Student Leadership and Engagement

If you Google® the word leadership, you’ll get back 491 MILLION results. That number is 1 million more than all the people that live in the United States, Canada and Central America combined. These definitions date back to the turn of the 20th century. With so many definitions it is hard to differentiate between what is and is not leadership. Komives, Lucas and McMahon (2007) challenge us to think about leadership within the context in which it is practiced. In other words, you must ask yourself “leadership for what purpose?” (p 36).

Further complicating matters are some common leadership myths that permeate our understanding of the word. To fully understand what leadership is, we must first examine what leadership is not (Crawford, Brungardt, & Maughan, 2000). Consider these myths.

- **Myth 1** - Leaders are born, not made.
- **Myth 2** - Leaders lead, followers follow.
- **Myth 3** - Leadership is just good management.
- **Myth 4** - Charisma is necessary for leadership.
- **Myth 5** - Leadership is power.
- **Myth 6** - Leadership is position.
- **Myth 7** - Leaders do anything to stay on top.
- **Myth 8** - Leaders control events; events don’t control leaders.
- **Myth 9** - Leaders tell people what to do, and followers do it.
- **Myth 10** - Leadership is what leaders do.

Now that we’ve reviewed what leadership is not, I challenge you to think of what the concept of leadership means to you and how it can play out in your life as an ECU student. ECU defines leadership as a relational process of inspiring, empowering, and influencing positive change. Leadership therefore is not about the destination but the journey. You don’t need a formal position to engage in the leadership process you just have to be willing to make positive change for your community.

The Center for Student Leadership and Engagement is one of many resources throughout campus for students interested in pursuing a purposeful relationship with leadership. The mission of the Center for Student Leadership and Engagement (CSLE) is to provide opportunities, support and experiences, in alignment with ECU’s Integrated Leadership Framework, for students to engage in the leadership process by developing competencies, building meaningful relationships and enhancing personal growth. The core pillars of the ECU’s Integrated Framework are knowledge, relationships, ethics, well-being and service. In contrast to the myths of leadership listed above, the Center for Student Leadership and Engagement operates off of the following beliefs:

- Leadership is a relational process of inspiring, empowering and influencing positive change.
- Leadership is a collaborative process.
- Leadership is value-based.
- All students (not just those in formal positions) have the ability to apply leadership practices to real life situations.
- Leadership is inclusive.
- Leadership fosters commitment, collaboration and courage.
- Leadership can be taught.
- Leadership capacity is rooted in one’s ability to understand the difference his/her presence makes in the lives of others, observe and identify adaptive issues within his/her communities and develop reciprocal partnerships to learn and solve these issues.

In conclusion, your leadership experience at ECU is up to you - start your leadership journey today. I challenge you to embrace the concepts of leadership and integrate them into your everyday life.

Laura McMaster, Director
Center for Student Leadership and Engagement
Did You Know

- In 1907 there were eight towns in Eastern North Carolina (Edenton, Greenville, Kinston, New Bern, Tarboro, Washington, Rocky Mount and Elizabeth City) that competed to have ECU located in their area.

- ECU started its journey as East Carolina Teachers Training School (ECTTS) with only two dormitories, 104 female students, 19 male students, and 11 faculty.

- The YWCA was one of the first student organizations formed on campus. Seventeen years later, in 1926, the YWCA printed the first student handbook.

- The first men’s basketball team, The Teachers, was formed in 1932. The team won their first game played against Campbell College.

- The men’s intercollegiate football team was also formed in 1932 but lost all games the first season.

- Separate student government groups existed until they merged in 1943 to become one Student Government Association.

- 1958 marked the historic arrival of the school’s first mascot - a 4 month old, Great Dane, weighing less than fifty pounds, who was given the name BUC.

- University status was awarded in 1967 and the school changed its name to East Carolina University.

- Mendenhall Student Center opened its doors in 1974 and in 1985 student registration became computerized.

- Joyner Library, and its Music Library branch in the A.J. Fletcher Music Center, is the largest library east of Raleigh and offers state-of-the-art research services and resources.

- The 100th anniversary of East Carolina University was celebrated in 2007

Information presented here was retrieved from East Carolina University Timeline at: http://www.ecu.edu/cs-lib/archives/timeline.cfm

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**E.C. Victory (Fight Song)**

Cheer for East Car’lina,
Cheer for old E.C.,
We know we’re the finest,
Onward to victory!
**GO PIRATES!!!**

Cheer for East Car’lina,
Cheer on for old E.C.,
Loyal and Bold,
we’re the purple and gold,
WE ARE THE PIRATES OF E.C.U.!

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**Student-To-Student**

Check in advance what you need for your major and what needs to be done to apply for it.

- Brittany Joseph
  Nursing

Try your best to make a schedule of your classes that you know works for you. If you are a morning person, take morning classes. If it is hard for you to get up early, then take afternoon classes; it will work to your benefit.

- Amy Braswell
  Pre-Dental

Strive to show your professors that you have an interest in the course material, especially if it’s your major.

- Michael Westmoreland
  Art

Make friends with a lot of the people on your hall or near where you are staying. You will see these people a lot during the semester.

- Logan Hamilton
  Design-Architectural Technology

Be willing to read over your professor’s syllabus as much as possible because the syllabus will tell you when assignments are due.

- Derrick Cooper
  Political Science

Don’t procrastinate; you don’t want to end up forgetting an assignment. Work in advance as much as possible.

- James Patsalos
  Psychology

Let your professors know who you are. Introduce yourself and don’t be afraid to ask questions.

- Haley Sexton
  Communications

Study as much as you can, and stay organized.

- Andromeda Flores
  Criminal Justice
Creating Bridges Between Institutions: A Brief Look at Advisors Roles in Transfer Student Transition
Authors: Amanda Hatton, Sarah Homer & Leslie Park

About half of first-year students take advantage of open entry and low tuition at two-year institutions. Cejda, 1997, noted that eighty-percent of these students report their intentions of transferring to pursue a bachelor’s degree (as cited in Berger and Malaney, 2003, p ); however, only forty percent get on track to transfer. Of those on a transfer track, only about ten-percent actually transfer, and only a small percentage of transferring students actually complete the bachelor’s degree (Berger and Malaney, 2003). This failure to attain the bachelor degree is an unfortunate result of the barriers many students face when attempting to transfer from one institution to another. Transfer students must learn to navigate these barriers at least twice: once at their initial institution, and then again when they transfer. The types of barriers transfer students face may determine whether students choose to transfer and may affect students’ likelihood to graduate. Cost of attendance, policies, campus climate, and post-transfer adjustment are examples of educational barriers.

Cost of Attendance
One of the largest barriers to student persistence is the cost of attending college. Dougherty and Kienzl (2006) found that socioeconomic status was the biggest contributor to failure to transfer. The differences in tuition costs between two-year and four-year institutions often are not made up within federal financial aid. There has been a decline in the amount of money provided students through federal grants, and an increase in the number of federal loans taken by students (Zamani, 2011). This can be detrimental to the persistence of students who most need financial assistance as they often work while attending school, take fewer credits a semester, and stop out to save money - all of which prolong completion of their degrees.

Students must connect with financial aid counselors or programs that offer scholarships, like Women’s Centers, ROTCs, major departments, etc. Additionally, they need help in creating class schedules that will maximize the use of their money, e.g., prevent them from repeating or taking unnecessary courses.

Policies
Boswell (2004) identifies how the failure of statewide policies to align secondary institutions creates barriers for transfer students. He talks specifically about (1) the misalignment of high school graduation and college entrance requirements, (2) lack of a standard tracking system, (3) failure to provide need-based financial aid for students, and (4) lack of statewide articulation agreements (p 26-27). The articulation issue is particularly problematic for students transferring between in-state schools. Although many states have tried to mitigate the cost of transferring through the creation of statewide articulation agreements (Anderson, Alfonso, and Sun, 2006), these policies may not always have the desired effect. Articulation policies may not be enforced well enough to prevent students from retaking courses.

Understanding what will and will not transfer can affect student persistence. If students are confused by requirements or if they take courses they do not need, they may become concerned about wasting money or be frustrated by an institution’s lack of help, and may elect not to attend.

Student Spotlight
Haley Sexton

My name is Haley Sexton. I am a sophomore at East Carolina University majoring in Communications. I transferred from Wake Technical Community College in Raleigh North Carolina. Coming from a small high school like campus to a university campus was a huge change for me. I adjusted well to ECU. I live on campus in a suite with three friends who have helped me adjust to my new environment. My older brother also attends ECU and that is comforting. I wanted my first semester to be focused on getting use to a new place and keeping my grades up. I plan to look into getting more engaged on campus next semester.

Choosing ECU was the best decision I have ever made. I am doing well in all my classes, and I’m very happy here. Everyone is so polite and the atmosphere is full of school pride. I felt like a Pirate from day one and can’t wait to see where the rest of my ECU journey takes me.

Go Pirates!!
Creating Bridges Between Institutions: A Brief look at Advisors’ Roles in Transfer Student Transition (cont’d from page 3)

Campus Climate
The climate of an institution can also be a barrier to persistence, specifically when there is a division between students’ backgrounds/needs and the campus environment. An example of this is differences in levels of formability expected between students and faculty members. Moreover, Finkelstein, Seal, & Schuster (1998) state that faculty and administrators at some four-year institutions may view transfer students as less qualified for university work and more likely to drop-out. These perceptions can negatively affect transfer students’ relationships with faculty and may result in their choice to depart.

Campus climate also “encompasses student interaction across race and ethnicity, perceptions of the climate of inter-group relations (racial and ethnical tension), experiences of overt discrimination, and the ethnic and racial diversity of the student body” (Eggleston and Laanan, 2001), p. 10). The selectivity of the institution will affect the climate of the campus and the adjustment of the students who transfer there.

It is also important to consider the strength of a student’s connection to members of the campus community (both academic and social) when examining barriers to educational completion. Zamani (2001) noted that students who feel a connection within a campus community are more likely to persist academically. An example that illustrates this is provided by Velez (1985) who found that students who live on campus are 43% more likely to persist than are students who commute (as cited in Zamani, 2001 p 16). Since many transfer students are also nontraditional (e.g., 24 years of age or older, have a spouse, and/or children, live more than five miles from school, or are employed off campus), transfer students are likely to connect less with the campus and focus more on other responsibilities.

Post Transfer Adjustment
One of the biggest issues discussed in transfer literature is “transfer shock.” Eggleston and Laanan (2001) define transfer shock as the temporary dip in students’ GPA during their first or second semesters after transfer to a four-year institution (p. 87). This can result from students’ inability to adjust to different academic standards at the four-year institution and/or the lack of support from the transfer institution. Enggleson and Laanan (2001) believe that the focus on student GPA after transfer or on their academic adjustment, is not the only thing that should be considered. Other concerns are the psychological and educational environments and the campus climate, and how these affect students’ abilities to adjust. Understanding more about what helps students adjust to individual institutions is important to finding the most effective ways for them to succeed.

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Important Dates to Remember

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>November 27</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Break begins</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 2</td>
<td>Classes resume.</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 1</td>
<td>Last day to apply as an undergraduate transfer student for the spring semester.</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 3</td>
<td>Classes end. Last day for submission of grade replacement requests.</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 4</td>
<td>Reading day.</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 5</td>
<td>Final exams begin.</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 12</td>
<td>Exams for fall semester close at 4:30 pm.</td>
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<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Commencement.</td>
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Transfer Student Services
210D Mendenhall Student Center
(252) 328-4173
http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/transfer/