**Ripon College Pieper Family Chair in Servant Leadership Report**

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Background

To say the least, this has been an interesting year for all college educators and students. The pandemic took over the academic world last spring and Ripon College was no exception. Students went home after spring break, and after a summer of uncertainty, returned to our campus in August to participate in a shortened 14 week semester that is a combination of face-to-face, online, and hybrid courses. A new Learning Management System designed for online teaching was instituted at the College requiring much training and trial-and-error learning. In short, the academic life that existed before last spring break seems a distant memory, and the turmoil we have all experienced since then is quite real for both students and faculty.

As all of this happened, our small college was already dealing with difficulties with finances and with enrollment, with the range of possible outcomes including having to jettison all non-tenured faculty. Although this happily did not come to pass, the simple possibility caused some faculty to choose to leave the College for greener pastures, and one was a colleague who had been participating in discussions about leadership and last year’s proposal for a new Positive Leadership Institute at Ripon College. As I write this, the College is actually doing rather well; enrollment is actually beyond our initial projections for this year, and we have made it through eight weeks of our semester with minimal rates of COVID infection. It seems that being in a small town in the middle of nowhere has for once worked in our favor.

I have continued to advocate for the interests of the Chair in Servant Leadership and have been personally active both in the classroom and behind the scenes. It has been difficult to push forward initiatives during such uncertain times, however. The following report will provide details.

**Outcome element 3: Outcome measures**.

There are fewer outcome measures to report this year, as the departure from the college campus of students last spring led some measures of seniors to not be taken. I thus have less information from the Dean of Students office than is usually the case. I do have information from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) at the Higher Educational Research Institute at UCLA which provides the relevant information detailed below.

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| Question | Ripon College | Comparison 1 | Comparison 2 |
| Participating in a community action program (essential or very important) | 27% (the office coordinating this lost its funding two years ago) | 41% | 42% |
| Performed volunteer or community service work (frequently) | 16% | 18% | 18% |
| Performed community service as part of a class (frequently or occasionally) | 76% | 73% | 74% |
| Becoming a community leader (very important or important) | 41% | 47% | 45% |

Ripon College continues to enroll high percentages of first-generation college students, and continues to enroll students with fewer resources than average.

**Outcome element #4: Phenomenally above norms for maximizing this area.**

I would not argue that the above outcomes are phenomenally above norms for these areas, although our numbers of first-generation students are still higher than most comparison colleges, which addresses the idea of serving the less-privileged among us.

**Outcome element #5: Breakthrough venture that promises new beginnings in acts of goodness; on campus, community, collaborations in our world.**

I am sorry to report that the “breakthrough” initiatives detailed in last year’s report all suffered setbacks due to the pandemic or to the uncertain nature of the College’s future.

1. The initiation of the Ripon-Jamaica Scholars program.

This program was shelved at the request of the Administration of the College, who were simply not comfortable committing the College to any international program that may at some point produce financial obligations on the part of the College. Funds that had been raised for bringing two students to Ripon College were instead given to the Blue Mountain Project that operates in Hagley Gap, Jamaica, for the education of students from that community within the confines of Jamaica. Two students were selected for the largest scholarships (and designated as Ripon/Jamaica Scholars) and funds were allocated to further the education of more students in the area.

It was intended to have Ripon College students make connections and serve as educational mentors to students in the Hagley Gap area during last spring’s Service Learning trip to Jamaica. This trip was cancelled due to the COVID-19 virus.

2. The initiation of the Ripon College/Fox Lake Correctional program whereby Ripon College professors teach classes to inmates at Fox Lake.

This initiative was also put on hold due to the pandemic, as all correctional institutions put policies in place that minimized contact with the outside world. This may be resumed when conditions allow.

3. The revival of the Leadership Studies program at Ripon College in the form of the Positive Leadership Institute

The Administration and relevant Faculty Committees expressed interest in this proposal, but there was no will to initiate new programs during a time of such uncertainty and staff turnover. One faculty member, Dr. Jennifer Stalnaker of the Business/Economics Department, has a background in Leadership and helped with the presentation of the proposal. Unfortunately, she left the College in the late spring to pursue academic opportunities elsewhere. Ms. Sahnya Thom, who is working on a Ph.D. in Industrial Organizational Psychology with an emphasis in Transformative Leadership was also involved in the proposal; she is now a Visiting Professor in the Psychology Department, and we continue to have conversations about possibilities concerning leadership.

**Outcome element 6: Elements of the mission of the Pieper Chair.**

The mission of the Chair consists of the following four elements:

 A. 25%  +/- Facilitate and nurture student leaders formally and informally

             B. 25%  +/- Work in their professional discipline

             C. 25%  +/- Creations of scholarly papers/research and nurture servant leadership or character education

D. 25% +/- Work to include the servant/leader principles in the curriculum of the institution.

As noted above, this was a difficult year for the College and therefore a difficult time to promote new initiatives. Nevertheless, new seeds were planted, and plans, sometimes behind-the-scenes, were initiated and moved forward. At the same time, my general activities, many of which are related to the ideas of Servant Leadership, continued as before. Although the criteria presented above contain some overlap, I will use them to organize the presentation of this section of the report.

A. Facilitate and nurture student leaders formally and informally

As a well-known faculty member at a small (800+ student) college, I have considerable exposure to student leaders on campus, and have always gone out of my way to support them and get to know them. These informal conversations are helpful by themselves, and they sometimes lead to other opportunities, such as an invitation to speak to the local Sigma Chi fraternity about opportunities for broadening and making more inclusive their views on leadership.

But my primary opportunity to identify, facilitate, and nurture student leaders comes from offering classes in the subject. This year I was able to offer two such classes, one to first-year students before they arrived on campus and one this fall semester. I describe these classes below.

**“Master Class” on Servant Leadership offered to first-year students before they came to campus**

The College asked for volunteers to teach a three-session Master Class to first-year students over the summer before they arrived at the College. I stepped forward and offered a three-evening class on Servant Leadership to 12 first-years students, going over the basic teachings of Greenleaf, extensions of his thinking by Keith and others, and ending with their report on a Servant Leader of their choice. The class was well-received and was well-attended by the students, several of which subsequently took the fall semester class I offered, which is described below.

**Interdepartmental Studies: Servant Leadership,** *Take Two*.

Two credits, half-semester.

As the Board may recall from last year, I was able to secure some release time during the fall of 2019 to teach a course on Servant Leadership to a group of about ten students. This year, without release time, I nevertheless decided to do the course again, and this time not to focus on Servant Leadership and the Liberal Arts, but to focus more on the developmental aspects of Servant Leadership. How does one become a Servant Leader? Are there steps or experiences that one could provide to make it more likely to become Servant Leaders?

The size of the class almost tripled from last year, with 27 students enrolled. We again covered the basics of Greenleaf’s “orange pamphlet” and expansions of his ideas by others, but the central element of the class was a series of guest speakers from the College and the local community who were recognized as Servant Leaders from different walks of life. Each speaker was asked to tell “their story” of how they became a Servant Leader, and to give us an idea of what they had done or accomplished. It was fascinating. Each speaker had something different to add, from the local head of the Campus Outreach program to facilitators of the Black Lives Matter movement locally. They talked about the influence of their early family experiences, their college courses, their friends and other influences. Some were faith-based, some were not. Reggie Lewis, the Executive Director of the Greenleaf Center, gave an excellent talk about his own background and his development as a Servant Leader, and this was well-received by the class. Ms. Sahnya Thom, the Visiting Professor with a background in leadership also spoke to the class about the future of leadership, and this was similarly well-received.

One element that all speakers had in common was that they talked as much about their failures as they did their successes. They talked about the difficulty of trying to make changes in the world and of “swimming against the current”, and of the challenge of not becoming discouraged while attempting to be in the service of great ideals. This was an inspiring part of the class that many students commented on, and reinforced my ideas that Servant Leaders are made more effective by any training or experience that acquaints them with “doing hard things”, as my Exercise Science Half-Marathon/10K course does.

Along with listening and responding to speakers, the class also formed small groups to try to accomplish Servant Leadership projects on campus in the short time we had. Groups did projects that contributed to student morale on campus, aided a “get out the vote” effort on campus, and sent notes to residents of local nursing homes who are suffering from the lack of visits and contact due to the pandemic.

All in all, I was pleased to see the increase in enrollment of the class; several students reported that they “heard good things” about last year’s class, and several first year students took it who took the Master Class during the summer. It was great to get to know some first year students with an interest in this area; one or two are already impressive in their desire to serve and their ability to lead.

B. Work in my professional discipline

I have two professional disciplines, the first as a professor who teaches and does research in the Psychology Department, and the second as a part-time professional doing mental health work in nursing homes.

In the first discipline, I teach the Clinical/Counseling courses at the College. These are of broad interest, of course, but they also appeal to those students interested in a career in the Counseling/Clinical field. It is my belief that Servant Leadership exists in many forms, and that the intentional choice of a career that serves others (teacher, counselor, police officer) is an act of Servant Leadership. The basic ethical tenet of the Clinical/Counseling field is that the best interests of the client come first, and among the other active ethical principles of the field is the idea that services need to be extended to all members of the population, however privileged or underprivileged. I find this entirely consistent with the principles of Servant Leadership presented by Greenleaf.

My second area of professional work, doing mental health work in nursing homes, is certainly an act of service to those in need. Particularly during these pandemic times, residents in nursing homes can have no direct visits from family and friends and only reduced interactions with other residents. Having regular mental health appointments (over Zoom) has been especially appreciated by both residents and staff during this difficult time.

C. Creation of scholarly papers and articles.

Professors also think and write, in that order, and a great deal of my thinking over the last three years has been directed toward obtaining a better understanding of Servant Leadership, how it is developed, how it is presented, and how similar/different it is to other leadership approaches. Two topics that I have thought about but not yet written about are the following:

(1) What are the developmental steps to Servant Leadership? As a professor who teaches classes, how do class content and activities promote the concepts of Servant Leadership? If one had access to a number of 18-21 year old college students, how could one encourage them to be Servant Leaders most effectively? To answer these questions, I believe that more must be known about the “path” to Servant Leadership. In my experience this semester hearing and reading stories of the lives of Servant Leaders, most contain an early exposure to the joys of service, and encouragement from respected others. This may suggest, among other ideas, that service-learning opportunities may play a role for those not brought up with those experiences.

(2) What are the pros and cons of the faith-based connections of Servant Leadership? Although it is often stated that Servant Leadership need not be faith-based, it appears that a sizable number of Servant Leaders approach the idea from a faith-based perspective. Like anything else, this can have pros (it may open doors that otherwise may not open easily, such as with business leaders who consider their faith to be very important) and cons (non-faith based thinkers may shy away from ideas that have a fairly clear faith-based foundation). This is an area of thought that it may be useful to pursue, as it may relate to how Servant Leadership is perceived by others.

My thinking on these issues was influenced by my conversations with Reginald Lewis, the new Executive Director of the Greenleaf Institute for Servant Leadership at Seton Hall University. This summer I took up Mr. Pieper’s invitation to meet with Mr. Lewis and a small group of other Servant Leaders for lunch and had an excellent wide-ranging conversation that led to additional conversations between Mr. Lewis and myself, and also to Mr. Lewis addressing the Servant Leadership class that I described above. We continue to be in contact at this point.

D. Work to include Servant Leadership principles in the curriculum of the institution.

It is good to offer classes and other experiences of Servant Leadership for students who already have that interest, but it is also important to expose people with no initial interest to these ideas, as often it is only unfamiliarity that stands in the way. This is one reason that service learning projects are useful; students may choose to do them to get to visit Jamaica, but while there they have the experience of serving others, which may lead to more involvement and, for some, a lifetime of service.

At the college level, it would be important to expose all students to the ideas of Servant Leadership. I do so regularly in my classes (and did so today in my General Psychology class) but a larger reach is necessary. Ripon College has a viable mechanism for doing this, as our Catalyst Curriculum requires that five courses be taken by all students during their time at Ripon. It would be fairly simple administratively to insert Servant Leadership into one of these courses; the prime candidate would seem to be the Catalyst 300 course, the Applied Innovation Seminar. Students in this class plan a project and do the necessary groundwork to carry it out. Historically, almost all of the projects have elements of Servant Leadership as part of their goals, but this is not explicitly stated in the course guidelines.

I have formally suggested the inclusion of Servant Leadership as part of the required material for this course, but there are many such suggestions and I was unable to elicit sufficient interest for that choice to be made. I recently volunteered for the Catalyst Advisory Group and, upon my selection, suggested as my first comment that Servant Leadership be included in this class. Conversations will surely follow.

Staffing

It is also important that faculty beyond the Chair be involved in the promotion of Servant Leadership at the College, and I have made several efforts in that direction. As noted above, one promising junior faculty member with an interest in Leadership unfortunately took a position at another institution due to the uncertainty facing junior faculty here at Ripon College. A second person, Ms. Sahnya Thom, is pursuing her Ph.D. in Industrial/Organizational Psychology with an emphasis in transformative leadership. Ms. Thom was instrumental in our earlier proposal for the Positive Leadership Institute at Ripon College, and we were successful in hiring her as a Visiting Professor of Psychology for this year. She may be able to transition to full-time tenure track if staffing opportunities allow, but at least for this year she has spoken to my Servant Leadership class and we have had continued conversations. Such behind-the-scenes actions can bear fruit in the future, although that takes time, of course.

**Conclusion to the report**

It has been an interesting, challenging year for any faculty member, and particularly for anyone attempting new initiatives at their facility. There were, as always, successes and failures. Perhaps this next year will be more stable, and will allow more progress to be made.