

Leadership Subcommittee 2005-2010 Strategic Plan

RE: Subcommittee Report/Recommendations

Subcommittee Members:

- Faculty/Administration -- Joan Antonicelli; Heshla Ash; Joseph Benedict; Bill Gargan; Natalia Guarin-Klein; Millicent Grant; Tomas Lopez-Pumarejo
- Students -- Anthony Caines; Veronica Feliciano; Corydon Merritt; Leah Silber; Mayique Wright

Leadership Subcommittee Charge:

Each subcommittee will develop a set of recommendations around a particular issue based on its vision of where it would like the college to be in five years. In its discussions, each subcommittee should consider two scenarios, one with limited and another with substantial resources. The former scenario should lead to more feasible activities in the current budgetary environment, while the latter, to more ambitious objectives to which we might aspire with external funding.

Each subcommittee should generate a statement, 5-7 pages maximum, which presents its ideas, either in the form of a narrative or an outline with a series of bullets, or, a combination of the two. From your reports we aim to create a living strategic plan that both offer a blueprint of change and benchmarks for progress.”

The overarching goal of the Strategic Plan encompassing our “Leadership Subcommittee” is:

To assure a student-oriented campus by creating an environment that puts student needs and concerns at the heart of our concerns and activities.

1. Introduction:

The Leadership Subcommittee had two meetings: Thursday, May 5th at 3:00pm in the Student Center Penthouse and Wednesday, May 11th at 2:00pm in the Boylan Hall Georgian Room. Although all subcommittee members were not able to attend both meetings (due to other priorities or commitments), the meeting discussions had continuity, were stimulating and informative. An underlying theme throughout the subcommittee’s discussions was inspired by the “Leadership Reconsidered: A Campus-Wide Focus On The Student Experience” article coordinated by The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators and The American College Personnel Association; key points of the article were:

- a. *“Learning Reconsidered is an article for the integrated use of all of higher education’s resources in the education and preparation of the whole student. ... It advocates for transformative education – a holistic process of learning that places the student at the center of the learning experience.”*
- b. *“Learning Reconsidered defines learning as a comprehensive, holistic, transformative activity that integrates academic learning and student development, processes that have often been considered separate, and even independent of each other.”*

2. Leadership Definition [as defined in Business Department classes]:

“ability to influence and motivate others”

3. Discussion Points:

- a. Initial discussions revolved around whether the various educational experiences for students at Brooklyn College, both in the academy and student development arenas, intentionally focused on leadership skill development, as opposed to merely presenting lectures/workshops and allowing students to integrate the “teachings” on their own connections.
 - B. Gargan informed the committee that SEEK students, prior to beginning their classes, are given a folder that delineates establishes benchmarks and expectations for success; each student is expected to follow these guidelines, developing a port-folio of achievements.

- T. Lopez-Pumarejo noted that there was a recently introduced two (2) credit course entitled Business Leadership in the Business/Economics Department; in addition he informed the committee that a “Business Development Center” (in conjunction with Small Business Association and NYC) was being established to assist in putting business proposals together, provide strategic guidelines for beginning a new business, and serve as a resource in raising the “quality of life”.
 - L. Silber opined, that in most cases, she did not feel that “intentional linkages” existed between academics (including student develop initiatives) and leadership opportunities -- connecting what was being presented to leadership skill, personal empowerment, or civic responsibilities.
 - M. Grant stated that feedback given to her by two students, CORE 3 (People, Politics and Power) deals with the theoretical model as opposed to personal empowerment (urging students to empower themselves to become civically engaged).
 - B. Gargan stated that he has been recently using “group work activity” in his classes to foster more student involvement and interaction.
 - Members of the committee generally agreed that we need to find ways of “engaging students who are not normally involved” in campus projects/task forces – as opposed to continually involving those students that are already engaged (e.g. students involved in student government, student newspapers, clubs and organizations, etc.).
 - It was suggested, and most agreed, that there is also a need to educate staff as well as students.
 - Several committee members referenced the “Leadership Course” that was taught by Vice President Gold, and more recently by Dean Morales; it was noted that although this course is not currently offered (perception was because it was no longer connected to an academic discipline), steps should be taken to find an appropriate academic discipline to restore this course offering. Some committee members even suggested that a “leadership/empowerment segment” be incorporated in one of CORE courses (perhaps the existing CORE 3).
 - M. Grant suggested that while steps are taken to restore the Leadership Course, we should establish a “Mentorship Program” (using faculty/administrator volunteers).
 - B. Gargan recommended that the campus take advantage of “student employment opportunities” (both College funded and Work Study funded), to foster more effective student leadership experiences; student employees would be intentionally exposed to various training and mentoring initiatives within the department/office assigned.
- b. The committee brainstormed “desired leadership skills” students should possess upon graduating from Brooklyn College – however, there will be a need to determine various ways these skills can be achieved. Below is the list of desired leadership skills students should possess:
- Self-Confidence/Personal Empowerment Skills
 - Communication Skills – both oral and written
 - Conflict Resolution Skills
 - Ethical/Integrity Skills
 - Knowing Self [Self Introspection]/Interpersonal Skills
 - Public Speaking Skills
 - Problem Solving Skills
 - Perseverance & Persistence Skills
 - Analytical, Creative & Strategic Thinking Skills
 - Respect for Diversity/Appreciation of Difference
 - Time Management Skills/ Responsibility/Initiating Action
- c. N. Guarin-Klein suggested that we may want to develop a “Top Ten” media piece (e.g. brochure, booklet, etc.) that could be distributed to students when they begin classes delineating specific leadership and personal empowerment skill initiatives to foster civic engagement and responsibility.
- d. N. Guarin-Klein shared ideas that she has been contemplating that relate to student leadership development:
- An event with Faculty to discuss skills needed for a successful career and how to integrate the skills into the curriculum (having representatives from organizations in the discussion as well)

- Development of a career skills handbook - that outlines the top skills students need once they leave college (related to the book I refer to below) with ideas/suggestions on how to develop the skills.
 - Development of workshops such as (titles are not finalized)
 - How to Make A Great Impression (discussion on impression management, how impressions are formed, why they matter and how they affect your career/success)
 - Communicating at work - assessing students ability to communicate and listen and tips on building better communication skill
 - Writing documents (e-mails, letters, memos etc.) that get read!
 - Creating and delivering a knock out presentation
 - Continuing to work with departments on events where alumni can discuss their careers and give advice to students.
 - Also our center is launching Professional Development Institute in the fall. I will forward those who did not get the e-mail.
 - Here is the information she gathered in developing the ideas above:
 - The National Association of Colleges and Employers conducted a recent survey of employers asking them to rate the importance of candidate qualities and skills (5-point scale, where 1= not important and 5=extremely important)
 - ❖ Communication skills (verbal and written) 4.7
 - ❖ Honesty/integrity 4.7
 - ❖ Interpersonal skills (relates well to others) 4.5
 - ❖ Strong work ethic 4.5
 - ❖ Teamwork skills (works well with others) 4.5
 - ❖ Analytical skills 4.4
 - ❖ Motivation/Initiative 4.4
 - ❖ Flexibility/adaptability 4.3
 - ❖ Computer skills 4.2
 - ❖ Detail-oriented 4.1
 - ❖ Leadership skills 4.0
 - ❖ Organizational skills 4.0
 - ❖ Self-confidence 3.9
 - ❖ Friendly/outgoing personality 3.8
 - ❖ Tactfulness 3.8
 - ❖ Well-mannered/polite 3.8
 - ❖ GPA (3.0 or better) 3.7
 - ❖ Creativity 3.6
 - ❖ Entrepreneurial skills/risk-taker 3.2
 - ❖ Sense of humor 3.2
 - Dreaming of a Big Paycheck? Know What Skills Employers Look For
http://www.youngmoney.com/careers/job_hunt/031201_01
 - What Do Employers *Really* Want? Top Skills and Values Employers Seek from Job-Seekers
http://www.quintcareers.com/job_skills_values.html
 - Developing Employability Skills (this is a compilation of research and how faculty can help develop these skills)<http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/8/c015.html>
 - Developing Employability Skills for Undergraduate Students at Keele University - A Policy
<http://www.keele.ac.uk/depts/aa/qao/qamanual/employskills.htm>
 - This website refers to a book I recently ordered called 10 things employers want you to learn in college <http://www.tenspeedpress.com/catalog/all/item.php3?id=1628>
 - Example of learning outcomes at one college
<http://www.rrc.mb.ca/program/CollegeOutcomes.htm>
- e. The three students were given the opportunity to share their experiences at Brooklyn College:
- M. Wright, a transfer undergraduate student who is enrolled in a graduate program – Education, Guidance/School Counseling major, remarked:

- When she arrived on campus, “she did not have clue as to how to navigate the campus”;
 - She stated that there was little information regarding the Core Book Exchange operation;
 - Regarding the “Ask Me Center” – she shared, “If you don’t know what to ask, it is difficult to use this service”;
 - She suggested that “Volunteer Service Experience” be equated in some way to credits; the SERVA program was discussed (however, only one of the three students knew about SERVA);
 - She suggested that ongoing “student initiated workshops” (having student leaders and upper class students lead the workshops) be scheduled -- she felt that peer sharing/education could be very effective in assisting newer students navigate the campus.
- C. Merritt, also a transfer student majoring in Theater, stated:
- There seems to be a lack of “school spirit” or a “sense of pride” – e.g. not aware of campus athletic events;
 - Traditions of Brooklyn College should be celebrated;
 - Common Hours should include “community builder initiatives”;
 - Diversity of the campus community seems to promote “separatist behaviors (it was noted that this phenomenon is due to members of the campus community gravitating toward individual “comfort zones”).
- V. Feliciano, a graduate student who completed her undergraduate degree at Brooklyn College, shared her experiences:
- Freshman Orientation incentive for student involvement – should include leadership segment in training;
 - Academic course work could incorporate empowerment/leadership skill development – Melanie Bush’s Sociology course, “People of U.S.”, was sighted as an example;
 - She suggested that there should be an investigation of other academic courses that have leadership/personal empowerment initiatives.
- f. M. Grant shared that a former Brooklyn College student had suggested that perhaps a “buddy system/student mentorship” program be developed, and M. Grant suggested a faculty/staff to mentor students – to assist in breaking down the “comfort zone barriers” that students experience on campus.
- g. J. Benedict shared that the annual Leadership Retreat includes a session on “cultural sharing” (explaining that each student is asked to bring an item to the retreat that represents his/her culture, ethnicity, etc. – and students have the opportunity to share in small groups); he stated that each year the student evaluation of “cultural sharing session” strongly suggests that it should be “institutionalized” in each academic class during the first week (e.g. each faculty person would devote one class session during the first week to engage students in this type of discussion and dialog). Breaking down the individual difference barriers would be a major step in promoting personal empowerment and leadership initiatives.
- h. When the subcommittee was asked to define leadership, T. Lopez-Pumarejo offered a definition used in business – simply, “ability to influence and motivate others”. Some members suggested key factors related to leadership: “development of followers”; “ability to take risks”; “listening skills (active listening)”; and “integrity”.
- i. J. Antonicelli suggested that entering students should be exposed to a brainstorm session on the topic, “What can Brooklyn College do for you” (e.g. this can be done during New Student Orientation or in the classroom with faculty).

j. Although N. Guarin-Klein was unable to gain access to the meeting, she shared information she recently obtained from a “IT Matters: Redefining Effective Communication” symposium; many of the techniques listed below directly relate to student engagement, personal empowerment, and leadership skill development:

- Faculty sit in on a company meeting
- Have students write a 500 word introduction as to what grade they think they deserve and why.
- Helps students understand critical thinking and shortcomings.
- Students grade each other's papers and have them justify why the person deserves that grade (peer review)
- Use e-mail blocs to have students critique each other
- Prepare 100 PowerPoint slides and have students use few of the slides to present on (set a limit on time or the number of slides). This helps students to think on their feet and to think critically
- Have students write a memo, e-mail, PowerPoint slide and have it critiqued by an organization
- Have students write for a real life organization
- Need to have consistent message across the organization by developing standards/expectations
- Consider action learning teams
- Develop a template to be submitted with each paper that asks questions such as who is the audience; what message were you trying to get across, what is the objective etc.
- Develop critical thinking course
- Have students write about same topic for different audiences/situations (for example write a letter to their friend and then to their parents)
- Integrate writing/critical thinking in all courses
- Define explicit performance expectations for students
- Teach students how to analyze and choose appropriate medium for their writing
- Offer professional development for faculty in areas of technology
- Determine what technical skills students have
- Incorporate experiential learning
- Incorporate debates/multiple viewpoint
- Develop electronic portfolio
- Write memo to president of the college or to a company that describes a problem, analysis of the problem, various possible solutions, and recommended solution. Post memo for other students to challenge and revise memo based on those challenges
- Have students videotape and record them so they can playback and critique their presentation.
- Role playing
- Conduct informational interview
- After each assignment have students discuss what they learned and how it is transferable & applicable to their career or the real world.

4. **Recommendations:**

- a. Steps should be taken to identify classes that incorporate leadership and personal empowerment initiatives within the syllabus so that there can be an intentional linkage for student experiential learning with other areas of the campus (e.g. Student Life/Student Development).
- b. As a follow up to “a” above, it is recommended that each department identify such a course for their students.
- c. One of the CORE programs (e.g. current CORE 3 – People, Politics and Power) be designed to specifically incorporate leadership and personal empowerment initiatives to stimulate students to become civically engaged.
- d. The Leadership Course, that is not currently offered, should be restored; ideally, there should be several sections of the course so that a greater number of students can register for the class.
- e. The campus should consider taking advantage of “student employment opportunities” on campus – creating training programs that intentionally expose students to leadership skill development. *The desired leadership skills include:*

- Self-Confidence/Personal Empowerment Skills
 - Communication Skills – both oral and written
 - Conflict Resolution Skills
 - Ethical/Integrity Skills
 - Knowing Self [Self Introspection]/Interpersonal Skills
 - Public Speaking Skills
 - Problem Solving Skills
 - Perseverance & Persistence Skills
 - Analytical, Creative & Strategic Thinking Skills
 - Respect for Diversity/Appreciation of Difference
 - Time Management Skills;
 - Taking Responsibility/Initiating Action
- f. Recommend that the College incorporate desired leadership skills (e.g. similar to those identified in “e.” above) as a part of the learning objectives of the academy, and then encourage each professor to identify which of the leadership skills s/he is nurturing in the course syllabus.
 - g. More intentionally incorporate class participation/attendance in special events offered by various constituents of the College (e.g. Student Life Program Offerings; Wolfe Institute; Conservatory of Music; Theatre Department Productions; Magner Center for Career Development and Internships; Women’s Center; etc.)
 - h. Develop and share with incoming students a “Top Ten” media piece that challenges students to seek out and experience specific leadership and personal empowerment skills during his/her tenure at the College – and in addition, engage all students in contemplating the question, “What Can Brooklyn College Do For You”?.
 - i. Encourage each faculty person (during the first week of class) to spend one class session – or a portion thereof – facilitating a “Cultural Exchange” exercise [asking each member of the class to bring an item to class that represents his/her cultural/ethnic heritage – each student would be permitted up to 5 minutes to explain the item and its relationship]. *Note: It has been demonstrated during leadership retreats that this exercise begins to break down individual barriers and stereotypes – thus fostering mutual respect and appreciation (besides being an educational experience, it expand the “personal comfort zone” of each student.*
 - j. Create a “buddy system/mentorship program” that involves both faculty/administration/staff and upper class students [e.g. a 6 to 1 program (6 students to each mentor)].
 - k. Increase linkages between the College community to broadening student’s awareness of campus resources (e.g. Federal Work Study Orientation – M. Grant partnered with colleagues from the Magner Center to provide students with additional insights about employment, internships and networking).
 - l. Develop a College “handbook for success – targeting both undergraduate and graduate students (suggested theme/titles: “Handbook for Our College Community”; “Know Your College”; and “Which Way Is Up”). Suggested content for the handbook follows:
 - finding mentors
 - key offices to visit
 - developing essential skills
 - community involvement/possible activities/campus run programs
 - broadening horizons- global perspectives: study abroad opportunities
 - clubs and campus organizations
 - special campus events
 - top ten elective courses
 - courses you never knew existed
 - leadership courses
 - comments from recent alumni (various majors) their reflections and advice
 - helpful tips from faculty and administrators
 - special programs- hot to qualify
 - Q & A section based on popular questions asked by students

- m. Encourage incorporation of the educational techniques below (these techniques were shared at a recent “It Matters: Redefining Effective Communication” symposium):
- Faculty sit in on a company meeting
 - Have students write a 500 word introduction as to what grade they think they deserve and why.
 - Helps students understand critical thinking and shortcomings.
 - Students grade each other's papers and have them justify why the person deserves that grade (peer review)
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 - Role playing
 - Conduct informational interview
 - After each assignment have students discuss what they learned and how it is transferable & applicable to their career or the real world.

Respectfully submitted:

Joseph Benedict, Subcommittee Convener