

FROM THE EDITOR

An Investment in Leadership

Douglas R. Lindsay, Editor in Chief, JCLD

Leadership is a formidable enterprise. It is one of the few endeavors that encompasses all aspects of an individual. It requires the whole of a person to lead effectively. Notice, I did not say lead, I said lead effectively. People in leadership positions can approach their position from many different perspectives and with many different approaches. It is their choice in how they chose to lead. Many lead, but not all lead effectively. Preparedness plays a critical role in effectiveness. The challenge is that leadership can be required whether we are ready for it or not. Historically, there have been many instances where people were thrust into leadership positions well ahead of when they thought they may be ready to lead. As we know, some were successful where some were not. While we may not always be able to choose the timing of when we may be called upon to lead, the one thing we fully own is our leadership development process and preparation. Those who invest wisely and intentionally in the process are rewarded for that investment. Those who fail to invest, fall victim to some pretty predictable consequences. The unfortunate part is that unprepared leadership is not a victimless situation. While the individual leader will likely feel the impact of their failure to adequately prepare (and some would suggest rightly so), so will their followers. In many domains, the consequences are primarily financial. Unfortunately, in some domains like the profession of arms, it is far more significant.

This idea of preparation is vital to effective leadership and doesn't just occur prior to accepting a leadership role. It is an ongoing, developmental process. For example, one aspect of effective leadership is knowing oneself. As all effective leaders know, this is not a one-time thing or a target. It is an ongoing spiral development endeavor. As we learn about ourselves, and how we show up in leadership situations, we test that knowledge though

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our experiences. Those experiences lead us to new insights about ourselves. That helps refine how we show up in the next leadership situation, which leads to more insights. This synergy is critical to leader development and effectiveness, and requires intentional and repeated investment.

You may sometimes encounter a false narrative that revolves around the notion that leadership can't be learned. It is something that must be done. You will sometimes even hear that taking classes on leadership or reading books about leadership isn't all that important. The interesting thing is if you pay attention to effective leaders, you will never hear that narrative. In fact, it is quite the opposite. Effective leaders invest in themselves and in their development. Effective leaders know that it is not a destination, but a journey. Effective leaders understand what lifelong development is all about. Effective leaders learn, read, and study leadership. They prepare so that they are prepared. The important point

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here is to really pay attention to who you pay attention to. That statement may sound a bit quippy at first, but it is critical for effective development. There is a quote by Charlie "Tremendous" Jones that says "Remember, you are the same today as you will be in five years, except for two things: the people you meet and the books you read. Choose both carefully." The lesson in that quote, is that we choose how we show up to a leadership situation. We don't always choose the situation, but we choose how we show up (through our preparation) and that is based

on things that we do. The fact that you are reading this issue of the JCLD is a testament to how you want to be in the future – the type of leader that you want to be and how you want to show up in the future. You are taking ownership of your development. That part, you own. So for the narrative that exists about not being able to learn leadership, that is a misinformed narrative. Think about the effective leaders that you have worked for or observed in the past. What did they do? What were their habits? How did they go about the habit of leadership? That is the narrative and experience that I want to learn from.

In This Issue

This issue of the JCLD continues our annual linkage with the National Character & Leadership Symposium (NCLS) that is held every February at the United States Air Force Academy. NCLS is a multi-day, intentional focus on character and leadership. The NCLS brings together a wide range of local, national, and international leaders around a particular theme. The theme lines up with one of USAFA's organizational outcomes. This year's theme is Valuing Human Conditions, Cultures, and Societies. In order to support that endeavor, we have intentionally aligned the JCLD with NCLS so that the Journal can serve as a read ahead on the theme of NCLS to give attendees a chance to start thinking about and processing the theme. We find this to be an intentional and important step in leader development.

The first article is by Lt Col Rouven Steves (USAF), who is the outcome team lead for this year's NCLS theme. He offers an advanced treatise on the background of the outcome of the Human Condition, Cultures, and Societies - explaining the meaning of the outcome and why it is important to

leader development. While steeped in the literature, he takes the time to go through several of the underlying principles for the outcome. Through his discussion, he covers the value of several competencies under that outcome: knowing oneself, knowing others, and constructive engagements. With this in mind, the reader can walk away with not only the necessary knowledge about this outcome and why it is important to their own development, but also how they can integrate this into their own leader and character developmental process. This article is a bit unique from other articles we publish in the JCLD in that it goes more in depth (academically and philosophically) about a topic. While an advanced approach, it shows how a topic can be described and developed through a different approach. For those looking for a more brief description of the outcome, please refer to the Appendix in the article as it describes the developmental competencies that are expected under this outcome.

With this foundation established, the subsequent articles follow the theme and cover various aspects of the competencies of knowing oneself, knowing others, and constructive engagement. While a complete discussion of these competencies is beyond the scope of a single issue of the JCLD, it is hoped that the reader will be able to start (or in many cases continue) their understanding of these competencies and how they are foundational to their development. The articles feature a broad spectrum of universities and organizations and shed light on how we can develop these capacities in ourselves and in others so that we can have enhanced and constructive engagements.

The first feature article is by Dr. Olenda Johnson from the United States Naval War College. In her article, Johnson discusses a critical leader skill related to knowing oneself: reflection. She details not only what reflection is, but also how a leader can integrate that into their own processes to more fully

understand how they are showing up to leadership situations. She outlines some work that she has done related to reflection at the mid- and senior leader levels. At the end of her article, she offers some practical recommendations and activities to help leaders foster and develop this important skill.

The next article is a conversation with Dr. Joseph Sanders (Colonel, USAF, Retired), who is the current Chief Executive Officer of Colorado Uplift. This organization is committed to building long-term, life-changing relationships with urban youth. In the conversation, he talks about his journey, his calling, and how that has impacted how he invests his time. Sanders details some critical events that happened along the way and eloquently discusses three important capacities that all leaders need to have in order to be effective: faith, hope, and love. Through sharing several personal examples and experiences, he highlights how these three capacities are critical to living out your calling.

The issue continues with an article by Stanford University Master's in International Policy student and USAF 2nd Lt Lucas Beissner, and Air Force Academy Department of Management Head, USAF Col Scott Heyler, PhD., on the value of leader humility within a military context. They begin with a discussion of leader humility and how it has been previously conceptualized. Their discussion covers several challenges to leader humility in the military but follows that to also discuss potential benefits. In an effort to highlight the applicability of humility to the military context, they highlight several historical examples before concluding their article by offering several propositions regarding the relationship between humility and character in leaders.

Drs. John Sosik and Weichun Zhu take a more macro view in that they examine the fourth industrial

revolution and the role of character. With an overview of the different industrial revolutions and the role of virtue, character and leadership, Sosik and Zhu examine character and virtue strengths that can be used to support human principles of social enterprises. The article wraps up with several recommendations offered by the authors on how to better understand character strengths and their role in current (and future) organizations.

their research, they have identified five meta-themes that address topics such as why preparation efforts fall short, the complexity in trying to prepare for such assignments and the challenges of the unique context in which their roles are enacted. They finish up their discussion with the organizational implications of their findings.

While it is certainly important to understand the individual leader when examining leadership within an organization, it is also critical to understand the climate and culture of the organization in which that leader resides. The influence of the organization can have a drastic impact on the individual leader. Drs. Paul Hanges and Jeff Lucas, University of Maryland, and Dean of Academics at the United States Air Force Academy Preparatory School, USAF Lt Col James Dobbs, PhD., discuss the interplay

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The next article is a conversation with Hans Bush (Colonel, USA, Retired) where he shares his thoughts about leadership, the role of culture, and the different experiences he has had – from Special Operations in the U.S. Army to advising in Hollywood. In the conversation, Bush discusses the importance of understanding culture, lessons for future leaders, and provides some context on how the military and the making of motion pictures are surprisingly similar in their operations.

Continuing the conversation around culture, Dr. Michael Hosie (Colonel, USA) and colleagues from the U.S. Army War College discuss a project that they conducted examining how individuals prepare for multinational staff assignments and the challenges that military members face in such assignments. Through

of culture, climate, and leadership on ethical behavior within organizations. Since culture and climate play such an important role in determining what types of behaviors are allowed within an organization, they discuss research that they have conducted over the past five years to provide recommendations to both organizations and individual leaders on how to minimize such undesirable behaviors.

Drs. Celeste Luning and Permanent Military Professor and Assistant Professor of Leadership and Ethics at the United States Naval Academy CDR Andrew Ledford, PhD., discuss work that they have done regarding the role of grit and hardiness and its impact on leading with character. They adeptly step the reader through a discussion of what we know about the constructs of grit and hardiness and then introduce

a model that shows the symbiotic relationship between them. The importance of these topics are how they relate to leader development. They wrap up their discussion by providing some very actionable steps on how leaders can develop grit and hardiness.

The final article in this issue describes a different approach to how educators can discuss the topics of war and peace and how that relates to leadership development. As related to the earlier comments in this article, there is a learning component to leadership that is necessary to prepare leaders for when they actually are in leadership roles. In this article, USAF Major Jahara Matisek and Dr. Ryan Burke, both of whom are instructors in the Academy's Department of Military and Strategic Studies, discuss such an approach, which they label the "Goldilocks Zone" and how it can be used in the classroom to prepare future leaders.

As you can tell by the broad coverage of topics in this issue of the JCLD, we are only looking at the proverbial tip of the iceberg on the theme of Valuing Human Conditions, Cultures, and Societies. It is our hope, whether you are just beginning your leadership journey or currently hold a senior level leadership position, that you use this opportunity to consider your own development and how these topics can (and in some cases already have) impacted your continued growth and effectiveness. The topics offered here are a great set up for the presentations that you will hear at this year's NCLS.

Book Reviews

In addition to the articles that are in the JCLD, our goal is to introduce the readers to other works related to character and leadership development. While there are a myriad of books that are published yearly on these topics, we try to highlight several works that are specifically related to the theme of the JCLD. In

that light, we have reviews on two books. The first is a new book titled *Call Sign Chaos: Learning to Lead* by former Secretary of Defense, Gen (Retired) James Mattis and Bing West. The second is *In Extremis Leadership: Leading as if Your Life Depended on It* by Dr. Thomas Kolditz. As you develop your professional reading list, we encourage you to consider these as they address the capacities of knowing yourself, knowing others, and how we can have constructive engagements.

Looking Ahead

There will be two more issues of the JCLD that will be published in 2020. The next issue will be published in June 2020. The theme for that issue will focus around four lines of effort that fold into the USAFA Strategic Plan. The goal is to highlight current research, ideas, and thought pieces to help inform those lines of effort. The lines of effort are that USAFA:

- Prepares warfighters for future conflicts.
- Developing leaders of character committed to service to our nation.
- Builds innovators and embodies a culture of innovation.
- Executes operations in an integrated, accountable, and agile manner.

As you read through those, you may see similarities with lines of effort at your organization. If you have scholarly work related to aspects of those lines, please consider submitting work to the JCLD. We are particularly looking for how other domains such as private industry, technology, and corporate or higher education, have approached the topics highlighted in those lines of effort.

The second issue will be published in September 2020 and will continue our focus on conversations with leaders in different domains. The JCLD uses the conversation format (instead of interviews) because

development occurs through learning, experience, conversations, and relationships. This format allows for conversations with current leaders in which they can share their personal experiences, discuss how they approach their own development, challenges and successes they have had along the way, individuals who have impacted them, what leadership and character mean to them on a day to day basis, and other related topics.

If you have an interest in submitting work on the above topics or know of someone who would be interesting to have a conversation with, please contact the Editor in Chief or jcld@usafa.edu with your ideas.