

FEATURE ARTICLE

Integrity in Leadership: Insights through a System Design Approach

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ABSTRACT

This article highlights a process of inquiry used to develop an institutional-level strategy for student leadership development at a comprehensive liberal arts college. The authors make the case for why having a leadership development strategy is of broad interest in higher education. This article offers practical insights from relevant literature and the authors' expert opinions. The article models a process for how any organization, especially those in higher education, can form an executable leader development strategy by following the example provided.

Keywords: Integrity in Leadership, Leadership & Character Development, Organizational Culture & Design, Strategy

If you wanted to reliably prepare college-aged adults to be effective leaders, how would you do it? Berry College, a small comprehensive¹ liberal arts college in northwest Georgia, offers an intriguing case to explore an answer. While the context at Berry is surely unique, our approach may prove valuable to others vested with the responsibility to promote character and leadership development, especially in higher education contexts. The contribution of this article is to provide an example that encourages organizations to think comprehensively about leadership development and to take action that brings about the desired results.

¹ Berry is different from a traditional liberal arts college in that it offers professional and pre-professional programs that are not commonly found at other liberal arts colleges.

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Across its 120-year history, Berry College operates on the idea of exchange: Berry helps students plan for personal and academic success, provides hands-on experiences, and surrounds students with mentors. In return, Berry asks students to make a difference in their communities and the world. Early in Berry's history, students practiced skilled trades such as manufacturing bricks and constructing campus buildings, improving the campus while learning through marketable experiences. Today, Berry's purpose is enacted through a shared commitment to produce outcomes that are perhaps less tangible, yet equally essential to our graduates' success. Developing individual and collective leadership capabilities are key themes that connect many of the important conversations taking place on our campus. While leadership development is a complex phenomenon, its importance as a marker of graduate readiness for the workforce has long been an aim at Berry.

At the dawn of the 20th century, President Theodore Roosevelt described Berry as one of the greatest works of the time for American citizenship (Kane & Henry, 1956). We undertake a focused interest in leadership development to refresh our approach and revitalize our commitment to fulfilling this accolade. What does success look like? Fundamentally, the answer involves preparing graduates who practice disciplined ways of thinking and patterns of behavior that promote well-being for themselves and others, encourage engagement, and contribute to performance. Our aspirational ideal is based on the assertion that Berry is stronger when character and leadership development principles, values, and norms are widely held, respectfully practiced, and kindly reinforced.

While Berry's enduring culture is fertile ground for developing character and leadership, we recognize that leadership development cannot be left to time or chance. In both social and economic terms, current events the world over reveal the pressing need every community has for effective leaders. Our graduates join communities and workplaces in desperate want of effective lead-

ers. A recent survey reveals that 89% of college graduates are hired by employers who expect them to lead (Zapier, 2019). Where wisdom obliges us to extol character and leadership development because we believe it is the right thing to do, prudence suggests we must also act to fulfill the community's needs. The contribution of this article is to document our efforts to develop a strategy to serve as highly effective stewards of the young citizens placed in our charge, fully preparing them to lead wherever the world takes them.

The Berry Center for Integrity in Leadership

The Berry Center for Integrity in Leadership is a relatively recent addition to Berry College. The vision for the center was inspired and sponsored by the efforts of Cecil "Buster" Wright III, an alumnus and current member of the Board of Trustees. Wright witnessed the effects of character and leadership deficiencies in various professional settings over his career and was inspired to act. Under his faithful stewardship, he envisioned and established early partnerships that resulted in the creation of the center and its first initiatives. The Carper Mentoring Program has operated continuously for the last 10 years. The program provides students the opportunity to build developmental mentoring relationships with professionals who inspire and encourage learning, promote student ownership and pursuit of developmental aspirations, and serve as positive role models. The center's efforts also include a lecture series that invites the community to explore diverse perspectives offered by a variety of thought leaders. Our guests over the years include Makoto and Haejin Fujimura, Dr. Barbara Kellerman, Dr. Ibram X. Kendi, and an impressive representation of contemporary leaders. These leaders have consistently brought ideas and challenges about leading others to light in unique ways. In addition, the center has experimented with other leadership efforts including the Collegiate Leadership Competition, student-led leadership initiatives, and academic courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Today, the center is building upon these preliminary successes by working on a vision where character and leadership development is a means toward and an objective of Berry's purpose and mission. We began this effort by confronting the somber reality that most leadership development efforts involve the expenditure of resources without bringing about the desired effects (Kaiser & Curphy, 2013; Pfeffer, 2015; Reimer et al., 2021). In part, we think part of the problem is that leadership interventions, no matter how well intended, fail to achieve outcomes when they are mismatched to the environments in which they function and for the people that they serve. Until there is a clear, unifying plan for leadership development, it is quite difficult to take stock of what is needed and what can be achieved.

Given such a plan, we humbly admit that success is anything but guaranteed. Leadership development involves leadership. As a dynamic process, the leader, followers, and the situation all get votes, and these votes are not equally or consistently weighted positively toward intended outcomes. In some circumstances, even optimal conditions in one area can be insufficient to overcome the limitations of another. Put simply, even the very best leaders face failure, especially when leading change.

A rain-soaked Martha Berry faced just such a leadership challenge when she asked a local congregation to fix the leaky roof of their small country church. As the story goes, a well-meaning parishioner (who was surely aware of the personal cost and time involved in fixing the roof) correctly observed no action was needed because it might not rain the following Sunday. The allure of his solution is that it is both plausible and authentic. Martha Berry persisted and arranged a solution because she correctly understood that inaction cost considerably more than an occasionally damp service. Sure, there are always good reasons to maintain the status quo and dismiss the rainy days because they are beyond our control. The response to rainy days, however, is fully our responsibility.

A former college administrator aptly observed that the center's periodic leadership development efforts and limited capacity programming fell short of providing developmental opportunities for the full community of our students. We aim to remove barriers so that any community member can benefit from our efforts. We considered the effects of expanding offerings to reach more students and how developmental effectiveness can depend on offering a range of experiences (e.g., Davis & Maldonado, 2015; Fenwick & Haigh, 2004; Selzer et al., 2017; Van Wart, 2012). In key instances, researchers conclude that programs tailored for diverse students produce the best returns. Each effort, however, (e.g., creating courses, planning seminars or workshops, providing personality assessments, or arranging for external experts to contribute diverse perspectives) requires considerable resources. We wrestled with the idea of how many individually tailored programs would be enough. The problem gets further out of hand when we started to consider the demand for follow-up efforts to each tailored offering. We loved the idea of offering something for everyone, but quickly reached the point where reality loomed. Left unchecked, scheduling and resource constraints could conceivably cause our efforts to completely miss our goals.

Implementing a Systems Approach

A systems approach provides a means to achieving similitude between desired and achieved results. Admittedly, we discovered this approach as we reflected on our progress in the last year. This retrospective review was taken in keeping with the leadership principle of learning from our leadership experiences (Ashford & DeRue, 2012). We believe our journey was effective, but perhaps not as smooth as it might have been. When we started to see the patterns of our efforts, we were able to identify, organize, and derive greater meaning from our efforts. Two lessons learned stood out. First, organizing efforts according to a systems approach offers an orderly approach to inquiry, design, implementation, and revision. Second, a systems approach encourages intentional accounting

for how intermediate results contribute to a specific end. Considering the effects of leadership development in terms of dynamic skills and abstractions (Day & Dragoni, 2015), it is necessary to account for how experiences interact and accrue over time (Tesluk & Jacobs, 1998). After all, the direct result of any single intervention in a larger developmental experience is not leadership. For example, consider a leadership intervention focused on a topic such as empathy. Participants may demonstrate measurable differences in knowledge, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral action. Nonetheless, empathy is not leadership. Rather, empathy is rightly understood in the context of a greater suite of leadership behaviors that serve as explanations for ways to improve bonds between people and advance performance (Kellett et al., 2006). This example illustrates the need to connect each element to the broader system.

We also discovered that just about any undergraduate program can claim it develops leaders. It is readily observable that degree-granting institutions universally challenge students to learn, practice, and refine diverse skills that are fundamental to leadership including communication, persuasion, teamwork, adaptability, and self-discovery. Effective leaders, however, must practice behaviors that are relevant to achieving results and performance (Campbell et al., 1993). The center contends that isolated competencies are insufficient to produce effective leaders unless they are integrated. In their comprehensive outcome-oriented review of leadership development, Day and Dragoni (2015) conclude that individual experiences and interventions bring about developmental indicators that when combined with support produce individual leadership outcomes. Simply stated, developing disaggregated skills does not make someone a leader. Leadership development is a complementary process of growth that embraces the interplay of what leaders know, value, and can do.

We are committed to outcomes that result from the integrated effects of the inputs we make to the system,

intermediate effects, and eventual outcomes. Here, we offer a summary of key principles we observed in reflection of our design effort based on a general application of systems engineering design practices (e.g., INCOSE, n.d.). In our efforts to serve as a community-wide catalyst to achieve Berry College's purpose and mission, we describe our process in a manner that any organization, especially those in higher education, should find relevant and practical to informing their developmental efforts.

Inquiry

The main thrust of our efforts started with a question that challenged us to think about the end we wanted to achieve. We began with the broad question, "How can we best produce individual and collective leadership capabilities through experiences and interventions on our campus?" We quickly discovered the need to define what we mean by individual and collective leadership capabilities.

Simple, but accurate definitions improve our ability to communicate what we are after, without prematurely biasing the emerging design to align with a particular leadership theory or model. We define character as practicing helpful ways of principled thinking. Our definition broadly incorporates concepts such as attitudes, motives, and values that represent learned patterns of thought. Leadership is character's directly observable companion and is defined as learned patterns of effective, influential behavior. Character and leadership fulfill complementary roles and explain how to unite groups of people (e.g., teams, organizations, and communities) and promote prosperity (e.g., achieving positive social and economic change). Defined in this manner, deficiencies in one quality confine what can be achieved with the other. Furthermore, we crafted our definitions to reflect the fundamental qualities of a liberal arts education. The center's efforts must contribute to the day-to-day efforts of learning that are essential for citizenship.

Our inquiry also helped us to understand that the idea of integrity in leadership was not widely understood on campus. Building on Berry's culture, we defined integrity in leadership as the whole person, lifelong process to form and master the head, heart, and hands to work in mutually reinforcing ways that inspire emulation and generate collaborative excellence (Berry Center for Integrity in Leadership, 2023). Defining integrity in leadership enhances our ability to communicate key ideas that explain the conditions of leading, learning to lead, and learning to be a leader.

The process of conceptual exploration involved careful consideration of goals to serve the college, its faculty and staff, current students, and future graduates. Character and leadership development is envisioned as an enhancement to ongoing activities that already reach every student. Berry offers students more than 75 areas of academic study and encourages students to explore career possibilities in over 180 work centers. With so many demands upon students' time and talents, students could easily become consumed by their interests and experience divides. Berry mitigates this risk by assigning every first-year student a peer and faculty mentor. As students complete four-year degrees, mentors guide students and promote student learning. Berry's mentor community inspires student action and contributes to the creation, exploration, and pursuit of consequential personal and professional goals.

In particular, the mentor community helps students derive meaning from key experiences. Through Berry's student work program students explore and build expertise. Real work on campus provides a meaningful context where students learn to function as teams, negotiate how to structure work and practice supportive norms and processes, and make consequential decisions. Berry is also responsive to emerging social needs. The Good Neighbor Challenge operationalizes a culture of belonging and equips community members to improve relationships across campus (Berry College, n.d.). Bring-

ing students together with mentors, in work centers, and through community initiatives all represent efforts to promote subgroup membership. Researchers have observed that such efforts can reduce the salience faultlines that would otherwise make heterogeneity more noticeable (Rico et al., 2012; Bezrukova et al., 2016). At Berry, students discover common interests with diverse peers in the pursuit of shared goals.

Our inquiry also involved identifying extant conditions (e.g., resources, talent, values, norms, and buy-in). Consideration of extant conditions involved taking stock of active influence processes that operate at multiple levels and through diverse domains (e.g., Mathieu et al., 2019; Yukl, 2013). The center identified three dimensions that operate as prevailing contextual influences at Berry. These dimensions include organizational culture, the contributions of community members (e.g., faculty and staff, alumni, benefactors, and the local community), and the experiences of our customers (i.e., our students). By seeking to understand each of these key influence processes, we seek to produce efforts in accord with Berry's culture to improve the likelihood of broad adoption and eventual effectiveness of our efforts.

Culture. Organizational culture plays an important role in any organization's performance. As observed by Schein and Schein (2017), embedded socialization processes dominate organizational behavior and inform who we are as members of these organizations. Every member of the community plays a central role in defining how values are carried out. What Berry's community values and how it implements these values are consequential to what the center can achieve.

Berry's motto, "Not to be ministered unto, but to minister" is unquestionably one of Berry's most established socialized values. Ancillary values that are widely evident at Berry include a deep respect for the whole person, lifelong learning, and making a difference (i.e., practicing leadership). Berry's values are clearly and

consistently evident in processes including the exchange between the college and student, the purpose of paid professional development experiences for students, the reason for Berry's emphasis on mentoring, and how the world's largest college campus serves as an inspirational learning environment. The motto reflects how community members should and do act. Of note, Berry's formal leaders hold responsibility and authority but tend to lead with influence and through culture. In an environment like this, it can be difficult to distinguish leadership and culture as they drift together and substitutes for leadership form (Hartnell et al., 2016). Berry operates as a community where members primarily pursue common interests, values, and goals through relationships. Serving others is a dominant motivating factor that attracts faculty and staff to the campus, informs how organizational members approach work, and is of keen interest to the present effort.

Community. While cultural messages and norms inform and guide community members about the right way to approach work, culture is not the only source of influence. Action also results from individually held attitudes, motives, and values. As posited by Kohlberg and Candee (1984), people make judgments of responsibility before they initiate action. The implication is that the center's approach to leadership development must also account for how leadership development fits with the intrinsic qualities of the people who comprise our community.

A key quality observed in how Berry's faculty and staff get work done suggests that the community relies on processes of empowerment. Empowerment emerges from the formal roles and responsibilities people hold, the characteristics of community members, and the ways that leaders initiate and achieve goals (Maynard et al., 2012). Students experience varying degrees of autonomy and responsibility for other students and assigned work. This appears to be especially true for upper-class students who are more likely to hold formal administra-

tive and leadership roles. Empowerment has significant effects on performance and learning behavior (Seibert et al., 2004) and these effects are strongest in the presence of interdependence (Hülsheger et al., 2009; Van der Vegt & Ven der Vliert, 2002). Our presumptions about the role of empowerment suggest it will be important to assess how empowerment functions as an explanatory condition of our efforts.

While most of our faculty and staff are unlikely to immediately endorse the idea that they are leader developers, organizational members demonstrate that they have a grasp of the power of purpose. Purpose involves helping students find meaning in routine activities by reinforcing behavioral ideals, providing developmental feedback, and generally promoting leadership development (Reimer et al., 2021). Faculty and staff are central to helping students discover the meaning of experiences. Subjects such as moral action, personal responsibility, leader identity, and leadership efficacy are highly relevant to establishing meaning (Bandura, 1986; Hannah & Avolio, 2010; Hiller, 2005; Kiker, 2021). As observed by Larsen (2019), an effective leader developer "has a disposition toward developing others as leaders, embracing the challenge of the messiness of development, while being humble and teachable" (p. 145). The center has a pivotal role to develop the leader developers but must do so in a manner that reflects and values the incredible efforts that occur daily on our campus. Efforts that enhance how community members approach individual contributions to student development appear key.

Customers. Berry's legacy depends on a thriving process of engagement that produces citizen leaders who are inclined to be and do good. Students learn character and leadership by observing, inquiring, and practicing the examples set by community members. Across successive generations, Berry students emerge as valued citizens who demonstrate mastery of essential knowledge, skills, experiences, and values.

Students' definitions and assumptions about leadership provide insights into how to best support the discovery and pursuit of developmental needs. Many students appear to have misgivings or simply fail to understand what leadership is. Students form perspectives from a variety of sources about who leaders are and how they should act. In addition, students tend to possess simplistic schemas that limit their perceived need to develop. For example, when asked to reflect on leadership experiences and how they could have led differently, students regularly suggest that exercising power and authority are the only alternatives. Emphasizing positive alternatives can expand student capacity to lead through the discovery of new attitudes, values, motives, and behaviors. Opportunities to intentionally practice leadership development across a range of activities appear as an effective means to energize the community and bring about the intended results (Scisco et al., 2017).

Course feedback from Berry during the Spring of 2023 revealed that students report learning more when they are challenged and receive proportional support as they explore new perspectives and make personal discoveries about their values, knowledge, and skills. Course feedback from one of the author's prior experiences offered a warning about what not to do. Students can easily misconstrue leadership as a cold and loathsome subject when we allow it to become disconnected from the experience. There is clear value in approaching leadership as a scholarly discipline that informs observation and analysis of what it is and how it works (e.g., Rosch & Anthony, 2012; Samuels et al., 2013). Regardless, the scholarly pursuit of leadership must be relevant and connected to a student's current state and future aspirations. Discernment about when and how to introduce new ideas appears to be important and nuanced.

Design

The value of an education at Berry College has always been one that emphasizes the education of the head, heart, and hands in an experience-rich environment

(Briggs, 2014). Accordingly, any approach to leadership development must be highly relatable, memorable, and practically relevant. Our design processes flowed from the process of inquiry toward desired outcomes. The nature of experiential learning through paid work on campus and mentoring culture at Berry indicated priority opportunities for our efforts. The present effort is focused on delivering a high level of design where we identify how to best leverage Berry's existing culture and structures. The goal at this stage is to improve, encourage, and support leadership development (Allen, 2008; Reimer et al., 2021) that illuminates future efforts that advance our purpose.

Successful leadership development at Berry College involves establishing developmental practices that can reach any student regularly. Two features of Berry's experience caught our attention. First, more than 90% of our students take advantage of paid professional development during their time as a student. Depending on several factors, students can work between 10 and 16 hours per week during the school year and up to 40 hours per week during the summer. Student work appears as a critical process where developmental efforts can take root and produce benefits for individual students, work teams, and the college. Second, Berry has a culture of mentoring. Every incoming freshman is assigned a mentor and Berry's norms and values encourage students to seek out additional mentors to learn more from their experiences. Seeking new mentors serves several roles. Data collected by the center suggests that students seek different types of mentors. Students appear more likely to seek mentors who will help plan and support career progression. Be that as it may, students also express interest in exploring relationships with mentors who can help them navigate personal challenges and serve as positive role models. Considering the reasons students are looking for a mentor informs practices that can enhance the effectiveness of mentoring relationships (Rose, 2003). Because supervisors have considerable opportunity to observe students through routine work and mentors are actively sought

out by students, investing in faculty and staff who serve in these capacities emerged as an implementation priority.

Credible and engaging experiences should spark curiosity, encourage perspective-taking, and entice action. An integrated education of the head, heart, and hands reflects the idea that education involves a lot more than simply acquiring knowledge or skills. Integrity in leadership requires developing the whole person. The resulting design spurred detailed discussions about the role of the head, heart, and hands in a leadership development context. The “head” addresses questions concerning what we know and need to learn. This comprehension-oriented element of the emerging framework represents a commitment to the lifelong, intellectual pursuit of knowledge that informs, creates, and expands our individual and collective potential. The “heart” addresses questions concerning who we are and aspire to become. This value-oriented element involves the continuous formation and refinement of attitudes, motives, and values that concern what is important, right, and noble, which drives us to pursue change in ourselves and to lift others. Lifting others includes relational activities that serve to inspire and maximize the personal and professional potential of others (Johnson et al., 2022). “Hands” addresses questions related to how we relate to others and our environment. Hands involves mastering skills and abilities that bring people together to combine their efforts and produce shared value. Our expressed values and behavioral actions should serve as a source of inspiration to others. Integrity in leadership gives a name to Berry’s distinctive approach to preparing students to make meaningful contributions by helping the community remember the essence of what leadership is for Berry and providing a common language and set of practices that encourage and reinforce learning across campus experiences.

Implementation

Our process of inquiry began with the identification and investigation of three prevailing influence processes. Upon examination, we discovered important qualities,

characteristics, and issues that informed our goals and objectives. Exploring Berry’s culture revealed new insights about Berry’s formal philosophy and espoused values. The role of Berry’s community indicated the need to encourage efforts related to habits of thinking and action that promote their roles as leader developers. Finally, inviting students to share in the rich cultural context of the school and its community is essential to breathing life into character and leadership lessons.

The Berry community values relationships and everyday interactions because they are both plentiful and meaningful. Rather than vying for that perfect moment to bring some leadership or character principle into focus, the center needs to raise awareness of the opportunities inherent in daily life. Berry’s relationship with students builds upon intellectual exploration and practical experiences in conjunction with strong support, engagement, and empowerment that further reinforce leader development in day-to-day conditions. The members of Berry’s community, regardless of differences in stature or position, require support so that they can continuously share, model, and teach value-centered ideals to students. The community’s values are deeply ingrained, regularly communicated, and exemplified through consistent and resolute practice.

We are now applying the systems design approach to implement our first major initiative by building upon Berry’s long-standing tradition of an education of the head, heart, and hands. The center is exploring and designing a coaching intervention. We arrived at coaching after a considerable investment in the systems design approach. Reflecting on our discoveries and observations, coaching skills promise to enhance communication, improve engagement around our objectives, and support a feedback-rich culture that leads to improved discovery and awareness of how each member of the community is valued and can grow.

To understand the effects of this effort, as part of the next design process we are planning assessment efforts

that will support the revision process. We are focusing on key, measurable variables that are foundational to leadership practice (Scisco et al., 2017). These variables include self-awareness (using reflection, feedback, and assessment to improve the accuracy of personal insights that inform and support development), learning agility (applying lessons from diverse experiences to find better solutions to new challenges), communication (building interpersonal relationships through the exchange of ideas, active listening, establishing rapport, and clarifying objectives), and influence (building cooperation and commitment by shaping attitudes, values, motives, and behavior to develop and implement effective change). Initially, we plan to implement assessment at the individual level. Using lessons learned from this process, we plan to expand assessment efforts to understand how these individual-level competencies work at the team level to better understand higher-order effects. The emerging coaching initiative resulted from considerable investment and planning based on qualities inherent to our organization.

Revision

We started with the assumption that despite our best efforts, we will not get everything right. Throughout the process of inquiry, design, and implementation, one element that revision involves is actively encouraging and inviting feedback to enhance and learn from our efforts. In part, this involves seeking to understand diverse perspectives and working to achieve shared solutions. We expect to encounter difficult challenges and diverse points of view through this process.

As important as the perspectives of others are to success, we cannot rely on the input of others alone to establish accountability. Accountability in terms of ongoing monitoring and assessment provides the means to recognize sound investments, indicates the timing and nature of adjustments, and informs the need to eliminate those things that prevent success. Accountability must be tailored to the organization, involves

clearly and consistently communicating values and aspirations, and entails transparency.

The progress achieved in the past year reflects hours of conversations with campus partners, answering questions, accepting critique, and revising our own developing understanding of what we aimed to achieve. In a sense, this article is an artifact of that effort through which we invite dialogue and shared learning.

Conclusion

The center's vision is to become a community asset for character and leadership development so that Berry graduates are known as citizens who possess integrity in leadership as evidenced by their capacity to bring people together to inspire and achieve collective success. Our second aspiration is for faculty and staff to be known for exemplifying integrity in leadership by developing and inspiring students who make significant contributions to the communities in which they live, work, and serve. Achieving our overarching vision involves community-wide development that operates on Berry's enduring principles and values. When we started our inquiry, the center already offered a host of programs and initiatives to students. Rather than growing our programming, we invested in an intentional process to better communicate the center's intent and what we want to achieve. Being busy, by artlessly providing students with one leadership experience after another, creates a challenge of abundance that is hardly a great way to substantiate success.

Leadership development results from purposeful efforts that serve individual and collective needs while advancing an organization's purpose. First, the center will serve as a community-wide catalyst to achieve Berry's purpose and mission through innovative and adaptive character and leadership solutions. Second, the center will empower and equip the Berry community with growth-oriented, learner-focused, evidence-based engagements that advance character and leadership development. Third, the center provides, shapes, and

refines character and leadership development solutions that are self-reinforcing, scalable, and sustainable. These statements posture the center to share our vision and invite partnerships, establish priorities, and steward resources as we move forward.

Achieving our vision depends on our continued success in inviting current and prospective students, faculty, and staff to share our values and aspirations for developing leaders. The idea that “the people make the place,” (Schneider, 1987, p. 437) is central to our approach. Our people determine the behavior, look, and feel of experiences at Berry College and ultimately shoulder the responsibility to prepare Berry students to be accountable, humbly confident, and steadfast leaders of character. The center’s role is to influence objectives and strategies, motivate the community, coordinate efforts, and promote shared values and practice. Character is cultivated and formed through strong relationships, everyday habits, instruction, and inspirational environments (Snyder, 2019). Character and leadership formation is not simply an ideal but is a tangible and viable solution to overcoming challenges that our students face now and into the future.

Leadership development is essential to being competitive and successful in all manners of organizations and communities. Developing individuals into leaders requires every member of the community to share in the responsibility of providing requisite knowledge, skills, and values. Introducing and sharing these qualities must be done in ways that respect theories of organizational culture, leadership development, and the needs of the learner. Our journey and approach are rooted in our campus culture and community while illustrating that any organization can engage in leadership development in a manner fitting with its history, culture, and context. We have endeavored to model principles and ideals that we believe are worthy of inquiry and pursuit in the readers’ organizations.

Thus, our emerging approach to leadership development through daily life at Berry represents a significant shift in the center’s traditional role. Rather than simply

planning and hosting programs and events, the center’s investments must serve to inspire and empower Berry’s citizens to consistently embody highly valued and widely applicable leadership knowledge, skills, attitudes, and motives that meet institutional priorities and bear evidence of individual and collective growth.

Berry’s culture strongly represents values and norms that are immediately conducive to our efforts. Nonetheless, we cannot take Berry’s culture for granted. Sustaining the beliefs, values, and practices that underlie Berry’s reputation requires ongoing investment, renewal, and refreshment. The center’s efforts embrace the responsibility to cultivate character and leadership development. The integrity in leadership framework offers an appeal to the Berry community to pursue leadership development as a whole-person, lifelong process that transcends academic disciplines, increases access to development across campus experiences, and celebrates individual differences and expressions of leadership. Our founder Martha Berry established the values and practices that created our culture. Our future depends on committing to this exciting contribution that starts us on the right foot and guides us in the journey.

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