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Research Reporter

Leadership above the Line: A Character-Based Leadership Tool That Leads to Success for You and Your Team by Sarah Sumner, Ph.D.

Sarah Sumner, Ph.D., Professor of Graduate Theology and Ethics, provides a clear, motivating guide to ethical leadership in her *Leadership above the Line: A Character-Based Leadership Tool That Leads to Success for You and Your Team* (Tyndale House, 2006). Her thesis is that “good character is the key to good leadership.” The heart of her book is a story featuring John Mark, the vice president of sales; his wife Cynthia, a nurse; Lisa, his mentoree; Max, the CEO and president of the company; and Nathan, the company’s executive vice president. This cast of players moves above and below the ethical “line” until a resolution to their company’s in-house politics is finally arrived at. In this fictitious scenario Dr. Sumner reveals the nasty power plays and the superficial camaraderie that can occur in an organization dedicated to serving well its clientele. The story builds in suspense as the reader wonders if truth will prevail or “spin” will conquer, the company ultimately not having room for the proponents of each.

Preceding and following this narrative are theoretical explanations of “The People Model”, a chart which designates the strengths and weaknesses of three types of leaders: Strategists, who value authenticity, clarity, and integrity; Humanitarians, who prioritize compassion, supporting others, and community; and Diplomats who desire peace, impressive appearances, and unity. All are needed for a successful enterprise. However, when they slip “below the line”, their negative attributes can cause deceit, pain, and eventually chaos in the community.

Strategists can criticize pridefully; Humanitarians can skew their moral compasses by becoming too people pleasing, and Diplomats can “spin” the truth into lies for the sake of presenting a positive image to outsiders. Dr. Sumner prescribes a strong dose of humility for the Strategists, courage for the Humanitarians, and honesty for the Diplomats. Her concluding section is “The People Model Workbook” which will assist readers in character development.

Her text reminds readers that all are created in the image of God: “God cares about authenticity because God himself is truth. He cares about people’s feelings because He is compassionate and good. He cares about harmony and order (the very elements that makes things impressive) because he is a God of beauty. Heaven and earth alike attest to that.”—Carole Lambert

DR. SARAH SUMNER

LEADERSHIP ABOVE

THE LINE

A CHARACTER-BASED LEADERSHIP TOOL
THAT LEADS TO SUCCESS FOR YOU
AND YOUR TEAM

1
"Leadership above
the Line"
by
Sarah Sumner, Ph.D.

2
"More Employers,
More Jobs, More Money:
An Empirical Analysis of
Local Economic Develop-
ment Policy Impacts in
U.S. Cities"
by
Stuart Strother, Ph.D.

3
"External Agent
Support to K-12 Schools"
by Susan Warren, Ph.D.

4
"Undergraduate Tamara
Moellenberg presents
at NSPC"
by Kevin Huang, Ph.D.

“More Employers, More Jobs, More Money: An Empirical Analysis of Local Economic Development Policy Impacts in U.S. Cities”
by **Stuart Strother, Ph.D.**



Stuart Strother, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Business and Management, further expands the scholarship in economic development and growth by providing a comprehensive statistical analysis focusing on how local economic development policy affects cities within the United States. Due to the scarcity of research in determining the effectiveness of economic policies, Dr. Strother seeks to ascertain “to what extent can government influence markets?” His hypothesis is “the level of public sector economic development activity in the U.S. cities is positively correlated with local economic growth.” A review of the relevant literature in the field reveals that the correlation between government economic development and economic growth is minimal. Dr. Strother is able to contribute to the literature with his study in three ways: the use of a large dataset in the study, the concentration in the number of firms, jobs, and incomes as economic growth, and comparing whether firms or individuals benefit more from economic development policies. The data for the study consists of 412 U.S. cities with populations over 25,000. The dependent variables are measures of economic growth related to firms, the labor force, and income. The independent variables measure economic development policy, business attraction and retention, business development, and equity planning. Control variables are also included in the study to represent the various factors that affect city economies. Descriptive

statistics are provided for all variables (minimum, maximum, mean, standard deviation). Dr. Strother utilizes Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analysis to determine the statistical significance of local government economic development policies, as well as to determine a positive correlation with economic growth in U.S. cities. He runs three different regression tests: firm growth model, job growth model, and income growth model. Although each model tested a specific hypothesis of economic development and its effects on the growth and expansion of firms, jobs, and personal and corporate income, all three of the regression models found that “economic development policy had no substantial impact on the income growth of either individuals or firms.” Even though these empirical results ran contrary to the desired outcome, the study still provides useful application to “real-life” local economic development policy decisions. It was found that business development techniques were positively correlated with overall job growth and the investment in human capital (a high school education) showed a positive correlation to economic growth. This fine piece of scholarship can be found in “More Employers, More Jobs, More Money: An Empirical Analysis of Local Economic Development Policy Impacts in U.S. Cities” (*Panoeconomicus*, 4, 2007: 445-467).—Abbylin Sellers



“External Agent Support to K-12 Schools: Principals’ Perceptions on Educational Change”

by Susan Warren, Ph.D.

Susan Warren, Ph.D., Professor of Advanced Studies, and Beth Higbee, Ph.D., in “External Agent Support to K-12 Schools: Principals’ Perceptions on Educational Change” (*Journal of Urban Learning, Teaching, and Research*, 3 (2007), 49-64), shows the great need for principals to be both carefully listened to and coached by external agents assisting them in improving the education children receive in their schools. *The No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) act of 2002 requires contracting these external agents, and Dr. Warren’s year-long study of two such agents providing support in four large, urban school districts reveals how nine K-12 principals perceive these sources of support. She wisely notes, “a mandate for change is far from sufficient to ensure achievement of one’s purpose. Many educational reforms are designed by experts outside the schools and have failed because those in charge of the efforts had little or a distorted understanding of the culture of the schools. Successful implementers understand the structure of the organization, sacred traditions, power relationships, and how members define themselves and their roles.”



Dr. Warren found that some of these principals “customized” the programs presented to them by the external agents with good results, but they were then not invited to collaborate with them “in planning the next steps, changing plans, and identifying new and unexpected resources.” Other principals were unsure how much authority they really had to both “customize” and “plan.” All, however, wanted “a mentor or a coach—someone to, at the very least, serve as a ‘sounding board’.”

Since principals are key to advancing the educational goals of their students, Dr. Warren concludes that the external agents and the district administrators “must work to ensure that these needs of the principal are fully met.” Her brief, clear article sprinkled with significant quotes from the principals supports well this conclusion.—Carole Lambert



**AZUSA PACIFIC
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“Be still and know

that I Am God.”

Psalm 46:10

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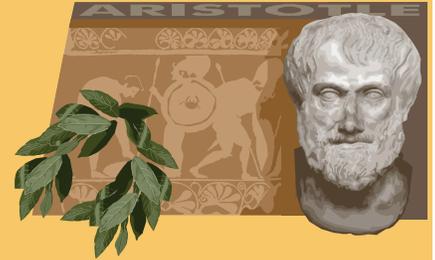
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Office of Research Mission Statement:

Our purpose is to assist faculty and doctoral students with their research and dissemination endeavors and to promote an academic climate that celebrates and strengthens the Azusa Pacific University community of Christian scholars and researchers.

Undergrad Tamara Moellenberg presents at NSPC



The Office of Undergraduate Research is always excited to see APU undergraduates presenting their work at conferences. But we are thrilled when they are invited to do so. Tamara Moellenberg, a junior philosophy major and president of the Sigma Tau Delta Honors Society, was invited last month to present her paper at the Northwest Student Philosophy Conference (NSPC). Under the guidance of Professor John Culp (Division of Religion and Philosophy), Tamara explores the works of Richard Rorty and John Dewey.

“My paper mainly consisted of a critical reading of Richard Rorty's reading of John Dewey. So, on the one hand, it served Deweyan scholarship by defending Dewey against a critique of Rorty's, but then it was also a critique of Rorty's attempt to adopt certain elements of Dewey's thought (namely, his theories on social hope and progress) that, really, it is inconsistent of Rorty to adopt given his neo-pragmatist perspective on knowledge. The larger implication of my paper, then, is that Rorty's neo-pragmatism is more distant from earlier American pragmatism, at least on theories of social hope, than Rorty claims it to be. What the larger significance of my paper might be is thus likely very different than, say, certain scientific findings. Nevertheless, it addresses a possible point of interest within studies of the history of philosophy.”

Like many conferences, NSPC provided Tamara numerous opportunities and rich resources for many interactions with students and faculty from other institutions.

NSPC proved particularly valuable in its immersion in a philosophy department with a significantly different approach and atmosphere than here at APU, as well as in providing exposure to a variety of philosophic topics I would not have been likely to otherwise encounter.... There is thus no doubt that NSPC provided me with a challenging and immensely beneficial academic experience, but it also proved personally valuable for me as well. For one thing, I represented the only distinctly Christian voice present among the students, although I discovered many of the WWU philosophy faculty are professing Christians, and it was exciting to me to learn about their other perspectives on religion while providing a Christian perspective where it may otherwise have gone absent.”—Kevin Huang, Ph.D.



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