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LEADERSHIP AND IMPLEMENTATIONS WITHIN COLLEGE ORGANIZATIONS TOWARDS ADVANCEMENT

By

Koby Khauv

A capstone project submitted for
Graduation with University Honors

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University Honors
University of California, Riverside

APPROVED

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Abstract

The purpose of this study aims to assess how leaders and leadership impacts their communities, specifically in college campuses in their different departments, colleges, first year learning communities, student-led organizations, and advising departments. UC Riverside will be a campus referred to because of the familiarity aspect and the known structuring of similar topics. Within the groups that leaders reside, the research will also look and analyze the various implementations that are utilized, such as programs and initiatives led by administration, and see how effective they are towards their target population group. A more focused example are first year college students and their transition to college and whether first year learning communities are of use. Similarly, within those learning communities do the instructors and leaders in place effectively utilize their roles to harbor a greater development for students towards their overall advancement in their 4 years of university? I will argue that the various factors and circumstances will hinder growth for students but also create indefinite opportunities for huge growth in leadership; a very arbitrary and random source of effectiveness within it's prospective communities and resources. To dive in deeper to these analyses, I will use various scholarly article and literature reviews with research done from other campuses to showcase their usage and models in parallel to these common implementations. The overall goal in mind is to bring a clearer light to creating more cohesive programs and leaders within communities to promote longevity and opportunities for students.

Keywords: leadership, implementations, learning communities, opportunities, student-led organizations

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I would like to greatly acknowledge my parents because of their constant love and support throughout my college endeavors. As a first-generation college student, coming from a low-income and bi-racial background, it has been an extremely challenging endeavor to find my educational and career-focused goals. Their constant trust and belief in my capabilities were what motivated me and kept me passionate in everything I did throughout my undergraduate experience. Within the UCR Honors Program, I would also like to heavily acknowledge and thank Dr. Elaine Wong, whom became one of my very first and close faculty members that continuously saw my developmental growth and continuously showcased dedication towards the Undergraduate Business Program. Another acknowledgement I would like to mention is towards my Honors advisor, Dennis McIver, whom graciously made me feel truly part of the UCR Honors program. His constant guidance and kind words of wisdom always created a joyous feeling to continue to persevere. Lastly, I would like to acknowledge Professor Thomas Kramer, whom generously became my faculty advisor towards the end of my capstone research. The culmination of everyone's effort is what enabled me to become a successful and optimistic individual.

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INTRODUCTION

University and college experiences help build a greater foundation in our youthful times to better develop and understand our capabilities, inter/intrapersonal skills, goals, and career paths. Pursuing a higher education following high school comes with numerous possibilities of potential development, pertaining to each prospective school and its surrounding community. UC Riverside continues to show its legacy of inclusivity, diversity, and endless opportunities to grow leaders. Great leadership and leaders should exist in any organization, especially in a setting where individuals are pursing a higher degree of achievement and knowledge for oneself, also spoken broadly as advancement in this case. Reflecting on my four years of my undergraduate journey has taught me numerous lessons on developing my soft and hard skills, including networking, interviewing, study habits, communicating in new environments, etc. UC Riverside harbored an environment filled with pathways to choose to develop oneself in these areas. How did UC Riverside's campus and environment enable me to achieve my goals and go beyond of what I anticipated? How may it have differed for other students who may or may not have similar perspectives, stance, or potential opportunities?

The leadership within the community is something integral to consider within colleges. Even more so the implementations each college and their prospective departments utilize to portray their approach and intentions is also equally important to see the usage towards its desired population. With this in mind, can there be possible disconnection(s) for students in college, regarding leadership and effective implementations, towards their overall success, achievements, and advancements? Looking upon leadership theories and concepts will guide the assessment of the importance of leadership in its role in organizations. Additionally, implementations such as first-year learning communities, student-led organizations, and the

overall impact on its surrounding communities will be analyzed as additional supporting evidence to dive in deeper to its roots of influence. Essentially, this research will ask how leadership plays a role into shaping malleable college students and individuals to pursue their own hobbies, interests, strengths and weaknesses, and career paths. Within the prospective leadership outlets across campus, how effective are those implementations that such leaders are utilizing for the students and community alike.

LEADERSHIP THEORIES AND CONCEPTS

Authentic Leadership Development

To begin with, I wanted to set the foundation with this first theory of *Authentic Leadership Development* (ALD). We hear similar terms regarding leadership, such as leadership development, transformational leadership, leadership framework, leadership behavior theory, etc. An interesting approach with ALD is simply the inclusion of the authenticity aspect; self-made, genuine, and being able to take account for what they act upon and believe in. Walumbwa et al. (2008) indulges deeper with the definition of authentic leadership as 'a pattern of leader behavior… of greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency' (p.94). It is invigorating also to note that ALD has a growing importance of its usage in providing an evidence-based method to positively represent "a broad range of vital business factors, for example organizational climate and commitment, communication and knowledge sharing, job-satisfaction and work engagement, even individual, team and overall company performance and productivity" (Fusco et al, 2015, p.132). Under *Appendix A Table 1: Authentic Leadership Outcome Research*, its further details previous authors' research done within authentic leadership and its overall focus. Many, if not all of these

focuses, and factors attribute to a common linkage towards leadership within organizations and how may they implement certain ideals and practices.

Leadership Behavior Changes

A typical college requirement does not require a leadership class, yet those who have the chance or make the choice to take one gain the specific insight on how their own leadership behavior might change throughout the course. In a course setting, a subject can be more enlightening than to just read theories and attempt to learn from mistakes, whether from work or group related endeavors. That being said, I want to also layout the development leadership model that is used as a foundation for research done on leadership behavioral changes over time periods. The study uses the developmental leadership model (Larsson, Carlstedt, Andersson et al., 2003) as it's point of departure and the model is presented in *Appendix B Fig. 1.* The model showcases two main classes of leader characteristics; basic prerequisites, that include physical, psychological, and view-of-life-related, and desirable competencies, which include task-related competences, management-related competence, social competence, and capacity to cope with stress. The figure also shows contextual characteristics that include environment, organization, and group factors. Finally, the model includes three basic types of leadership styles: developmental, conventional and non-leadership, laissez-faire (Larsson et al., 2017, p.63). The aim, using the developmental leadership model as it's backbone, was to "evaluate effects of leadership courses based on the developmental leadership model at the leadership behavior". The model will be viewed in a similar light when assessing leadership and implementations towards advancement. The results to their research showed that with periodic evaluations at certain intervals of months after taking the leadership course, evaluations from a 360-feedback perspective showed increase of developmental leadership and a reduction of conventional-

negative and laissez-fair leadership. Though granted, this research admitted its flaws with their hypotheses that each one was not heavily supported by the data gathered between leaders, their evaluators, and scales used to evaluate each leadership attribute. The focus at hand is the usage of the leadership course and its impact throughout and after it's influence.

LEADERSHIP WITHIN COLLEGES

First-Year Learning Communities

First-year learning communities have shown to be of great usage for incoming Freshmen in college. The integration and transitioning process is much smoother for those coming from high school and it brings a more tight-knit experience for one another. As an individual who experienced the first-year learning communities in UC Riverside's CHASS Humanities department as a Pre-Business major my first year, it was definitely a useful tool in my first quarters of college. The Honors program is a similar example, despite it not branded as a first-year learning community, but it is an evident structure of students enrolled in a common cohort of high-achieving individuals. Whether it was course preparation, refining study habits, networking, public speaking, or leadership activities, there were many worthwhile endeavors throughout these types of programs. A first-year learning community is typically a classroom designated time where freshmen with similar majors are put into to ease the transition from their previous educational environment. On occasions, the instructor is a TA, professor, or even an undergraduate student. This sparks controversy in my eyes as for cases for learning communities to have undergraduate students, of only one to three years older of age than their class that they are instructing. Discussing a study investigating the direct and indirect relationships between participating in a learning community may guide into a less controversial perspective on leadership roles.

The research study in place for learning communities and its effectiveness used multiple measures to analyze the gains perceived and not perceived by these students from various backgrounds. The conceptual model used to showcase the measures and a summary of how the research played out is shown in *Appendix C Fig.1 Conceptual Model*. This included backgrounds from gender, ethnicity, and ACT scores. Following, their learning community status, quality interactions in the community, impressions given to their environments, and their resulting gains introspectively and through their educational endeavors. The results came from two outlets, direct and indirect effects. More importantly, many of the variables, more than half, showed a significant direct influence on students' perceived gains. "As seen in these results, the major influence on students' perceived gains is from the effort that they exert taking advantage of the opportunities for learning provided by the institution, such as interactions with faculty members and peers and effort in their coursework. Furthermore, the greater students perceive the institution as a challenging and stimulating place the greater they perceive gains" (Rocconi, 2011, p.188). What is really noteworthy from this study is the effort resulting with students to take initiative and interact more with their environment for its maximum utility. Reaching out to others and seeking help and guidance is not such a simple task to achieve, especially in a typical freshman's capability. Although there are always limitations within studies and external factors, a big one being that this was only tested on one individual school campus, the lingering thought was how may their leaders in their community played a significant role into their greater gains. I believe authentic leadership development and leadership behavior changes are two concepts worth noting at this point, in which there are similar attributes in which this study exemplified; organization commitment through ALD and contextual characteristics through the developmental leadership model in parallel to learning community participation. Learning

communities who may have variances in leadership, age, gender, qualifications, background, may inherently affect student's college experience and would be another measure potentially used in the recent spoken study.

Retention Amongst Students

It is not a surprise that within the public-school education sector, retention is of high importance when considering the plethora backgrounds of each student, especially economically and financially. It is most likely the case that all educational institutions strive for their retention rates to be as high as possible, whether they implement programs promoting retention, or even specialists that are hired for even more specific actions to take with regards to retention. At Syracuse University, Vincent Tinto states that the concept of learning communities is most essential for student retention at any college because of the importance it holds in creating a cohesive, collaborate environment for students. "…institutions that provide academic, social, and personal support encourage persistence…students are more likely to stay in schools that involve them as valued members of the institution. The frequency and quality of contact with faculty, staff, and other students have repeatedly been shown to be independent predictors of student persistence" (Tinto, 1999).

Just previously discussing the impact of learning communities, this study helps emphasis and support the positive claims towards learning communities. Tinto hits on two extremely vital points with learning communities, "…academic advising should be an integral part of the first-year experience." And "…the first year of college should be understood as a developmental year in which new students acquire the skills, dispositions, and norms needed to learn and grow throughout the college years" (Tinto, 1999). The stress with learning communities is apparent because of the huge impact it has with first year colleges students. Academic advising comes

through as a mean of guidance from a professional to give students that extra support as their advisors are experienced and have dealt with many scenarios. Leadership qualities within those advisors are then factored in as whether their sessions with their students are ineffective or effective outlets for guidance. It is the great foundation built within colleges, like UC Riverside, that can inspire and motivate these students to go above and beyond their educational and career goals. Whether students have a good or bad experience is where development becomes either accelerated or impeded. Considering all these portions and factors, we are still continuously analyzing the effectiveness of each outlet of development, as well as reverting back to ALD and leadership behavior changes to acknowledge the leaders at hand for each case.

Administrative and Faculty Roles

The administration and faculty roles within colleges all differ by their prospective departments, majors, and affiliations, yet all works towards a similar goal of aiding students in their college endeavors. As briefly stated earlier, those advisors and mentors chose that career back from their background and experiences, yet there can be variances in teachings and advising. Advising itself includes indulging and building relations with students and mentees. A model worth comparing to the developmental leadership model is the engagement model, introduced by David Yarbrough, also found in *Appendix D Figure 1 Engagement Model for Academic Advising.* The model contains numerous transitions and chronological stages in a student's development through college, starting from experiences from professor/advisor to even after graduating with an institutional commitment towards their alma mater. "Application for the Engagement Model for Academic Advising requires that the academic adviser understands his or her role in the process of passage. The student-adviser relationship is best viewed as a mentoring relationship that results in the initiation and the induction (commencement) of the advisee into

the group of individuals having completed a degree" (Yarbrough, 2002, p.65). Acknowledging that the relationship must be a two-sided, compared to a one-sided where the one side is more invested than another, it is also comparable to the developmental leadership model because both acknowledge aspects of a value-based, supportive, and participative environment to build the relationship. If one is developed to be a great leader that encompasses high-level characteristic pertaining to the developmental leadership model, one can say that it is more likely for that relationship to be built on a stronger level towards the student/mentee. With more opportunity for development and encouragement towards the student, the student has more room for growth in their interpersonal and intrapersonal skills to absorb the resources given and utilize them more effectively in their college endeavors. The models can bounce off each other very smoothly as there is a coherent and linear approach for each side.

Preserving Campus and Student-Led Organizations

Aside from first year learning communities and advising, there comes arguably the most notable and exciting part of college, which is that they contain the most diverse amount of student-led organizations possible. These organizations are what motivate and let students indulge in their interests, formulate long-lasting bonds of friendship, and hone their educational/recreational/professional crafts. Organization structure differs across campuses and individual organizations, depending on the hierarchy, the mission statement, and the leadership within. A typical student organization will have its board members that include a president, vice president, treasurer, secretary, and a form of public relations officer. This may be one of the more general formulas that equate to an organization, but what lacks to these generic structures is the longevity of experienced leadership and the consistency to leave a long-lasting legacy. An implementation I sought to be a possible solution to low retention rates and possible disbandment

of these student-led organizations are alumni-related boards that entice future members to have a commitment past graduation. This also goes hand in hand with ALD, developmental leadership model, and even the engagement model for academic advising. Harboring a commitment towards its future leaders from past organizations are what resulted from great leadership and great advising. The authentic and genuine nature comes from ALD and continues to persevere towards a more cohesive fundamental of overall advancement.

With so many factors and outlets now presented, I want to allude towards another study from the University of Iowa, in which they began to make a team that helped encompass many of what is brought to the table regarding undergraduate initiatives towards engaging and inclusive implementations. They formed what was called, University of Iowa's Student Success Team (SST). It began in 2006, including faculty, staff, and colleges on campus with the purpose to "develop ideas and implement initiatives…" and make "significant changes in the undergraduate student experience at Iowa" (Askby & Mintner, 2017, p.101). Their aim and desire to expand leadership opportunities is what makes this project such a great initiative towards the undergraduate community. With more connectivity on campus with every organization, student, faculty, and administration, it closes the gaps between titles and positions and lays a deeper focus on the community growth. More accomplishments can be seen in a clearer picture and the structure of this all harbors fluidity through each chain of process. The concept of what University of Iowa accomplished with their SST is similar to what UC Riverside's Undergraduate Business Program attempted to do with an organization called School of Business Student Leadership Council. In parallel with their names, this council consisted of student leaders that helped bridge the gap between organizations and promote a liaison towards the School of Business. However, this council was short lasted as with past leadership of those who

graduated did not leave as powerful as a legacy or direction to the younger student leaders. This is a prime example of the disconnection between ALD and holding a titled position of 'president' or 'leader'. Another example lightly mentioned was the concept of an Alumni Board, in which graduates or even seniors can still hold a position to help guide the present student leaders to a more solid foundation. Alumni boards are useful because they promote a long-lasting relationship with their organization. This can also aid with student retention in organizations, as well as future development and relationships with its campus affiliations.

IMPACT OF LEADERSHIP IN COMMUNITIES

Diversity and Inclusion

UC Riverside does a superb job with its diversity and inclusion throughout its campus, known to be one of the most diverse universities in the nation. Similar to a program such a learning communities, in which it has been established that UC Riverside has learning communities for its respective colleges, Riverside campus also provides services, such as tutoring, SAT workshops, parent meetings, offered by Early Academic Outreach to local high school and middle school students who have academic potential and are from unrepresented ethnic groups or low-income families (Premski, 1991). The inclusion of this aspect stems from not only do organizations and communities need great leaders and proactive initiatives, but the diverse pool of individuals to help represent those who are the minority population in academic settings. The Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), which helps identify students who do not meet certain UC requirements but show potential, offer these unique and collaborative opportunities to combat the endeavors or the minority population in these cases. A most noteworthy endeavor is their encouragement to Riverside's minority students to serve as tutors and counselors. In this manner, it gives young individuals the opportunity to become a leader in

their community and become more well-aware of the duties and responsibilities that come from being a successful incoming college student. Producing more like-minded individuals from diverse backgrounds aids the foundation of building better leaders at college-based levels. The earlier the start, the more progressive the outcome can be.

Job Recruitment

Within job recruitment, I will use a personal example from the UCR Business School perspective of an individual pursuing a business major with an accounting concentration, then towards a broader spectrum. As an aspiring CPA, the accounting route is quite a linear process in which accounting firms, and many other similar non-accounting firms, seek out to provide internships for college students as almost a prequel to what to expect when working full-time. Other occupations have a similar timeline, and even earlier programs are created before an actual internship to provide more readiness and increase overall competition. Going back to the accounting profession route, some firms provide a first-year program, that can proceed to a summer leadership program their second year of college, followed by an internship their third year, and finally securing a full-time job post graduating. The process can be lengthy but harbor numerous opportunities for growth and development. This is worth mentioning as all professions have their own routes, but consequently the demand for jobs are much lower than the supply of readily available positions for graduates. The unemployment rate for young college graduates exceeds that of the general population, and about 41 percent of recent college graduates -- and 33.8 percent of all college graduates -- are underemployed in that they are working in jobs that don't require a college degree, according to new data from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. As competition rises and the value of a degree becomes lower, or the norm, can leaders with their community gain the proper insight from their prospective organizations, affiliations,

and prior advising? Internship programs provide significant benefits to students in terms of career preparation and income but also offer valuable advantages for participating business organizations and universities (Brightman, 1989). Many companies recognize the importance of internships as a future source of employees with qualified experience (Gault, 2000). However, with internships and similar experiences being in high demand, students must learn from their leaders in their communities to rightfully prepare and advocate for much sought out experiences for their long-term success and future endeavors. Campus organizations also come into picture as internal campus resources to provide a more centralized approach towards major and career specific job routes. Within campus organizations, there is still considering of the leadership within and the board members that reside; those individuals are the ones running the group and creating the environment for members to succeed in what it needs to.

DISCUSSION ON IMPLEMENTATIONS

Exit Exams

Though UC Riverside and many other UC systems do not implement an exit exam of any sort for undergraduate students, it is a somewhat popular practice for other colleges. Similar to the concept of taking standardized tests such as the SAT and ACT in high school, exit exams are implemented to administer the overall learning objectives over the course of their undergraduate experience. The effectiveness of such an implementation, such as at UC Riverside, would seem to be controversial as standardized testing have a history of being in favor to those with better economic and financial standing. Students could potentially pay for private courses and study sessions to get a higher grade specifically catering towards the standardized test. Reflecting back on leadership behavior and its change over time, one might consider exams to assess the qualities of leadership. It can be argued as well that exams like these are similar in nature in which this

can lead the community into a more standard way of learning and approaching things. Although this may lead organizations, instructors, professors, and leaders to a more 'standardized' approach of learning and greater knowledge, experts say that there may not be a direct correlation to better learning methods and retainment of knowledge and applications. "Standardized exams might also assess the quality of the student instead of the quality of the program" (Pfeffer & Fong, 2003). Green, Stone, and Zegeye (2014) stated that the major field test provides "no direct evidence of student learning and offers no useful comparative analysis to other business institutions" (p. 20). Instead of trying to implement a standardized testing, college administration should create a deeper focus within its community and forge greater role models. The application aspect is of most concernment as students' skillsets range from so many different majors and studies. One cannot and should not create a benchmark for a student because this may show them that they are great or not so great at test taking, thus creating stereotypes, limitations, and insecurities towards one's capabilities. Looking back at the developmental leadership model, this may distort the notion towards contextual characteristics, in which environment of demands and threats are questionable. The organization within the contextual characteristic could also have such a fixated structure that there is limited room for creative development for students. Referring to the model and reflecting on authentic leadership development, one may not be able to reach that standard due to the constant regulatory ways of standardized testing.

Competition Between Schools

University and colleges often compete with one another in regard to rankings, accomplishments, offerings, and student admissions. What makes one college stand out more to another college may be completely different in the perspectives of the students applying.

Regardless, even when admitted to each prospective college, there are internal and external competition between opportunities and advancement. Business schools, for example, may have competition of their geographical placement and local business opportunities. This may result in more advantages towards internships, part-time jobs, and full-time career post-graduation. Additionally, different Business schools structure their course availability differently, such as offering upper-division classes through their four years in college, or only after completing a set number of pre-requisites. How may leadership affect these factors with internal competition? Learning goals between leaders may come into play as a leader is often inspired and motivated to challenge team members and subordinates to achieve certain goals and tasks at hands. Likewise, with competition and a colleges' strategies, the journal article, "Learning Goals of AACSB-Accredited Undergraduate Business Programs: Predictors of Conformity Versus Differentiation", discusses the approach where they "…choose to focus on learning goals because they form the basis for curriculum (Rubin and Martell, 2009). The learning goals explicate a business school's mission and curricular priorities and serve as the link between a school's mission and assessment. The 2003 Standards (AACSB 2012) say that learning goals are "a key element in how the school defines itself" (p.61) …" (Brink et al., 2014, p.425). Learning goals are essentially central to assurance of learning, yet little is known about what goals are used specifically by business programs or how they are established. However, business schools also face pressures that would encourage conformity by adopting goals used by others. The authors of the recently spoken article examined the extent to which learning goals are unique versus similar, and the evidence found suggest they are quite similar. This is an important result to note as leaders typically learn and grow from one another, likewise with programs and tangible

implementations. The results of the study also implied a more fixated focus on the content of learning goals, so reviewing and asking critical questions.

CONCLUSION

It is extremely mind boggling to try to attempt to configure and understand all the various factors and circumstances that may affect a student's college journey. Whether it is the different leadership style apparent in the community, opportunities with learning communities and student-led organizations, advising and guidance through undergraduate programs, or even the competition that may spark internally within colleges, students will always end up finding a way through their college endeavors by their own means of trial and error. I speak heavily on the topic of learning communities as I went through the process my first year and was lucky enough to have dedicated leaders in my workshops that in one way or another, influenced my decision making with my goals in life. Likewise, I personally had great advisors that guided me extremely towards pursing my academic and professional goals. I was able to achieve to an extent a form of authentic leadership as I became leads and presidents of student-led organizations and groups. There may not be a perfect formula and perfect approach to gauge how might a student will effectively choose the right implementations and follow the right leadership, but colleges campuses are actively reforming and conforming their ideologies to keep up with societal trends. Especially in the UC system, competition is apparent as students from all over the country pursue a higher education in California. Through the models, research, and studies I have presented, students most likely and will ultimately have the end-all decision in what they choose to be their future.

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APPENDIX A

Table 1: Authentic Leadership Outcome Research

Table 1: Authentic Leadership outcome research.

Authors	Focus of Research
Clapp-Smith, Vogelgesang & Avey (2009)	Trust in leadership
Wong & Cummings (2009)	Trust in leadership
Walumbwa, Hartnell & Christensen (2011)	Communication climate and knowledge sharing
Jensen & Luthans (2006)	Follower job-satisfaction and organisational commitment
Giallonardo, Wong & Iwasiw (2010)	Follower citizenship and work engagement
Wong, Laschnger & Cummings (2010)	Follower citizenship and work engagement
Wong & Cummings (2009)	Follower job performance
Walumbwa, Luthans, Avey & Oke (2011b)	Group creativity
Hannah, Walumbwa & Fry (2011)	Team productivity
Toor & Ofori (2009)	Psychological well-being
Hmieleski, Cole & Baron (2011)	Overall company performance

APPENDIX B

Fig. 1 The Developmental Leadership Model

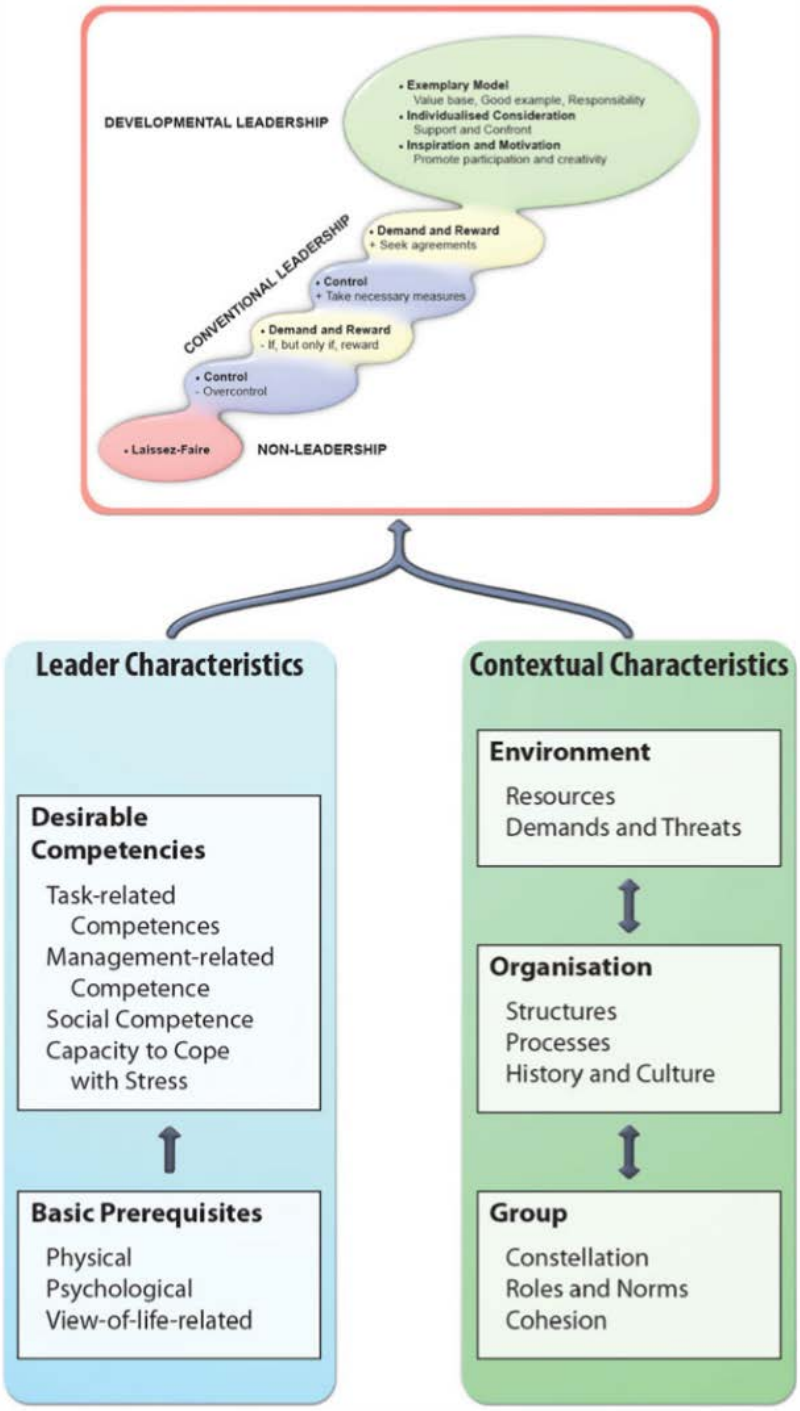

Fig. 1. The Developmental leadership model (adapted from Larsson *et al.*, 2003).

APPENDIX C

Fig.1 Conceptual Model

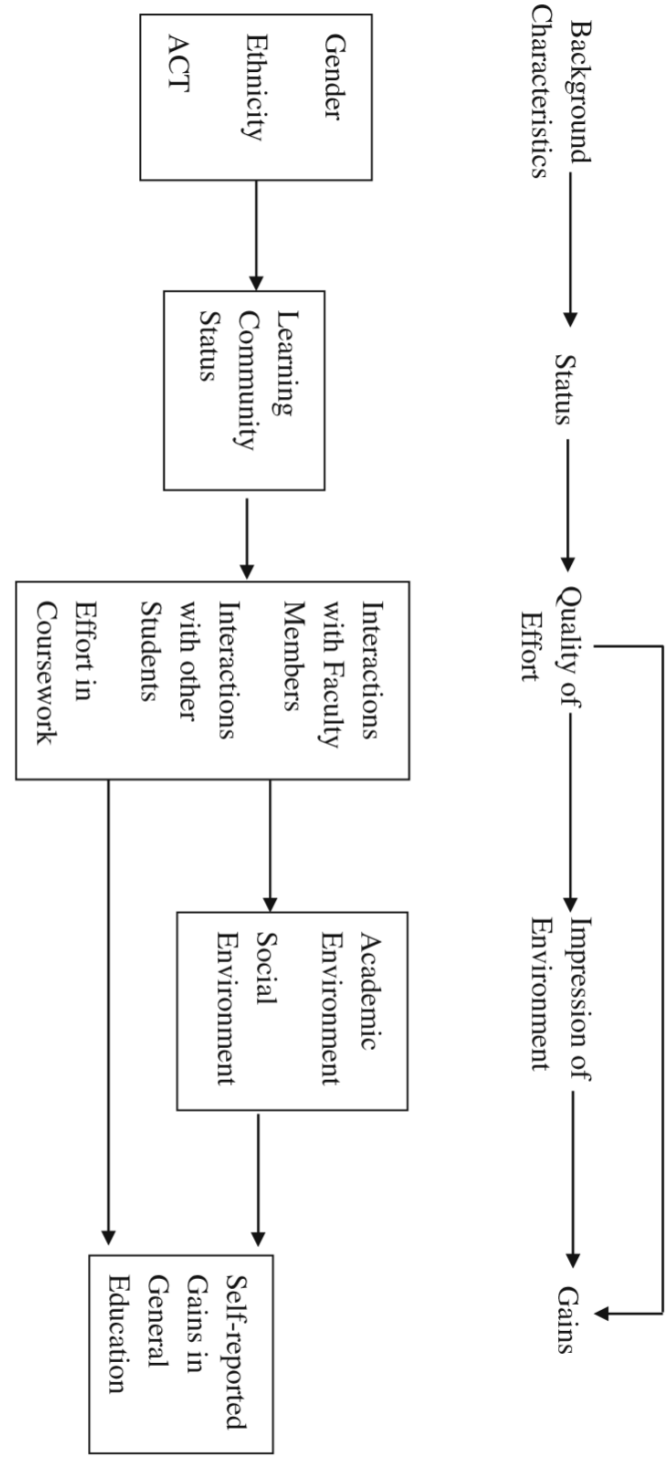

Fig. 1 Conceptual model

APPENDIX D

Figure 1 Engagement Model for Academic Advising

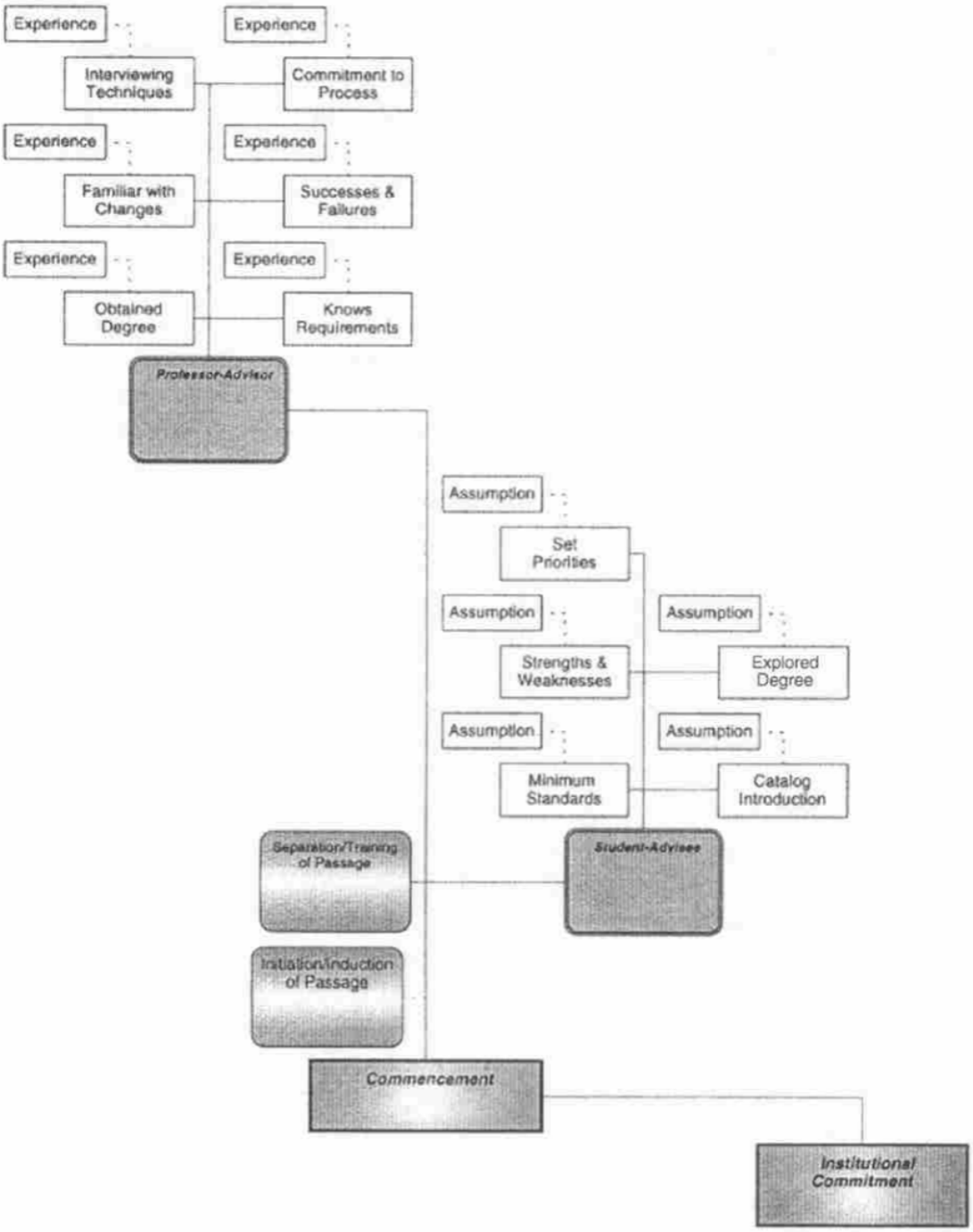

FIGURE 1

Engagement Model for Academic Advising