

Commentary: American Public University System: Nurturing Our Leaders and Future Leaders

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ABSTRACT

It is often a disaster or crisis that highlights our leaders and their leadership capabilities. Certainly, the current pandemic has caused us to scrutinize the abilities of our national and local leaders. How well or how bad a leader responded to the pandemic has become a benchmark for leadership evaluation. How are leaders created? Are they born to it? Sure, some required leadership skills are born from characteristic traits found in many people. These leadership characteristics include patience, caring, empathy, decisiveness, and efficient planning. What then, if they are born to it, but are never presented with an opportunity to actually lead? The answer is they remain in a state of potential.

Keywords: leaders, pandemic, COVID-19, leadership skills, characteristic traits, accountability, potential, forward-thinking, model

American Public University System: nutrir a nuestros líderes y futuros líderes

RESUMEN

A menudo es un desastre o una crisis que destaca a nuestros líderes y sus capacidades de liderazgo. Ciertamente, la pandemia actual nos ha llevado a escudriñar las habilidades de nuestros líderes nacionales y locales. Qué tan bien o qué tan mal respondió un líder a la pandemia se ha convertido en un punto de referencia para la evaluación del liderazgo. ¿Cómo se crean los líderes? ¿Han nacido para eso? Por supuesto, algunas habilidades de liderazgo necesarias nacen de rasgos característicos que se encuentran en muchas personas. Estas características de liderazgo incluyen paciencia, cuidado, empatía, decisión y planificación eficiente. Entonces, ¿qué pasa si nacen para ello, pero nunca se les presenta la oportunidad de liderar realmente? La respuesta es que permanecen en un estado de potencial.

Palabras clave: líderes, pandemia, COVID-19, habilidades de liderazgo, rasgos característicos, responsabilidad, potencial, con visión de futuro, modelo

美国公立大学系统：培养我们的未来领导者

摘要

通常，一场灾害或危机能突出我们的领导者及其领导能力。的确，当前的大流行让我们检视国家和地方领导者的能力。一名领导者的大流行响应举措有多好或多差已成为领导力评价的一个基准。领导者是如何诞生的？他们是天生的吗？从许多人中发现，一些必要的领导技能的确源于典型特征。这些领导力特征包括耐心、关爱、共情、决断力和高效规划。如果他们生来就具备这些特征，但从未获得机会发挥领导能力呢？答案是，他们保持处于潜在领导者的状态。

关键词：领导者，大流行，新冠肺炎（COVID-19），领导力技能，典型特征，问责，潜能，前瞻性思维，模范

Introduction

It is often a disaster or crisis that highlights our leaders and their leadership capabilities. Certainly, the current pandemic has caused us to scrutinize the abilities of our national and local leaders. How well or how bad a leader responded to the pandemic has become a benchmark for leadership evaluation. How are leaders created? Are they born to it? Sure, some required leadership skills are born from characteristic traits found in many people. These leadership characteristics include patience, caring, empathy, decisiveness, and efficient planning. What then, if they are born to it, but are never presented with an opportunity to actually

lead? The answer is they remain in a state of potential.

Leaders Need Nurturing Too

New and current leaders must be nurtured if they are to grow and become effective. Especially now, in a pandemic, leaders are called upon to communicate, plan, organize, and implement solutions. Nurturing leaders and future leaders are exactly why American Public University System (APUS) matters. The University's core values of accessibility, innovation, integrity, learning, and quality can be seen as the building blocks for the leadership characteristics needed to effectively and bravely communicate challenges.

Thou Shalt Not Exclude

A good leader does not exclude. Rather, good leaders welcome all inputs and experiences to solve the problems at hand. By providing access to a diverse community, the University involves as many people as they can to make the educational experience accessible to all. The more inputs a leader has, the better decisions they can make. These decisions help drive innovation, which can be considered as *imaginative forward-thinking*. To be a good forward-thinker, one must think out of the box. That is, they must do what is not the norm. A forward-thinker does not look to merely get by. A forward-thinker challenges themselves and everyone around them to exceed expectations, which drives innovative ideas. Good leaders are compelled to explore new ideas and work out of their comfort zone.

Leaders Hold Themselves Accountable

Accountability in leadership ensures that individual leaders honor and respect the positions they hold because leadership can be revoked. Leaders must communicate and interact with their subordinates, peers, and their superiors. Discussion forums at APUS encourage and support interaction and communication. Forum interaction with instructors and other students provides a venue of fairness, honesty, and objectivity so that students learn to self-critique their own efforts. Since every leader is not always aware

of their mistakes, self-critique and welcoming critiques from others allows leaders to better themselves.

Do As I Say and As I Do

Obtaining the characteristics of a good leader are only the first part of leadership. How does one, with good leadership characteristics, actually lead? The answer to the second part of leadership is to *set the example*. Setting the example means you conduct yourself above reproach and do not complain. Setting the example may sound easy but keeping that mindset throughout each day is a challenge. For example, it may be easy to tell your organization to wear a mask at all times, but you the leader must also wear a mask. Effective leadership means a leader makes informed decisions so that the organization continues to move forward. An example is after data are presented, true leaders inquire within the leadership body as a whole, and then, make a decision based upon the data.

Conclusion

In summary, there are many characteristics and traits that define a good leader. It is easy to recognize the good leaders from the bad ones, but it is much more important to encourage and promote the good leaders. The curricular format at APUS not only prepares students with the knowledge and skills to become a true leader in their field of expertise, the University enables leaders and future leaders to learn and interact

with others in a respectful way—which can certainly be revived with the right
seems to be a dwindling characteristic education.
in the workplace and government, but

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