

# THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE **research**

---

THE MOST TRUSTED SOURCE ON BECOMING A BETTER LEADER

- TITLE** Departmental Head Leadership Practices and Strategic Planning in Occupational Therapy Graduate Programs
- RESEARCHER** Katherine D. Henley, Kimberly D. Jessee, and Erin L. Stroup  
Occupational Therapy Program  
Milligan College  
Unpublished Masters' Thesis: December 2005
- OBJECTIVE** The focus of this study was to provide information on the strategic planning of academic program directors and how student outcomes are affected.

## METHODOLOGY

The target population included all accredited graduate-level occupational therapy programs in the U.S. and Puerto Rico, as listed by the American Occupational Therapy Association. A random sample of 40 programs was selected for participation and 10 responded (25% response rate). Each program director selected two faculty members to participate, of which a total of seven responded. The program directors were all female and all but one Caucasian. They all held graduate degrees, were mostly untenured (56%) and had been program directors for less than six years (80%). The seven faculty members were all Caucasian females. Eight items from the Leadership Practices Inventory were selected to represent a measure of leadership in strategic planning.

## KEY FINDINGS

There was a positive correlation between the strategic leadership planning practices of program directors and faculty perspectives ( $r = .494$ ). There was a significant positive correlation between the strategic leadership planning scores and occupational therapy program graduation rates. There was not, however, a significant correlation between leadership planning scores and pass rates on the certification exam. "These results," according to the authors, "indicate that strategic planning skills have more of a direct impact on students graduating from their program than on passing the certification exam....certification pass rates may be more affected by outside influences such as fieldwork experiences, test taking ability, length of time since graduation, and individual student circumstances" (pp. 27-28).

**THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE®**