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TITLE	Self-report and Direct Observer's Perceived Leadership Practices of Chief Student Affairs Officers in Selected Institutions of Higher Education in the United States
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OBJECTIVE	The purpose of this study was to determine the perceived leadership practices of chief student affairs officers in the United States and to examine how these leaders compared to others in the Kouzes Posner normative database.

METHODOLOGY

Information on the chief student affairs officers' leadership practices was obtained from the self-assessments of 338 chief student affairs officers (30% response rate) using the Leadership Practices Inventory-Self and from the assessments of 168 observers of the chief student affairs officers using the Leadership Practices Inventory-Observer (34% response rate). Fifty-six percent of the respondents were men (while only 41% of the observers were men), 70 percent were Caucasian, nearly half had been in their positions for less than five years, and most (60%) had a doctoral degree. Forty-four percent were from four-year private institutions, 37 percent from four-year public institutions and 18 percent from two-year public institutions. The percentage of respondents from small institutions (less than 2,500 students) was 27 percent, medium size institutions (less than 10,000) was 32.5 percent and the rest from large-size institutions.

KEY FINDINGS

Based upon mean scores, Enabling Others to Act was perceived by respondents as the leadership practice engaged in most frequently, while at the same time exhibiting the least variability. Modeling the Way, Encouraging the Heart, Challenging the Process, and Inspiring a Shared Vision followed next. The standard deviation for Inspiring a Shared Vision was almost twice the variability of Enabling Others to Act.

The researcher subjected the LPI to a Principal Component Analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .932, and Bartlett's test of sphericity had a value of .000. Using a minimum eigen-value equal to one, five factors were extracted and accounted for 58.3 percent of the variable space. The items did not load exactly (match) to the pattern of responses proposed by Kouzes and Posner; although most clearly approximating Challenging, Inspiring and Encouraging.

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Chief student affairs officers and their direct reports ranked the five leadership practices in exactly the same order. This would suggest that the perceptions by chief student affairs officers regarding the strength of each leadership practice were substantiated, to some degree, by their direct reports. However, self scores were consistently and significantly higher than those reported by observers on all five practices. Similarly scores of chief student affairs officers were all higher than those of leaders in the Kouzes and Posner normative data base.

No significant differences in leadership practices were found on the basis of gender or ethnicity. Some differences were found on the basis of educational background and institutional type. The author concludes, however, that "there was little *practical* significance since the R^2 scores were so small. Therefore, even the strongest conclusion is minimized to nothing more than a suggestion" (p. 142).

The author provides these recommendations (pp. 145-148):

Chief student affairs officers in the United States should review the research study findings, by individual leadership practices, to obtain a sense of the discrepancies between self-described chief student affairs officers' leadership practices and perceptions by observers of those practices. Such an investigation may prove fruitful to understanding how perceptions are formed.

Chief student affairs officers should consider the development of procedures and mechanisms to obtain feedback from their administrative team members and others regarding their leadership actions and activities. The implementation of assessment methods, and the resulting reports, could assist chief student affairs officers by revealing how their leadership practices are being interpreted. Each chief student affairs officer should have his or her professional staff evaluate his or her leadership practices using the Leadership Practices Inventory.

Chief student affairs officers should develop a leadership development plan, paying attention to their own leadership development and ways that they might influence their institutions.

Graduate degree preparation programs in college student personnel and higher education administration must provide comprehensive instruction in the area of leadership.

Colleges and universities should invest resources to make the Leadership Practices Inventory and other instruments more available to administrators.