to are I-You-We (Buber, 1958) constructs and their subdimensions of analysis. Examples for each level include: a) I's exploration of subdimension "positional leadership" led to an in-depth understanding of students' character development; b) You's analysis of others through listening enhanced individuals', and thus, group's, ability to communicate, debate, and make decisions; and c) We's focus on the relational pillars and the emphasis on teamwork not only created positive group energy in goal completion, but also enhanced students' leadership, skills such as working in a diverse environment.

effectively participate and communicate their message within the parameters of the organization and the represented communities. The *I* level refers to students' understanding of self, their past leadership experiences and skills brought into an organization, and their view of the newly established role during the forming stage (Tuckman, 1965) of a group. The *you* level addresses the initial interactions through the storming stages of the organizational development, with an emphasis on communication and understanding of others. The last level is the w*e*, present through the norming and performing stages of the Student Advisory Board, whereby individuals begin working as a team, concentrating on the collective goals, task-orientations, and successful completions of projects. Although the individual skill development and understanding of others continues during the *we* level, the primary focus of all students participating is on the organizational goal accomplishment.

The I-You-We (Buber, 1958) levels provide students with an opportunity to expand their conceptual understanding of self, others, and the collective (Conger, 1992; Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998). These levels allow an individual to grow on a personal basis, learning and experiencing new leadership environments; to modify their actions through constructive feedback provided by the group; and to enhance skill developed through hands-on leadership training, organization-specific projects, and the time constraints that accompany this unique environment (Conger). Through personal growth, feedback, and teamwork, each individual at the Student Advisory Board is able to stay motivated while learning how to collaborate in diverse groups, work on complex tasks, and make decisions that would not only impact the organization, but the other students that the individual is representing or serving.

The multidimensional developmental experience at the Student Advisory Board allows students an opportunity to practice another relational component, the knowing-being-doing. Meaning, students as stewards and citizens recognize a particular set of issues on their campuses that need to be addressed via policy recommendations, forums, or public testimonies, and educate themselves through the Board and respective campuses on the complexities of these concerns. Knowing these issues, themselves, and others, students are able to make a difference. Passionate, motivated, and committed to a resolution, students develop an inner drive and project their concerns during the Board meetings in an ethical, inclusive, and informative way, engaging others in the process. Educated, motivated, and collectively smarter, a student begins to act on an issue, committed to bringing a resolution to his/her community (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998).

The focus group members, like their fellow Board members, serve, through this organization, three roles: as institutional stewards, public servants, and politically engaged Atlantic state citizens. As stewards, students are entrusted by their institutions to make decisions beneficial to their college's values and policy needs. Thus, students are expected to uphold the college mission and remain attentive to students' issues. As servants, students serve a role of a public figure responsible for addressing and improving student issues pertaining to all higher education institutions. Working collectively with other institutional stewards, these students have to balance the interests of their college with their duty to recommend policies and conduct forums whose outcomes would be beneficial to all campuses, such as enhancing the quality of academic advising for both undergraduate and graduate students, a policy project assigned for the 2002-2003 session.

Finally, as citizens, students are Atlantic residents, educated in the realm of public policy and politics and entrusted with the tools necessary to make a difference in their community, be that on or off campus. For some, this role is fulfilled through volunteer public services such as the fire department; for others, it is through political legislative processes representing the voices of marginal populations. Stewards, servants, and citizens, the Student Advisory Board members are change agents actively participating on their campuses, within higher education organizations, and the state level, showing a significant level of leadership skills, service and civic orientation, and commitment to student advocacy.

Stewards, servants, and citizens, students utilize their leadership skills at the Student Advisory Board for the purpose of meeting mandated objectives, innovating on the future directions the Board can take to better serve college students, and in the process, learning new relational skills of effective leadership.   Inclusive of all participants, the Board members embrace their diversity and find strength in insightful discussions on public policy, student activism, higher education, and individual viewpoints. Due to the web design of the organization, the information flows freely, parliamentary procedures are respected, and individual viewpoints honored with attentive respect. Empowering, students support one another during the discussions, Board projects, and provide assistance and motivation in individual initiatives. Purposeful, students engage in Board meetings with the intention of selecting the next student commissioner, testifying on hot higher education issues, and writing policy recommendations on academic advising that could possible reorganize the current system and support services. Ethical, students hold each other to high moral and ethical

standards and openly confront any discrepancies between what is expected of student leaders and their possible questionable actions or intents. Finally, process-oriented, students are fully aware of the Board's history, its purpose, and time-sensitive projects. Thus, students have to continuously manage multiple tasks, stay focused, and support collective efforts, from planning through to the execution and evaluation. The five pillars of relational leadership development are crucial processes for the successful completion of the Board's goals. Students' collective positive energy, focus, and determination to accomplish goals produce satisfactory outcomes for students across the state, with particular regard to academic advising, and in the process enhance Board participants' leadership skills.

Derived from the focus group participants' examination of the Student Advisory Board as a phenomenon and the paradigm of student activism in higher education, leadership has been defined as the ability to recognize the group's needs and wants, collaborate within a team as an equal, motivate and empower others, create and share a common vision that would lead to goal accomplishment, and support innovation for positive organization change. Socially constructed within the parameters of the Student Advisory Board's web structure, bylaws, and parliamentary procedures, student leadership most closely relates in its practice to the relational model of leadership development (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998), whereby a given group undergoes organizational stages (Tuckerman, 1965) of development while successfully practicing the five pillars of relational leadership. On an individual level, this form of leadership provides students with an opportunity to derive lessons about themselves as student leaders, to learn from others, and to reflect on the meaning of their experience as it relates

to their role as college students, public servants, and active citizens. The Student

Advisory Board teaches students about diversity, student empowerment, civic discourse,

and how to connect these lessons back to self and the represented institution.

Discussion of the I-You-We Framework Through Four Organizational Stages

Student leadership development can be experienced through multiple

opportunities. A student develops and enhances his/her leadership skills in the

classroom, at on-campus organizations, within interest groups, through community

service, and on public boards, such as the Student Advisory Board. Through each one of

these experiences, both positional and nonpositional, a student uncovers more about their

own understanding of leadership and the benefits that service-oriented leadership has in

society. The students also have an opportunity to learn about themselves, who they are as

individuals, student leaders, public servants, to build character, and to develop a strong

set of values. Student leadership roles are "not just experiences but opportunities for the

development of skills and techniques of group leadership as well as understanding of

human relations" (Klopf, 1960, p. 30).

There are four "Ls" of leadership by which one can understand the process of

leadership development in students: personal, dyad, group/team, and collective. The

personal level refers to individuals who comprise an organization, a group. It is an

individual's personality, traits, characteristics, and skills that are brought into a team

(Dansereau, Alutto, & Yammarino, 1984). The dyad level relates to the interdependence

of individuals and the importance they bring into the group dynamics and goal attainment

(Dansereau et al.). The group/team level is a link of individuals face to face and their

initial engagement in organizational projects. Finally, the collective level is a group of

individuals who share common expectations, goals, and similar functions within the group (Dansereau et al.). These four levels create a pattern of growth by which students develop leadership skills within an organizational opportunity or community/public service.

The four "Ls" parallel the four stages of organizational development: 1) forming; 2) storming; 3) norming; and 4) performing (Tuckman, 1965). The four stages speak to the interaction of organizational members from the initial contact to the goal completion. The focus of the forming stage is on personal identity and interpersonal relations (Matusak, 1997). It is during this stage that organizational members are first introduced to each other, learn about organizational structure and function, and wonder "if they will fit in, if they will have any influence on the group, and if they can trust the others who are potentially part of the team" (p. 73). As members meet each other and began the learning process, they also begin working together on an agenda, organizational vision, strategies for producing the changes needed to achieve that vision, and establishing short- and long-term direction that organizational members should take (Conger, 1992).

The storming stage serves to develop "a human network for achieving the agenda, aligning people, communicating the direction by words and deeds to all those whose cooperation may be needed so as to influence the creation of teams and coalitions that understand the vision and strategies and accept their validity" (Conger, 1992, p. 20). Matusak (1997) sees this stage as confrontational, whereby individuals are learning to "deal with each other," accept differences, and recognize similarities. Although there is little energy left in the process, it is during this stage that the group becomes a

collaborative unit, trusting and respecting each other, and willing to fulfill their agenda (Matusak).

Once the individuals become a collective they enter a "norming" stage, motivating, inspiring, and energizing each other to overcome barriers (Conger, 1992). They begin to collaborate with each other for the "greater good" – achieving the group's objective. "The members of the group begin to relax; they accept and respect the many different lenses through which their colleagues view the vision, and begin to work together toward consensus" (Matusak, 1997, p. 74). The members work as a team, accepting diversity and difference of opinion, and working together towards an outcome.

Through the performing process, the goal-path is fully established and leads to change (Conger, 1992). During this stage, the team works in harmony and understanding, working together to complete a goal (Matusak, 1997). Once a goal is accomplished, the group is able to adjourn, to reflect, reframe, and make meaning of the processes, problems, and outcomes (Matusak). The four stages of organizational development serve to explain the group processes and individuals' roles within.

In this case study the four "Ls," as well as the organizational stages (Tuckman, 1965) described above, correspond to the students' development. Table 17 explains the correlation among the three organizational constructs.

Table 17.

Stages of SAB Organizational Development

Organizational development	Oct./Nov.	Dec./Feb.	March	April
Relational leadership model	I	You	We (transition)	We (collaborative)
The four "Ls" of growth	Personal	Dyad	Group	Collective
Organizational stages	Forming	Storming	Norming	Performing

As reflected in Table 17, this discussion is divided into four parts:

- The I – personal dimension of student leadership development. During this forming stage, students look at their past leadership experiences in order to understand the significance of their new role as Student Board members. They also use this period to uncover who they are as student leaders, why they are part of the Board, and if they want to partake in this experience.

- The you – understanding of the Student Advisory Board's processes and learning about the other members through the student commissioner selection process. The students as a group experience brainstorming of ideas, issues, and begin to understand each other's goals and perspectives. During this stage students struggle with diversity of opinions, leadership styles, and institutional goals, and begin to discuss, negotiate, and compromise.

- The we (transition) – the norming stage of student development in which student begin team building, working together towards organizational goals, and advocating the group's vision (e.g., policy project writing).

- The we (collaborative) – the final stage of student leadership development within an organization is the performing stage, in which students pull together their collaborative work in order to achieve a collective goal.

The Student Advisory Board members enter the experience carrying with them unique leadership characteristics, previous skills developed, lessons learned, and individual expectations on what their role should be as institutional representatives and public policy servants. The students' diversity in leadership experience brings together a plethora of perspectives that enables students to learn from each other and frame/reframe their own identity as student leaders. The experience also enables students to work as a team and collectively create policy recommendations that could potentially change the way higher education handles particular issues.[109] The results of the experience are: better understanding of self as a student leader, the interconnectedness and mutual empowerment of student leaders, and the importance of student participation in higher education.

I – Understanding Oneself

Understanding oneself is a continuous process of reflection, meaning-making, and correlation to the present. For the participants of the Student Advisory Board, leadership development has been an ongoing process dating back to their family/demographic origin, high school, and college positional and nonpositional roles. Through each of these dimensions, students uncovered more of themselves, their connection to educational and social issues, their values, faith, and importance of family, as well as their personality

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[109] This year's issue focuses on undergraduate and graduate student advising.

styles. The following discussion addresses these dimensions and how they shaped

students' leadership prior to the Board experience.

    Origin. Traditional research on student development connects family, religion,

and environmental factors with self-concept,[110] self-acceptance, and self-esteem.[111]

According to James McGregor Burns, youth finds motivation to lead embedded not only

through family support but also due to "two powerful influences… One is a continuing

need for self-esteem… The second is a developing need and capacity for social role-

taking" (Conger, 1992, p. 23). "The striving for self-esteem and the evolution of a sense

of human empathy work in harmony to bring out the potential for leadership" (Conger, p.

24). It is these elements that shape the raw leadership materials of personal identity into

actual leadership by providing essential knowledge and behavioral skills (Conger). These

elements provide paths through which leadership potential can be taught, and leadership

skills, conceptual abilities, needs, interests, and self-esteem enhanced (Conger).

Furthermore, they manifest themselves through the ability to set direction, think

strategically, and strive for goal accomplishment. Although traditional research makes a

valid connection between origin and self-identity/acceptance/esteem, in this case study,

the data suggests emergence of an additional dimension – that origin defines the students'

concept of leadership and motivates them to pursue leadership and service-oriented roles

in society, as seen in Table 18.

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[110] Self-concept is defined as an objective description of oneself, based on an individual's roles and attributes (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998).

[111] "Self-esteem is the ability to know that you can rely on your strengths, competencies, and skills in the many contexts in which you find yourself" (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998, p. 113).

Table 18.

Origin and Its Connection to the Concept of Leadership

Factors	Student	How does a factor shaped the student
Family	Marcus	Strength to challenge status quo; team leadership
Religion	Male students	Importance of service leadership
Culture	Jesse/Marcus	Understanding diversity and civic activism

Table 18 shows that all focus group participants were deeply influenced by the three major external factors. For Marcus, two primary influences have been his family and his childhood in California. Through the encouragement of his family and social activism in the African-American community during his stay in California, Marcus learned the importance of challenging the status quo through civic and political activism. His concept, "Decisions are made by those who show up" (personal communication, April 5, 2003), emerged not only from his parents' positive influences, but also through family trauma in which he had to step into a leadership position in order to aid and bring resolve to his "team," his family.

For Jesse, the primary influence has been her cultural heritage. Being born and raised in Jamaica gave her a sense of identity as an African woman. Coming to America to receive higher education only accentuated her cultural upbringing as she charged into community service and leadership roles in order to help her peers and make a difference in the Atlantic state. As she wrote in her journal, leadership is an enhancement of her knowledge, an opportunity to learn more about the politics, policy, and society in which she lives.

For Michael, Henry, and Bob, the major influence came from their Christian upbringing, from their church and its community activities. Through their church activities, they participated in Christian Sport Fellowship and in global missions and local community drives to help those in need, under the poverty line, who struggle to receive the education and supplies other children have as a status quo. Religion, like family and cultural background, served not only to shape self-identity, but also to define leadership and its benefits. The factors discussed above create a sense of social, historical, and cultural contexts in the students' backgrounds (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) and help define their understanding of leadership.

High school leadership background. For the five focus group participants, high school leadership was primarily about gaining positional role experience. Although their stories are diverse, in terms of organizational affiliation, the skills enhanced as the result of these experiences are similar to one another. Figure 5 exemplifies these patterns as found in students' vignettes.

Figure 5. Leadership skills learned from high school experiences.

- Each circle represents a leadership characteristic.
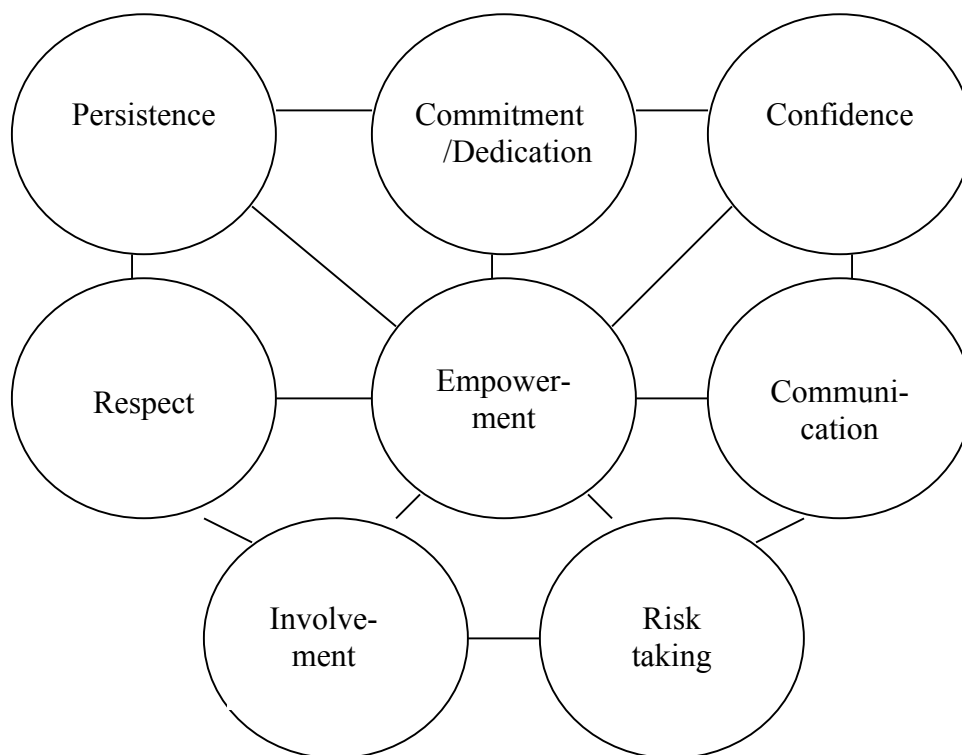
Persistence, commitment/dedication, respect, confidence, empowerment, communication, involvement, and risk taking are all elements of a strong character, a person that understands the needs of others, stays true to his/her goals, and works in a team to fulfill personal and group objectives. These characteristics are equally important in the students' learning curve and have been enhanced as the result of both successful and "unsuccessful" positional leadership opportunities. It is through these positional experiences that students developed their vision, became action-oriented, and recognized the importance of teamwork. Furthermore, it is through positional experiences and risk taking that new opportunities revealed themselves, allowing students to step into new leadership challenges.

The five individuals, much like other students in the Board, are highly qualified individuals who have been building their leadership skills, learning lessons, and exploring new opportunities since a very young age. All focus group members had significant positional leadership experiences at the top of their extracurricular organizations. These positional opportunities have given students a chance to go through a self-discovery as student leaders, to enhance their leadership skills, and to build character. However, students' development into prominent student leaders can also be attributed to their nonpositional experiences.

College leadership background. Focus group members are a representative sample of the Student Advisory Board. Randomly self-selected for this case study, they entered the process from different backgrounds. Influenced by a variety of "origin" factors and high school opportunities, the focus group students have experienced college years with different sets of lenses comprised of unique choices, decisions, and

challenging developmental situations.[112]   Despite these differences, all of them found

service a crucial element to their student leadership development. They not only

continued their interests from high school days (e.g., church activities, modeling), but

engaged in new challenges, primarily serving the larger populace.[113] Furthermore, they

saw their role as student leaders as one of community service.

College years are the precursor to career path and choices that students will make

in their lives (Super, 1957). As actively involved students on their [respective] campuses,

they have multiple opportunities to gain experience, perspectives, and move up the ranks;

however, due to a short framework of time in which students experience college

(Downey, 1981), they have to examine their development from an intellectual perspective

(Piaget, 1952) and make meaning[114] of these moments in order to understand their own

identity as student leaders and individuals. The five individuals examined in this case

study saw their college years as an opportunity to balance positional and service roles and

engage themselves in the community in which they live. Following a general theme of

"action speak louder than words" (Henry's motto) and "leadership is not a one man

show" (Jesse's motto), all members involved in the case study dedicated their leadership

development careers to service opportunities, which provided them with valuable skills,

leadership lessons, and personal growth.

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[112] These psychological assumptions are based on typological theory by Evans, Forney, and Guido-DiBrito (1998).

[113] Larger populaces include such examples as: college, nearby neighborhoods, state, national, and international youth communities.

[114] The ability to make meaning occurs as a result of assimilation, "the process of integrating new information into existing structures" (Evans in Komives, Woodard, & Associates, 1996, p. 173), and accommodation, "the process of creating new structures to incorporate stimuli that do not fit into existing structures" (Evans, p. 173).

Conclusion to focus group students' background. Student development is a "compilation of choices and character development created over the course" (Evans in Komives, Woodard, & Associates, 1996, p. 164) of sequential stages, each with its own meaning and lessons. According to Erik Erikson, a leading psychologist in the area of psychosocial theory, students' development occurs over the course of four main stages:[115] childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and late adulthood (Evans). At each stage people are faced with issues and developmental tasks influenced by psychological, biological, and external influences that shape their outlook on life, world, and self (Evans). It is during these turning points that new skills are developed, attitudes created, and self-identity formed. During the college years, this identity development becomes crucial as students, influenced by their educational environment, develop competence, and interpersonal relationships, and establish identity, purpose, and integrity (Evans).

As Erikson suggests, the development of a person is embedded in "a social context, emphasizing the fact that movement through life occurs in interaction with parents, family, social institutions and a particular culture, all of which are bounded by a particular historical period" (Widick, Parker, & Knefelkamp, 1978, p. 1). Within the Student Advisory Board, dimensions of identity development include family, religion, and geographic/ethnic origin (McEwen in Komives, Woodard, & Associates, 1996). Family serves to provide a sense of stability and security, and provides students with a sense of values, morals, and a support system. Religion is to some individuals an integral part of their core beliefs, values, and ethical bases (McEwen in Komives, Woodard, &

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[115] The four stages are: childhood – trust v. mistrust, autonomy v. shame/doubt, and initiative v. guilt; 2) adolescence – industry v. inferiority, identity v. role confusion, and intimacy v. isolation; and 3) adulthood – generativity v. stagnation; and 4) late adulthood – integrity v. despair (Evans in Komives, Woodard, & Associates, 1996).

Associates). Born out of tradition, culture, and level of practice, religion can shape

students' actions, activities, and the meaning of these experiences. Geographical/ethical

origin may play a role in the level of socioeconomic resources available, as well as

cultural identity affecting understanding of self and the world around.

Positional leadership, like the component "origin," has played an integral part in

students' development as student leaders. As seen from both the high school and college

years, positional leadership provided opportunities to move up the ranks, gain

responsibility, and learn valuable lessons through elections lost or poorly led

organizations. The positions in governmental, athletics, and special interest groups have

influenced the student's understanding of "self as student leaders" and have built their

character as leaders and individuals.

- Government – whether it was the Student Government Association (SGA), class

   officers, or Board of Trustees, all five members at some point during their high

   school or college careers ran in a capacity of a political student leader.

   Regardless of the outcome of their experience with such positions, all focus group

   students saw these opportunities as an important way to participate in

   governmental matters and in politics. Through their governmental opportunities,

   they learned how to stand for the initiatives of their fellow students, how to

   negotiate and make decisions that would aid others, and how to accomplish goals

   without compromising their integrity as individuals, institutional representatives,

   and student leaders. These opportunities also illuminated students' leadership

   traits, such as strong communication, networking, honesty, and the ability to listen

   to fellow students.

- Athletics – has been an important developmental component of all members during their high school years. Most of the students were captains/cocaptains of their teams, thus, were aware of how to manage their teams, motivate their teammates before the games, provide support and delegation when needed, and work together to accomplish their best. Although all members have forgone this opportunity at the college level in order to focus on their studies and community and civic service, the teamwork learned has helped them in other organizations.

- Special interest – whether cultural or academic organizations, all five individuals felt that their involvement in special interest groups provides for a creative outlet where they can bond with peers who share their passions. Such groups included non-profit agencies, departmental organizations, internships, and honor societies. These organizations allowed students, to learn more about their own passions and interests, about who they are as students and what academic fields trigger their interests and make a difference.

The three positional types are a core element in building the individual's character. They provide students with an opportunity to trust themselves and others to make right choices, be just, open, compassionate, and serve those who have elected them to these positions (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998).

Nonpositional involvement is equally important in students' leadership development. From the findings addressed in the previous chapter, it can be inferred that students have a broad definition of what opportunities constitute leadership experiences: religious activities, community service, and civic service duties.

- Religious activities – Religion is an important element of students' lives. As most students observed stated, religion is the center place of their core values and beliefs, and it is a comfortable place that they return to for guidance and community service. For some, church activities mean teaching Sunday school, leading the church choir or orchestra, or playing sports within the church community. For others, church activities are the major part of their extracurricular involvement (e.g., Bob started a ministry, Marcus is a minister). Although these roles are technically positional, "minister," "founder of a ministry," students view them as community service outreach and do not see them in the same light as an SGA president. For students interviewed, religious activities are the extension of their values and personal growth, within which they learn leadership skills; however, they are not considered to be traditional positional roles like those of president, vice president, treasurer, or secretary.

- Community service – As students entered college, community service became an essential component of their leadership development, a way to project and preserve their core values while giving back to their colleges, neighborhood, and peers. At the same time, through volunteering students learn the importance of their own values, but also the importance of embracing other's values and points of view. Two examples of community service are Jesse's participation in the peer counseling center and Henry's community program "Pens for Friends."

- Civic duty – "Citizenship is the civic virtue of knowing that as a member of a community, you have responsibility to do your part to contribute to the well-being of the group" (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998, pp. 119-120). Being engaged

in civic duty means being proactive and having a sense of obligation to empower and aid the community.

These positional and nonpositional roles, although unique to each individual, present a few key leadership themes that students had prior to their engagement with the Student Advisory Board:

- Involvement – It is important to participate in extracurricular activities.

- Persistence – The student leader should be committed to an organization s/he serves and work diligently towards his/her positional goal.

- Learning – The student leader should always be open to learning new programs, participating in new projects, operating under diverse roles, and, thus, gaining more valuable experiences.

- Taking risks – To be an effective leader, one has to recognize a need for change, modifications within their style or organizational goals, and as to venture into new leadership opportunities.

- Networking/communication – To be successful within an organization or while trying to obtain a new role/position, it is important for a student leader to network within his/her team as well as with outside mentors and student groups. Creating a flow of communication also helps student leaders get their point across, be heard and listen to others, and have an open discussion about any problem/issue facing their organization/group.
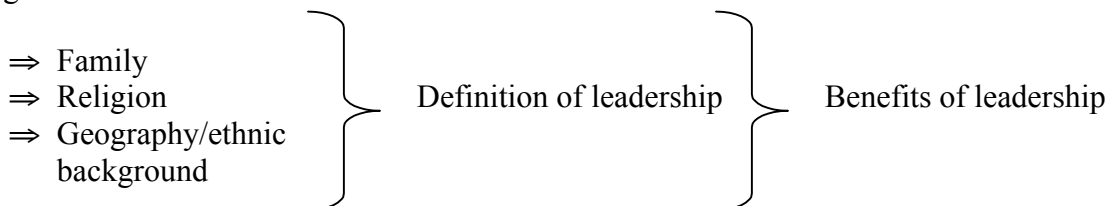
These themes reflect the main leadership steps all five observed individuals have followed in their past experiences. These leadership components provide students with a sense of confidence, goal accomplishment, public-speaking ability, and expertise

knowledge that enhance students' chances of advancing within an organization as well as being recognized by faculty, administrators, or peers for new opportunities, such as the Student Advisory Board. By understanding their background expertise, personal interests, life goals, and their approach to public service, it can be inferred that these students are not only knowledgeable about higher education issues and students' concerns, but they have the confidence, sense of empowerment, personal motivation, and self-leadership to take on the Student Advisory Board opportunity. Figure 6 shows the influence of origin, positional, and nonpositional roles on students' leadership development.
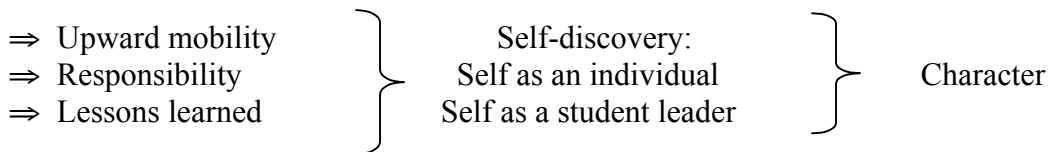
Figure 6. Influences on students' leadership development.

• Each segment illustrates one form of influence on students.

Origin:

⇒ Family
⇒ Religion
⇒ Geography/ethnic
   background   Definition of leadership   Benefits of leadership

Positional leadership:

⇒ Upward mobility
⇒ Responsibility   Self-discovery:
⇒ Lessons learned   Self as an individual   Character
                                     Self as a student leader

Nonpositional leadership:

⇒ Religious activities   Definition of civic
⇒ Community service   responsibility &   Core values
⇒ Civic duties   public service
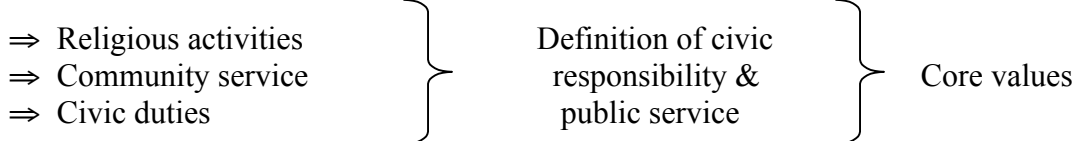
Figure 6. Each of these dimensions adds to how students view themselves in society, as

successful individuals, and as student leaders. These main components of origin have not

only provided an environment in which self-discovery can occur but also helped

formulate students' definition of leadership and the importance of taking part in

leadership opportunities.

Understanding oneself is a crucial step in being a successful student leader. The five students examined in the focus group have strong leadership background in both positional and nonpositional roles. Due to different origin influences such as religion, family, or ethnic backgrounds, the students have, from their early years, understood the benefits of being involved in school organizations, volunteer activities, and community service. Focused, goal-oriented, and open to new challenges, students have taken risks in elected offices, modified their styles and built skills, seeking new opportunities on the horizon.

Entering the Student Advisory Board, these students were well accomplished and recognized by their institutional community as "leaders." On the personal level, each of these individuals had a clear sense of how their personalities, traits, character, and values impact their goals and roles. They understood their strengths and weaknesses and felt confident that they could make a difference on their campuses. Furthermore, each of them had an internal sense of obligation to fulfill their duty as an institutional representative, to work on the behalf of their college cohort. However, as they entered the forming stage of the Board session, students were introduced to the full scale of objectives and goals expected from them and learned about other students' concerns and backgrounds. Understanding the Board as not only a group of individual institutions but as students of an Atlantic state helped students open toward others, listen, learn, and build working relationships that would benefit the Board, the institutions represented, and the state as a whole.

You – Understanding Others

Understanding others in an organization means acknowledging one another's demographic differences, respecting diverse opinions, empowering others to share their views, to participate in the decision-making processes, to innovate, and to learn from others. Understanding others at the Student Advisory Board meant opening up to diversity, encountering, for the first time perhaps, students from different institutions, and beginning to comprehend their institutional agendas as well as their personal motivation to serve at SAB. To bridge the gap between student participants, the Board engaged in its required fall session activity – selection of the student commissioner. Through this process students learned more about the Board, as well as about their fellow students' views on state policies, higher education, institutional struggles, and individual definition and understanding of leadership.

The student commissioner selection process served as a leadership development opportunity that helped students learn more about the Board and each other. The skills learned and the level of leadership development that occurred can best be analyzed through the relational model of leadership development. According to the relational leadership model, there are five key elements that an organization should provide to student leaders participating a role in it: inclusiveness of people and diverse viewpoints, empowerment of others, ethical conduct, purposeful group work, and process-oriented structure (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998). These elements are evident in the student commissioner selection process.

Inclusive. The Student Advisory Board is a diverse organization comprised of student members from thirty Atlantic institutions, including four-year public, four year

private, community colleges, and professional schools. In addition to the institutional

diversity, the Board's membership is very heterogeneous, with balance in gender, racial

backgrounds, ethnicities, religions, and national origin. Although the majority of

students fall into the 19-21 category, as undergraduate representatives, there are over a

half a dozen individuals that represent nontraditional students.

As appointed by their individual institutions to the Higher Education Coordinating

Commission's Student Advisory Board, the students serve a variety of civic duties – one

of them being the student commissioner selection. As institutional representatives, the

students not only serve the interests of their individual colleges and universities, but also

the state as a whole. By being inclusive in their interview processes, the students, both

positional executive committee officers, and members as a whole, were able to enhance

their leadership skills, as exhibited in Table 19.

Table 19.

Inclusiveness in the Student Commissioner Selection Process

Skills developed	Examples
Differences shared	Everyone is given an opportunity to share
Listening	Each person is listened to w/out interruption
Debating	Students evaluate their ideas
Negotiating	Students find compromise
Building coalitions	Students work as a team
Framing/reframing	Everyone can make a difference

The first leadership skill developed in the student commissioner selection process was opening discussions for all members to join in and giving all individuals to voice their opinion if they chose to. This was evident during the February meeting, where the advisor and the chair/vice chair asked the Board members to discuss their opinion on the interview questions, on the task ahead of them, as well as to discuss their post- interview observations. After each selection process step, the students had time to discuss their thoughts, one person at a time. For example, as the advisor distributed question handouts during the February meeting, Michael, who acted as the chair, immediately asked students to look over the questions and share ideas about an additional question as well as volunteer if they would like to ask a particular question during the interview. As soon as Michael stated this, he remained quiet, allowing the Board to share their opinions. A few hands were raised, and students automatically gave priority to fellow students who raised their hands first, second, third… By allowing this process to happen, not only did the positional leader act in a democratic way, but the Board members felt that their voices were important, were being heard, and that their opinions no matter how similar or different from others', enriched the process.

Thus, the second skill developed during this process was listening to each other's views. As an observer, I found it intriguing that at all times only one person spoke, while all others waited in silence, listening to the individual speaking. There were no whispers, signs of boredom or other activities (writing, reading). All members felt that it was their civic duty to not only participate in the discussions but also listen to each other as a way to learn more, hear about a new approach on a topic, and challenge their own initial thoughts about a topic. Allowing others to be heard and embracing the diverse thinking

through attentive listening, made for wonderful debating and negotiating dynamics. A great example of both skills was the post-interview debate after the first February candidate exited the room. Michael immediately opened the floor for discussion. The students were looking over the notes they took during the interview on the candidate's answers and began the discussion about what quality standards they all had for a student commissioner as a leader versus what the candidate possessed or lacked. The students' comments, as was evident from the interview section, indicated a plethora of opinions. Some felt that the candidate seemed overwhelmed with extracurricular activities, while others felt that his activities showed commitment to students.

Leadership definition also caused diverse opinions. Certain members felt that a leader should have focused on *we*, not *I*, when speaking about their agenda; others, on the other hand, felt that his definition showed care for students. Towards the end of discussion it was evident that students were divided on how to vote on the candidate. The feeling about the candidate's ability to meet their quality standards was mixed. Bob and Michael offered words of compromise, stating that the candidate was evidently too nervous and that the Board might not have had the opportunity to really get to know that candidate and learn about his passions and abilities. Michael, acting in his positional role as a vice chair, provided a compromise, negotiating with students, taking all opinions into account, and extending a lunch invitation to the candidate so that he could, in a more casual setting, converse with the Board members. By providing a compromise solution, the members felt comfortable with each other's diverse opinions because they felt they had been given another opportunity to talk to the candidate, negotiate and debate initial thoughts, and work as a team to find a solution.

Working through a storming phase into the norming phase means building coalitions and making each individual feel that they are making a difference in the decision-making process. As was evident from the student commissioner process, students worked as a team every step of the way. They discussed questions they wanted to ask of the candidates, they negotiated who would ask which question during the interview process, they smiled and comforted the candidates, ensuring that everyone felt welcomed, and they negotiated their post-interview views and opinions in order to reach a final decision. During all discussions, the positional leader served as a guide, opening the floor to discussion allowing students to lead in any direction they felt necessary. At times, students debated, grouping for or against a candidate, but at the end they all felt comfortable with the decision made.

Empowering. The Student Advisory Board works as a team to accomplish three main tasks, empowering each other every step of the way. Through their listening, negotiating, and teamwork skills, they have created an atmosphere of inclusion, and involvement and have not only followed rules and procedures to ensure that they meet their goals, but have also focused on individual development, encouraging each other to voice their opinions, offer a new way of thinking, and boost their self-esteem. As Henry, Jesse, and Michael indicated in their individual interviews, everyone has something to offer and should be heard. The more diverse the opinions, the greater learning opportunity it is for members to learn about each other and empower each other.

According to Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (1998), empowering of others is a crucial step in leadership development. It involves such skills as team building through information sharing and encouragement and affirmation of others, building the capacity

of others, and promoting self-leadership. Marcus, a community college student, provides a reflective piece on the student commissioner process that speaks to the empowerment of others theme. Writing in his reflecting leadership journal on the December interview process as a powerful learning experience, Marcus (personal communication, April 5, 2003) addresses the empowerment theme through a vignette about self-leadership and encouragement:

> During the first round of interviews for the student commissioners, I noticed something that I feel wasn't noticed by most of the students present, but which was eventually noticed by the vice-chair… During the meeting a problem was discovered with one of the interview questions; the question that asked the candidate to define leadership. After a back and forth argument about whether or not the question should be revised, the first candidate was called in to be interviewed and the leadership question's turn came. Amongst all the debating over revisions, no one was chosen to ask the leadership question for the 4-year public schools. A 4-year private student, who had been the main contributor to the question revision debate, stepped up to the plate and delivered the question perfectly. It showed the kind of leadership that any good student commissioner would need to exhibit, the ability to deal with issues as they happen. These experiences made me realize that to elite students, such as those on the Student Advisory [Board], we not only need to be able to recognize good leadership skills, but we need to able to exercise the very leadership skills that we look for in others. It also helped me to understand that leadership by example is just as effective if not more effective than all other forms of leadership.

Marcus' journal points to the following empowerment themes of the four-year private college student:

1. The student was observant of the interview process, the questions, and the candidate-Board dynamic, and his active observations led to the "loophole" in the questions "who is going to ask the leadership experience question?" This shows information sharing.

2. Marcus is honest in his expression describing an indecisive debate of the Board on how to approach the leadership question and who should ask it. His candid words show concern for policies and procedures.

3. From the vignette, it is evident that leadership can be exercised not only by the positional leaders but also by all Board members. The four-year private college student's courage to step up into self-leadership shows courage, high self-esteem, and is empowering for those around him.

4. Finally, from Marcus' concluding remarks, it is clear that the Board member had a positive influence on the way Marcus views leadership. By stepping up to the plate, the student showed a type of leadership the Board was looking for in the future student commissioner, meaning that the students actually exhibit the very leadership qualities they are looking for in others. This speaks to capacity building in each other and encouragement of each other that anyone can be a leader.

From Marcus' journal reflections, it is evident that students learn from each other, empower and encourage each other to be more pro-active leaders, stand up for what they believe in, as well as work as members of a team ensuring the selection process goes smoothly.

Purposeful. For the Student Advisory Board to accomplish all its tasks ahead of time, they must be purposeful as an organization, remaining committed to their goals and activities. As Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (1998) write, being purposeful in an organization means identifying goals, envisioning the path to goal accomplishment, and thinking creatively in order to achieve organizational tasks.

The student commissioner selection process was the first Student Advisory Board activity that tested these organizational points. As seen from the December and February meetings, the Board followed the organizational rules and worked together to select the next student commissioner. To ensure that the process went smoothly, all Board members remained focused on the goal, followed procedural protocols, and worked to find a candidate that matched their standards of quality – an individual with a strong academic and extracurricular background who possessed leadership skills, worked for students, and was knowledgeable about higher education issues. During each part of the process, there were three elements that contributed to goal accomplishment: 1) the role of the advisor; 2) the role of the chair and vice chair; and 3) the role of *Roberts' Rules of Order*.

According to the Student Advisory [Board] *Bylaws* (1998), the advisor serves the following procedural roles:

1. Represents the Coordinating Commission between the students and the commission;

2. Provides guidance to the Student Advisory Board with regard to administrative and budgetary regulations, limitations, and procedures to which the Board is subject;

3. Provides administrative and other support services that are available to the Board from the Coordinating Commission staff; and

4. Provides other support or guidance as requested by the executive chairperson or committee.

In the student commissioner selection process, the advisor was an important actor. In September he mailed out inquiries to all higher education institutions, asking them to select a candidate to run for the position of student commissioner. After he received the applications, he consulted Michael, the vice president, about how to proceed with interviews. When it came time for the Board-wide meeting, the advisor made sure the students had all the necessary tools to make a decision: resumes, essays, job description for the student commissioner, and interview questions. During the meeting, he carefully inserted his comments to the group in order to guide them in the process. It is also important to note that the advisor trusted his students during the interview process leaving the room during the interview time. That allowed students to feel a sense of freedom to express their leadership capabilities in conducting the interview and asking insightful questions. As Jearim (personal communication, March 8, 2003) [the advisor] stated in our personal interview, "[I] challenge students more, push them more. They can do a lot more than most people think they can. Continue to push them, to expect more out of them."

The advisor also played a key role in the decision-making process. As students discussed candidates, the advisor cautioned students to be polite and courteous towards one another, and to be fair to all candidates – meaning, to refrain from harsh comments and irrelevant observations. Finally, as students began discussing the election procedure, the advisor stepped up to the role of a director and assigned an anonymous, paper-based election process. His strong presence during the selection process indicated his interest in the Board's activities, his ability to keep students on task, and his willingness to act as a supervisor during a delicate time. The advisor played an intense role. He gave students a

sense of security that they were following and meeting their goal, fulfilling their Board purpose, and that they had an administrator nearby to assist them. Finally, the advisor provided a creative outlet. With his positive energy, he kept the Board smiling, laughing, and on task. Even in tough times, such as finding out a way to conduct elections without revealing individual preferences, the advisor came up with an idea of how to have quick and easy election process. He suggested that each student should write their number one and two choices on a piece of paper. After the secretary, who volunteered to cut up, distribute, and collect finished collecting the votes, the advisor took it upon himself to count the ballots and let students know the results at the next meeting, thus making sure the students stayed on tasks as they moved to their project discussions. The advisor is thus not only an administrator, but also a mentor whose presence provides for a "purposeful" (term defined in Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998) organizational and student development.

The second important actors that created a purposeful setting were the chair and the vice chair. The chair, as the de facto meeting guide, made sure that meetings followed outlined agenda, that they had proper time to discuss candidates and interview questions, and to share their opinions about the student commissioner process. The vice chair, as designated in *Bylaws* (1998), served an active role from the very beginning. He made sure all candidates who applied were given the opportunity to be interviewed. He made sure that students were well informed of any procedural changes as well as candidate status. Foremost, when the chair failed to appear during the February meeting due to an illness, the vice chair stepped up to the role of the chair and conducted a meeting in the manner that maximized students' time and effort to accomplish their goal.

As a positional leader, he practiced his right to conduct the meeting (follow agenda and track time), but made sure that students led the meeting in their topics and conversations.

Finally, both chair and vice chair showed creativity, another key element of purposefulness in an organization, during the selection process. During the December meeting, with the leadership of the chair, the students thought "outside of the box" and decided to make a bold move – requesting additional candidates and declining those that had been interviewed. Michael (personal communication, February 28, 2003), the vice chair, shared his thoughts about this process during our first focus group meeting:

> It is really hard to describe how it was. I guess it is when you are sitting in a committee, and everyone is in a circle around one applicant, very intimidating… It gives you a seat of power. Everyone was a little stiff with the applicant, which must be crucially intimidating. So, when we opened up, we got a lot more progress. We figured out what we wanted in a commissioner, and we decided that the two applicants are not what we were looking for. At least, we wanted some more options. We requested more applicants. I think that was achieved by really opening up and working as a group.

Another creative idea was that of Michael, the vice chair, who suggested that the Board spend time with the candidates during the lunch period in order to get to know them better. During the February meeting, this suggestion was well received and the idea helped students understand candidates and make a confident decision in their selection.

The final element, which created a purposeful selection process, was the use of *Roberts' Rules of Order* (1994). According to the *Bylaws* (1998), Board meetings are open; votes are made by majority-rule; everyone has equal rights and privileges; every voice is heard (inclusiveness); discussions are full and free; there are clear orders to motions; each question is considered one at the time; duties are delegated among positional and nonpositional members; members remain impartial in their decision-making; and members follow simple and direct procedures. Although during the

candidate post interview discussions some students had trouble keeping impartial, their comments were waived from the decision-making process, and the comments did not enter the official, public minutes so as to prevent bias. In addition, students vocalized their concern if a member appeared biased to make sure that the discussion was a debate rather than hearsay.

Ethical conduct. The student Advisory Board is driven by high standards and values for both the organizational well-being and in the selection of the student commissioner. Following *Roberts' Rules of Order*, the students made sure that they maintained a strong character, acted in a socially responsible manner, and benefited from each other's input. By doing so, they learned to be responsible and ethical and were able to build trust knowing that there was mutual respect towards one another.

During all observed meetings, members were polite towards each other took their time, listened, and made sure to warn anyone who stepped over the line. As seen from the previous sections, students held high standards not only amongst each other, but also in their expectations towards the new student commissioner. Students wanted someone who had strong communication skills, solid academic and involvement background, who works for the students, and acts in the best interest of others. It is because of those high standards that the Board refrained from overly political, egotistical, or underexperienced candidates.

Another example of ethical behavior was the election process conduct. Once it was decided that students should write their selection choices on a piece of paper, all heads went down and focused on their individual papers. There was no "cheating" or sharing of personal interest, because that was deemed unacceptable by the members at-
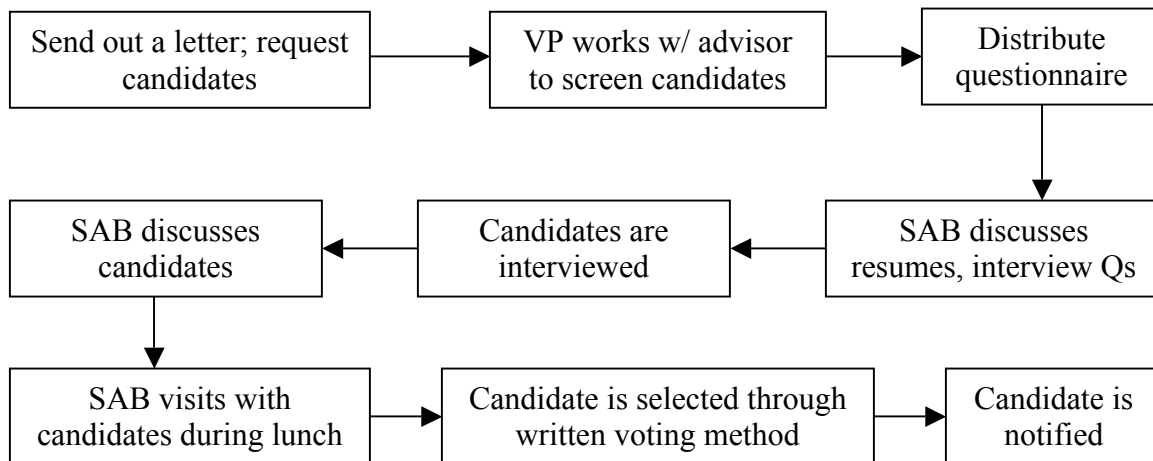
large. As Alicia, the secretary, went around collecting votes, all remained quiet until the

election process ended. In addition, once the advisor decided that he would count the

votes and announce the results all agreed and no one tried to impair the process.

Process-oriented. The final element of the relational model of leadership

development is process orientation. According to Komives, Lucas, and McMahon

(1998), being process-oriented encompasses the following themes: how the group goes

about being a group and accomplishing the group's purposes; how the group challenges

each other/provides feedback; and how the group reflects on what they have learned.

The student commissioner selection process entailed many group processes,

where the Student Advisory Board had to work together as a team in order to determine

the next student commissioner that met the standards desired. The protocol included the

following processes, as illustrated in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Student commissioner selection process.

- Each box portrays a step in the commissioner selection process.

| Send out a letter; request candidates | → | VP works w/ advisor to screen candidates | → | Distribute questionnaire |

| SAB discusses candidates | ← | Candidates are interviewed | ← | SAB discusses resumes, interview Qs |

| SAB visits with candidates during lunch | → | Candidate is selected through written voting method | → | Candidate is notified |

These processes, as shown in Figure 7, challenged students to understand and learn about each other, to debate each other's ideas, and to learn from each other. Through my observation at the February meeting and from my conversations with the focus group members (Michael, Henry, Jesse, Marcus, and Bob), the group kept each other on track by:

1. Communicating – Students e-mailed each other about their ideas on the candidate selection process; the secretary e-mailed students the meeting agenda; and the advisor provided the job description, resumes, and essays of the student commissioner candidates.

2. Following the agenda – Both the chair and the vice chair made sure the group stayed on track by following the agenda. By doing so the Board was able to complete all student commissioner selection processes.

3. Implementing *Roberts' Rules of Order* – Throughout the selection process, the Board followed parliamentary procedures, allowing all members to be heard, listening to each other's opinions, respecting rules and procedures, and voting by the majority rule.

4. Collaborating – Students worked together to formulate questions, to select who was introducing which question to the candidates, as well as to narrow down the qualified candidates. Even when there were disagreements on the candidates' qualifications, students were able to put aside their own biases for the "good of the group."

These four group features increased the level of comfort and respect each person had towards the other Board members and helped enhance the interaction and decision-

making. An example of group dynamics during the selection process was during the interviews. As candidates came to be interviewed, the Board members had to be observant, to time their questions, refrain from comments, and be respectful and comforting to the interviewee until the interviewee exited the room. Due to the significance of the position for which the Board was selecting a candidate, many students found the experience to be a great learning opportunity about what it means to be in the statewide student group.   Through this process students became committee-oriented, interactive, comfortable with each other and respectful of different views.

However, for the group to grow, accomplish tasks, and learn from each other, there have to be challenges. Those challenges mainly stem from balancing one's personal opinions with those of the Board at large, knowing when to compromise and when to stand one's ground. Due to positive, friendly interaction, open communication, and democratic structure, compromises beneficial to all members can be developed. The Board successfully selected the next student commissioner, who met their quality standards, by accommodating each other's opinions, respecting one another's points of view, and facilitating the selection processes. By taking part in this unique, important Board process students [at-large] learned how to negotiate, debate, conduct searches for public officials as well as how to work as a team, respect each other, stand up as self-leaders, and adopt/create innovative ways of thinking. The student commissioner is a powerful position and a crucial link between the Higher Education Coordinating Commission and the Student Advisory Board; thus, selecting a qualified individual to be a positional leader was the utmost significance in the first part of the Board's session and

has, in the process, enhanced Board member's leadership skills and overall leadership development.

Transitioning Into "We" Through Political Discussions

Teamwork, controversy, debates, innovation, resolution, and harmony are all part of the transitioning *we*, the initial elements of a team that understands one another and is working together for a greater good. Although students had opposing views on many political issues, their debate was not an attack on individual persons or an insult to a subgroup; rather, it was a self-mediated discussion filled with understanding, poise, and compromise. Every time an issue divided the Board, each side worked together to present its arguments in the best light, but also to listen different viewpoints. It can be thus inferred that the Board worked as a team willing to disagree, but also equally willing to find closure, to empower each other, and move forward as a team.

The political and policy discussions served to empower individual members, to create a learning environment about education policy as well as each other's institutional situations, to create a transitioning setting in which student can become change agents. The regular political discussions have engaged students in reflective thinking of their own role as student representatives, Board members, and state citizens; elevating the individual sense of self as a leader. Figure 8 demonstrates the relationship between steward-servant-citizen concepts.

Figure 8. Political discussion – self as a change agent.

- Each text box shows a dimension of students roles at SAB.

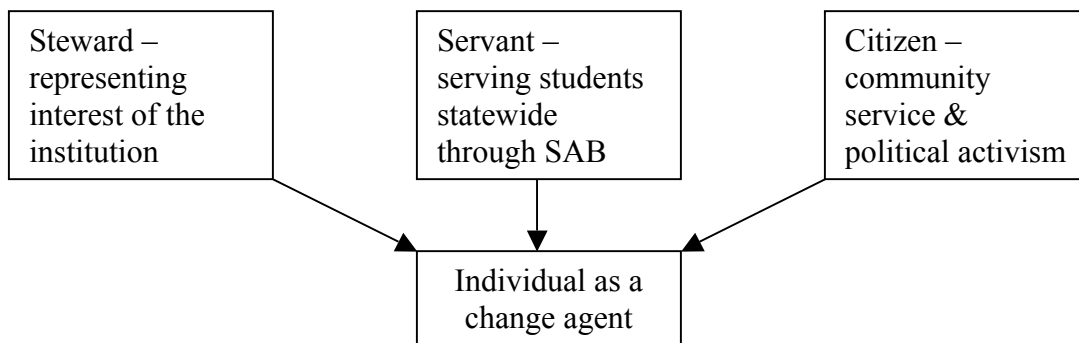| Steward – representing interest of the institution	Servant – serving students statewide through SAB	Citizen – community service & political activism

Individual as a change agent

Figure 8 shows the development of individuals as stewards, servants, and citizens. First, students are recognized by their institution as active leaders who will best represent institutional interests at the Board, meaning that the students themselves are committed to extracurricular causes that benefit the student population at large, be that in positional or nonpositional roles. Secondly, students are servants, devoting their time, knowledge, and resources to making a difference at the Board. Although students are institutional representatives, they are devoted to state issues and have through their discussions above showed care towards other colleges as well as the overall economic, political, and educational climate in the state. Finally, students are citizens, volunteering their time to the Board, at off-campus volunteer organizations, and through public testimonies for social causes beyond their individual interests or those of their institutions. The political discussions allowed students freedom to express themselves, to learn from each other, and to gain a new sense of purpose as student leaders. This individual learning, empowering, and sharing created a collective sense of policy knowledge, mutual support, and political activism. Figure 9 shows the collective effect of individual change agents.

Figure 9. Political discussions – students transitioning into change agents.

- The arrows show development of students as change agents.
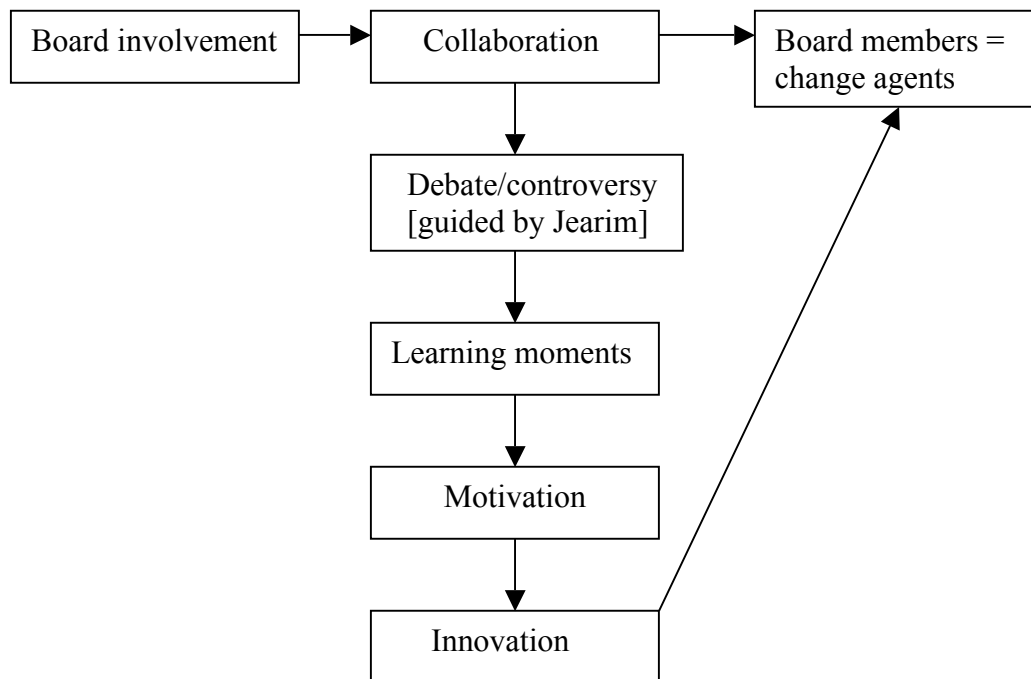
The development of students as a collective group of change agents is best exemplified through the norming, transitioning stage of the Board session, during the political discussions, which served as open forums for individual college issues and broad higher education topics. These discussions, as created and guided by the advisor, Jearim, allowed students to speak freely about their own institutions, learn from one another through both agreement and controversy, and motivate each other towards political action on selected legislation focused on either an individual college or higher education as a whole.

For example, Alicia was an active member of the Board. As a secretary, she attended the majority of the meetings. When the students moved into the norming stage of organizational development and felt closer to and more relaxed around each other, Alicia addressed the Board, presenting her legislation on in-state tuition for international resident students and asking the members to support her initiative. Alicia's presentation was educational, motivational, and encouraged students to engage in the political process, joining her during the public testimony and rallying for the bill. Students' participation in the rally not only showed support for Alicia as a group member, but also served as a learning experience in public policy and political activism. This form of civic engagement as well as Board-based political discussions have over the course of the session encouraged student members to brainstorm innovative ideas on how to expand the role and function of the Board, involve more statewide student leaders in the political process, and change the inner culture of the Board into one of legislative activism and open student forum. Their collective debates, controversies, and consensus have formulated the idea of a student-run conference that would bring together student

government presidents, student leaders, and active groups and provide them with informative workshops on how to lobby, cosponsor legislation, and testify in front of the Senate and the House of Representatives, as well as how to organize campus forums, debates, letter-writing campaigns, and others.

The transitioning, norming stage of the Board was one of group debate, learning, collaboration, motivation, and activism. Through this stage students learned from each other in both debate and collaboration, recognized problems faced by individual institutions, and realized the power of teamwork. The advisor's initiative to have open forum policy discussion on higher education at the beginning of each Board meeting helped spark the students' interest and create a comfortable place where students could voice their opinions and feel respected and heard even if not all students agreed with their viewpoints. The political/policy discussions helped students evolve into statewide change agents and grow as a group, prepared to work together on a policy project.

We – Understanding the Collective

The performing stage of the Student Advisory Board was the last, the most intense, and most rewarding part of this session. Working under a tight timeline, student members had only three months to get together in their segmental groups, outline data collection, analyze findings, write an institutional-type report, merge all of the segmental reports into one concise document, and present it in front of the Atlantic Higher Education Coordinating Commission. Their collaboration, hard work, and member-checks allowed for a successful project completion as well as the highest reward for their work – the acceptance of their policy recommendations into new academic advising guidelines for the state. However, the depth of teamwork, on both segmental and Board

levels, was challenged through this part of the session with issues of tardiness, member disengagement from the Board, leadership conflicts, and time pressures to create a concise policy documents.

Tardiness was an issue not addressed on the Board level, but one I have noted in my observations. For example, at the February meeting, in which students selected their incoming student commissioner, some of the students who had traveled from afar, as well as the advisor were more than 45 minutes late, delaying important policy discussions and negatively affecting the amount of time allocated to the segmental groups for discussion time. This directly affected the groups' ability to have in-depth discussions about their projects and caused many to cut their sample sizes in order to meet the data analysis deadlines.

As months went by, one-third of all Board members declined to continue due to academic constraints or conflict of schedules. Their sudden disengagement caused shifts in segmental powers as both private and community college sectors had to select new leaders that would guide their groups through the policy project stages.[116] Although the change in power did create stability in the segmental groups as well as the Board's confidence with the policy project, the two groups had to find additional time in which to meet and discuss the project. They had to compensate for the decreased segmental membership by finding ways to make meaning of their data so that it could be understood and validated by the Coordinating Commission.

The final challenge faced by the Board during the performing stage was the time constraint. With only two general meetings prior to the Commission presentation,

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[116] Michael and Marcus, respectively, were selected by their segments as leaders.

students had to remain focused, collaborative, and respectful of each other. They also had to act as leaders, calling upon those who had not completed their work to justify their actions and work closely with their segmental leaders to get the data and/or analysis elements completed in a timely fashion. Working as a team, the Board spent the last two sessions discussing their policy project and the significance it had not only on the represented institutions, but also on all students, and thus found the issues of responsibility, respect, and task coordination crucial. The *we* section above exemplifies the frustration, hard work, and joy of this policy process and the confidence and leadership skills students have gained through this last Board task.

Inclusive. Group inclusiveness is identified in Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (1998) as going beyond heterogeneous recognition of organizational diversity and incorporating the individual's unique features into the discussion time and decision-making. The Student Advisory Board, as seen from the previous discussions, is a phenomenon of multidimensional diversity in which all group members are recognized for their differences and accepted as important innovators, change agents, and meaning makers.

As discussed in the *I* section of the chapter, the Board is an eclectic group of individuals, diverse not only in basic demographic groups of gender, race, age, and ethnic background, but also in their developmental influences, prior leadership experiences, and their self-identity as student leaders. Furthermore, the individuals are also diverse in their academic and cocurricular interests, and thus bring more enriched perspectives to the group. Finally, although all present individuals have clear political and policy interests, their viewpoints often differ due to their developmental experiences as well as their

institutional diversities, be that their college type (e.g., professional, graduate institute), college location[117] or its mission. Together, these differences create a phenomenon, the Student Advisory Board, through which institutional representatives come together to create student-centric policies that would affect one or more functions or services of each individual institution.

The rich diversity of the Student Advisory Board during the performing stage was of crucial importance in the function of the segmental units, data collection and interpretation, and the final Board presentation of the policies to the Coordinating Commission. Diversity, in the Board setting, is not seen as a deterrent or a barrier a group must surpass or overcome; rather, it is seen as a complementary component that enhances discussions, teamwork, and goal attainment.

Empowering. "Empowerment is claimed as well as shared with others" (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998, p. 77). For an organization to be empowering, its rules and procedures must allow for all member voices to be heard during the organizational process, must encourage involvement of all members, and create an environment for teamwork. The Student Advisory Board provides clear objectives that members must meet by the end of the session, and its structure calls for both large group work and segmental teamwork in which all members have equal voice and decision-making powers. Furthermore, during the Board discussions, students are free to ask questions, to inquire advice from other students about their institutional concerns, and use the group diversity as the means to innovate, brainstorm, and learn from the collective.

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[117] An example: A rural, private college built on a religious mission would have vastly different interests in state politics and higher education policy than a large, suburban public institution.

Diversity is not only a catalyst for the inclusiveness of all team members, but also for

self-empowerment, whereby each individual participates in the given procedures as

designated by formal bylaws and informal rituals set out by the organization as a whole.

This form of leadership development evokes interest, ideas, motivation, teamwork, and

strengthens individual leadership skills.

Purposeful. The performing stage of the Student Advisory Board was about

collaboration, finding common ground, and working towards goal completion – policy

recommendations that would positively impact the advising system in the Atlantic state.

Due to time constraints and multiple tasks required in the *Bylaws*, the group had to learn

early on in their organizational development the importance of being task-oriented and

purposeful. With the help of the advisor, who served as a mentor, mediator, and a guide,

all agendas were carefully crafted to address Board responsibilities, in addition to new

advisor-driven political discussions that opened each meeting. With a clear vision at

hand, students felt comfortable with the assignments, the organizational structure and

function, and even found time during the norming and performing stages to address

innovative ideas for the enhancement of the Board's role as a student advisory group.

As institutional representatives, student leaders, and public servants, Board

members "intended to accomplish change" (Rost, 1991) and not merely fulfill their duties

as institutional representatives.[118] They understood their role to be unique, statewide, and

significant to all students; thus, through their discussions and actions, the Board members

not only wanted to fulfill their basic duties but go beyond the requirements and share

their ideas with their institutions on the importance of the Board, the significance of

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[118] Those who were not fully committed to the Board's efforts and time constraints due to academic or cocurricular conflicts dropped out of the Board in the early to mid-session.

students' voice in higher education, and the contributions that policy alterations can have in improving academic advising and student services on all campuses.

Ethical conduct. Ethical leadership in a public environment such as the Student Advisory Board, is crucial in the conduct of those that represent the interests of all students and serve under the Atlantic state's laws. However, even in times of great teamwork, commitment, and shared values, there are times when particular individuals conduct themselves in questionable standing, taking shared leadership into a single role – for themselves. During the performing stage of the Board, there were two incidents in which segmental members acted on behalf of their personal interests alone, neglecting to collaborate or acknowledge their teams. One example was Darnel, a leader for the public college segment, who, during his policy report presentation on March 8[th], asked the advisor if his name could be left on the document as the sole editor of the piece.   The advisor and the students alike were astonished by his request and questioned his comments on collective data analysis and strong teamwork. Found in a dilemma as a group leader, he was publicly advised by Jearim that his name should not appear on the document, "No name should appear on the document. It is a product of a team effort. I know that some of you leaders find yourself merging documents, but you are not fully responsible for the writing of this document!" (personal communication, March 8, 2003).

A second example of questionable morals was during the April 5[th] meeting following Marcus' community college presentation. As Marcus finished delivering his results to the Board, his segmental teammate Bob stood up to deliver his institutional report on academic advising.   Although Bob completed all the project requirements, his lack of initiative to work with his segment and merge his data analysis with other

students' work raised concerns from both the advisor and the Board. Jearim, the advisor, was confused about the dual segmental reports and called for an immediate rewrite of the community college reports into one clear and concise set of policy recommendations that could be understood by the Coordinating Commission. Although Bob agreed and Marcus confirmed his interest, Michael and Katherine, a student from a small suburban private college, found Bob's decision to separate from his group in poor taste. Bob defended his remarks by stating that he created this document in the interest of saving time, but the Board found his statement to be one of separation from the team and the overall mission of the policy project.[119]

The two examples show misconducts displayed by student leaders who wanted to distinguish their work above those of other Board members. However, due to the collaborative nature of the Board and its emphasis on teamwork and group processes, the two actions were immediately addressed in public by both the advisor and the students. In both cases, the reasons showed were of poor character and were deemed by the Board as socially irresponsible. Both students apologized and agreed to work with their groups in completing the assignment. Interestingly, their honesty and the immediate resolve did not cause animosity among their teammates as all were focused on the end goal rather than on individual judgments. Addressing this issue with Marcus after their last meeting, he stated that he worked hard on his segmental report and that he would be more than happy to incorporate Bob's comments because what is important is changing the advising system in the state (personal communication, April 5, 2003). Marcus' comments speak to

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[119] Following this discussion, Bob and Marcus did merge their reports into one and successfully delivered it to the Coordinating Commission.

the last frame of the relational model during the performing stage – the process-orientation.

Process-oriented. The performance stage of organizational development is primarily focused on the group's ability to accomplish their purpose (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998). With sequential assignments ranging from the selection of the student commissioner to political discussion, and finally, to the policy project, the Student Advisory Board members have learned from early on the importance of being task-oriented and accomplishing their goals in a timely fashion. The most significant of their roles came during the performing stage when they worked in segmental groups on academic advising policy recommendations to the Coordinating Commission.

The policy project required students to stay focused on the processes necessary to accomplish this task as well as roles they must fulfill to satisfy the guidelines stated in the *Bylaws* of the Board. In the interest of time, as well as students' responsibility to the state and their institutions, the Board members worked efficiently through their segmental groups and used the at-large meeting to air their concerns and put final touches on their report. This flow of information, tasks, and focus are all examples of process-oriented groups who work together from a system perspective in order to accomplish their goals. As Yukl (1989) states, group community focused on a relational leadership process is a key to successful collaboration, civil discourse, and positive outcome. Furthermore, organizations that are group-centered produce harmony, and collaboration, and enhance their decision-making processes (Yukl).

The Student Advisory Board, by its structure and function, is process-oriented, aware of its history, past policy projects, and student initiatives; and vigilant of the future

possibilities for role expansion. Its successful completion of all formal duties can be attributed not only to the advisor's guidance but also to the group's standards for success. Adopted from Klopf (1960), an effective process-oriented group must have the following attributes:

1. The group is most effective when all of the members are involved in the entire process, from planning through to the execution and evaluation.

2. The group is most effective when all members actively participate and make their unique contributions.

3. The group is most effective when it has within its membership, or can call upon, resource persons representing all points of view, and especially those that contribute insight and perspective. (Klopf, 1960, p. 27)

The three standards for goal completion are also closely correlated with the four previously addressed pillars of the relational model.

The performing stage of the Student Advisory Board incorporated all elements of a relational model and organizational advancement. The diversity represented at the Board not only added to the richness of the policy discussions but also showed the inclusiveness of all its members in the decision-making, innovation, and the individual empowerment. The ability of all members to work in their segments on a shared project elevated their common purpose and the ethical and moral standards to which all individuals were held. Together, these pillars enhanced the group's ability to accomplish the Board's goals and have a concise report to present to the state and individual institutions of higher learning.

Discussion of Steward-Servant-Citizen Role Development

The philosophical assumption often made in the contemporary higher education setting is that students should receive adequate leadership training, practice public service, and organizational stewardship, and become responsible citizens that would serve their communities (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997). Educators such as Clark (2001) feel that students should be given opportunities that would in turn advance students into future leaders. Astin (McMahon, 2001) explains the significance of student empowerment:

> Once students understand what leadership is, they need to see how they can engage other people collaboratively, and how they can be good listeners. And they need to own who they are and what their strengths are. That is very empowering. Empowerment is exactly what happens in a collaborative group, in terms of how everybody's opinion is valued and everybody is allowed to express themselves and be heard. (p. 5)

Understanding leadership as a concept is often developed through leadership experiences, curricular and cocurricular opportunities, and students' internal and external environments. Due to the complexity of leadership in today's society, and hence, the position of a leader, students' roles, be they positional or nonpositional, are guided by a multitude of dimensions.[120]

Furthermore, through the adaptation and practice[121] of the reciprocal models of leadership development, students are taught to work in a shared-leadership environment, and become active in their organizations and communities (Astin in McMahon, 2001).

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[120] For example, as a student representative to a state board, one is a board member, policy maker, institutional representative, and general student advocate.

[121] The relational model as well as the social change model of leadership development are broadly used in higher education curricular and cocurricular opportunities (e.g., leadership courses, workshops, and organizational opportunities).

The Student Advisory Board, through its structure and *Bylaws,* allows for the relational leadership to happen, providing students with avenues through which to develop their skills and capacities as organizational stewards, public servants, and citizens.[122] The three roles, steward-servant-citizen, all encompass the greater concept of service. To serve as a student means to be a steward in an organization, to be a servant to his/her peers, and to practice active citizenship. In order to comprehend the three dimensions students play in the Student Advisory Board, it is important to gain a general understanding of the concepts "steward," "public servant," and "citizen."

Students as Stewards

Stewardship is one of the key contemporary reciprocal theories that emphasize the role of the leader within an organization as a service-provider, meaning a leader who serves the needs of a community (Dunn, 2002). Stewardship, similarly to the relational model, focuses on the notions of meaning-making, people empowerment, and organizational benefits. Effective stewardship thus consists of teamwork, integration of diverse opinions, and evaluation of goal accomplishment and individual achievements (Ryan & Bohlin, 2000). It "requires putting information, resources, and power in the hands of those people closest to making a product, designing a product or service, and contracting a customer" (Block, 1996, p. 33).

Stewardship, from the student leadership perspective, is about trusting the team to make the best decision towards organizational goal accomplishment. It is a trust in the students as a community and in the goals and standards they uphold (Spears, 1995). A student leader who takes on a role of an organizational steward is a person attentive to

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[122] Citizen is defined as a higher education community member working and contributing to the higher education institutions as a whole.

students' needs, committed to the growth of students as learners and leaders, and focused on building a strong, successful community within a group (Spears).

Students at the Student Advisory Board of the Atlantic state's Higher Education Coordinating Commission uphold the main principles of stewardship within the public environment in which they serve. They [Student Advisory Board members] have the steward present in both their structure and function. As organizational stewards, they help their fellow students by encouraging self-growth and leadership development and by communicating needs, knowledge, and ideas for the purpose of democratic decision-making. The students also show empathy, understanding, and good intentions when relating to one another, and above all, they trust each other to do their best on behalf of the organization in which they serve. These practices translate into active Board meetings, participative policy analysis, shared policy making, and group-empowering support towards students' political and educational initiatives at-large.

Students as Servants

In higher education, a student-servant is "someone who joins a club, a community, or a social movement with the sole goal of serving others to make a difference" (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998, p. 45). As such, a student-servant sees leadership development as the primary benefit of involvement and views service to the institution and/or community as a direct connection to self-identity (Golden & Schwartz, 1994). For these students, leadership development is about connections, visibility, and group dynamics (Golden & Schwartz). In fact, students view the servant-leader role as the most effective way to contribute to the community, to gain leadership skills, and to develop leader-follower trust (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon). Being a servant leader

means the ability of an individual to listen, be empathetic, have the will to change, reflect, and collaborate with others (Beazley & Beggs, 2002). It means being aware, having foresight, and having commitment to the community s/he serves (Spears, 1995). Servant–leadership is a connection between service and individual character (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998).

The most effective student servants are those who have the support of their followers, who are able to motivate their team members to reach collective decisions, and who are consistent in their goals (Kotter, 1990; Landsberg, 1990). Although there are different "levels of servantship," students who view themselves as servants-first exemplify the highest moral values and commitments to public service (Greenleaf, 1977). Servant-first means the students serve in a way that encourages individual and goal accomplishments whereby the servants can be followers, goal keepers, or positional leaders (Greenleaf). "The person who is servant first, is more likely to persevere and refine the hypothesis on what serves another's highest priority needs" (p. 8).

Students as Citizens

Citizen leadership is a form of involvement in a community through active engagement in public issues and individual empowerment (Couto, 1995). According to Richard Couto, citizen leadership is very important in building and improving communities, in reaching out to the populations that have not had a traditional voice in policy matters, and in making a difference by acting as a responsible, dutiful citizen. "Civic responsibility is basically… you are given an opportunity, and you have a responsibility to aid the government, to aid the political culture, and total idea of Americanism – voting, saying what you believe, your opinions, writing to your

legislatures, and actually taking, instead of a laissez-faire attitude, looking for a proactive change" (Michael, personal communication, 2003, January 31). "Civic responsibility is a sense of personal responsibility individuals should feel to uphold their obligations as part of any community" (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998, p. 15).

Lori Varlotta (in Outcalt, Faris, & McMahon, 2001), the author of "Using Postmodern Feminism to Reconceptualize 'Citizenship' and 'Community'," identifies citizen leadership as: 1) An individual who participates actively in a community s/he belongs to; 2) someone who upholds and respects rights of others; and 3) one who works as a team member to get things accomplished. A citizen leader is one who "reflects common values, common norms, and shared goals" (Varlotta, p. 52) and one who has the capabilities to require development of self and others as the means of improving a community (Mabey in Wren, 1995, chap. 42). Marcus (personal communication, March 8, 2003) explains, "Civic responsibility is to give people the means and the opportunity to be the best that they can be, and then, expect them to run with that opportunity, and if they don't run with that opportunity, it is our responsibility as a nation to say, "Look, you don't get that chance again." As Matusak (1997) concludes, "Good citizenship is our responsibility! One aspect of good citizenship is being willing to lead when our talents are needed. Progress towards vision for the future is achieved when people make use of the strengths and knowledge they possess" (p. 11).

Mainstream higher education has always placed the cultivation of citizenship among its central purposes" (Daloz, Keen, Keen, & Parks in DeZure et al., 2000, p. 172). According to a qualitative study conducted by Laurent Daloz, Cheryl and James Keen, and Sharon Parks (in *Change magazine*, 1996, May/June, in DeZure et al.), higher

education has to provide an environment that encourages constructive engagement[123] and focuses on service learning, internships, and extracurricular involvement.

The idea of service-citizen-leadership in higher education dates back to Harry McKown's (1944) student-citizen theory in which he focused on the importance of leadership opportunities for college students as an essential component for building character and a work ethic, thus preparing students to be good citizens. To develop a strong student-citizen character, McKown proposed development of a college student council that would provide leadership opportunities to college students, with the primary focus on campus affairs. As McKown wrote in his book *The Student Council*:

> The function of the student council is this connection to develop and coordinate opportunities for many different kinds of participation, not only in games, competitions, programs, public events, publications, and similar activities but also in such projects for the common good as orderly corridor traffic, safety on the streets, neatness of lockers, thrift in the use of materials and equipment, courtesy to visitors, and friendly aid to new students. (p. 45)

The student-citizen theory, although modified over the years with the development of diverse student affairs cocurricular education, has remained a favorable approach in student leadership development. Today, the notion of student-citizen emphasizes development of college student identity through leadership and service opportunities (Jago, 1982) such as student government, multicultural and academic organizations, athletics, community and religious centers, and state-level positions [such as the Student Advisory Board].

The roles of students as stewards, servants, and citizens allows individuals to practice positive change through public service, a concept directly correlated with the

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[123] Constructive engagement is defined as respecting each other's viewpoints, cultures, and civic space.

relational model of leadership development. Leadership as a relational process, as collective effort to create positive change (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998), encourages students to be stewards of their organizations, servants of the student population they represent, and to act as model citizens engaged in the political and policy processes around them, around higher education.

Students' roles as stewards, servants, and citizens are all present at the Student Advisory Board. As seen in the findings, students are stewards of their institutions, representing the interests of their college population, addressing the issues deemed important by their fellow classmates and the administration. They are also servants, providing a public service by participating in the Student Advisory Board's activities. Finally, they are citizens, experiencing policy making first-hand, voicing their opinions for the good of all students in the Atlantic higher education system and recognizing the importance of civic activism. Together, these three roles create well-rounded individuals, skilled in leading and representing the interests of their fellow students.

Answering the Research Question – the Overall Findings

The Student Advisory Board is a unique opportunity. Guided by formal bylaws, a web structure format, and an advisor, the Board serves to communicate students' ideas to the Coordinating Board, to present policy ideas to the legislature, and involve students in the higher education realm. An empowering statewide opportunity, it draws students with extensive and/or recognized leadership backgrounds and places them in multidimensional positions – as institutional representatives, equal Board members, and education policy activists. Through fast-paced activities, the Board engages student participants in negotiating, decision-making, forum discussions, policy development, and

student commissioner selection, all while expecting each student to communicate Board

findings and discussions to their institutional leadership, student governments, and other

organizations. The leadership development that occurs through this process is multi

dimensional effecting students as individuals and as a collective. Table 20 shows the

overall leadership development findings by correlating organizational influences, stages,

and processes with the research question, how students make meaning of the Board

experience.

Table 20.

SAB's Student Leadership Development Findings

Dimensions	I	You	We	Meaning-making
Understanding	Oneself	Others	Collective	Leadership Development
Influences	Origin Positional & volunteer leadership roles	Diverse demographic backgrounds Plethora of experiences	Formal bylaws Unique function Web structure Advisor's role	Beliefs Character Values Ethics
Recognitions	Motivation to take on challenge Embrace Board roles	Recognition of other's leadership Respect each other's ideas Ability to resolve conflict	Group dynamics Collaboration Communication Embrace diversity	Self as an institutional steward, public servant, and citizen
Stages	Forming	Storming	Norming/ Performing	Adjournment
Processes	Self-growth	Feedback	Teamwork	Reflection

Dimensions	I	You	We	Meaning-making
Outcomes	Passion for student issues	Learning from others	Learning about teamwork	Collectively smarter
	Elevated understanding of education	Goal accomplished	in diverse environment	Reflectively smarter
	Enhanced leadership skills	Motivating others to engage in policy processes	Creating innovative ways to sustain SAB	Spiritually smarter
	Empowerment to advance as student-leader			

This case study served to uncover *How does the experience at the Student Advisory Board create meaning to Board members in their leadership development?* To understand the SAB phenomenon and answer the research question, I have conducted individual interviews and focus groups, observed Board meetings, and collected artifacts related to the focus group members for the purpose of data triangulation. Through extensive coding and data exploration, three main dimensions emerged, the I-You-We (Buber, 1958) model, and six levels through which these dimensions were developed: understanding leadership backgrounds; influences that impact individuals; recognitions within the SAB that elevated positive interaction among participants; organizational stages (Tuckman, 1965) that brought participants into a successful and functional group; processes that brought meaning to the dimensions; and the overall SAB outcomes.

The first dimension was *I* – understanding oneself. Based on the first interview with the five focus group members, three crucial developmental patterns emerged – the influence of origin on students' beliefs, the influence of positional roles on their character building, and the influence of nonpositional service roles on their values and ethics. These influences, such as demographic background, family support, formal positions, and community service projects, helped students identify themselves as leaders, as agents of change, and motivate themselves to take on a unique challenge – the Student Advisory Board. Furthermore, their past experiences have given students self-confidence and necessary leadership tools to embrace the multi-dimensional roles at SAB as institutional representatives, Board members, segmental group members, and student policy advocates. Through the forming stage of the SAB, students had an opportunity to evaluate their decision to join the SAB, and the majority of the institutional

representatives agreed to participate knowing that their role was of crucial importance to the student voice across the state. The Board experience, on an individual level, was thus about self growth, renewing the students' passion for student issues, elevating their understanding of higher education and public policy processes; enhancing their leadership skills of communication, negotiation, collaboration, and project management, and empowering students to push further as citizen activists.

The second dimension was *you* – understanding others. Like the focus group members interviewed during the case study, other Board participants have also had a rich leadership background of both positional and nonpositional roles. In addition, they were demographically diverse, representing different types of higher education institutions, academic programs, class levels and ranks, age groups, races, ethnic backgrounds, nationalities, geographic origins, family values, and religious beliefs, among others. This diversity created a unique, heterogeneous environment, often absent in traditional campus organizations. Thus, it was crucial for Board participants to recognize differences, and through the storming stage, learn to respectfully disagree on political issues but also find common denominators that would aid them in the group project. Their student commissioner selection process served as a way to bring students together, to listen to each other, empower one another, and be inclusive of each other's views. The outcomes of the strong communication and feedback were learning about one another; establishing boundaries as well as ties necessary to accomplish organizational goals; and motivating each other to preserve SAB, to brainstorm ideas on how to reform and improve the Board as well as to encourage each other to motivate their institutions towards political engagement.

The third dimension was *we* – understanding the collective. Through formal bylaws, the web structure, and the advisor's support, the Student Advisory Board participants had a unique opportunity to engage in political forums, policy recommendations, and not only meet organizational requirements, but make a difference in the state – as a collective. By understanding themselves and others, students entered the norming and performing stages ready to take on a tight deadline schedule, to work in segmental groups, reconvene for large SAB discussions, and support each other's institutional causes. Additionally, they embraced the diversity of the group and used their teamwork skills to build relationships, to learn about higher education systems, and student issues across the state, and create innovative ways in which to sustain the organization, SAB. Through these collective processes, students let a free flow of communication anchor their decision making; they encouraged each other to ask questions, to search for discrepancies that might exist between current advising policies and practices; and they shared responsibilities and organizational vision, putting the needs of the team above their own opinions.

The three dimensions collectively helped individuals make meaning of this experience for themselves and for others. Through students' beliefs, strong character, and values, they practiced ethical leadership and upheld high morals. Additionally, the experience provided students with a recognition of themselves as institutional stewards, public servants, and active citizens. Thus, after the last meeting adjourned and the Board successfully passed their academic advising recommendations through the Coordinating Commission, students took time to reflect on their experience.

The focus group reflections showed that the experience made students collectively, reflectively, and spiritually smarter, meaning that they have gained a new level of understanding on how to work in diverse and unique environments, how to collaborate and communicate under pressing deadlines, and the importance of student participation in public policy on both institutional and segmental levels. The level of leadership development enhanced resulted in greater self-confidence in individual abilities to take on leadership challenges and to work with other student leaders. Overall, all students interviewed described the Board experience as a leadership development opportunity through which they learned to be more effective student leaders, public servants, and active citizens. They learned that they have what it takes to be successful team members, innovators, negotiators, policy activists, and student supporters.

The findings further show the complexities of student leadership development processes through one organizational experience. Leadership development is a multi dimensional process through which students engage in a reflective process. They enter the experience unsure of the duties and responsibilities involved, unaware of organizational goals, and unfamiliar with other participants. Through strong communication, team building, and positive group dynamics, students learn how to work in a diverse environment and ways to engage fellow students in state politics.

An example of this form of leadership development is Michael's cycle of motivation. Selected by his college to be an institutional representative, Michael joined SAB for the purpose of making a difference on his campus and higher education at-large. His experience has motivated other students to engage on their campuses by participating in student governments, and possibly in SAB. Figure 10 illustrates this cycle.

Figure 10. Cycle of motivation.

- The cycle begins with "one student" text box.

One student

Campus-based
organizations

Student Advisory
Board

College students
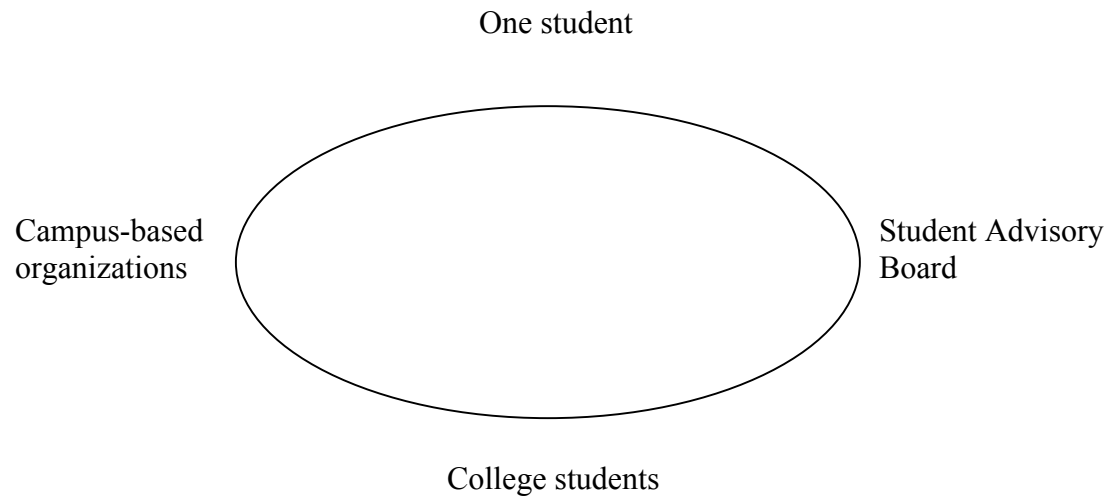
"Empowerment is the act of increasing either one's own or other's influence over life's circumstances and decisions" (Gross, 1979, p. 20).   What encourages an empowering environment is openness to the experience, internal locus of evaluation, exploration of concepts, self-acceptance, and confidence (Maslow, 1976). Michael exhibits these elements of empowerment through:

1. His participation in a unique organization – SAB;

2. His dedication to public issues, campus improvement, and student activism;

3. His ability to take on leadership responsibilities;

4. His explorations and discussion on ways to reform the Board's existing function; and

5. His confidence to motivate others into the political process.

Internally, the experience has given Michael and other Board participants the confidence that they are on par with other peers, capable of fulfilling multiple responsibilities, and engaging in projects with equally capable individuals. Additionally, the students interpreted their continued leadership development as different from traditional opportunities, allowing them to develop their identity as stewards, servants, and citizens. Identity development is a crucial inner outcome of individual meaning-making of the SAB experience. Unlike on-campus opportunities where students serve a microcosm of a campus focusing on a particular set of internal issues, the Board allows students to work on a macro level, dealing with issues across the state, issues common to most campus communities, and to create resolutions that would aid all higher education institutions. The excitement and sense of internal fulfillment not only create individual satisfaction with the experience, they also build internal identity as a statewide student

leader, not bound by any one organization or group. As Michael (personal

communication, April 5, 2003) stated earlier, "SAB is a unique, fantastic opportunity,

crucial to one's development as an active policy-oriented individual."

Discussion of the Conceptual Framework

Qualitative inquiry primarily focuses on the phenomenon researched, on the

individuals studied, and the meaning made through the processes analyzed. In this case

study, the literature review was conducted after the data collection for the purpose of

allowing data to speak for itself. I used vignettes as a way to communicate student voices

to the reader, to reflect their thoughts and actions. As vignettes evolved into multi-

dimensional stories, I began to research student leadership development literature for the

purpose of uncovering previous studies conducted on statewide leadership opportunities,

student governance, and policy-making. Surprisingly, there were only a few survey

studies on students' presence in the governing boards, but without exploration of

students' leadership development through these experiences. Understanding the

uniqueness of the Board phenomenon, I began to read leadership literature, focusing on

post-industrial models, from Burn's transformational theory on. Although my data

correlated with some elements found in the social change model (HERI, 1996),

servantship (Greenleaf, 1977), stewardship (Block, 1996), and newly released, team (Hill

in Northouse, 2001) models, their scope proved limited within data findings.[124]

However, one model addressed all major stages and processes reflected in my data – the

relational model of leadership development.

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[124] These models were adopted in the findings to inform the data.

The relational model, developed by Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (1998), centers around the idea that "leadership is a relational process of people together attempting to accomplish change or make a difference to benefit the common good" (p. 11). Meaning, leadership is a collective process of individuals willing to work together for a common good, to be change agents, and to learn and grow from each other within an organization. The Student Advisory Board is one example of student-centric leadership whereby individuals engage in the group processes focused on statewide public policies that could potentially benefit all college students. Due to the uniqueness of the experience, the Board also provides an opportunity through which students can develop new leadership skills, learn from one another's college and leadership experiences, and grow as responsible stewards, public servants, and citizens.

The process through which students learn and develop occurs through the practice of what Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (1998) refer to as "knowing-being-doing." By knowing themselves and understanding others, individuals engaged in an organization are able to immerse themselves in the group dynamics and goals, and embrace the learning experience. By being open about their leadership experience and others' diverse backgrounds and viewpoints, students are able to learn from each other, to communicate, listen, and understand each other. Finally, through understanding of self and others, individuals are able to practice their leadership skills, challenge themselves with newly learned skills, and actively make a difference.

The knowing-being-doing approach is a fundamental process embedded in this case study for the purpose of showing the multiple dimensions of students' leadership development through an organization. At the Student Advisory Board, individuals arrive

aware of their own leadership backgrounds, personality types, strengths, and weaknesses. They also take this opportunity, during the forming and storming stages of the Board's session, to know others, their leadership and demographic backgrounds, their ideas, and institutional goals. By following parliamentary procedures during the meetings, as well as having an underlying respect for each other's opinions, students are able to open up to each other's diversity, to discuss and negotiate organizational goals without feeling isolated, disengaged, or ignored. Finally, by understanding one another, communicating and trusting each other, students are able to quickly move through the required functions of the Board and take time to brainstorm reforms that could enhance the students' position in the state politics.

The knowing-being-doing concepts of the relational model are applied as the primary influences of the case study analysis framework – the I-You-We (Buber, 1958) dimensions of organizational leadership. Applying the stages[125] of organizational development, the I-You-We dimensions create a framework of analysis that take the reader on a journey from the beginning to the end of the Board session. The *I* stage serves to introduce the reader to the focus group participants, their leadership backgrounds, influences on their development as student leaders, and the college processes that help students enter the experience. The *you* stage, built on the "understanding oneself" segment, focuses on students' initial interaction with other Board members, their first task negotiations, and role development. The *we* stage,

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[125] The stages of organizational growth are forming, storming, norming, and performing (Tuckman, 1965).

present during the norming and performing stages, serves to address group dynamics towards the SAB's goal accomplishment.

The three dimensions, with a particular emphasis on the *we* level, serve to analyze the leadership development at the SAB. However, to further understand the meaning of these dimensions, I adopted the relational model's pillars[126] of leadership development for the purpose of correlating data exhibited with the theoretical concepts widely adopted in the leadership education community. The relational model concepts serve to provide leadership-specific language that would articulate the group dynamics processes observed in my data. Applying the relational pillars of successful organizational leadership, it can be inferred that the Student Advisory Board members studied exhibit all elements of this model:

1. They are inclusive of each other's diversity, embrace different viewpoints, and through this acceptance, feel compelled to learn more about one another, and their individual backgrounds, as well as institutional missions and visions.

2. They empower each other, making each individual feel like a change agent, not a mere obscure member.

3. They are goal-oriented, using agendas and e-mails to communicate tasks at hand.

4. They are purposeful, supporting each other's initiatives, embracing creativity, unique college situations, and common issues.

5. Finally, they are process-oriented, focused on completing all required Board duties, such as the selection of the student commissioner and the presentation of policy recommendations to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, and

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[126] The five components are inclusive, empowering, purposeful, ethical, and process-oriented leadership (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998).

brainstorming ways of how to improve next year's experience and motivate even more students to get involved in this unique leadership opportunity.

Through the I-You-We (Buber, 1958) dimensions and the five pillars of leadership (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998), SAB participants develop inner strength, confidence, focus, a will to motivate self and others, and take on further civic responsibilities. Based on the relational model premise, student leadership development enhances one's personal, leadership, and civic senses of responsibility. This premise correlates closely to the outcomes found in this case study and further reiterated by the Board's advisor, Jearim – as a direct result of the Board experience, students are able to be more effective institutional representatives, stewards; to have greater dedication to public arena, servants; and to engage in political discourse out of their own belief in student activism as citizens.

On an inner level, the leadership development that occurs in the Student Advisory Board can be divided into three forms of data reflections: 1) Students' reflections on the collective knowledge, lessons learned from the experience; 2) students' meaning-making through individual reflection of the experience; and 3) students' spiritual connection of the experience as personal values reinforcement and/or expansion. These reflections, as found in the first half of this chapter, serve to answer the main research question, providing individual meaning-making to the Board experience.

Making meaning is a continuous process that begins with the first encounter between the individual and the organization. As officers gain familiarity with the structure and function of an organization and the participants engage in meaningful actions, the need for reflection increases. Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (1998) address

this idea in their book *Exploring Leadership*, adopting Gardner's (1990) concept of continuous organizational self-renewal as the means of "interweaving continuity and change" (p. 124). Designed to reflect processes found in college organizations, Gardner suggests that "groups, organizations, and communities can reassign their leader to expose them to new challenges; take steps to increase the motivational level of leaders and participants alike; foster at least some diversity and dissent in original reasons that the groups, organizations, and communities were formed; ensure that both internal and external communities are easy and open; keep focused on the vision of a desired future; and finally, reorganize" (p. 279). His recommendations directly correlate with the findings uncovered in the focus group and individual interview data. Analyzing the data collected among the five focus group participants, similar practices are evident:

1. All Board executive committee leaders share leadership responsibilities with other participants and their segmental positions do not necessarily hold the same positional statute as their at-large presence, thus encouraging exposure to different organizational roles.

2. Through the advisor's political forums, all Board participants feel motivated to continue their representation at the SAB feeling that their ideas are acknowledged, considered, and aided. Furthermore, after the organization adjournment, students plan to motivate their own college students into political activism and encourage them to get involved with the Student Advisory Board.

3. The group fosters values and learns from its diversity; further, the findings show that students see diversity as the cause for a collectively smarter organization.

4. As institutional representatives, public servants, and active citizens, students feel direct connection with the higher education system, with their cohort, and with policy makers, actively participating in all these elements over the course of the SAB.

5. Due to a tight deadline schedule, students have always focused their attention on formal SAB functions, and only took time to discuss possible reforms when they were sure that tasks are being fulfilled by individual segmental groups.

6. Finally, to ensure that the Board continues on with the reforms proposed, the student participants have formed a transition group made up of undergraduate participants – in their sophomore and junior years – for the purpose of successfully passing on their ideas, preliminary work, and analysis to the incoming officers and members.

Organizational renewal during the adjournment stage is very important. It is a time of transition and new beginnings. For those who hope to stay for the second SAB session, it is the time to look back on tasks accomplished and to look forward to possible reform, new challenges, and recruitment strategies. For those leaving, the adjournment stage is one of permanent parting from the Board, an internal evaluation of skills enhanced, lessons learned, and meaning-making. For some, the meaning is reflected in their comprehension of the collective, and their personal development as leaders, while for others it is about values preserved or expanded as the result of interaction with a diverse group of students.

The relational model of leadership development serves as a guide to understanding students' leadership growth and meaning-making through the Student

Advisory Board. Thorough in its examination of group process and individual growth, the relational model has been easily adopted to provide the conceptual framework for the Student Advisory Board data. Approaching the conceptual possibilities, I grouped data into patterns, dimensions of development and reflective outcomes – the relational model provided a comprehensive structure through which data could be organized, vignettes allocated, and matrixes developed. The relational model is an emerging postindustrial paradigm of collective leadership, adopting the newly accepted theory that leadership is not about the leader. Rather, it is about the collective, both leaders and followers, who together make an organization successful. In the SAB, where the web structure has clearly shown the effects of co-leadership as a way of creating change agents, the relational model serves to educate the reader about the importance of such practices in both traditional and unique student leadership opportunities and furthermore, to show the importance of preserving SAB-like opportunities on the statewide levels and thus empowering college students to be effective institutional advocates, public servants, and active, educated citizens.

<div align="center">*Significance of This Case Study*</div>

This case study, on students' leadership development and meaning-making in the Student Advisory Board, is one of the few qualitative studies that focuses on off-campus extracurricular student leadership development and is one of the first studies that applies the relational model of leadership development as the conceptual framework. Through its qualitative method, it serves to educate the reader about the uniqueness of the SAB opportunity, as an implicit way of encouraging other states to follow Atlantic's steps; it serves to show the multi-dimensional skill enhancement and leadership development

outcomes that result from this phenomenon; and it addresses the importance of diversity in collective leadership engagement. This case study goes beyond traditional co-curricular skill-enhancement outcomes research by focusing the reader's attention on the uniqueness of this phenomenon, on the significance of such opportunity to student voice in higher education, and on a web structure has on students' leadership development.

Patterns in Student Leadership Development Research

The field of student development through leadership opportunities is an emerging one. Over the past century, there have been two general forms of research conducted on student leaders: 1) The effects of curricular leadership programs on students' development; and 2) the effects of co-curricular on-campus organizations, primarily the student government, on students' development as positional leaders. As Clark (2001) observes, the majority of current research and literature is focused on longitudinal assessments and curricular development; however, the means by which students are evaluated is as diverse as the programs offered. For this reason, the leadership education research community has found difficulty in generalizing their findings and presenting their implications on the overall American college student experience. With leadership education attached to college mission, values, funding, and the academic scope given to the student affairs professionals, the range of leadership programs covers topics from military strategies and business, managerial orientations to spiritual and religious studies of leadership.

The individual growth of college students also complicates the curricular assessment of leadership programs. Influenced by their background experiences, internal and external campus environments, national climate, and embedded values, the effects

that leadership programs have on students' identity development as leaders vary.

Chambers (1994) explains, "The nature of both leadership and college student

development capacities complicates the issue of evaluating programs because individual

development occurs over a period of time and is influenced by a variety of factors: it is

difficult to isolate the change, growth or development derived from a given leadership

development effort" (p. 226). Thus, like the relational model of leadership development

and the social change model, researchers are returning to the importance of understanding

oneself prior to the leadership experiences, whether curricular or co-curricular, and to use

internal reflection periods as a means of making meaning of these experiences.

The co-curricular research on student leadership development has been an equally

intriguing topic for many leadership educators. However, the majority of the research

studies conducted on the co-curricular college experiences have been centered around the

student government and Greek systems, with little qualitative or quantitative evaluation

focused on interinstitutional opportunities, such as those found in governing and

coordinating boards of higher education.

Significance of SAB in Practice

The Student Advisory Board experience is empowering. Traditional campus-

based organizations provide a healthy environment in which students can collaborate and

an adjustment transition period where outgoing and incoming officers meet. However,

constrained to a microcosm of a campus population, the student empowerment is often

limited to students' self-identity as student leaders on campus.[127]   The Student Advisory

Board provides multiple opportunities for self-empowerment:

1. Being recognized by their institutions as representatives gives students a boost in

   self-confidence and their identity as campus leaders and college stewards. They

   see the recognition as a direct correlation to their on-campus work and feel

   empowered to make a difference on their campus and in other institutions.

2. Being assigned a task of student commissioner selection and policy

   recommendations empowers students to work as a team to fulfill these goals and

   instills in them a sense of public service, change, and contribution to higher

   education.

3. Being engaged in political forums, invited to testify in front of the legislature, and

   encouraged to participate in the state's politics, builds a sense of civic

   responsibility in students.

The Student Advisory Board case study serves to contribute to the existing research on

students' on-campus leadership development by shedding light on a nontraditional

opportunity, in this case, the Coordinating Commission's subcommittee. The research

serves to show the importance of student engagement in higher education, the positive

outcomes their work has on public policy and college climate, and the importance of

student voice in government politics and decision-making. With the redefinition of a

"college student" to include international, senior adult, and working students, the student

voice should no longer be constrained to campus event planning and narrow issue forum,

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[127] In community service groups, students might also gain a sense of public service or
civic responsibility.

rather, it should be incorporated in administrative decision-making, governing, and coordinating boards' policy negotiations and analyses.

This case study serves to exemplify the complexity of students' leadership development through an experience. Student leadership development is an ongoing process through which students build on their existing skills, reframe or reaffirm their core values and beliefs, and learn new ideas and tools to enhance their careers, roles, and self-identities as leaders. Through the Board experience, it is evident that past experiences and background influences play a part in how students approach a challenge, but it also shows the commonalities of meaning that are derived from the Board experience. Unique in both its structure and function, the Board experience is reinstating students' commitment to their campuses, setting them on a journey to motivate their cohorts and engage in higher education politics. Further, it motivates students to be active citizens and servants, immersing themselves in their communities and the government.

Significance in Student Leadership Research

This case study is one of the first to adopt the relational model of leadership development as a conceptual framework. The model, pioneering the reciprocal and shared leadership, provides significant dimensions of analysis that served to portray the complexities of student leadership development during the Student Advisory Board experience. The I-You-We (Buber, 1958) dimensions parallel the students understanding of self, others, and the collective group, as well as the organizational stages (Tuckman, 1965) of the Board. The model also serves to correlate observed group behaviors and

web structure to the five theory-based elements of successful organizations.[128] The

relational model, due to its strong correlation to the Board experience, serves as an

organizational tool in the findings, as a contribution in the level of analysis of students in

the SAB, and as a conceptual frame for findings that help a reader understand the

complexities of students' leadership development during their college years, in particular,

in unique statewide opportunities such as the Student Advisory Board.   Finally, the

relational model provides a new emphasis traditionally omitted in leadership theories, the

importance of meaning- making and self-renewal during and after leadership experiences.

This SAB research is also one of the first student leadership development studies

that goes beyond the analysis of students' skill enhancement and learning outcomes by

incorporating these concepts towards a more personal discovery – the meaning of this

experience to students as they develop into strong student leaders. The findings show

that meaning-making is the key level of analysis that ties together students' prior

experiences, lessons learned, organizational goal achievements, skill enhancements, and

group dynamics, and correlates them to individuals' development as institutional

representatives/stewards, public servants, and active citizens. Through the Student

Advisory Board case study, I gave the student participants an opportunity to analyze their

leadership background and to assess their SAB roles, as well as to give them time to look

back on the SAB experience and make meaning of the organization, the group, goals

achieved, and their roles. Data collected was in-depth and provided three levels of

analysis: students' reflection of the group, of the meaning, and their spiritual growth.

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[128] These elements are that groups must be inclusive, empowering, purposeful, ethical,
and process-oriented (Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998).

Again, the relational model serves to provide leadership terminology[129] and explain the importance of these dimensions in student leadership development. Through the application of the relational model dimensions, students' reflections and meaning-making were brought to the forefront in a developmental fashion, exemplifying the step-by-step nature of how students create meaning of their experiences, and how they apply lessons learned to their self concept as stewards, public servants, and active citizens.

The findings noted in this case study set the precedent for future studies conducted on student leadership development through nontraditional, high-stake opportunities. As the relational model of leadership development continues to be applied in on-campus leadership programs analyses and student evaluations, its significance in the study of student leadership development in cocurricular settings will continue to expand.

Significance in Student Leadership Policy

The Student Advisory Board is a unique organization, both for its function and structure. Although the majority of the states have students' presence in their [primarily] governing boards, only the Atlantic Coordinating Commission gives its students direct voting powers, under the auspices of the student commissioner, and policy analysis capabilities within a student-run subcommittee. The function that statewide student representatives fulfill over the course of a session sets a precedent on the importance of student voice in higher education and the effectiveness of their commitment to campuses statewide. Advocates of positive change, the Board members have worked through their

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[129] The terminology adopted from the model refers to the "collectively, reflectively, and spiritually smarter" dimensions.

differences to achieve goals for the common good, this year alone bringing in a reform to the student advising system, calling for interinstitutional networking among academic advisors, more rigorous training of the advisors, and student orientations on university/college requirements.

The Board is also unique in its organizational diversity. Today's higher education student population consists of a plethora of demographic diversities; however, the student populations continue to be stratified based on their ethnic or religious backgrounds – cultural organizations, age groups – undergraduate and graduate students have separate cohorts and student governments, colleges – departmental organizations, and/or special interests. The Student Advisory Board breaks these barriers by incorporating all higher education students into one organization and giving them the tools to make a difference statewide. Thus, the Board provides a unique diversity profile consisting of a wide range of institutions and fields represented, students' college status, and demographics. This diversity not only brings richness to the conversations, but also creates a special setting where students can see a full spectrum of higher education concerns and commonalities and work with and through them, sharing, borrowing ideas, and innovating together.

The Student Advisory Board is a phenomenon on a structural level. The web structure has traditionally not been practiced within the parameters of interest groups – although it is common in forum-like gatherings. The Board breaks this mold by incorporating its participants' diversity and multiple-functions into a web structure where each participant has the potential to be a leader. Additionally, during the policy project when students are divided into their respective institutional types, segmental chairs are there to help manage the project, but are not the sole voice of the group, nor are they the

decision-makers. Finally, the advisor serves as a mentor to the group, guiding their agenda, facilitating their discussions, providing group direction, and demanding excellence in their final report to the Commission. However, due to the web structure, the advisor encourages innovation, aids the Board processes, and allows students to work together, make decisions and modifications to the Board.

This form of organization is rare but its impact has a significant meaning to its participants. As vignettes from the focus group members reflect, the web structure of the Board is a unique experience, an empowering one in which students feel that they are indeed working as a collective without barriers between each other's roles or positions. Each student felt that their voice could be heard, that they are a crucial element in the decision-making processes, project management, and delivery. It is because of this structure that students claimed a sense of ownership for their actions and those around them and remained committed to the goals and tasks.

Recommendations for Further Research Explorations

Qualitative inquiry is a methodology that encourages continuous phenomenon exploration, revisiting of the subjects, settings, and ideas for the purpose of tracking their development, advancement and/or decline, and long-term significance. In cases where the subject area is a phenomenon, a pioneered research, either from the data or theoretical perspectives, the researcher is encouraged to explore the extent of the phenomenon and gain further understanding of the case explored. This case study is one such exploration. A phenomenon, a unique, nontraditional leadership experience, the Student Advisory Board is a pioneer program in the country, empowering students to reach outside of their campus and make a difference in higher education policy.

Recommendations for Future SAB Studies

The Student Advisory Board's structural and functional history has been well documented during the 1970s, but there has been no documentation or analysis of students' outcomes, further leadership positions, or revisiting of alumni for the purpose of evaluating the long-term effectiveness of the program. During the last focus group meeting, I asked Michael and Marcus to share with me ideas on possible future exploration of this topic. Their comments reflected an absence in SAB's archives.

> … You would have to implement a systematic feature on what are the benefits and what are the costs. So if you want other states to incorporate this, you have to look each year: how much does SA[B] cost and what are the benefits? It may have cost anything, but just knowing that there is someplace where students to turn to may have been enough benefit to go against the cost. (Michael, personal communication, April 8, 2003)
> Like a prolong thing of tracking students to see if they show up here, what kind of careers do they go into, what kind of people do they become, to really see if the leadership skills they use here affect them later in life… Because you can go through the world's greatest workshops and conferences and go back to your regular old life and don't change. I would like if these bodies were everywhere, if we can track people and say, "Wow, I want to become part of this! This person – they are president of something. They are a CEO. He is a colonel in the army. Look at that!" That would be great! I hope they read this and say, "If I get involved, look what happens, look what I can become if I get involved, because all these other people go involved and look where they are! (Marcus, personal communication, April 8, 2003)

Incorporating students' suggestions in future research recommendations, it can be inferred that there are two key elements to be further explored in long-term assessment research: cost-effectiveness analysis and the students' leadership achievement outcomes. For Michael, the concern is future funding of this opportunity. For the Student Advisory Board to continue, it needs to be validated by the Coordinating Commission. One of the first steps is weighing its function costs with its outcomes. The past budgetary allocations indicate that funding for the Board's continuation is divided into meeting

location/food and advisor's time, a positional duty as a deputy secretary of the Commission. However, with the possible expansions in the Board's size, to include more student government representatives and a possible conference, additional funds might have to be allocated. Considering the successful passage and utilization of past student recommendations on Atlantic campuses, it is likely that this 28-year-old body will continue to be strong. Nonetheless, further research into the funding-outcomes correlation is necessary to reflect the state's sentiments on students' presence in higher education policy making.

The other research exploration focuses on the student participants. It is a "where are they now" idea that would attempt to track past participants for the purpose of analyzing their current leadership successes and finding possible correlations between the Board experience and individual leadership outcomes. When the Board was first founded under the Higher Education Council in the 1970s, its internal documents alluded to the success of the Board's alumni. Those who have remained in the Atlantic state and continued to immerse themselves in higher education have taken on roles from state delegates to local business CEOs. However, no research has been found on the alumni[130] status of those who did not continue with higher education participation. Courtesy of the Internet records, a potential follow-up study could track the last six years of the Board's participation and research students' current career status, intermediate leadership practices, and reflections on their past Board experiences. Not only would this research

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[130] SAB records have only been kept since 1998. All prior records are embedded in abbreviated forms located in an internal newsletter, discontinued in 1988, and in the annual reports.

help encourage other students to engage in the Student Advisory Board, but it would show the impact such experiences have on one's growth as a leader.

Recommendations for Further Research

The relational model of leadership development is a significant breakthrough in reciprocal studies, focusing on collaborative teamwork, weblike structures, and the importance of inclusiveness, empowerment, strong purpose, ethics, and process orientation for successful goal accomplishment. The model also highlights the importance of self-renewal and meaning-making as a way to reflect, understand, and move forward with an organization or as an individual leader. As the relational model continues to be embraced by the student leadership research community, the implications for student identity development as leaders are great.

According to the findings exemplified in both this case study and the relational model, student leadership development in an organization is a process in stages, which closely correlate to the organizational stages of forming, storming, norming, and performing (Tuckman, 1965). Furthermore, the understanding of individuals on a personal, *I* level; others', the *you* level, and the collective, the *we* level, correspond to these organizational stages. To strengthen this correlation between the organizational and individual stages of development, I have created, in my research finding, a transitional level – the *we intermediate* – that corresponds to the norming stage of the organizational development from a group of individuals into a collective.

The *we intermediate* is an important transition, building a bridge between students' storming stage in which they begin to learn about each other, and the performing stage, in which students work as a collective to accomplish organizational

goals. The *we intermediate* serves to bring individuals, who at that point have begun to

learn from each other and to respect and understand one another, together. It serves to

norm the diverse ideas and build consensus in a group, gearing them towards intense

group work and goal achievement. The intermediate stages serves as a motivating,

empowering element in the students' growth in a group where they begin to recognize the

importance of diversity for goal accomplishment. Meaning, students are not only a set of

strangers functioning in a organization; rather, they are a team that has built the

framework of ideas and individual introductions to move ahead as a collective and reach

the goals for which each individual has come in the first place. The importance of a *we*

intermediate stage is significant. Thus, it is recommended that future relational analysis

of students' leadership development that adopt Buber's (1958) structure, whether in

qualitative or quantitative inquiries, recognize the intermediate, transition stage of

organizational growth. By recognizing that students do not simply emerge from

individual introductions to teamwork in any given organization will help the reader

understand the correlation of students to the organizational goals and the strength that

individual similarities and differences bring to a group.

A recent grounded theory developed by Dr. Susan Komives, the Leadership

Identity Development Model (LID),[131] focused on college students' identity development

through leadership experiences, implies similar findings as those found in this case study.

LID, focused on the individual rather than group development, sheds light on the

personal development of students as leaders, and the positive ramifications of unique

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[131] LID is an on-going research on an emerging grounded theory conducted by the University of Maryland, College Park faculty member Dr. Komives and a cohort of doctoral students - Casper, Longerbeam, Mainella, and Osteen.

opportunities on students' recognition of leadership. In order to understand the Board member's internal understanding of self as student leaders prior, during, and after the experience, a future case study can frame the Student Advisory Board experience in an individual dimension, following the LID conceptual framework.

Leadership research is an ongoing process in which researchers revisit old assumptions, theories, and settings in order to uncover new dimensions or to apply current knowledge to understand old and new phenomena alike. The Student Advisory Board is a phenomenon that in this case study, based on the data collected, was analyzed through a relational conceptual framework. As the Board continues each year to attract students from across the Atlantic state, further research would help illuminate this process on an individual, student-centric level.

Recommendations for Further Student Advisory Policies

The Student Advisory Board is a national phenomenon; however, there is no extensive research on the impact of such opportunities on students' leadership development as well as on the impact that students' voices have on higher education policy. For this reason, it is important to conduct a multistate cross analysis of coordinating and/or governing boards' student subcommittees and assess their structures, functions, policy impacts, and students' leadership outcomes. Through a comparative case study and/or mix methods survey, the research can show the importance of the students' voice in higher education, and the impact that their recommendations, resolutions, or actions have had on students' quality of education and cocurricular experiences. Furthermore, the study could reiterate the necessity of nontraditional, high-responsibility positions for students' leadership development as stewards, public servants,

and responsible citizens. In the words of Gardner (in Wren, 1995, chap. 1), "We have

barely scratched the surface in our efforts toward leadership development" (p. 7);

therefore, the recommendations for future Student Advisory Board study can only help

enhance our understanding of students' leadership development.

Through this research I hope to bring awareness to the importance of student

leadership opportunities in higher education governance and coordination. With only a

few states giving their college students, either undergraduate or graduate, subcommittees

in the higher education system's governing and/or coordinating boards, the importance of

engaging students in policy and political process of their education has become crucial

for the advancement of students as leaders, public servants, and active citizens. I hope

that the Student Advisory Board's profile will help other states to consider implementing

an empowering system, similar to SAB, and giving students direct policy

recommendations and voting rights.

In order to create a Student Advisory Board, there are two main elements that

need to be considered: the role of the advisor and the importance of campus-based

support for the Board. The Board is a web structure in which there is no distinction

between the positional and non-positional leaders, as all students have power to innovate,

discussion, and make-decisions during all functions. However, their ability to resolve

conflicts quickly, to meet regularly, and stay focused on the organizational goals can be

mainly attributed to the Board advisor. Advisor, a legislative advisor to the Secretary of

Higher Education, is entrusted in mentoring the Student Advisory Board. Meeting

monthly with the student group, the advisor is responsible in ensuring the students'

follow the Board's function, stay with the agenda, and complete all projects in a timely

manner. Due to a time constraints for each project, the advisor serves to guide discussions and manage/stop any internal conflicts.[132] Additionally, the advisor serves to encourage students to become active citizens in the state.

The second essential element is creating internal networks that will sustain the Board's support on individual campuses. In the Atlantic state, there is no connection between the student government associations and the Board, and the students at individual campuses are unaware of this leadership opportunity. Thus, it is recommended for both the Atlantic state and the other state's that might adopt this design, to engage their campuses with the Board. First, the Board must make a functional change, including a conference of all student government presidents into their session, which would allow students to network and lobby together. Secondly, the student affairs professionals on campus should advertise the Board as a unique, top-level opportunity for all students interested in higher education policy. Finally, the Board members should be required to meet on-campus with their student governments, main campus organizations and report on the current higher education legislation. Through these three processes, a basic level of communication between the Board and the campuses will be established.

In addition to the two main elements, there are structural and functional parts that should be considered in the development of a Student Advisory Board:

1. The student organization must be an officially recognized subcommittee, not a temporary ad hoc group.

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[132] Internal conflicts are also minimized by the geographic distance between students, which enables them to continue their discussions outside of the monthly meeting. Thus, students choose to remain focused around the organizational projects.

2. The structure of the organization must most closely resemble the web structure whereby each individual has an equal right in the goal implementation and decision-making. Although an official executive committee should be formed for the purpose of implementing an agenda and ensuring that the group stays on track towards goal completion, these individuals should have the same rights as regular participants. The selection of the executive committee should take place during the first meeting of the students.

3. The organizational structure must incorporate an advisor, who serves as a full-time staff person in the governing and/or coordinating board. S/he must be willing to engage in all student meetings, to implement the agenda, and to ensure students stay on task. S/he should serve as a mentor to the students rather than a director of the organization, allowing the students to have governance autonomy.

4. The organizational function must be clearly outlined in the *Bylaws* specifically designed for this structure. The functions should be manageable in size due to time constraints, and should provide students with empowering rights, such as the right to select a voting student member to the central governing and/or coordinating board and the right to make policy recommendations on issues facing all college students.

5. The structure and function must provide room for growth in both numbers and ideas. Students should be allowed to recruit more institutions to participate, to invite student government representatives to meetings, and to be allowed to hold conferences and forums on key higher education issues.

6. The selection of students to this organization should be unified, ensuring a greater chance for wider student interest and inclusion of the majority of colleges in the system. Such process could also yield greater demographic diversity, bringing different viewpoints to the organization and enriching the process. And,

7. The Board should have a designated operating budget that will cover the meeting rooms, food, and the advisor's compensation for Saturday sessions.

The recommendations outlined serve as the basis for development of a student advisory, be that in a governmental or coordinating system. The key element is engaging students in the higher education process, allowing them to represent their institutions, to share and learn from other college students, and to create a set of recommendations that would potentially change an aspect of higher education. It is also important to allow students to discuss current events and vote on issues that directly affect their academic, co-curricular, and financial experiences. By encouraging states to implement student advisory boards, more college students will have the opportunity to serve their institutions, to serve the state, and gain valuable leadership experiences that might not be available within the realm of their campuses. Student leadership development, both individually and as a collective, is crucial in the meaning-making of one's college experience, the knowledge students take with them into their careers and into their future. Therefore, it is essential for both the states and the leadership educators to provide students with interinstitutional opportunities where students can engage in policy and political discussions and bring about positive changes to their campuses and the state's higher education.

Appendix A

Bylaws of the Student Advisory Board

Preamble

The Higher Education Commission Student Advisory Board is established in accordance
with §11-106 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code in order to advise the
concerns, perspectives, and experiences of students of institutions of higher education.

Article I - Name

The name of this organization shall be the Student Advisory Board to the Higher
Education Commission.

Article II - Functions

(A) The Board was created, pursuant to a legislative directive, for the purpose of
reviewing such matters as are referred by the Commission or the Secretary of Higher
Education for their consideration and advice.

(B) The Board may make recommendations to the Commission on matters of statewide
importance that affect their constituencies.

(C) The Board shall operate for the course of one academic year beginning with the first
meeting in the fall and ending September first of the following year.

Article III - Representation

(A) Each state institution of higher education, which is authorized by the higher education Commission to operate in the state, will have one representative to the Board. The method of selection will be determined by the president of the institution in collaboration with the student government(s).

(B) Only the representative from that institution will be allowed to vote. No absentee votes will be allowed.

(C) Representatives shall be appointed for the term of one academic year and may be reappointed by their institutions.

Article IV - Executive Committee

(A) The Executive Committee is responsible for providing coordination and direction of Board activities and discussion, and will serve as the official voice of the Board.

(B) The Executive Committee shall have the power to create standing and ad hoc committees as it deems necessary to the proper functioning of the Board and shall delegate the authority to such committees as is necessary for their operation according to their purpose.

Article V - Officers and Duties

Section 1.

The officers of the Executive Committee of the Board shall be the Executive Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, three Segment Chairpersons and Secretary. The advisor and student commissioner shall serve as ex-officio, non-voting members.

Section 2. - Executive Chairperson

(A) Supervise the activities and operation of the Board.

(B) Call and preside at all meetings of the Board.

(C) Prepare and distribute the agenda and meeting materials prior to all meetings.

(D) Shall vote only in case of a tie.

(E) May have been involved in the Board for at least one year, immediately proceeding the term of office.

(F) Maintain regular contact with advisor.

(G) Maintain regular contact with representatives to ensure the ready flow of information from the higher education Commission to the institutions.

(H) Attend the Commission meetings and present reports from the Board when appropriate.

Section 3. - Vice Chairperson

(A) Assume the duties of the Executive Chairperson during his/her absence.

(B) Assist the Executive Chairperson in supervision and operations of the Board.

(C) Coordinate nominations of the Student Commission member.

(D) Perform such additional duties as the Executive Chairperson or advisor may request.

Section 4. - Secretary

(A) Maintain the minutes of each meeting of the Board.

(B) Be a custodian of records of the Board, and maintain a list of names, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of the representatives.

(C) Keep at all times the current copy of the Board bylaws at the meetings.

(D) Perform other duties as may be assigned by the Chairperson or advisor.

Section 5. Segment Chairs

(A) Should coordinate for the Board the activities of their respective constituencies:

(1) Four-Year Public Institutions

(2) Four-Year Independent Colleges and Universities

(3) Two-Year Colleges

(B) Will be responsible, along with constituencies, for coordinating and producing responses on certain topics referred by the Commission.

Article VI Elections

(A) Election of officers will be held at the first meeting of the Board.

(B) The Student Commissioner will plan and execute the election of the new officers. The Student Commissioner, with the assistance of the advisor, will tally the votes and announce the new officers immediately after the balloting.

(C) Segment Chairs will be elected by their respective constituencies.

(D) Voting will be by secret ballot.

(E) New officers will be determined by simple majority and will serve for a one-year term beginning with the first meeting of the Board and ending September 1 of the following year.

Article VII Meetings/Attendance

Section 1. - Meetings

The meetings of the Board shall be held at least four times a year. The meeting dates shall be designated by the Secretary of Higher Education, in consultation with the Board.

Section 2. - Attendance

Attendance at all meetings is expected. Upon the absence of a representative at two consecutive meetings, the Board Secretary shall send a note to the president of the student government of the representative's institution declaring the absence and may send

a letter recommending replacement of the representative to the President of the institution.

Section 3. - Quorum

(A) Quorum is attained by the attendance of the Executive Chair or his/her designee and representatives of at least nine-member institution.

(B) All meetings shall be conducted according to *Robert's Rules of Order*.

Article VIII - Sundry Provisions

Section 1. Advisor

(A) The advisor shall be appointed by the Secretary of Higher Education from the staff of the Commission.

(B) Shall represent the Commission between students and the Commission.

(C) Provide guidance to the Board with regard to administrative procedures and limitations to which the Board is subject.

(D) Provide other support and guidance as needed.

Section 2. - Student Commissioner

(A) The Student Commissioner is defined by §11-102 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code.

(B) Each institution will have the opportunity to nominate a candidate to be the student member of the Commission.

(C) The Vice Chairperson shall establish a committee to review nominations and select the top candidates for interviews.

(D) The Board will interview each candidate selected by the committee to review and recommend up to three names to the Secretary of Higher Education. The Secretary may consider these recommendations in making the final recommendation to the Governor.

(E) Duties of the Student Commissioner are as follows:

(1) Serve as the voting student member of the Commission and have all powers given to the student from the state's legislative branch.

(2) Inform the Executive Committee of the actions of the Commission.

(3) Serve on the Executive Committee as an ex-officio member.

(4) Plan and execute the election of the Board officers at the first meeting.

Article IX - Amendments Procedure

(A) To amend these bylaws, the following criteria must be met:

(1) Any proposed amendment will be presented in a written form at least one meeting prior to the one which a vote is taken.

(2) The proposed amendment must be sent to each member in print form with notice of the called meeting.

(3) The proposed amendment must receive a two-thirds majority of the representatives to be included in the bylaws.

(B) Any amendments must also be approved by the Secretary of Higher Education and the Commission.

Article X Enactment

These bylaws shall become effective immediately upon the approval by the Commission.

Bylaws approved by the Commission

Appendix B

Introductory Packet

Jelena Janc's Thesis Proposal:

The meaning Student Advisory Board has to student

members' leadership development

Purpose

The purpose of this case study is to understand the leadership development and the

meaning Student Advisory Board experience has on the members.

Research question

What is the meaning to student members of the Student Advisory Board experience as a

leadership development opportunity?

Significance of the study

- Little research has been done on cross-institutional organizations

- Little research has been done on student leaders who serve at regional and state

  level position.

- The framework of student public-service leadership is emergent

- The pilot study conducted in the summer showed positive correlation between the

  Student Advisory Board and students' development as public service leaders

Triangulation

- Focus group interviews – discuss the framework of leadership development,

  Student Advisory Board as the opportunity to develop further leadership skills

- Individual interviews – discuss students' background, leadership skills, the meaning of this and past experiences, roles played, and their passion for student-related issues

- Board observation – observation of the meetings, leadership skills applied

- Reflections – group and/or individual reflections (via journal, e-mail, or conversation)

Sampling

- Five individuals who are currently serving as Student Advisory Board members and who plan to actively serve between October and April (attending 80% of the meetings)

- The researcher plans to meet with the focus group three times (Feb., March, & April) for a 45min. guided leadership discussion and twice with each participant from the focus group (January-April) for an hour discussion

- Volunteers will be accommodated in terms of meeting time, space, food, and leadership material that they can keep for their records

- At the end of data collection, volunteers will be presented with a chapter draft for the purpose of feedback

Top Ten List

What makes higher education student a public-service leader?

1. A silent leader who makes a difference

2. A change agent who is willing to take risks for the good of the group

3. A leader who inspires others to do their best, to have a sense of accomplishment, and to believe that they have achieved it all on their own

4. A follower of group's goals and values that s/he upholds above his/her own

5. A visionary who empowers the group

6. A team player and a team builder

7. One among the equals

8. An individual full of enthusiasm and hope

9. A leader of strong character

10. A leader of great ethical and moral values

Outline of the Case Study Requirements

Sign the informed consent form

Sign the informed consent form for
the use of recording devices

Respond to the e-mail confirming
meeting dates

Meet in January for individual interview #1

Meet in February for focus group meeting #1

Meet in February for individual interview #2

Meet in March for focus group meeting #2

Meet in April for individual interview #3

Meet in April for focus group meeting #3

Write a journal on individual's personal development at the Board (via paper or e-mail)

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*Meeting places, times, and dates will be determined by the participants and the

researcher collectively. Because the dates will be determined after the selection process,

the focus groups might meet more than once in one month and might meet in January.

**Participants involved in focus groups and one-on-one interviews will have the

opportunity to meet with the researcher on the same date as the focus group meetings (for

convenience). In case the interviewees are not available for personal interview, the

questions can be transcribed via e-mail or phone calls.

***Individuals will be required to provide a reflection (via journal log or an e-mail; no

length requirements) on their leadership development at the Board as well as on their

development as student leaders.

Benefits of Participation

⇒ Learn about leadership development opportunities

⇒ Explore relational model of leadership

⇒ Empower oneself and fellow students – the power of student leadership

⇒ Create friendships with fellow student leaders

⇒ Engage in leadership conversations that will explore the past, present, and future of student leadership opportunities in Atlantic state

⇒ Evaluate the meaning Board experience has on your leadership development

Appendix C

Consent Forms

<u>Informed Consent Form for Focus Group & Interview Participants</u>

Identification of project/title	*A Case Study: The meaning Student Advisory Board has to members' leadership development.*
Statement of age of subject	*I state that I am 18 years of age, in good health, and wish to participate in a program of research being conducted by Jelena Janc in the Statewide Higher Education Coordinating Commission, Capital City, Atlantic.*
Purpose	*The purpose of this case study is to understand the leadership development and the meaning the Student Advisory Board has on student leaders.*
Procedures	*There are three data collection parts: 1) three observation of the February-April Board meetings; 2) three focus group meetings with possible e-mail interaction; and 3) two individual interviews with journal entries. The researcher will facilitate the group discussions, guide the interviews, and observe the Board.*
Confidentiality	*All information collected is confidential to the extent permitted by law. I understand that the data collected will be grouped and cross analyzed with data others provide for the purpose of the thesis. I also understand that my name, institution represented, and the names of organizations I (did) belong to will be protected. The data collected will not be shared with anyone outside the thesis committee, and the material will be securely stored.*
Risks	*I do not foresee any considerable risks involved with this leadership development analysis.*
Benefits, freedom of withdraw, & ability to ask questions	*As a participant, I will gain a better understanding of my leadership characteristics, my role as a student leader on a statewide board. I will also get the opportunity to discuss leadership issues facing the Board and student leaders in higher education, and finally, reflect on the meaning Board experience has on my leadership development. I will be free to ask question, and I can withdraw at any time without penalty.*
Investigator's contact information	Jelena Janc; 1135 Stamp Student Union; University of Maryland, College Park; 301-405-XXXX; hjanc@union.umd.edu.
Signature of the subject	Name of subject _____ Signature of subject _____ Date _____

Informed Consent Form for the Use of Recording Devices

Identification of project/title	*A Case Study: The meaning Student Advisory Board has to members' leadership development.*
Statement of age of subject	*I state that I am 18 years of age, in good health, and wish to participate in a program of research being conducted by Jelena Janc in the Statewide Higher Education Coordinating Commission, Capital City, Atlantic.*
Purpose	*The purpose of the recordings is for the researcher to more accurately transcribe data collected, directly quote students, and to ensure that there are no misconceptions in the realm of research context.*
Procedures	*There are two recording opportunities: 1) during three focus group meetings and 2) during two individual interviews. The researcher will require consent form signatures and will record only if all participants agree. Upon thesis completion, all recordings will be destroyed.*
Confidentiality	*All information collected is confidential to the extent permitted by law. I understand that the data recorded will be grouped and cross-analyzed with data others provide for the purpose of the thesis. I also understand that my name, institution represented, and the names of organizations I (did) belong to will be protected. The tape recordings will not be shared outside the thesis committee, and the material will be securely stored until the completion of the thesis, at which time the recordings will be destroyed.*
Risks	*I do not foresee any considerable risks involved with the recording devices.*
Benefits, freedom of withdraw, & ability to ask questions	*By recording group and individual interviews, the researcher will be able to properly quote and interpret discussion. I will be free to ask question, and I can withdraw at any time without penalty.*
Investigator's contact information	Jelena Janc; 1135 Stamp Student Union; University of Maryland, College Park; 301-405-XXXX; hjanc@union.umd.edu.
Signature of the subject	Name of subject _____ Signature of subject _____ Date _____

Appendix D

Interview & Focus Group Questions

Interview #1 Template

Participant's name: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Objectives:

- To analyze the individual's concept of leadership, public service, and student activism in higher education

- To learn about the individual's leadership background

- To understand the student's view of Board as a leadership development opportunity

- To give the individual the opportunity to analyze their leadership characteristics and the reasons for participation at the Board

Interview questions:

- What is your concept of leadership? How do you define the words *leader, leadership*?

- What is your concept of student leadership? What qualifies an individual to be a student leader?

- What trends have you noticed in student activism in higher education in terms of student involvement in extracurricular activities, volunteerism, and application in state or regional offices?

- What is your leadership background? Could you please state few of leadership positions held in your years in higher education? Why do you deem these positions as those of leadership?

- What leadership characteristics do you find in your leadership style (as you assess your past and current leadership experiences)? How have those leadership characteristics changed through different leadership opportunities? What new leadership characteristics do you see developing as you continue to participate at the Board?

- What is your view of the Board as a leadership development opportunity?

- Why did you choose to participate at the Board?

- What type of leadership themes do you find at the Board?

Thank you very much for your time and participation in this interview.

Your input is of outmost value to this study. I look forward to our next encounter.

Interview #2 Template

Participant's name: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____ Location: _____

Objectives:

- To analyze the individual's assessment of the Board experience as a leadership

  development opportunity

- To evaluate leadership skills, characteristics, and lessons learned during the Board

  meetings, focus groups, and journal writing

- To discuss the meaning the Board experience has had on the student

- To reflect on the leadership development of the student

Interview questions:

- How would you evaluate your interaction with the Board groups?

- How would you evaluate your role at the Board? What opportunities did you have

  to apply your leadership skills and to learn new ones?

- How would you bridge information [received at the Board] to your representative

  institution?

- What leadership lessons have you learned?

- What correlation do you see between the concept of [public] service leadership

  and your own concept of leadership?

- What characteristics of citizenship have you seen applied at the Board by you or

  the group as a whole?

- What leadership lessons have you learned as a result of your participation at the Board? In the focus group? In journal writing activity?

- What does the Board experience mean to you as student leader?

- Please reflect on your leadership development during the Board experience.

A note: Additional questions were posed to each individual based on their previous comments and background. Such questions included: What is the level of interaction among and within segmental groups? What would you reform about the Board? How was survey data collected for the policy project?

Thank you very much for your time and participation in this interview.

Your input is of outmost value to this study. I look forward to our next encounter.

Focus Group Questions

Session I

Objectives:

- To create a comfortable environment for students to voice their opinion

- To discuss group dynamics at the Student Advisory Board, in particular the role of diversity and students' interactions

- To discuss the effect of Board's structure and function on students' skill development

- To analyze the student commissioner selection process

Focus group questions:

- How does your collaborative setting (structure, Robert's rule of parliamentary procedure) influence your leadership development?

- In terms of diversity, how does this help the collaborative setting? What dimension does this add to the age, race, gender, and institutional types… with all different perspectives coming in at once, how do you adjust to that in terms of teamwork?

- Based on the parliamentary Robert's Rules of Procedure, based on the role that you play within the institution you represent, how does that enhance your leadership development, being the representative in a parliamentary setting?

- What does it mean in your leadership development to have the opportunity to participate at the Board with such a divers group of people?

- Discuss student commissioner process. What standards of quality (qualifications) did you set out ahead of time for candidates coming in for that position? What

were you looking for in a representative? What would make a good student

commissioner? What qualities would that person have?

- What have you learned from that experience?

Thank you very much for your time and participation in this session.

Your input is of outmost value to this study. I look forward to our next encounter.

Focus Group Questions

Session II

Objectives:

- To evaluate students' relationship with the Board, with students in their institutional segments

- To discuss the extent of the interaction students have amongst each other

- To gain an understanding on how is the information from the Board translated to individual institutions

- To discuss student empowerment at the Board and state at large

- To brainstorm ideas on how the Board should be improved, why or why not

- To understand the concept of public service (what does it mean to students in the context of the Board)

Focus group questions:

- How would you evaluate your interaction with the Board members? How would you evaluate your relationship with other members?

- What type of relationship exists among Board members outside of the official meetings?

- Do you communicate with anybody outside of your institutional segment?

- Do you think it would be valuable to involve student governments or general student population in the Board's projects? How would you bring awareness of this opportunity to other students?

- What is the best way to get the Board to get the message across on why students should get involved?

- How would you evaluate your role at the Board? (Are you usually the person that asks a lot of questions? Are you a person that summarizes everything? Or are you quiet and then speaks at the end?)

- What do you do with the information you get here? What type of information do you share at your college?

- Is there anything that the Board can do to enhance how they function?

- Where do you see the Student Advisory Board going in the future in terms of its structure, student empowerment?

- What does it mean to you to be a student service leader? What does it mean to you to be a student leader providing public service? Representing your institution, representing all students… What does it mean to you to have that opportunity?

- Do you feel that you are providing a public service to your institution? Do you still think you are offering public service at large?

Thank you very much for your time and participation in this session.

Your input is of outmost value to this study. I look forward to our next encounter.

Focus Group Questions

Session III

Objectives:

- To gain an understanding of the concept "civic responsibility"

- To analyze organizational stages and the impact each one had on students' leadership development

- To analyze roles students played at the Board and how these roles enhanced their leadership skills

- To discuss the meaning this experience had to students

Focus group questions:

- What do words "civic responsibility" mean to you?

- Describe Student Advisory Board's stages of organizational development (refer to the forming, storming, norming, and performing stages)

- What influenced you most in your decision-making and role functions that you took (culture, personality, etc.)?

- What do you want to take away from this experience?

- What was the most important thing you have learned at the Student Advisory Board?

- What does this experience mean to you?

- What is the most important thing that you want to pass on to the future Board members?

Thank you for participating in the case study. I appreciate your time and support.

Appendix E

March Minutes Assembled by the Researcher

Minutes of the Statewide Higher Education Coordinator Commission

Student Advisory Board

Fifth meeting for the 2002-2003 term

March 8, 2003

11:30AM-1:30PM

Career Design University

President of the Board, called the meeting to order at 11:30am with the following

members in attendance:

1. The chair, County Community College

2. Jearim, Board advisor

3. Jesse, University of African-American Leaders

4. Marcus, Western Institute of Higher Learning

5. Amy, Women's Catholic College

6. Jennifer, Rural Private College

7. Michelle, Alternative Health Institute

8. Darnel, Rural Public University

9. Cherri, African-American Rural Public University

10. Tom, Classic College

11. Taiowa, Student commissioner, University of African-American Leaders

12. Bob, Institute for Comprehensive Academic & Technical Studies

13. Alison Prendergast, St. Mary's College of Maryland

14. Michael, Vice-chair, Career Design University

Dr. Robert Smith, the President of Career Design University welcomed the Student Advisory Board. After a brief welcome, the Board meeting started:

1. Jearim announced that names of the nominee for the next Student Commissioner have been sent to the Secretary of Higher Education. Following the announcement the focus shifted to the political discussion.

   - Issue I: Higher education budget and the impact it has on state's institutions. Discussion focused on layoffs, advocacy day, and the importance of student involvement in the Capital City.

   - Issue II: Slot machines – should the State have them? What impact will they have on higher education and on the budget?

   - Issue III: Board's future - Jearim pointed out that students should testify in the Capital City to get their point across. Michael added that the Board should increase its attendance and become a soundboard for student issues. Bob suggested that the Board should take on a more grass-roots role and bridge the gap between the public and the Statewide Higher Education Coordinating Commission.

   - Issue V: Katherine discussed Senate Bill (funding for private institutions) and the importance of public funding for small, private, liberal arts colleges.

2. Following the political discussion, the Board had lunch

3. At 12:30pm, Board broke into their segmental groups and discussed their final report. Some groups were discussing how to assemble their data; others were putting together their final drafts.

4. Presentation of the reports:

   • Four-year public – Darnel had a final report by his segment. He read the executive summary and discussed the overall finding from his segment. The group decided that it is best for each segment to e-mail their copies to each other and to Jearim as the means for putting it together.

   • Four-year private – Michael will e-mail the draft to the Board and Jearim

   • Community colleges – the Board chair will e-mail the draft to Jearim

   • Jearim agreed to merge all segmental drafts into a final report by the next meeting. In addition, he stated that the Statewide Higher Education Coordinating Commission meets in early April at which time the Board might be able to present their final report. He encouraged all members to be present, but he also pointed out that the Board should select an individual who will present the report.

5. Jearim announced that the Board next meeting will focus on two points:

   • Final report

   • Future of the Board – the roles, attendance, relationship with the Commission and institutions

6. The chair of the Board outlined the recruitment discussion that will take place at the next meeting. Issues that will be addressed are:

- How should the Board members be selected? What qualifications should they have?

- Can former a former Board members run for the student commissioner position? The answer was "yes."

7. The meeting was adjourned at 1:30pm.

Jelena Janc, Board observer assembled the minutes.

Appendix F

2002-2003 Policy Project

Report on the Student Perception of Adequacy and

Effectiveness of Academic Advising

Student Advisory Board representative will familiarize himself/herself with campus

policies regarding academic advising, i.e., faculty advisors vs. centralized advising

through a student service center.

Representatives will interview 20 - 30 students on campus to determine how students feel

about the adequacy and effectiveness of academic advising.

At the November Board meeting, representatives will discuss initial findings and begin to

shape the report to the Commission.

Representatives will discuss and finalize report and recommendations (if any) at the

March and April meetings.

Final report will be presented by the Student Advisory Board to the Higher Education

Commission at the June meeting.

A note: The name of the institution and the Board name have been modified for

confidentiality purposes. Thus, the source of the Bylaws will be kept anonymous.

Appendix G

Coding Table

ADV	Advisor's role in the Student Advisory Board
CITIZEN	Themes/discussions related to citizenship, public and civic service
E	Election procedure in the student commissioner process
FGD	Focus group descriptive notes (e.g., individuals' dress, attendance, location)
GD/LD	Group dynamics – phrases related to the leadership development
INFO	How is information obtained at SAB translated to represented institutions?
ISSUE	Political, higher education, and social issues discussed
L	Leader definition (positional & nonpositional)
LD	Leadership definition (from the students' perspective)
LO	Leadership opportunities (general statements)
LQS	Leadership qualities/skills a leader should have
LT	Leadership types (e.g. authoritative, relational, etc.)
NPL	Nonpositional leader/leadership (definition)
O	Researcher's observations during focus group, SAB, & interview meetings
P	Indicates personal statements that directly pertain to focus group students
PCB	Personal college background
PD	Personal drive
PHSB	Personal high school background
PLL	Personal lessons learned (during SAB session)
PLQS	Personal leadership qualities/skills
PNPLV	Personal nonpositional leadership vignette
PROF	Students' profile (qualities, demographics)
PROJ	Discussions and reports related to the SAB projects
PSABMDV	Vignette on how SAB members make difference at their institutions
PSABQ	Personal qualities a student observed brings to SAB
PSABR	Personal role students play at SAB (what role they take, what they bring)
PSABRI	Personal role students play as institutional representatives
PSABVMD	Personal vignette on how other SAB students made a difference for the students observed
PSLQS	Personal student leadership qualities
PSVED	Personal side vignette about higher education
PTMVL	Personal vignette on the turning moment in students' leadership development
PV	Personal values
PVL	Personal vignette on leadership
PZLV	(An institutional) president's leadership vignette ("Field of Dreams")
RLM	Relational leadership model characteristics
SABF	Future recommendation for SAB by students observed
SABG	General points about SAB

SABGD	SAB general dynamics
SABGDR	SAB discussions about problems, issues, and reforms needed at the Board
SABI	How did students got involved in SAB (selection process)?
SABL	Why is SAB a leadership opportunity?
SABLQ	SAB student leadership (students qualities, skills, development process)
SABM	Meaning of the SAB experience
SABMD	Students making a difference at SAB
SABS	SAB structure (bylaws, agenda)
SABS/S	SAB segmental structure (4 year public & private, community colleges)
SABT	SAB leadership themes
SABTD	SAB segmental dynamics
SABUO	SAB – an unique opportunity
SCS	Student commissioner selection process
SCM	Social change model (7cs characteristics)
SCR	Student commissioner role
SERV	Service (general meaning)
SERVL	Service leader/leadership (definitions, qualities)
SERVP	Public service (definitions, qualities, student development)
SGO	Segmental group dynamics (general observations)
SHECCG	General information on the Higher Education Coordinating Commission
Side note	Side note observations that might/not be used in the analysis
SLD	Student leadership definition (general definition by students)
SLQS	Student leadership qualities/skills (general definition by students)
SLSAB	Student leadership at SAB (general observations)
SLSABQS	Students' leadership qualities/skills at SAB (general observations)
SLT	Student leadership types (general & w/in SAB)
SURVEY	Surveys (design, collection, response, interpretation for the project)
V	Vignette (letter sign for personal vignette)
VHES	Vignette on student leadership development in higher education

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