Developing Leaders: A Middle Eastern perspective

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Abstract

With its large expatriate workforce and rapidly developing economy, the United Arab Emirates provides a microcosm of the processes of globalization and internationalization. As the society expands the demand for leadership across all sectors is similarly growing, Zayed University is at the forefront of response to this demand and has developed a range of programs to accommodate the need for leadership development. It educates female Emirati students and has a mandate to assist them to develop leadership qualities and skills. This symposium reports on three specific programs currently in use. The first paper discusses the ways in which the university encourages leadership development in the undergraduate program. The second paper reports on how the Center for Professional Development of UAE Educators is developing curriculum leadership for Ministry of Education personnel, principals and teachers. The third paper focuses on the graduate program for the Masters in Educational Leadership and discusses graduate perspectives on their own leadership practice. The final paper analyses issues surrounding the implementation of leadership programs in a cross-cultural context including bilingual context, knowledge of leadership theories versus developing leadership skills, different leadership philosophies and practices, the role of women and emiratization.

Zayed University

Zayed University seeks to prepare Emirati students for a meaningful and successful twenty-first century personal and professional life; to graduate students who will help shape the future of the UAE; to support the economic and social advancement of the UAE; to lead innovation in higher education in the UAE through teaching, learning, research, and outreach; and to do so in a culturally diverse, humane, technologically advanced, and increasingly global environment.

Zayed University was established in 1998 by the federal government of the United Arab Emirates to educate U.A.E. National women. It has campuses in Abu Dhabi and Dubai led by a single administration, and offers similar programs on both campuses. Zayed University currently enrolls approximately 3200 National women. Zayed University is based on an international model of higher education. It is organized academically into five colleges—Arts and Sciences, Business Sciences, Communication and Media Sciences, Education and Information Technology — and the primary language of instruction is English. The University expects its graduates to be fully bilingual in English and Arabic, proficient in the use of computing technology, and strong in
quantitative and research skills. It expects them to achieve significant intellectual and social development. It also expects its graduates to be well-prepared professionals ready to become leaders in government, business, civil society, and family life. The graduates of Zayed University will help shape the future of the United Arab Emirates.

Since it opened in 1998, the University has progressed remarkably. It has graduated three classes. It has instituted—and continues to develop—a broad undergraduate program. It has established an efficient administrative structure and effective academic and operating policies and procedures. It has instituted a unique Academic Program Model which focuses on learning outcomes and incorporates them throughout the curriculum. The University has been accepted for candidacy by a leading accrediting association in the United States, and it has established an external Board of Visitors to provide additional guidance. Zayed University also has established a number of outreach centers and institutes designed to promote the development of public and private sector institutions in the United Arab Emirates.

The mission and development of Zayed University are guided largely by the institution’s responsibility in the national context. The U.A.E. expects the University to educate students and to conduct research for the benefit of the country. While the University continues to build a strong undergraduate program, which is critical for student success, an increasing emphasis is being placed on faculty research that contributes to the national knowledge base. During the next several years, Zayed University will refine this new model of higher education and continue to expand and improve its undergraduate programs. It will also initiate new projects and programs—e.g., in research and graduate study—to more fully realize its purpose and aspirations. Zayed University offers a great and exciting opportunity for the country, the region, and the West. The potential is enormous.

**Center for Professional Development of UAE Educators**

The Center's mission is to assist UAE K-12 teachers, and educational administrators to develop their practice so that they may, by example, participate in the reform of the UAE educational system. The Center provides programs and consultancies and conducts research to accomplish this goal.

The Center began its activities in 2002. It operates as a unit under the auspices of the College of Education, Zayed University. In the last year it has delivered approximately 1000 hours of professional development to over 700 clients in the UAE. The Center is moving from ‘one-off’ workshops to a model of long-term interaction with clients.

**Undergraduate Program**

The College of Education undergraduate program is committed to providing students with excellent preparation to become beginning teachers. The College’s emphasis is on preparing students to teach in both U.A.E. government schools and private schools. Its programs are based on the belief that effective schools are essential to the sustainable development of the nation. Effective teachers know their subject matter well, and they understand how children grow and develop. They have high expectations for their students’ learning. They know a variety of teaching methods and can use them effectively to help students learn. Effective teachers know how much their students are learning and understand their learning styles and strengths. They are caring and creative and know
how to establish a positive learning atmosphere for their students. Zayed University drew upon these understandings to develop its teacher preparation program. The employment outlook for new teachers is bright. In this context, preparation at Zayed University, with emphasis on fluency in English and Arabic, technology skills and preparation for leadership, serves both students and the schools.

**Degrees Offered**
Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Education
Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Technology and Education (joint with College of Information Technology)

**Graduate Program**

The Masters of Education (Educational Leadership) degree is designed to meet the needs and interests of current and prospective educational leaders. The first cohort of 24 graduates began the program in 2005 and a second cohort of 25 students has started this year. The program comprises 11 courses and a final capstone project. The program has been around three domains:

- **Strategic Leadership** includes leadership, information management, technology, change, and research

- **Learning and Instructional Leadership** includes curriculum and learning, assessment, supervision, and professional development

- **Organizational Leadership** includes educational organizations, human and financial resources, the people in the system, and the community