

THE PPD SERIES: AN INTEGRATED LEADERSHIP AND ADVISING CURRICULUM

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ABSTRACT

Leadership and emotional intelligence are essential competencies in business leaders. The concept of emotional intelligence was brought to the forefront of leadership building by Daniel Goleman in his book, *Emotional Intelligence* (1995). At Wilkes University, the Personal and Professional Development Series (PPD) was developed to address the dual concerns of personal and professional leadership development for students in the Jay S. Sidhu School of Business and Leadership. Concepts in emotional intelligence and leadership are the foundations of this integrated advisement and leadership program. Using the guidance of Daniel Goleman (1995, 1998, 2002, 2003), Jay Sidhu (1994), and Tucker, Sojka, Barone, and McCarthy (2000), the PPD Series was organized to deal with student change readiness through the components of assessment/feedback, content/context, and modeling/coaching. The PPD Series incorporates conceptual and experiential learning and helps students to develop their own approach to life planning. Plans are being developed for program evaluation and longitudinal assessment of student personal and professional development throughout the program and beyond.

INTRODUCTION

Collegiate business programs at the undergraduate level prepare students for entry level contribution in both profit and nonprofit industries, in entrepreneurial ventures, and for graduate study in several fields. What is this contribution? Many business programs are defining this contribution as various aspects of leadership development especially leadership in identifying opportunities, motivating stakeholders, effective decision-making, ethical behavior, sustainability, and accountability.

The global business community is certainly changing and in need of agile and effective leaders. For example, David Murphy, Vice President of Human Resources at Ford Motor Company, views “grassroots leadership as the best vehicle for creating a nimbler business”. According to Mr. Murphy, Ford needs ‘people at all levels who will take risks, who are prepared to coach and to counsel, and who can make decisions’ (Hammonds, 2000, 138). When describing the necessary traits of leaders in the international environment, Sir John Whitmore, the noted UK business consultant and author, cited emotional intelligence, inspiration, agility, self-knowledge, and a mind open to knowledge (Jayne, 2005).

THE SIDHU SCHOOL PROGRAM

At the Jay S. Sidhu School of Business and Leadership at Wilkes University we are developing learners who have the necessary content and

competencies to begin the journey to leadership in business. Our program “combines a strong core business education with the development of skills for authentic leadership and ethical business practices” (Wilkes University Undergraduate Bulletin, 2006).

The Sidhu School faculty designed a program to enhance the development and nurturance of emotional intelligence and leadership in our undergraduate students. Specifically, we designed an integrated curriculum that encourages student self-development through three interconnected components: academic business foundations, career preparation, and leadership development” (Wilkes University Undergraduate Bulletin, 2006). The connecting thread is the Personal and Professional Development Series (PPD). The PPD was designed to achieve the following goals:

1. An engaging and effective advising process, and
2. A learning adventure that combines cognitive, affective, and behavioral experiences to help our students achieve their goals.

Since these two goals are dynamically interrelated, our approach is also interrelated -- as an integrated advising/curriculum approach.

Each semester, Sidhu students take a one-credit PPD course. The course activities will allow time for self-assessment, interpretation, and development of sensitivities and competencies in leadership, teamwork, and emotional intelligence. The first year is focused on learning about oneself and preparation for development; the second year

adds a career focus in addition to leadership, team, and emotional competencies; the third year continues career preparation and skill development; and the final year looks toward graduation and life-long growth and development. The PPD Series includes self-assessment and interpretation, learning/action plans, learning portfolios, service learning, guest speakers, career preparation activities, and mentoring/coaching by alumni and of peers.

Our advising is a process designed to assist students in the development of their human potential. Advising is integrated with the PPD Series timeline. In Year 1, the first year advisors and freshman course business faculty are the primary advising team. As the students are further socialized in the professional program, their advising team evolves into a campus community support network. The advising goals are student success in their academic and professional preparation program, and development of self as a life-long learner.

Philosophy

According to the Vision Statement for the Undergraduate Program in the Jay Sidhu School of Business and Leadership at Wilkes University our learning-centered, entrepreneurial environment will "nurture the development of independent, self-initiating professionals" (Vision 2003). The promotion of emotional intelligence and authentic leadership are an integral part of the newly developed curriculum. Realizing the vision of a multi-layered learning environment requires curriculum with "interpenetrating content, context, and community" (Norris, et al, 2003).

The Personal and Professional Development (PPD) Series adds value and depth to the Wilkes University learning program by explicitly targeting personal and professional competency assessment, development, practice, and evaluation. The PPD Series is designed to engage a cohort group of students in a four-year advisement and development program. The students begin in the first semester by examining their knowledge, values, and competencies in a spirit of self-knowledge. This self-assessment will be expanded and reviewed throughout the 7 semesters of the series and will form the basis for the student's development of a Life and Learning Plan.

Structure

The initial experience (PPD 101) brought together first year students, faculty and peer advisor/facilitators, course content, and a learning

exploration environment. As the cohort group moves through the experience, a team composed of faculty, staff, and, later, upper class students, serves as the advisory team for the students. This team has expertise in the area of learner focus. One faculty member will move with the group as their primary advisor/facilitator. Thus, the PPD 101-102 team consists of first year students and their freshman advising team --- their freshman advisor, the PPD Coordinator, and the faculty from the Integrated Management Experience, a first year required business course. PPD 201-202 students move into their planning phases with their primary advisor (Major Academic Advisor) and their advising/coaching team is developed from faculty and staff with expertise in assessment interpretation and career development. The third year team has added expertise in career preparation, planning, and portfolio development. The fourth year team helps students focus on graduation and developing a plan for life-long personal and professional development. Resource coaches from the University and community complement the support network for the student.

The Director of Leadership Education is responsible for the overall coordination of the integrated advising and leadership program for Sidhu undergraduates. The Director in close collaboration with the faculty develops course content, organizes the orientation programs, conducts program and evaluative research, coordinates student learning plans, portfolio development, and essentially serves as the visible core of the program.

Content, Context, and Community

Since the student learners are required to participate in this self-discovery and evolutionary process, extreme care must be taken to provide a nurturing, trusting environment. According to Cherniss and Goleman (1998) there are four stages of readiness for change. Essentially these stages are denial of the need for change, accepting the need but procrastinating doing anything about it, understanding the need for change, and finally, developing an action plan.

In 2000, Mary Tucker and her colleagues presented a multi-phase model for incorporating emotional intelligence into business curricula (Tucker, Sojka, Barone, and McCarthy, 2000). This model was based on the Goleman/Cherniss Four Phase Model for developmental efforts (Goleman, 2003). The Sidhu School PPD Series recognizes and addresses these stages of readiness through

student assessment/feedback, content/context, and modeling/coaching and incorporates them into the developmental phases of the program.

Assessment/Feedback

The first type of assessment is confidential self-assessment. As the PPD Series progresses, team, coach, and field supervisor assessments are added to the knowledge base. The assessments are used as developmental tools and the roles of the PPD faculty and the advisors are to help the students interpret and use the assessment information. Knowing that change is difficult and that many students will not see a need for change, it is essential that the entire advising team be committed to the value of the PPD Series. In fact, it is important for the entire University's Business Program faculty and staff to be committed to the values and goals of the entire advising/development process. The faculty must be knowledgeable about emotional intelligence, leadership, and other basic competencies addressed in the PPD Series. In addition, the advising team will be the primary source of the students' perception of the long-term value of being involved in this developmental undertaking.

Context/Content

The PPD faculty designed learning experiences to provide theoretical background, enhance motivation, and supply context for the emotional intelligence, leadership, and professional development competencies. Readings, lectures, service learning projects, field observations, leader interviews, role-plays, case problem solving, and other exercises provide conceptual meaning and pragmatic practice for the students.

Modeling/Coaching

The faculty and staff advisory/coaching teams engage in constant self-assessment, planning, and working with their own support communities. Sharing their personal experience with continuous learning, along with the struggles, challenges, and benefits of being involved in the process, help bring a sense of reality and value to the students. As the cohort group progresses, collaborative learning and peer coaching are a part of the process. According to Vygotsky's Theory of Learning (1962), collaborative and peer learning take advantage of the concept of the *zone of proximal learning* (ZPD). The ZPD is the distance between the learner's actual development level, as determined by individual problem-solving and potential development (problem-solving with

faculty guidance and /or in collaboration with more capable peers). The student cohort groups engage in collaborative and cooperative learning throughout the PPD Series. They enhance their leadership and teaching abilities when, in their third year, they move into peer advising and coaching of first and second year students.

DEVELOPMENTAL PHASES

The Consortium for Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations published *Guidelines for Best Practice* (www.eiconsortium.org 2003). Daniel Goleman and Cary Cherniss developed twenty-two guidelines representing the "best current knowledge about how to promote emotional intelligence in the workplace". According to the Consortium, these guidelines apply to "any development effort in which social and emotional learning is a goal." The Goleman/Cherniss Four Phase Model includes Preparation, Training, Transfer and Maintenance, and Evaluation. The PPD Series used the Goleman/Cherniss Model as a framework for our developmental work.

Phase One -- Preparation

Assessment of the environment, assessment of the learner, careful feedback, maximizing learner choice, encouraging/motivating, participation, linking learning goals to personal values, building and adjusting expectations, and assessing readiness are all part of the preparation phase.

The beginning stages of the PPD Series emphasize the preparation phase. General University orientation and advisement, business program advisement, and assessment are the focus of the early part of the series. Assessment includes measures of abilities in self-awareness, emotional management, self-motivation, empathy, and handling relationships. The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) is used to assess the following components of emotional intelligence: perception and identification of emotions, facilitation of thought, understanding emotions, and managing emotions (Mayer, Salovey, and Caruso, 2002; Salovey and Meyer, 1993). The MSCEIT, a 141-item test, is based on an ability model of emotional intelligence. In addition, indicators of learning style and personality (Jung-Meyers-Briggs) are assessed. Academic content in terms of social/emotional competencies, leadership, and ethics emphasize the strong connect between personal and professional values and success. During this first year, students

began to interpret their assessments and explore developmental activities to help them enhance strengths and intervene with or side-step weaknesses.

Phase Two -- Training

The Goleman/Cherniss Guidelines emphasize fostering positive relationships, self-directed change, clear goals, step-wise process, practice, performance feedback, reliance of experiential methods, support, models, insight enhancement, and relapse prevention.

This Training Phase is integrated throughout the PPD Series. The students are encouraged to develop a Personal Marketing Plan, consisting of their self-assessments, career analysis, and plans for self-improvement; a Learning Plan, which plans out curriculum choices; and their Learning Portfolio, which contains selected demonstrations of their reflections, business plans, and other academic products.

The coaching/mentoring relationships focus on nurturing, positive relationships, encouraging experimentation with ideas and concepts in a safe environment, and developing mutual trust. In addition, training takes place via process linkages with academic courses and service learning projects. For example, in the first semester, PPD 101 students choose a team-based service learning project. This proposed project is carried out in the second semester, PPD 102. Concurrently, Sidhu students develop a team-based plan for a business in a first semester business course, Integrated Management Experience, and actually launch that business in the second semester continuation course. The PPD service learning project must relate to the proposed business. For example, if the student team proposes a book exchange network for their business, the service learning project might deal with community literacy. The goal is for the students to link strategy with community partnership.

Phase Three -- Transfer and Maintenance

Encouraging the use of the new competencies and developing an organization that supports learning are the two guidelines for Phase Three.

The peer advisement/coaching and collaborative learning experiences provide opportunities for safe practice. Internships and team-based consultancies and other service learning opportunities support deepened use of the learner's

repertoire of competencies and enable a continuous improvement process.

Phase Four -- Evaluation

Both the program and the learner need to chart progress on acquiring competencies and relating the competencies to outcomes. The learner is asked to continue communication with the University in terms of outcomes, advice, and serving as community coaches for future Sidhu students.

SUMMARY

The PPD Series was developed to address the dual concerns of quality advisement and personal/professional development for students in the Jay S. Sidhu School of Business and Leadership at Wilkes University. The PPD Series incorporates conceptual and experiential learning and helps students develop their own approach to life planning. Concepts in emotional intelligence and leadership are the foundations of the integrated advisement and leadership program. Content and process are integrated with the overall Sidhu Business Program curriculum. Plans are being developed for program evaluation and longitudinal assessment of student personal and professional development throughout the program and beyond. The PPD Series begins with assessment and ends with assessment assuring a continuous quality improvement of the program over time. The PPD focus is on the student's authorship and ownership of their own self-development process.

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