

A Proposal to Establish The Center for Ethical Leadership

Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs
The University of Texas at Austin
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I. SUMMARY

The Center for Ethical Leadership in the LBJ School of Public Affairs represents a **major advance in** graduate professional education. Traditionally, schools of public affairs have emphasized **the teaching of** analytic methods and substantive knowledge, thereby equipping graduates with the expertise needed for staff jobs. We want to go beyond that by preparing our graduates **for leadership positions in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors** and for the ethical challenges they will encounter throughout their careers.

The Center for Ethical Leadership rests on four premises. First, the long-term success of an organization, community or a society depends on good leadership, not just on technical proficiency and skillful management. Second, good leadership must be grounded in ethical values. Third, there are tensions between personal values and goals, on the one hand, and organizational, community or societal values and goals on the other. Ethical leadership involves recognizing and reconciling those tensions. Fourth, although leadership is a complex form of human behavior, most of what we think of as leadership is learned and, therefore, can be taught. However, very few colleges and universities teach leadership, and very few institutions provide leadership training for their employees. Indeed, the United States military is virtually the only American institution that systematically develops leaders.¹

The mission of the Center for Ethical Leadership will be to promote ethical leadership in our society through education, research, and service to community.

Education

The Center will offer graduate courses to students from all disciplines in the area of ethical leadership. In addition, it will sponsor a Leader-in-Residence program to bring outstanding leaders to the LBJ School and will host an annual International Leadership Conference to convene leaders, teachers, and students

from around the world. Through a Fellowship in Public Leadership, the Center will strive to develop the leadership potential of selected students.

Research

The Center will conduct and facilitate research to advance the theoretical foundation for ethical leadership. Studies will be pursued, for example, in styles of leadership, how different organizational environments impact leadership, and how leaders affect the ethical quality of organizations. Research results will be disseminated through the Center's newsletter and an internet website as well as through scholarly papers and presentations.

Service to Community

The Center will offer two major services: seminars for leaders in government, business, and education, and consultation for organizations that are struggling with leadership challenges.

II. RATIONALE FOR THE CENTER

The need for good leaders

Our democratic society requires and depends upon ethical leadership in all of our institutions and communities, but we frequently experience confusion about the meaning of leadership and disappointment in the quality of our leaders. Studies show that over the past 30 years, public confidence in government has steadily declined, reflecting a widespread perception of leaders as too often distant, corrupt, or unable to deal effectively with complex social problems. The future of our society may depend upon citizens who are capable of providing strong leadership, who understand that leadership means service, and who believe that their very citizenship carries the obligation to lead when circumstances require. This obligation is especially great for those who have had the privilege of attending college and attaining professional status.

Our nation's colleges and universities claim that they educate tomorrow's leaders. This is misleading. Universities do not offer courses in leadership in the way that they offer courses in, say, law or nursing. To the contrary, students learn leadership by participating in extracurricular activities. Most institutions of higher education offer courses in ethics, but only small numbers of students take those courses. And very few universities have courses that combine ethics and leadership. Robert Greenleaf, author of the influential work *Servant Leadership*, describes the situation in higher education as follows:

Our vast educational structure devotes very little care to nurturing leaders or understanding followership. If there is any influence, formal education seems to discourage such pursuits. Educators argue, speciously I believe, that such preparation is implicit in general education. . [E]ducators are avoiding the issue when they refuse to give the same care to the development of servant leaders as they do to doctors, lawyers, ministers, teachers, engineers, scholars (p. 4).

Greenleaf pinpoints a critical problem when he further observes that “The academic world appears to be approaching the point at which everyone wants to educate the technical expert who advises the leader, or the intellectual who stands off and criticizes the leader, but no one wants to educate the leader himself.” (*Servant Leadership*, p. 228)

A great public servant, John Gardner, has even accused higher education of administering an “anti-leadership vaccine”:

If, despite all the discouragements, a spark of enthusiasm for leadership is ignited in any of our young people, our educational system may well snuff it out. It does this in two ways. First, it places enormous emphasis on individual performance, and virtually none on the person’s capacity to work with the group. Second, the educational system---not necessarily with conscious intent---persuades the young person that what society needs are experts and professionals, not leaders. (*On Leadership*, p. 160)

A new trend toward leadership development

Perhaps in response to these critiques, there has been recent growth in both the number and quality of leadership education programs, primarily at the undergraduate level and in schools of education at the postgraduate level. As a result of these efforts, the study and development of leadership have become plausible, accepted and even significant activities in some institutions of higher learning.

At present, however, no college or university in the Southwest offers a coherent program in ethical leadership. Although the University of Texas at Austin offers some courses and workshops on ethics and/or on leadership, these efforts are scattered and neither well coordinated nor easily accessible. The proposed [Center for Ethical Leadership in the LBJ School of Public Affairs](#) will serve as a teaching, research, and information focal point for students and educators from all disciplines as well as for practitioners and other interested parties.

Why the LBJ School?

The Lyndon Baines Johnson School of Public Affairs is internationally recognized for the quality of its academic programs as well as for its research productivity and commitment to professional development. A graduate component of The University of Texas at Austin, the LBJ School offers a comprehensive program of study at the masters and doctoral levels with an emphasis on policy analysis and public administration.

Our graduates typically pursue leadership careers in government, business and nonprofit organizations. However, the School has never emphasized “leadership potential” in its selection criteria, nor included leadership development as a part of its curriculum. Like other educational programs, the School’s emphasis has been on equipping students with the substantive knowledge and analytic skills they will need early in their professional careers. The creation of a Center for Ethical Leadership in the LBJ School of Public Affairs will bring to one of the nation’s top professional programs in public policy and administration **a focus on effective and responsible leadership.**

III. THE CENTER FOR ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

Theoretical foundations

Contemporary studies of leadership suggest strongly that our nation needs ethical and imaginative leaders at every level to cope with the complex problems of a changing world.

The LBJ School intends to self-consciously promote the development of leadership potential among our students and other constituents. We believe that the study of ethical leadership is a critical component of a public affairs education, and that it must be incorporated into a student’s experience along with the traditional emphasis on policy analysis and formulation. After two or three jobs, perhaps even sooner for some, most of our graduates will find themselves in positions of leadership that require not only the skills of the policy analyst, but also the ability to lead teams of analysts and others through the policy implementation stage.

Leadership education has to be understood as a special form of human knowledge, talents and capacities. There are no simple formulae to bring forth the leadership ability of a given group of learners; but a carefully planned and balanced educational program can foster the capacity for reflective, ethically informed leadership. The most effective learning is that which combines theory and practice. Students must be presented with learning situations both in the classroom and elsewhere to strengthen the connection between ideas and actions.

We also must find ways to encourage young people to accept the responsibility of leadership and to do so in harmony with the value of service to others.

Through interdisciplinary experiences, students will develop a base of knowledge that advances the traditional goals of higher education and also provides tools for the exercise of ethical leadership in a range of settings. Such an intellectual foundation will better prepare graduates to assess the leadership challenges in their environment and to work with others to identify and pursue a common purpose.

Leadership is increasingly understood to involve persuasion and explanation as well as the ability to identify, affirm and renew the values of the group the leader represents. Managerial expertise, technical skills, cultural literacy and other relevant knowledge and skills are not sufficient virtues for leaders whose lives will be dedicated to public service. A program of study focused on ethical leadership will combine knowledge from many disciplines of inquiry with practical experiences to produce better prepared leaders for the future---men and women of courage, integrity, compassion, and imagination who are capable of much more than analysis or advice.

The programs of the Center for Ethical Leadership will help graduates learn to do the following:

1. Exercise moral judgment, imagination, and courage in the practice of leadership;
2. Serve effectively in formal and informal leadership roles in a range of settings;
3. Help others exercise leadership and hold other leaders accountable;
4. Develop cooperation and teamwork while inspiring commitment and trust;
5. Combine knowledge with judgment and imagination to creatively solve problems with others;
6. Envision the future and inspire others to join in bringing about necessary change;
7. Apply the modes of inquiry and knowledge bases of many disciplines to the study and practice of leadership;
8. Think critically about leadership knowledge and practice;
9. Continue their development as leaders by self-directed learning

Programs of the Center

A. Education

The Center's goals in education will be pursued through four programs: (1) a sequence of graduate courses in leadership open to students across the

University; (2) a Leader-in-Residence Program designed to bring office holders and business executives to the LBJ School; (3) an International Leadership Education Conference; and (4) a Fellowship in Public Leadership to develop the leadership potential of selected students.

1. Graduate courses in leadership.

The primary goal of the Center's education program will be to promote instruction in ethical leadership at the LBJ School and in academic units across UT Austin. A sequence of courses open to graduate students university-wide will focus on Leadership Principles and Practices, Leading Change, and other topics related to leadership development.

While there is substantial and growing interest in leadership education at The University, current course offerings fall well short of satisfying student demand. A seminar on Leadership Principles and Practices was offered for the first time in the spring of 1999, and student response was so enthusiastic that subsequent sections have been over-subscribed. Using incentive grants, the Center will act as a catalyst for the development of more leadership courses in the LBJ School and across the many disciplines at the University. For example, a member of the LBJ School faculty might use an incentive grant to develop a course on the challenges of leading nonprofit organizations that involve large numbers of volunteers. A faculty member in the Psychology Department might use an incentive grant to develop a course on coping with the compromises that are often a part of effective leadership. A faculty member in the Graduate School of Business may develop a course to explore corporate leadership in an internet age.

In promoting leadership education, the Center will strive to ensure that students and faculty have the opportunity to mix classroom learning and research with real-life experience in ethical leadership. Toward this end, experienced practitioners will serve as guest lecturers, bringing the viewpoint of practice to theoretical discussions. Conferences and symposia will be held periodically to bring leaders from all sectors to the LBJ School. These events will be open to the general public, thereby building awareness of the University's interest in understanding and promoting ethical leadership.

In addition, the Center will organize and sponsor a Policy Research Project involving ethical leadership each year. Policy Research Projects (PRPs) are distinctive to the LBJ School experience and are often cited by our graduates to be among their most memorable learning opportunities. PRPs are conducted by research teams composed of one to three faculty

members and ten to fifteen students. The projects must meet three criteria: they must be done for a client (e.g., a government agency or nonprofit group); they must address a practical problem; and they must produce results within the span of a school year. Students participate in all phases of the project, helping to define its objectives and methodology, organizing available talent and resources to accomplish the research, and developing the final research report. A PRP focused on ethical leadership will present real-life opportunities for students to develop and integrate research skills, experience the realities of leadership challenges in a variety of organizational contexts, feel the impact of political pressures and conflicts, and learn to communicate effectively with practitioners about concrete problems.

2. Leader-in-Residence Program

The Center's educational goals will also be addressed through a Leader-in-Residence Program. We will invite prominent former or current office holders, business executives, government officials and leaders of nonprofit organizations to spend several weeks in residence at the LBJ School, where they will interact with students and faculty and be available to address organizations throughout Texas. Bringing in experienced leaders for an extended time will allow students to thoroughly explore how these men and women manage the ethical aspects of their leadership responsibilities. In addition, students will learn about the full range of leadership issues that our leaders-in-residence have faced during the course of their careers.

Leaders-in-residence will work with LBJ students and faculty in a variety of settings, including formal classroom instruction, informal topical discussions with small groups of students and faculty, and scheduled or informal meetings with individuals. Through these interactions, students and faculty can test their understanding of leadership concepts, discover how these concepts are used in practice, and learn how to evaluate the relevance of research and theory in relation to the realities of responsible leadership. Leaders-in-residence will also engage students and faculty from other parts of the University of Texas with the aim of fostering an interdisciplinary leadership community on the UT campus.

3. International Leadership Conference

The Center for Ethical Leadership will host an annual International Leadership Conference for the purpose of establishing a global, interdisciplinary community committed to leadership development. The conference will bring together leaders, teachers and students trained in

various disciplines from all over the world so that they might share the realities of leadership in their respective [countries or regions](#), discuss the state of leadership pedagogy, and explore the best ways of preparing future generations for leadership. The first conference is scheduled for January 2001.

The International Leadership Conference is a critical part of the Center's educational mission to develop an interdisciplinary approach for the study and teaching of leadership. Leadership is a highly complex form of human behavior that requires the integration of knowledge and understanding from a broad variety of disciplines. Insights offered by psychology, political science, history, philosophy, literature and others can contribute powerfully to a leader's perspective and effectiveness.

The Conference is also part of the Center's plan to create an institutional leadership role for the University of Texas in the field of leadership studies and leader development. [By bringing together leaders, educators and students from around the world to share ideas, experiences and best practices, the University will offer a unique service to the global community.](#)

4. [Fellowship in Public Leadership Program](#)

[The LBJ School will recruit a few students each year with the explicit purpose of fostering their leadership potential. A new Fellowship in Public Leadership Program will be established to support these future leaders' program of study. The Leadership Fellows will be required to take the same core courses as other Masters in Public Affairs students, but their elective seminars and internships will focus on leadership.](#)

[The first fellowships will be awarded to students entering the program in August 2001. That class will have two Leadership Fellows; subsequent classes will have between two and four, depending on resources and the numbers of qualified applicants. Since the LBJ School is a two-year MPA, the number of Leadership Fellows in residence at a given time could range between four and eight -- more, if some of the fellows are enrolled in joint degree programs requiring three or four years to complete.](#)

B. Research

[The Center will strive to advance understanding of ethical leadership through research on topics relating to leadership theory and practice. One long-term study, for example, might examine styles of leadership \(e.g., command-and-](#)

control, consultative, and collegial) and the types of organizational environments in which one or another style is most effective.

The bulk of modern scientific leadership research has been focused on business and military leaders and organizations. The Center will study leadership practices and effects in public sector and non-profit organizations to test previous findings in new settings where different leadership supports and constraints may be operating. Of special importance will be studies to determine the impact of leadership on the ethical quality of public sector work organizations. The Center will also conduct research to determine the comparative effectiveness of different leader development strategies, including evaluation of both classroom and experiential learning methods.

Since leadership is best understood through interdisciplinary approaches, the Center will sponsor research by faculty and graduate students from other UT schools and colleges, thereby serving as a resource for scholars throughout the University. From time to time the Center will convene symposia to provide a forum for the presentation and discussion of leadership research projects.

C. Outreach and Community Service

The Center will offer two major services: seminars for leaders in government, business, and education, and consultation for organizations that are struggling to master leadership challenges.

For many years, the LBJ School has offered professional development programs for senior administrators in state, county and municipal governments. The Center for Ethical Leadership will expand beyond that select audience by marketing specialized seminars to business executives and educational administrators. Our goal is to become a resource to leaders in public-sector, non-profit, and other organizations by offering short programs on leadership in such areas as leading change, systems leadership, leader development, leadership in organizations, team development, and leadership assessment. Such courses will be offered in formats of up to a week, though most will be one or two-day programs. Workshops to develop leadership skills such as establishing a vision, gaining support across organizational levels, coaching, counseling and mentoring also will be offered.

In addition, the Center will provide consulting services to organizations whose leaders have never been trained for their positions or who are seeking to meet new challenges, serve new missions, or master new responsibilities. Through its service efforts, the Center will work with leaders throughout the community to make organizations more effective, especially in the public sector.

IV. ORGANIZATION, STAFFING and SPACE

During its first year, the Center staff will consist of a senior faculty member who also will serve as the Center's director, and an administrative associate. The Center director will be appointed by and will report to the dean of the LBJ School. As funds become available, additional faculty positions will be added, including an endowed chair and Leaders-in-Residence. Additional administrative and research support staff will be added over time.

Space in Sid Richardson Hall will be **allocated** to house the Center. However, that space will need to be renovated to meet the requirements of a leadership development program. The optimal leadership training experience, for example, is one in which scenarios can be acted out, videotaped, and played back so that students can observe and critique their behavior. This requires an investment in technology. In addition, the space needs to be reconfigured and furnished in a way that offers a comfortable setting in which professionals can meet and interact. About 10,000 square feet of space will need to be renovated.

V. BUDGET AND FUNDING NEEDS

The LBJ School seeks to raise **\$10 million** over the next five years to support the staff and programs of the Center. The LBJ Foundation has committed up to \$2 million in matching funds over a period of seven years. **In addition**, the Hatton Sumners Foundation recently granted the Center \$100,000 to support the International Leadership Conference **scheduled** for January 2001. These funds, along with resources that the LBJ School can reallocate from other purposes, will enable us to start the program during the 2000-01 school year.

Of the \$10 million needed to sustain the Center for Ethical Leadership over time, \$8 million will be invested to generate direct support for the Center's educational, research, and outreach programs. Specific program budgets for the Leader-in-Residence Program, the International Leadership Conference, and the Fellowship in Public Leadership Program are included in the Appendix of this proposal.

The remaining \$2 million will be used to create an Endowed Chair in Ethical Leadership which will ensure ongoing strong leadership of the Center. Distributions from the Endowed Chair will provide support *in perpetuity* for the scholarly and teaching activities of a distinguished professor who will serve as director of the Center. This individual will be recruited through a national search designed to attract an eminent scholar with top credentials in leadership education and research and a distinguished record of personal leadership

experience at the highest levels. The chairholder/director will set the course for the Center's educational programs and teach at the graduate level; define the Center's research agenda and contribute scholarly work; and represent the Center to the larger community. He or she will have broad discretion in the use of funds generated by the endowment.

The Endowed Chair in Ethical Leadership will be the cornerstone of the Center for Ethical Leadership and will ensure that leadership development remains a priority of The University of Texas at Austin well into the future.

VI. IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE (FIRST THREE YEARS)

Program Year One (2000-01)

Objectives and initiatives:

- Establish and fill faculty and administrative positions;
- Begin development of curriculum and other service programs (clients to be charged fee for services);
- Continue to develop community of interested educators;
- Plan and host international leadership education conference;
- Create advisory board;
- Begin development effort, including endowed chair.

Program Year Two (2001-02)

New Objectives and Initiatives

- Expand program to include research support;
- Add staff support for program development and research;
- Begin Leader-in-Residence Program;
- Begin Fellowship In Public Leadership Program;
- Host leadership education conference;
- Begin space renovation.

Program Year Three (2002-03)

New Objectives and Initiatives

- Expand the Leader-in-Residence Program to two leaders
- Expand Fellowship in Public Leadership Scholarship program
- Host leadership education conference
- Expand service programs

VII. APPENDICES

- About the LBJ School of Public Affairs
- Faculty credentials
- Detailed program budgets