

THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE results

The Leadership Challenge Opens Minds, and Doors, for Tomorrow's Leaders

When Dr. Catherine Pratt began looking for materials for her new leadership course, she knew she wasn't searching for a typical textbook. Pratt wanted something to reach the students on their level, something that would integrate personal experiences with the concept of leadership.

A professor at Pacific Lutheran University in Tacoma, Washington, Pratt had read *The Leadership Challenge* (TLC) several times herself, and had found the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) personally useful. Based on her vision for the course, and the fact that the Student LPI is a research-based 360-degree development tool, Pratt chose to wrap her course around TLC—with tremendous success.

Her students read the book and use the Student LPI Participant Workbook, the Student LPI Self, and

Student LPI Observers when they take "BUS 387: Leaders and Managers in Action." The course was offered for the first time during last winter's 4-week intersession and she just finished teaching a second installment of the short, intense format. Starting this fall, the forecast is for the course to be offered as a traditional, semester-long session.

In addition to using TLC materials, students hear from a number of "live case studies" via guest lecturers—all exemplary leaders in the community. They also engage in service to the community, interview a local leader one-on-one, and, using all of the course material, create a "Personal Leadership Development Plan."

"Linking students to *The Leadership Challenge* and introducing them to leaders who serve through their values helps students realize that what they read relates to what they see and hear, enabling them to learn instead of memorize," said Pratt.

Shane Richins, 21, a senior majoring in finance/accounting, took

last month's class as an elective. "I wasn't sure what to expect," said Richins, "but I really liked coming to class. The book is a great read—and with the concepts woven into the stories, I know I'll retain the information. I even did the suggested exercises in the book, like identifying who my role models are, and thinking about the ways I am like them. It's made me much more self-aware."

The Leadership Practices Inventory's 360-degree component has also been an incredible learning tool for the students, often resulting in surprises. An athlete from last year's course was extremely confident that because of all his team experience, leadership was "his thing," and therefore he was particularly adept at two of *The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership*—Enable Others to Act and Encourage the Heart. Upon reviewing his observers' analysis, he was humbled to realize that perhaps he wasn't as good of a leader as he thought. This led to incredible insight and reflection and caused him to start doing things differently in his interactions with others.

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Self-discovery abounds in Dr. Pratt's classroom. One admittedly-shy student had her "aha" moment when she realized that she doesn't have to be an extrovert to be a leader. "You don't have to be in charge to be a leader," she wrote in a recent quiz.

Students also learned a heartfelt lesson from a guest speaker who had recently been laid off from his high-level management position. "The students observed first-hand that it's not failure that derails people, it is the failure to learn." said Dr. Pratt. As one student reflected on this session, she mentioned she did not realize people could recover from mistakes. She always thought she had to be perfect.

The course and The Leadership Challenge materials have even led three students to their dream jobs. In one example—upon hearing the CEO of Bargreen-Ellingson speak, one student was so touched by their values, and so excited that they matched hers, that she decided she absolutely had to work for them. (The 47-year-old company specializes in food service supply and design.) The student was extremely persistent in her communication with the company, so much so, that the Human Resource manager finally went to the CEO and explained that this young woman thinks so highly of us, and is so sure

that she needs to work for us, but we don't have a position for her. The CEO decided that if the student was that determined, then she should be working for him—and they hired her. The match has been made in TLC heaven.

"I love all my classes," said Pratt, "but this one is special. Here, connections are made, values are clarified, possibilities are imagined, and the desire to make a difference is energized. Students connect with TLC material on a personal level, and as they start to internalize it, they start making life choices that will make a difference."

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