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The Symbiotic Relationship of Leadership and Culture

Bernita L. Krumm

This article concentrates on two areas: individual leadership roles and the influence of organizational culture and language on leadership. Women tribal college presidents offered their perspectives on the presidents' leadership roles, visions for the colleges and behaviors, strategies and insights on leadership.

Women in Leadership

In the past, leadership studies focused on men; the majority of college presidents are men. Despite a 7% increase in the number of women presidents between 1975 and 1995, only 453 of 2903 institutions (16%) were led by women (ACE, 1995). Independent two-year institutions led with 27% (38 of 143) having women in CEO positions. The number of women leaders in tribal colleges, however, was higher.

In 1992, Ambler reported that women presidents led 10 of 28 (39%) of the member colleges in the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC); three served in acting capacities, and an eleventh woman president was on leave. In addition to the college presidency, "Women serve[d] the tribal colleges in a variety of other expected and unexpected roles, as vice presidents, deans, vocational education directors, cultural studies teachers and board members" (p. 10). In 1996 the roster of AIHEC member colleges indicated that 10 of 31 (32%) presidents were women. The 2002 roster of AIHEC member colleges lists 14 women presidents (42%), two in an acting capacity; three hold doctoral degrees and one an education specialist degree.

The majority of tribal colleges are two-year institutions with characteristics similar to community colleges. DiCroce (1993) reported that "two-year colleges appear[ed] to be at the forefront in placing women in their presidencies" (p. 80). She hypothesized two possibilities: (a) The higher percentage of women presidents reflected the gender composition of the student body and demonstrated a "strong commitment to the values of open access, diversity, and inclusiveness." (b) "...the steadily rising number of women presidents in the community college may simply be a result of the institution's lower hierarchical status in academe" (p. 80). Women presidents in the tribal colleges are natural providers of information about the role of women in higher education leadership.

About the Author

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Tribal College Leadership

Since the beginning of the first tribal college (Navajo Community College, Tsaile, Arizona in 1968), tribal college leaders have guided their institutions in providing educational opportunities previously inaccessible to many American Indian students. These leaders assumed responsibility for problems that included the lack of proper funding and facilities; political controversies; difficulty recruiting and retaining faculty (both Indian and non-Indian); student concerns that encompassed financial, transportation, and childcare concerns; and in many cases, problems beyond human control caused by the environmental and weather conditions.

Tribal college leaders assumed the responsibility for lowering the barriers that separate their institutions from mainstream society. Boyer (1995) described tribal colleges as "institutions that bridge two worlds. They are built on a foundation of tribal culture and values, but teach the knowledge of both Indian and non-Indian communities. In this way they are cultural translators, sitting on the fulcrum between two very distinct societies" (p. 15). Tribal college presidents operate that fulcrum; they are responsible for identifying the direction and setting the course. "Leaders look forward to the future. They hold in their minds visions and ideals of what can be. They have a sense of what is uniquely possible if all work together for a common purpose. They are positive about the future, and they passionately believe that people can make a difference" (Kouzes & Posner, 1987, p. 79).

Badwound and Tierney (1988) wrote, "The struggle for tribal community colleges is to understand their organizations from their own perspective, as well as that of the dominant society" (p. 9). To gain the respect of constituents, tribal college leaders must demonstrate appropriate leadership qualities, including

wisdom and spirituality. Wisdom is attributed to those “who have consistently demonstrated adherence to Indian values and who possess visionary qualities to lead; spirituality is “a condition that is neither learned nor certified, but is attained through the workings of a higher power or being” (p. 12).

According to information gathered by the Carnegie Foundation (1989), “In the early years the tribal college presidents were frequently people committed to tribal development but with little experience running a college. They tended to view the tribal colleges as tools to help provide economic and social parity with the Anglo community. Increasingly, presidents today are strong leaders with a background in education or administration” (p. 32). Becenti (1995) reported that 3 presidents of 31 AIHEC member institutions were non-Indian.

Fowler’s (1992) study on tribal college leaders found that the concept of leadership in the tribal college “had three aspects: leadership in general, the vision, and the leader’s personal characteristics” (p. 160).

Leadership in general involved the ability to respect and cooperate with tribal governments and individuals, to delegate, to reflect the values and morals of the tribe, to be accountable, to be knowledgeable, to be consistent, and to be a positive role model. Leadership vision addressed a shared vision, the ability to communicate direction and clearly portray the vision, and the ability to know and implement the mission statement. The personal characteristics needed by the leader were honesty, fairness, kindness, energy, creativity, thoughtfulness, strong work ethic, strong spirituality, and good health (p. 161).

Becenti (1995) used the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire-Form XII to profile the leadership of five American Indian higher education institution presidents. The participants (four male; one female) scored highest in the category Predictive Accuracy, a characteristic Becenti related to their ability to maintain control under uncertain economic situations. They enumerated institutional goals that related to stabilizing the financial status of the institution, providing educational opportunities for tribal members, and establishing campus facilities (pp. 91-92).

Working with tribal boards comprising highly educated individuals and tribal elders with little or no formal education called for presidents to “be competent in complex organizational theory, and at the same time [to] maintain competence in tribal culture, language, and theory” (Becenti, 1995, p. 93). Responsibilities deemed to be important were “working with tribal governments, working with students, being a good leader, providing clarity in mission, establishing vision, and motivating staff” (p. 93). Becenti concluded, “The tribal college presidents are the driving forces behind the success of the tribal colleges” (p. 98).

Reflections on Leadership

At the time of the study, four women tribal college presidents were interviewed: Dr. Janine Pretty On Top, President of Little Big Horn College,

Crow Agency, Montana; Dr. Verna Fowler, President of College of the Menominee Nation, Keshena, Wisconsin; Ms. Tanya Ward, President of Cheyenne River Community College, Eagle Butte, South Dakota; and Ms. Margaret Perez Campbell, Vice-President of Ft. Peck Community College, Poplar, Montana (former president of Ft. Belknap College, Harlem, Montana). In 2002, Fowler remains as college president; Campbell is Vice President for Community Services; Pretty On Top and Ward are not listed as employees at their respective colleges.

Janine Pretty On Top

Pretty On Top believes that good leadership is “not only good judgment, but it’s a real educated understanding of what the organization is. What are things that this organization must be about—at all times, not just sometimes.” There must be an awareness of the business that needs to be done, “the breadth and depth of the vision and the purpose of the institution.” She believes good leadership must have the “discipline to stay within the resources that you have.”

The institutional mission has to be protected. “I have to see if something fits within the mission of the institution. And I have to always protect the institution.” Leading the college is not something that can be done alone. “The presidency is not in isolation. But I have a central role that I can’t lose sight of. It isn’t just something fun to do. You must always ask, ‘Is this really what the college was chartered to do? Does it promote our survival? Does it help us be better and stronger?’”

Leadership is a “process of building consensus.” Janine attempts to find a “common ground” in working with others in problem solving. She consults a cadre of advisors prior to making decisions. Because she knows them well, she has a sense of their perspectives. “I’m not isolated from their wisdom even if I don’t have immediate access to them when a problem comes up.” She believes it is important to listen to others. “I have been a seeker of advice. And I think that if anything, a leader in the Crow context needs to be a seeker of advice. You don’t always have to use it, but you have it. It broadens your ability.” Pretty On Top seeks advice and takes time to consider the action before making a decision.

In Pretty On Top’s estimation, leaders must be perceptive about their effectiveness. “There’s no amount of song and dance that can make people accept you. If they think you are a person of good judgment, they will already know it and they’re not frivolous in that you’ve long earned that respect . . . it isn’t shallow. It’s long earned. It’s something that’s very formidable.” In a tribal community, the reputation of the individual provides the credentials for leadership.

A person who is afforded the title of leader is someone who’s tried and true over many years, not because they’re simply hired for that position, although the choice would lean on a long-term credential. But a community in a tribal setting is one that has already known the leader’s life, and they’ve already tried

and tried him. They understand what it is you do in your life to show your commitment. So there's no mystery about that. If people wish to be led by you, they will be.

Verna Fowler

Fowler expressed her belief that "everybody has within themselves a desire to know, and to understand—a sense of curiosity." She continually asks questions: "How can this be done better? How can things be improved?" She described her leadership role:

First and foremost, I see myself as one who has a vision and has a direction worth heading. My job is to persuade the others to follow me in that direction—not that I'm the only one who develops that direction. I have to develop that direction and vision by being in tune to and listening to the faculty and the staff and the community, so I can get some sense of what they want as a tribal college. I have to be able to listen well enough to pull all those aspects together and fashion that vision that these people can buy into and say, "Yes, that's it. That's where we want to be; that's where we want to go."

Fowler believes the president is also a figurehead, a person who instills pride in others. People need to "feel secure in their jobs, and take pride in them." She looks for high standards, high ethics, and a value system in her leaders. She tries to maintain those herself "so the people who work here have some belief that I'm true to my word. That—I may not have all the answers, but I do know something about education and higher education, so that they have some confidence in me when I speak."

Fowler emphasized being "willing and ready enough to sometimes listen to people" as being important in a working relationship. Sometimes her role is "more counselor, sometimes it's more personnel [director]—listening to people and what their problems are." People want to know that their concerns are heard. "It's just that they want to know that somebody's hearing them and somebody understands and knows what their concerns are so they aren't lost in the shuffle. You have to be willing and ready to do that."

She believes that the role of an administrator is to enable faculty to provide students with those skills to find answers. "You're not the head dollar, you're the servant. You're the servant of the faculty because their role is teaching. Our primary mission is teaching. We have to make it possible so that the faculty can do their absolute best." Sometimes that meant Fowler had to "pitch in" and do whatever needed to be done. "Sometimes things don't get done, and so you have to go and do it yourself." She does not expect others to do what she is unwilling to do herself. "Just that you don't act like the menial jobs are beneath you. I've always taken the position that I can't expect anybody to clean bathrooms unless I also do it, so that they know I know how to do it myself. I just don't hesitate to tackle any kind of job that isn't done."

Tanya Ward

Ward depended on a core group of people who communicated her needs to others and who “can take the time to sit down and explain. I sort of use them as the conduit.” Tanya believed participation of the faculty develops ownership in decisions. Faculty need to be “empowered.” She delegated responsibility and extended her faculty the right to make choices with the expectation that they will utilize that prerogative. She did not want them to be afraid to make mistakes; right or wrong, they should make a decision and be willing to admit it when they’re wrong. Ward preferred that they grab “the bull by the horns—right or wrong, and admit it if you’re wrong. There’s nothing wrong with that.”

Ward did not view her position as having glamour or prestige; her task was to achieve accreditation and doing so was hard work.

I view it as being the old workhorse to accomplish a means, accomplishing a big task and getting accredited. That’s how I see it. I don’t really see the position as glamorous. There’s nothing to be glamorous about in this point in time. It’s work. This is the place where it starts and it’s top down. It doesn’t come bottom up. This is one of those tasks that’s driven top down. So I don’t see the position really as glamorous or as prestigious. It’s doing the work.

Ward saw her leadership as providing consistency and continuity. “My leadership is in terms of reading about change for the better, or accomplishing something. . . . I don’t see myself as being dynamic—at all. I see myself as maybe providing consistency, a continuity.” Her leadership “usually involved improving something to make it even better, to be the vehicle for improvement.” Education, “the salvation of the Indian people,” was a big part of that improvement. Education enables people to make choices, an ability that comes with knowledge. “It [education] just gives you a better understanding of who you are and what you are and what you choose to be. It just gives you better choices. That’s what we need out here. The ability to make the choice and to choose what’s right for us.”

Margarett Campbell

Margarett’s experience as a past president of Ft. Belknap College and of AIHEC, focused her attention on college mission. “If the tribal presidents remain mission-oriented and are able to sift through and sort through the requests that are made of them. . . . those things that are meaningful need to be brought back to the governing board and discussed.” She believed that the mission is foremost. “Everyone has to know the mission, believe in the mission.” Leaders are change agents and need to be open-minded. “I see leadership, people in leadership, as being change agents. And in order to do that you need to be open to learning and open to respecting a wide array of values and opinions.”

She stated her belief that participation facilitates change and described her leadership style as “inclusive and participatory. I try to involve a broad base

of opinions, values, and expertise.” Individuals need to know they are respected and valued. “The value of a person’s leadership could be weighed by determining if the individuals that are in subordinate positions feel like they’re valued members of the team, feel that their skills and values are respected, and understand and buy into the mission.”

“One of the key characteristics or factors of leadership is decision-making.” Making decisions means being able to defend those decisions; making decisions also means being able to admit mistakes, and Campbell declared, “And oh, I’ve made so many mistakes.” Admitting error is important because “once you admit you’ve made a mistake, people seem to respect you for that. I don’t know if it’s they see you as, ‘Oh, she’s human, too. She makes mistakes,’ or they respect the fact that you admit it.”

Campbell stressed that people in leadership are change agents who “need to be open to learning, and open to respecting a wide array of values and opinions.” She defined leadership as “the ability to enable other people to maximize their skills and energy in a common direction for a common reason.” Mediation is an important part of communication in the tribal college community. In tribal communities, everyone knows each other. “So in a community like ours we spend a lot of time mediating, trying to help both individuals see the value in the other and respecting each other.” Campbell wanted her leadership judged by “how well other people working with me function. Because if I’m working really, really hard—I could be doing a great job at say, some project, but I’m not a leader unless I’m able to enable others to do the same.”

Culture and Language

In *Look to the Mountain*, Cajete (1994) explained that tribal education is really “endogenous education, in that it educates the inner self through enlivenment and illumination from one’s own being and the learning of key relationships” (p. 34). He characterized a basic element of Indian Education as the recognition that “each person and each culture contains the seeds that are essential to their well-being and positive development (Cajete, 1994, p. 29). Culture, “all learned patterns of thought and behavior, whether conscious or unconscious, shared by all members of a social, ethnic, or linguistic group” (Houser, 1991, p. 17), provides the foundation for education in the tribal colleges. Focusing on the development of the individual, tribal colleges “maintain a strong focus on the cultural heritage of the local people” (Conti & Fellenz, 1991, p. 18) with an aim of “human resource development for the tribe” (Cross & Shortman, 1995, p. 37).

Tribal colleges are “flexible and responsive institutions” (Boyer, 1995, p. 10), that “promote the self-determination aspiration of Indian people” and draw on tribal history and culture as they “strive to integrate traditional disciplinary knowledge of mainstream society into their academic programs” (Badwound & Tierney, 1988, p. 14). Tribal culture is central to Indian Education and provides the basic element in establishing the tribal college

mission. Each mission statement clearly declares that the tribal college will “preserve, enhance, promote, and teach” the tribe’s culture and language. This common element is aimed at providing students the opportunity to learn more about their tribe’s culture and history, build their identities, and instill pride in their heritage.

This commitment to reclaim cultural heritage undergirds the mission of the tribal colleges, reinforced through the framework of their curricula. A “commitment to reaffirm traditions” (Boyer in *Carnegie*, 1989) and the focus on “incorporating culture into the curriculum is imperative if tribal colleges are to meet their stated goals” (Cross & Shortman, 1995, p. 34). This cultural framework is more than an effort to “add elements of native thought and philosophy” to their curriculum; tribal colleges “want their curriculum to be as fully reflective of their culture as Harvard is of western culture” (Boyer, 1995, p. 45).

The task of incorporating culture into tribal college curriculum is a difficult one. Cross & Shortman explain: “The reality is that incorporating culture into the curriculum is a formidable task given that most tribal colleges must first develop the materials about their own cultures” (1995, p. 35). Not only must these tribal colleges develop materials, they must also “define what, exactly, contemporary American Indian culture should look like” (Boyer, 1995, p. 45). As summarized by Conti & Fellenz, “No situation[al] factor is more important at tribal colleges than the philosophy of the institution. Tribal colleges have a definitive mission and a community responsibility. This must be reflected in the curriculum and in the way the curriculum is formulated” (1991, p. 22).

Tribal colleges strive to advance the understanding of Indian culture. Their curricula “work to express evidence of culture—through ceremonies and the teaching of language, for example—even on reservations where the culture is almost lost and few, if any, members speak the language fluently. In this way, they are bringing the active expression of culture back to life, making it the common currency of the tribe once more” (Boyer, 1995, p. 45). Preserving the native language is a monumental undertaking because few native language speakers exist. Students who learn the language in school or special programs may not receive the reinforcement of speaking the language at home. The tangible evidence of culture is in the pow wows and native study courses, but the intangible influence of culture is “carefully embedded throughout the entire curriculum, in the philosophy of teaching and the general mood of the institution” (Boyer, 1995, p. 16).

Tribal colleges strive to provide culturally relevant content that will reinforce the basic values of the community. Their goals “are neither competitive nor meritocratic... generosity, reverence for the earth, and wisdom are basic values” (McNickle, 1973, in Badwound & Tierney, 1988, p. 11) that connect tribal college education with cultural philosophy. Although tribal college education supports development of the individual, the goals reflect group interests (Badwound & Tierney, 1988) and work toward the development of the community. They are “truly *community* institutions...building new communities based on shared traditions...challenging the conditions that plague

their societies and continue to threaten their survival" (Boyer in Carnegie, 1989, p. xii). Tribal colleges continually examine their missions in the context of what it will mean for their communities. Each undertaking is evaluated in terms of consistency with mission and appropriateness for the community. The relationships of tribal colleges and communities are reciprocal. Just as states rely on their higher education institutions as "repositories of knowledge...so too do tribal communities look to their colleges for information and guidance" (Boyer, 1995, p. 14).

Little Big Horn College

Little Big Horn College exemplifies the efforts of tribal colleges to use tribal culture and knowledge as the foundation for learning. According to Pretty On Top, tribal knowledge is part of "the context of virtually any course" offered at LBHC; she believes that level of integration is related to "the level of respect that we have for knowledge that's held by people, the value of it and its place in the curriculum." Developing the curriculum, as well as all other areas of the college to include tribal knowledge is congruent with the mission statement. Janine explained the relevance of the mission statement to culture:

It says we respect the knowledge and scholarship of the tribe. And if we do, then we're going to find it [tribal knowledge] everywhere in the curriculum. It's going to permeate even the methods that we have in delivering the learning environment, in the student services...the ways in which counseling is delivered, or admissions or application. All of the ways in which we relate to one another we'll be able to apply Crow knowledge to those ways.

Integrating tribal knowledge into every discipline is not an easy task. Decisions have to be made in regard to what is important, how the information relates to the rest of the curriculum, and how to deliver the information. Some decisions are more easily made than others.

In that regard, we've had lots of hard work to do because if we recognize Crow knowledge as integral to the curriculum, then we have to be willing to understand how that curriculum, how that knowledge fits into the greater field of the academic curriculum, whether it's in history or it's in economics, or if it's in teaching the language and so on. And we have to speak to that knowledge in terms of other academics because those courses have to be translated or articulated. They have to be transferred. We have to handle that knowledge...we have to package it; we have to grade level it; we have to do all the things that academics do with knowledge, with information, with the Crow information.

Curriculum components that reflect the knowledge of the Crow culture garner more loyalty from college personnel than do those that lack the cultural element. When adjustments to the curriculum must be made, those parts that are most culturally cohesive are maintained; those lacking a cultural

foundation are subject to change. "Our cultural knowledge...has been reflected in the curriculum and...we have been most loyal to that curriculum. Others we can trim back or we can expand or we can alter or we can even trade, but there's a cohesiveness to the tribal studies that needs to be preserved and respected and I think that we're very loyal to that."

LBHC developed archives containing over 700 running feet of materials, photos, and tapes relevant to the Crow culture. Students are encouraged to complete cultural research projects and to seek out additional cultural knowledge from their families and other community members. Pretty On Top expressed her belief that the archives are an additional indicator of "how our cultural context, our cultural knowledge base is reflected in this organization." The archives show the "distinctive chartered purpose and that is protection of the history and language of the culture of the tribe."

I think the most powerful construction I get from my culture is the way in which I communicate with other people. Within the organization it would be with members of the faculty and staff—whether it's to correct some problem area or concern area, or whether it's to move work along that needs to be moved along to complete a task that's short or long term in nature, and that has to do with respect. It has to do with saying things without being so directive as to be insulting, to take a certain approach in a written document that is positive but yet motivating but yet task oriented. We have this to do; we set deadlines; and we get the work done.

Students are required to take two classes in the Crow language and in composition and speaking as part of their general education requirements. The premise is that to be fully capable of speaking and writing in English, students must first be competent in speaking and writing the Crow language. Achieving competence in written and spoken English is an important objective for students at LBHC. "We're concerned that people know how to do research papers and that they can speak in public in English, because our primary language here is Crow. So to be fully capable academically in English is an extremely important objective for our students to reach."

Some distinct differences exist between the Crow language and English, differences that not only present barriers to communication and understanding, but may also be reflective of differences in cultural beliefs. The Crow language is structurally different, so the aim of language instruction is to help students understand their chronic mistakes. Fundamental differences in structure include the use—or lack—of the past verb tense, gender pronouns, and possessive pronouns. Janine explained:

For instance, there is no past tense in the Crow language. And our Crow people tend to use the past tense in English anywhere they want. They use it for present, future—they use it any time they want, because the distinction between the past and the present is only contextual in Crow; it's not grammatical [*sic*].... We also don't have gender pronouns, like he/she. We just have person, the person

pronoun. And we don't have ownership, so there's the possessives—all of those "her tent," "his," and so on, and so those things are sort of interchangeable. His and her are virtually interchangeable if you listen to Crow English.

LBHC faculty, staff, and board members also have opportunities to expand their knowledge of Crow culture and language. With permission, they can take up to six credits, tuition free, of any course offerings. In this way, the college facilitates individual growth in knowledge of tribal culture and language. "It's really been a good way to facilitate the development, especially in, for instance, tribal languages, tribal studies, in that whole area of interest for non-Indian people—but for Indian people as well."

Additionally, faculty development opportunities are ongoing in the areas of language, culture, and teaching methodologies. Faculty received instruction specific to teaching tribal college students and American Indian adults. According to Pretty On Top, LBHC had a faculty development grant "to learn about the language and the culture from eminent scholars in our community. They're also interested in teaching methodology and they've had a series of classes and speakers on teaching in the tribal college, teaching American Indian adults."

Pretty On Top and others at the college recognized the need to be sensitive to the cultural needs of the community. "In the community itself the college is sensitive to certain times of the year and we recognize certain important holidays, certain community involvement that's very important to the Crow people." Being respectful of cultural and individual needs during times of sickness or death in the family is a means of demonstrating and preserving respect for the culture. Faculty and staff members are not penalized for time spent with their families during bereavement. Janine listed those practices as some of "the most serious ways in which you can respect people for their membership in a culture and their obligations to their family."

College of The Menominee Nation

For Fowler, tribal language is the means to bringing back the Menominee culture. "I think it's the language that helps us really understand what Menominee culture is all about." Although she does not want to "minimize the drumming, the singing and dancing," she believes that the important concepts for Menominee people are found in understanding the language and the Menominee way of thinking, a way of thinking that is rich with metaphor. If Menominee "don't have some broad understanding of the language and the concepts, they would miss the Menominee way of thinking."

The Menominee tribe was a terminated tribe and because of this Fowler said, "We're a little bit different from a lot of other tribes because we're more acculturated." The termination policy was an attempt by the federal government to decrease federal responsibility for all Indian services, including education. National support for termination reached a climax in 1953 with the passage of House Concurrent Resolution #108.

The final result of Resolution #108 was the termination of two major tribes, the Klamath of Oregon and the Menominee of Wisconsin, and 59 small bands and tribes. The termination philosophy also had direct effects on elementary and secondary education for Indians. Federal Indian schools were closed in four states: Idaho, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Washington (Oppelt, 1990, pp. 25-26).

The result was that Indian students attended public schools that discouraged teaching about Indian culture. Although the Menominee language currently is taught to students in the local grade schools and the high school, it is not used by them. "In the grade schools and the high schools it's been taught for the last 20 years, but you don't see kids using it." Few native Menominee language speakers remain, and Fowler would like to utilize the expertise of those who do to run "immersion camps in Menominee language" to teach and preserve the language and culture. She believes that the minds of the people are the most valuable resource. "Menominee have terrific [resources] with all their trees here and the wonderful and variable resources. But we have a much more important and a much more valuable resource and that's the minds of our people."

Cheyenne River Community College

Under Ward's direction, the faculty committee at Cheyenne River Community College reviewed the college curriculum during Summer 1996. They looked at the course descriptions and how to incorporate the Lakota perspective. "We looked at incorporating the Lakota thought and philosophy where we could through the curriculum." Ward stated that curriculum should reflect the culture. "As a tribal college we need to be unique and there's part of the culture that should permeate throughout the course offerings that we have."

Developing a values course was a priority for Ward; values of the Indian people were the focus of a 1995 staff development workshop. Language was another priority area. "I see us as a tribal college including a lot of the culture and parts of the language and my next step is to orient the faculty into just some simple practices and greeting their students." Ward, who speaks Lakota fluently and taught language classes, explained that the Lakota language requires a different thinking process and is not contextually equivalent to the English language. "The thought process is very different from English." Sometimes there are no "English words to describe appropriately what we say in Lakota for thought. One word could conjure up an entire picture in your head. In English it may take a paragraph to describe that. That thought process is quite different."

Few students at CRCC are bilingual. Students of mixed heritage are less conversant in Lakota than those who are full bloods. "The west end are the full bloods and I would say...the majority of west enders that come will be bilingual." Although learning Lakota is a challenge, the language classes are filled. "The language classes are packed when we start. It's a difficult language to learn. Maybe 10% [of the students], if that, are bilingual."

In addition to Lakota language courses, CRCC offers a course in Lakota history and faculty are looking at developing a Lakota studies program. Some involvement with community members occurs through the cultural center. "We currently have a couple projects going on with the cultural center and the oral tradition—filming and recording of the oral tradition."

Fort Peck Community College

Campbell's position in the Department of Community Services at Fort Peck Community College afforded her the opportunity to work in community services, the area she found most enjoyable and meaningful as a tribal college president. Her current project at FPCC supports the tribal mission of "preserving and restoring the culture and the languages" through educating children in the native languages.

Right now I'm working on the development of two total language immersion schools for three, four, and five-year-olds...on the extreme east and west ends of this reservation...we will be developing an Assiniboine total language immersion program...and then we're doing the same for the Sioux language on the far eastern end of the reservation.

Through community outreach, FPCC will be a "change agent for the entire Fort Peck community in terms of economic development, language and culture retention, and occupational training." Campbell believes tribal colleges view their role differently than do other educational institutions. "The tribal colleges accept the responsibility for embracing all their students, bringing systemic change to education. We view ourselves as being responsible for improving the lives of all people while teaching and preserving our tribal cultures which make us unique as a people."

Although the degree of emphasis on culture and language and the level of integration in the curriculum vary among the tribal colleges, a major focus of the tribal college mission is to sustain tribal heritage. The expressions of culture in the tribal college as in the tribal community are "expected complements to the rituals of modern life." The tribal college of the future will help develop contemporary American Indian culture. The tribal college "will not only teach and reflect the culture throughout the curriculum, it will interpret and redefine culture to meet modern needs" (Boyer, 1995, p. 45).

Discussion

Models of leadership generally have common elements; models define a leader as one who possesses vision, and focuses on mission, serves as a role model for others, and enables others to take action or perform their roles. Although the terms may differ with a particular model, the ideas are similar. Bennis and Nanus (1985) presented a transformative model of leadership that outlines attention through vision, meaning through communication, trust

through positioning, and deployment of self. Kouzes and Posner (1987) defined a behavioral model of leadership that profiles inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, and modeling the way. Both models included other components, but shared these basic elements.

Commonalities of responses by participants in the tribal college leadership studies of Fowler (1992) and Becenti (1996) included an emphasis on vision and mission; and working with tribal culture, including tribal members and governments. Participants of both studies described their general leadership style as being participative and consultative, utilizing shared decision-making (Becenti, 1996; Fowler, 1992).

Leader attributes of tribal college presidents may be as diverse and numerous as the tribes they represent. Existing leadership theories may not provide the necessary framework to contextualize tribal college leadership; however, they do provide a foundation for identifying leadership characteristics personified by the four tribal college leaders in this study.

Vision is inextricably tied to mission in the tribal colleges. The vision for fledgling tribal colleges was to establish a means for tribal members to access higher education. Tribal colleges share "common ground." They are the vision of the past, a vision that continues to grow and change as the mission grows and changes. For the most part, that mission is directed by the chartering body, the governing board, or the tribal college board; defined by the needs and aspirations of the tribal community; and articulated by tribal college administrators and faculty.

Fowler precisely defined a visionary leader when she described herself as "one who has a vision and has a direction worth heading." Listening to others and synthesizing all the data helped her "fashion that vision" so that others endorsed its validity. Tanya envisioned a college curriculum that incorporates Lakota thought and philosophy and focused on her vision and goal of achieving candidacy status for Cheyenne River Community College.

Pretty On Top emphasized that decisions were made by considering what fit "the breadth and depth of the vision and the purpose of the institution." For Pretty On Top the vision continues to change, "...it's like climbing to the top of one of the hills in the Big Horns. You climb the hill you see, but when you get there you see another peak and so on." Campbell stressed the need for everyone to "know the mission, believe in the mission."

Because the mission of tribal colleges is to "preserve and protect" the culture and language, tribal culture impacts leadership. To ensure that the focus of the institution remains centered on the mission, tribal college leaders must be knowledgeable of culture. Badwound and Tierney (1988) stressed the importance of the values—beliefs defined by culture—to tribal college leadership. "The leader in the tribal college is a facilitator and promoter of group values and interests. Instead of maintaining autocratic power by virtue of position, the tribal college leader develops authority by demonstrating competence and allegiance to the values which underlie the organization" (p. 13). Sergiovanni (1989) explained, "Leadership acts are expressions of culture. Leadership as cultural expression seeks to build unity and order within an organization" (p. 336).

Fowler stated that a leader must have a strong value system and model a sense of pride for others. Campbell expressed her belief that value and respect for others is important. Leaders work hard and function well with others; they "enable others to do the same." Pretty On Top talked about the value of teamwork, utilizing the skills of others, and investing "confidence and faith and the resources" in others.

Pretty On Top recognized the contributions others made to the success of Little Big Horn College and gave credit for their achievements. "Ownership" and "voice" were words she used to describe the faculty role in decision-making. Fowler prefers to give others "the opportunity to give their viewpoints." She emphasized the value of "listening" to others and allowing people to make their own decisions. Ward spoke of her desire to "actively involve the staff" so they develop a sense of ownership. Campbell described her leadership style as "inclusive and participatory," and said, "I try to involve a broad base of opinions, values, and expertise...I feel that the more participation that is invited allows for causing change and improvement."

"Empowered" was the word Ward used to describe how she wanted faculty to feel. She modeled accomplishing the task at hand through hard work like "the old work horse." Fowler talked about her willingness "to tackle any kind of job" that needed to be done; in the early days of her college, Pretty On Top assumed responsibilities that went beyond teaching. Campbell described a leader she admired as being "one of the most encouraging people" she ever met, a person who was able "to make others believe in themselves."

Pretty On Top, Fowler, Ward, and Campbell illustrate that tribal college leadership is not an act or a series of acts; it is not filling a position or playing a role. Tribal college leadership is not simply directing a process. Tribal college leadership is the embodiment of a lifestyle, an expression of learned patterns of thought and behaviors, values and beliefs. Culture is the basis of the institution; it formulates the purpose, process, and product. Tribal college leadership is inseparable from culture; leadership and culture are symbiotic.

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