



TLI News: Fall/Winter 2006

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CHAIR'S REPORT

First and foremost, I want to wish everyone a happy holiday season, no matter what holidays you celebrate. If you do not celebrate the holidays, then Happy December.

Communication breakdown. Not just a song from the early 70's. As we all know, many problems start and end with communication. It is a simple form that humans have long mastered, yet we have difficulty in doing it. It is usually one of the first reasons why Fellows say they partake in the Leading from the Middle program.

But whose responsibility does the communication fall upon? Here is a little case study:

A couple of weeks ago I stayed late to work on materials for an important meeting the next day. In the back of my head, I had a feeling that it had been rescheduled, so before my boss left, I asked him "Has tomorrow's 2PM meeting been rescheduled?" He replied a simple, "No". So I went on about my business, stayed another hour and a half and finished most of what I needed to do. The next day, I skipped a groundbreaking to make sure I had everything I needed. 12:45 rolls around, and I tell my boss I was going to grab lunch to be back in time for the meeting. The response I got: "What meeting is that, James?" I proceed to tell him what meeting, which got the reply, "No, that was cancelled. Didn't we talk about this yesterday?"



As it turned out, he made the assumption that by me asking if it was rescheduled, I already knew it was cancelled and I was just checking in to see if a new date had been confirmed. I immediately grew frustrated that he translated it so, and did not take the initiative to tell me it was cancelled in the first place. Miscommunication has become more common the last few months, as I was told about that groundbreaking I missed at 6:30 the night before, and I found out that another meeting had been rescheduled for 3PM that day which I had no knowledge of, but had been working on for months.

You may be thinking that my boss needs to get it together, which is exactly what I immediately thought. I thought about it and realized that another side of that miscommunication was that I did not trust my observations. I observed that there had been a trend of miscommunication with meetings and schedules, but did not correlate it to my situation. Thus, I wound up asking an inadequate question. If I took my observations into account, then I would have asked the situationally necessary follow-up question of, "So we are on for tomorrow?"

Moral of the story: Communication is everyone's responsibility. It is not only what we express that is important, but what we observe. In order to achieve our bottom line, we need to consider the situation, as well as history, to most effectively communicate, whether we say a mouthful, or say nothing at all.

THE LEADING INSTITUTE'S LEADERSHIP MODEL HELPS LATINOS AND PLANNING BECOME NEWEST DIVISION IN AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION

How do you build a national movement on a budget of less than \$2,000? By using the collaborative management and values-based planning approaches promoted by The Leading Institute. Last week, Latinos and Planning, a group of more than 110 urban planning and community development professionals, got national recognition when it was made the 20th division in the American Planning Association. The status gives Latinos and Planning a voice among the leadership of the 37,000 member APA – the world's largest urban planning-related organization.

Leo Vazquez sparked the development of Latinos and Planning in spring 2005, but it was built largely by more than a dozen planning practitioners and academics around the United States. They held nine forums (called "dialogos" [Spanish for dialogue]) around the country and wrote the guiding principles and bylaws for the group. They also helped put together the National Agenda for Latinos and Planning. The National Agenda identifies the most critical issues, as they were developed in each of the dialogos.

Leo's role in the "forming" stage (See the Group Management chapter in the Forum), was to be a catalyst and navigator. As the group moved to the "storming" stage, he adapted more of a mediator and consensus-building role. In these two stages, he also promoted collaborative leadership principles, which is helping us through the "norming" and "performing." Now, his biggest leadership challenge is to avoid getting in the way of the best performing leaders in the



team, while at the same time challenging those who are less motivated or at a lower level of capacity.

Especially because of the group's small budget, the most important parts of the chair's role is maintaining both the motivation and momentum of the volunteers, as well as stewarding a consistent – albeit organic -- vision and mission. Through this, you achieve many of the same results that you might get by paying staff. And given that this was a national effort, having motivated volunteers throughout the country reduced travel costs to an insignificant level.

The leadership principles promoted by The Leading Institute were reflected in several ways:

- Decisions on all major issues were made by consensus by a group of organizers, after the issues were discussed and reviewed by the membership through online forums.
- Before creating the bylaws, the group created a hierarchy of principles
- The dialogos involved exercises that generated a hierarchy of principles for each area in which the dialogos were held. These principles were combined into a National Agenda, which Latinos and Planning will use as a guide for prioritizing resources.

Another interesting point: None of the organizers ever met in person. All work was done through emails and monthly conference calls. This shows how collaborative management principles can be used by virtual teams and distance managers. (In fact, because of the difficulty of coercing at a distance, managers of virtual teams are more effective as collaborative leaders.)

A Latinos and Planning website will be available soon on the American Planning Association website. We'll let you know when it is published.

APPLICATIONS OPEN FOR LEADING FROM THE MIDDLE

We're offering at least two Leading from the Middle classes in 2007. (Besides New York and New Jersey, we're looking at offering programs in Washington D.C. and New Mexico.)

Leading from the Middle New Jersey will take place from mid-March to early December 2007. Nine half-day training sessions will be held roughly every other Friday between March and July. Leading from the Middle New York will also be from March through December. This course will have six six-hour sessions roughly every other Saturday from mid- March and late June. There will be networking events in the summer, followed by coaching from September to December. The classes will be held at the Bloustein School in New Brunswick.

Some of the improvements we're making for 2007:

- The final session on cultural competency – “Facing the Challenges of Diversity” – will take place before the coaching sessions, rather than afterwards.
- We will begin planning our network events in the spring, so TLI members have more time to prepare their schedules.

The Leading Institute at Rutgers University's Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy,
33 Livingston Avenue, #245. 732-932-3822, x631 info@theleadinginstitute.org
<http://www.theleadinginstitute.org>



- We're expanding the class to 20 people. If some of the students are absent on a particular day, there will be enough to have a diverse array of opinions.
- We will be reviewing and making a number of improvements to the coaching program.

Please check out The Leading Institute website <http://www.theleadinginstitute.org> for more information.

FREE ONLINE DIALOGUE: BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF FORM-BASED ZONING

Nicolas Ronderos, a TLI Board member who teaches about an innovative zoning regulation known as form-based codes, is holding a free online public dialogue now through Thursday, November 30. This is a great opportunity to learn about form-based codes, or to discuss your experience with them. To join the conversation, you'll need to join the Bloustein Online Continuing Education Program Network Forum. And to do that, all you'll need to do is send me an email asking to join the forum.

FORM BASED CODES PROGRAM RAISES \$3,000 FOR THE LEADING INSTITUTE

The Bloustein School held a two-day training session on form-based codes on November 1 and 2. It attracted 43 people, some of them from as far as New Mexico and Puerto Rico. Through a prior agreement, the Professional Development Institute split the net proceeds with the School's Center for Government Services (headed by Stuart Meck, who is part of our network). The program generated around \$3,000.

Getting grants for leadership programs is difficult, and even more so if you're not one of the big players like New York University, Leadership New York, or Leadership New Jersey. But efforts such as Form Based Codes 101 provide a promising route to sustainability. These kinds of programs help the Professional Development Institute to further its mission and sustain other initiatives. We're planning on doing another training session with the Form Based Codes Institute, and Stuart and I are working on ways to make the costs more reasonable to a wider variety of professionals.

SEEKING INSTRUCTORS FOR THE LEADING INSTITUTE

We are looking for experienced community development, planning or training and development professionals to teach workshops and sessions for The Leading Institute programs. Compensation varies by session. For example, we will pay \$800 per six-hour session in the New York Leading from the Middle class. Instructors are expected to teach from a knowledge base, which they can contribute to through a new Curriculum Workgroup to be formed.

First preference will go to those professionals who have gone through the Leading from the Middle or Executive Class programs, or have otherwise contributed time and knowledge to The Leading Institute. The RFP is at the end of this newsletter.

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GOOD NEWS

Jaime Sharrock, who was in the 2005 Leading from the Middle class, has moved from a planning position at the Jersey City Housing Authority to an events management position at Enterprise New York. Jaime is now the third member of a Leading from the Middle class to work at Enterprise. She joins Alana Smith and Paige Strackman. Congratulations Jaime!

If you have good news or success stories to share, please send them to Leo at vazquezl@rci.rutgers.edu

UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, December 8, 9:15 to 1:30 – Facing the Challenges of Diversity. Final Leading from the Middle class. Open to everyone in the Network, but only 20 seats total are available. At HUD Regional Office in downtown Newark. 1085 Raymond Boulevard – just two blocks from Newark Penn Station. Special guest instructor: Kathryn Volker. Free, but you must RSVP to vazquezl@rci.rutgers.edu

Monday, December 11, 6 to 8 p.m. – American Planning Association New York Metro Chapter holiday party (Open to all, not just APA members). At CUE Art Foundation, 511 West 25th Street, New York. Suggested donation \$10. (Because APA New York Metro Chapter was instrumental in seeding The Leading Institute, I hope you'll go and maybe give more than the suggested donation.) For more information, go to www.nyplanning.org



Requests for Proposals: Instructors, The Leading Institute

The Leading Institute is seeking instructors to conduct training sessions and provide additional continuing education support. The Leading Institute provides innovative training and development programs in leadership and management to professionals in the fields of urban planning, community development and public policy. The Leading Institute promotes principles of collaborative leadership, values-based planning, and cultural competency. We are seeking instructors for the following programs:

- **Leading from the Middle.** We will hold Leading from the Middle classes in New York and New Jersey. Leading from the Middle is a nine-month program for mid-career and mid-level professionals which includes training sessions, one-to-one executive coaching, peer coaching, and internal community building. We are seeking instructors for the New York class, which will be held on Saturdays in Manhattan between March and July.
- **TLI Workshops.** TLI Workshops are stand-alone sessions on various management and leadership issues. They can be held throughout the United States.
- **Executive Class.** Executive Class trains senior professionals in executive coaching skills.

Compensation will depend on the amount of work being performed and will differ by program. For example, instructors in the Leading from the Middle New York class will be paid \$800 per six-hour session.

Candidates must have the minimum qualifications

- At least five years of full-time experience in the fields of urban planning or community development.
- Experience in teaching, training, or communicating complex information to general audiences.
- Familiarity with theories and common practices in urban planning or community development, as well as organizational development or leadership. If you do not have at least a bachelor's degree in urban affairs/planning, community development, business, human resources or related subjects, you will need to clarify your sources of knowledge in your proposal.

Preference will go to candidates who:

- Have participated in The Leading Institute programs
- Have experience leading groups, projects and individuals
- Have practical experience in both urban planning and community development
- Have experience in training or development

Instructors are expected to participate in “train the trainer” sessions and to contribute their knowledge through The Leading Institute curriculum workgroup. Instructors will not have to generate their own materials, but will be expected to add to the knowledge base of The Leading Institute.

Please submit a cover letter, resume and any additional materials that may help your application to Leonardo Vazquez, The Leading Institute Director, at vazquezl@rci.rutgers.edu. Questions? Please call Leo at 732-932-3822, x711. We prefer proposals be sent by email. However, you can also mail your materials to Leo at The Leading Institute, Rutgers University Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, 33 Livingston Avenue, #245, New Brunswick, NJ 08901.

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