

# Towards a Multidisciplinary Undergraduate Leadership & Society Program

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## Abstract

The interdisciplinary field of Leadership Studies has emerged in recent years at several well-known universities as a major or minor course of study at the Undergraduate level. The success of these multidisciplinary programs depends importantly on an ability to creatively think outside the box and challenge the classical – and still all too common – framing in our universities as institutions structured into independent disciplines. This paper describes one attempt at meeting this objective. It assesses the lessons learned over the past five years in the development and teaching of Leadership and Society at United Arab Emirates University. As a practical matter, it offers academic curriculum planners a model for a full multidisciplinary leadership bachelor program and describes some administrative and academic conditions and requirements essential to successfully implement a program in this exciting and critical new field.

**Keywords:** Leadership, leadership studies, leadership development, multidisciplinary approach

## 1. Introduction

The current environment in which leaders must work is characterized by the army term VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous), one likened to perpetual turbulent white water (Petrie, 2014). It is a political economic environment that is dizzying and globalized which constantly demands efficiency and stability of organizations (Perruci & Schwartz, 2002). This environment is also typically shaped by interconnectedness and constantly calls for leaders who can transcend beyond the boundary of their specializations to cope with the ever changing demands on their organizations. The crisis imposes a situation not only on the social context where leadership is embedded but also on the cognitive effectiveness, resources, and strategies required by leaders to resolve the crisis. More so, these changes also impact leadership development in the trajectory of successfully developing leaders who have the increasing capability to deal with a multiplicity of crisis situations (Probert, 2011). More than ever, leadership has become a critical factor for the success or failure and excellence or mediocrity of any organization (Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017). This also comes with enormous cost. The Association for Talent Development (2015) for instance, reported that American corporations are spending \$160 billion annually on leadership training and development programs.

Although the environment has changed and the skills needed for leadership have also changed, it had been noted that leaders are not developing fast enough or in the right ways to match the new environment. Furthermore, the methods used to develop leaders have not significantly changed (Petrie, 2014:5). It had also been observed that the competency leadership framework that predominates in leadership studies and development has only succeeded in advancing a modern version of the great person theory. This is because the framework puts more emphasis on the technical, concrete, objective, and measurable aspects of leadership development at the expense of the subtle, ethical, psychological, and relational elements. Accordingly, Probert (2011) argued that leadership development itself is in crisis.

Globalization as an economic driver also created a demand for global leadership (Graden, 2014). What a global leader, however, still remains a fuzzy concept based on definitions given by authors. For instance, a global leader can be anyone in a position that merges the role of a manager and a leader (de Vries, et al., 2004) or a top level executive who is involved with global leadership activities such as global integration activities (Graden, 2014). These definitions are rather positional than behavioral. The insinuation of a global leader as one with a global mindset (Caligiuri & Tarique, 2009) is perhaps one that comes close to both the cognitive and behavioral demands of leadership. It had been found out though that the development of global leadership at times fail because it is specifically top-heavy rather than all-inclusive (Ready & Conger, 2007).

A cross country survey conducted by the British Council (2014) on the higher education preparation of leaders in thirty countries would help shed light on the issue of leadership studies and development. The countries that participated in the survey were selected from country groupings such as Anglo Countries, Confucian Asia, Eastern Europe, Germanic Europe, Latin America, Latin Europe, Nordic Europe, Middle East, Southern Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa. Among others, the results of the survey showed that:

- *Most leaders have degrees in social sciences and humanities, with over half holding advanced degrees. The prevalence of social sciences continues into post-graduate education with half of the leaders holding advanced-level degrees.*
- *Undergraduate degrees in social sciences are less prevalent amongst leaders in Confucian Asia and Middle Eastern Countries, and are more prevalent amongst leaders in Nordic*

*Countries and Latin Europe. On the other hand, an undergraduate degree in the humanities is more prevalent amongst leaders in Anglo Countries, Eastern Europe and Confucian Asia and less so in South Asia.*

- *There is a higher percentage of engineering degrees in South Asia and Middle Eastern Countries, which outpaces Eastern Europe, Nordic and Anglo Countries in this field. The incidences of business, computer and information sciences, as well as education and military degrees are virtually the same across all country groupings*
- *Of the overall sample of leaders, 16 per cent received their bachelor's degree outside of their home countries. The figure is higher in Middle Eastern countries) and lower in Germanic Europe and Latin America (British Council, 2014: 7-15).*

It was noted that the study participants did not have undergraduate degrees in leadership studies or related fields although many of them have undergraduate and graduate degrees in the social sciences and humanities. For the participants from the Middle East grouping coming from Egypt, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia, their preparation was more on business, information technology, engineering, and the military, all of which were taken internationally. It can therefore be surmised that the leadership studies of these executives were either collateral aspects of their educational or work experiences.

Leadership Studies has garnered much attention as an academic offering since 1992 when the first autonomous degree-granting program was established at the Jepson School of Leadership Studies, University of Richmond, VA in the United States (Murphy & Riggio 2003). Today, it competes well with more established disciplines, though it maintains characteristics that suggest it is still best described as an “emerging” discipline as there are no accrediting bodies or associations who can provide the answers to guide program design and evaluation efforts (Riggio 2013). Viewed internationally, the United States appears to have taken an early lead in its development. By the turn of this millennium, close to 1,000 programs existed in the United States alone serving thousands of students (Prince 2001). By that time the field was already showing dramatic growth (Schwartz, Axtman, & Freeman, 2000).

Considering that the development of leaders via collegiate education has been a goal of institutions of higher learning since their inception, the appearance of actual academic majors and minors in Leadership is still a relatively recently phenomenon. The delay may have much to do with overcoming the common perception that leadership qualities are innate, and thus leaders are “naturally born,” not made (Prince, 2001). Yet several studies suggest that leadership actually can be taught and learned in classroom settings (Buschlen & Dvorak, 2011; Astin & Astin, 2000; Daloz, 2005; Robert, 2007; Johnson & Woodard, 2014; Mangan, 2002). The subject is taught through different methods outside and inside the classroom. The former includes a variety of co-curricular activities, typically managed by Student Affairs offices and Residential Life Programs. The field appears more formally in various academic departments that offer one course tracks, minors, and/or majors in leadership (Brungardt, Curt ; Greenleaf, Justin ; Brungardt, Christie ; Arensdorf, Jill, 2006). Its lack of full maturity may be seen in its most frequent representation in “modifier” programs, like “Organizational Leadership” or “Educational Leadership.” (Riggio 2013: 10).

Leadership educators face the daunting task of creating leadership programs that must meet the needs of diverse learners and stakeholders, including academics, and administrators. As Andenoro (2013) noted, the task is both made more difficult and more pressing by the complex charge of leadership education to create a foundation for successfully working with the large number of dynamic organizations and diverse people present in an increasingly global social, political, and economic climate. Student participation in leadership programs must correspondingly encompass many aspects of student development – personal, intellectual, spiritual, philosophical, and skill-based growth (Evans, Forney, & Guido-DiBrito, 1998). Colleges and universities are starting to offer a myriad of experiences to build student leadership capacities, including co-curricular activities, social activities, tailored student organizations, immersion programs, weekend community service work, and training workshops (Dugan, 2007; Buschlen & Dvorak, 2011, Buschlen & Johnson, 2014).

Although leadership per se has been a topic of research for decades, there is still a lack of consensus on where it belongs as a topic or discipline and how leadership can be best taught or learned (Daloz Parks, 2005; Buschlen & Johnson 2014). Recognized as relevant to a wide range of disciplines, the topic of leadership has received attention in a host of classic departments – management, finance, education sociology, political science, history, philosophy and mass communication to name a few. Yet this dispersed representation may be viewed as an indicator that Leadership Studies is a multidisciplinary field that demands a dedicated multi- or trans-disciplinary academic program (Riggio 2013:13).

A recent examination of the role of civic engagement in 77 introductory undergraduate leadership courses points to the great need for improving undergraduate leadership curricula (Johnson & Woodard, 2014). While many well known universities have developed full undergraduate degree programs in leadership, very little has been available in academic literature describing the theoretical underpinning or even general characteristics of a successful program. Filling this gap is an important aim of this work. Here we discuss our program, constructed

after an analysis of several offerings and degree programs at schools, many of which began before our own, and we attempt to discern the elements that have made up the fruitful experiences in our leadership instruction. Perhaps the promise of such training to produce leaders capable of tackling pressing issues of global development and peace in a turbulent world could help convince those firmly entrenched in classical disciplines to accept a Leadership Studies focus (Buschlen & Dvorak, 2011; Brungardt, Greenleaf, Brungardt, & Arensdorf, 2006; Alexander, 2011). As cited by Pertie (2014), 'it makes little sense to begin leadership development processes at very senior levels. Instead the process must start early.' The challenge is to think about how leadership development can be democratized to 'take it back to the masses - to the base and middle of the socioeconomic pyramid, not only the peak' (Petrie, 2014:18).

In the conceptualization, design, and implementation or adoption of any leadership development program, a thorough assessment of organizational needs as well as the knowledge and competencies required for effective leadership is in order. Furthermore, an assessment of the current culture is a requisite in order to attain alignment of current practices with organizational and leadership aspirations and priorities (Gigliotti and Ruben, 2017). In short, leadership development needs to take into account certain theoretical as well as contextual considerations. In this regard, the purpose of this paper is to develop a Bachelor's course in Leadership and Society taking to account certain theoretical and contextual considerations.

### ***1.1. Theoretical considerations***

From the hundreds of leadership programs across the United States and Europe, Perruci and Schwartz (2002) distinguished two predominant approaches in leadership studies and development: utilitarian and communitarian. The utilitarian approach caters to the interest of students in economic security hence provides the necessary skills needed by students to enter the workplace. The undergraduate program replicates the program given in the graduate school that enhances the leadership skills of executives. The objective of the undergraduate program is to give an early start to students in acquiring the critical skills required by a demanding workplace (Perruci & Schwartz, 2002).

The communitarian approach, on the other, caters to the democratic requirement for active citizenship. The rationale of this approach lies in the logic that power resides in the people and therefore, citizens are expected to exercise leadership roles in advancing a democratic and equitable society. The objective is to foster and sustain the common good. Since students would become future leaders of their communities, they are expected to acquire the necessary skills to make a difference (Perruci & Schwartz, 2002). Whereas the utilitarian approach is premised on an economic motivation, the communitarian approach is shaped by political motives. Perruci and Schwartz (2002), however, argued that both approaches do not portray a complete picture of leadership development. To this effect, they suggested a third approach which they termed the humanistic approach. Accordingly, the humanistic approach combines both economic and utilitarian elements while drawing on the strengths of the humanities in providing a deeper understanding of leadership studies and development. What constitutes the heart of the humanistic approach is the development of a calling among students to translate meaningful knowledge into purposeful action. The three elements that edify the humanistic approach to leadership development include: (1) search for meaning and purpose in human experience; (2) focus on knowledge as the basis for action; and (3) action grounded in a moral ethos (Perruci & Schwartz, 2002:13).

The humanistic approach recovers the historical elements that gave rise to the classical canon which makes it very pertinent in the case of students today who appear to be losing a grip on their sense of history and cultural identity. This approach had been instrumental in building the leadership program at Marietta College's McDonough Center for Leadership and Business (Ohio, USA), a small liberal arts college with an established leadership program that infuses the humanistic approach to leadership studies and development (Perruci & Schwartz, 2002).

The importance of the past as an element in building leadership development programs also resonates with incorporating the needs of learners in leadership studies. In this regard, Mostovicz, et al., (2009) advanced the notion of a leader's timeline and the Theta and Lambda worldviews that influence the choice of learners. The formulation of leadership development programs is found at the intersection of this time line and worldviews. The leader's timeline consist of the past, present, and future. The past is seated in self-awareness or a deep understanding of one's strengths and weaknesses, drives, expectations, values, and emotions. This capacity is not self-evident but rooted in a cyclic movement of evaluation involving the present and the past. The present situates the leader in the social environment that requires the capacity of understanding the emotional make-up of other people. The focus of the present is on the capacity for empathy. To empathise means the ability to "respect the other's goals and motives" (Mostovicz et al., 2009:8). The future focuses on purpose. Everyone needs a purpose and each individual searches for his own purpose based on his or her unique personality. While it could be difficult to attain true purpose, people are deeply aware that they have purpose and will strive to continue searching for it (Mostovicz et al., 2009). According to Kouzes and Posner (2003), leadership is about making choices and people make choices based on their worldview. In this regard, Mostovicz et al (2009)

suggested two worldviews: Theta and Lambda worldviews. The Theta worldview is motivated by the need for achievement and the Lambda worldview is motivated by the need for affiliation. Whereas Thetas have asocially-oriented motivation, Lambdas are individually motivated (Mostovicz et al., 2009). Interposing the Theta and Lambda worldviews with the leader timeline would surface out the critical agendas for the leadership development of individuals (Mostovicz et al., 2009).

Leadership development is a progressive process of learning new skills, abilities, and behaviors (Petrie, 2014). While this can be attained by means of horizontal development, a more significant aspect of leadership development is making sense of the world in more complex and inclusive ways, a manner in which their minds grow bigger (Petrie, 2014). This can be accomplished by stages that individuals go through as a result of experience hence is attained by means of vertical development. As cited by Petrie (2004:11), "today's horizontal development within a mind-set must give way to the vertical development of bigger minds." While horizontal development can be attained through short-term leadership development trainings, vertical development is best attained through a progressive system of leadership studies.

Based on the foregoing premises, we developed a leadership development program based on a synergistic framework shown in Figure 1. The framework takes into account vertical development, the humanistic approach, and the leader's timeline in constructing the conceptual, strategic, and operational edifice of the program. This has to be laid upon a strong foundation which is anchored on the context in which the program is implemented. Hence, the program described in this paper is called Leadership and Society. To ensure continuous quality improvement, we employed the PDCA cycle (Deming, 1986) in every aspect of design and delivery processes.

### **1.2. Contextual considerations**

While establishing a Leadership Studies program is essential for every country on the globe, each country will have its own vision for implementing it, and each country or region will face local benefits and challenges (Alexander, 2011). The UAE, which currently emphasizes its ability to compete globally, recognizes a growing need for people with leadership skills. The development of the UAE is a function of its vast capital resources, business-friendly environment, transparent and accountable government, and the inspiration provided by the leader's vision to continue creating a confident, secure society and building a sustainable, open and globally competitive economy. For those who are not very familiar with the context of terms used in narratives pertaining to the UAE, the term "leader's vision" connotes the vision of the founding father of the UAE, His Highness Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, which is enshrined in the country's roadmap known as UAE 2021. Likewise, Abu Dhabi Vision 2030 delivers upon the leader's vision for the ongoing economic success of Abu Dhabi (Abu Dhabi Vision 2030, 2008:1).

The need for better instruction to develop leaders has been recognized in the UAE at the highest levels, including the vision and directives of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, and of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi (Al Maktoum, 2012). The UAE is a vision-driven society therefore there is a strong need for the younger generations to embody the ideals and values of leadership that would sustain the momentum of development in the country's journey towards becoming a leading knowledge-based economy in the future.

The UAE and the rest of the Arab world are not deprived of leadership development programs. In fact, the past decade witnessed the mushrooming of leadership development programs all throughout the Middle East and North Africa creating a cottage industry of leadership development managed by a diversity of providers and catered to by a broad spectrum of consumers. In short, the region is saturated with leadership development programs (Al-Dabbagh & Asaad, 2010). In a broad assessment of leadership programs in the Arab world, Al-Dabbagh and Asaad (2010) developed a typology that reflected an array of programs spanning the MENA region. Their typology shows six main types of providers of leadership development programs in the Arab world which includes governments, educational institutions, private sector organizations, commercial training programs or centers, international organizations, and local and regional non-governmental organizations. Each type of provider caters to a different target group and employs a distinct set of characteristics that differentiate it from others (Al Dabbagh & Asaad, 2010:5). The typology of leadership development programs is shown in Table 1

In their assessment, Al Dabbagh and Asaad (2010) surfaced some salient points that are relevant to this paper. They observed that the programs offered are 'tailor-made' to serve specific development purposes. More often than not, these programs are divorced from institutional context. The programs experiment with addressing local needs by outsourcing to Western leadership training providers thereby, creating a tension between the dominant Western perspectives on leadership and local needs and realities. The approaches to the programs targeted intra-personal competencies of individuals rather than transforming the relationships between people. In this regard, leadership is understood as a cause rather than an effect or an emerging property of effective systems design. Hence they asserted that. 'one of the main challenges for leadership development programs in the region is to better understand and conceptualize relational approaches to leadership development' (Al-Dabbagh & Asaad,

2010:11). In conclusion, the authors stated that

*There is a genuine need to create environments conducive to collaboration among researchers and practitioners across institutions and counties, clarify conceptually what is meant by leadership development, and allow for the emergence of authentic voices about what leadership is and how it works. The hope is that in coming years, leadership development programs in the region will transcend the cottage industry that currently exists to create a better, and more ethical, leadership development practice (Al Dabbagh & Asaad, 2010:14).*

In the light of the foregoing considerations, this program of Leadership and Society described herewith was designed to meet the theoretical and contextual requirements and implement the directives of the UAEU to offer education of the highest quality.

## **2. The Leadership and Society Program**

The United Arab Emirates University started offering a comprehensive Bachelor's degree in Leadership and Society in 2009. It has the distinction of being the only college in the United Arab Emirates, and the Gulf Cooperation Council to offer a Bachelor's Degree in Leadership and Society. The program is hosted by the College of Humanities and Social Sciences with the goal of providing students with an innovative curriculum that focuses on the study of leadership in the context of society. It offers a humanistic approach to the study of leadership and draws from research in a number of fields in humanities and social sciences including sociology, psychology, philosophy, history, mass communication, linguistics and political science. Since no one discipline holds mastery of leadership and social issues, students are expected to engage content, skills, thinking processes, and assessments by exploring connections among several different disciplines. The Leadership and Society program's objective is to provide students with the needed knowledge and skills to enact leadership roles in their respective workplaces and in the community, nation, region, and global spheres. The emphasis of the program is on assisting students in realizing their potential and responsibility for leadership by providing them with a comprehensive educational experience based on both theory and practical application. The program is designed to immerse students in a challenging and stimulating intellectual environment; it emphasizes academic and cultural enrichment, as well as a strong sense of community and social responsibility. The degree is intended to equip graduates with skills to achieve personal, professional, and citizenship excellence in their post-university careers.

Murphy and Riggio (2003) and Brungardt et al. (2006) provided valuable early efforts to critically analyze academic curricula from universities in the United States in order to improve the foundation for Leadership as discipline. As yet, the formal Leadership bachelor's major is still a relatively new, and there are no agreed to guides or standards. Thus, sharing information and opportunities for open discussion on the establishment of quality instruction and best practices becomes very important (Mangan, 2002; Brungardt et al. 2006; Arensdorf, 2006). As Brungardt et al (2006:21) asserted

*We as leadership educators must become much more intentional in our collaboration. We are so busy being "lone rangers" in the field that we fail to practice what we preach. We, like so many others in organizational life, talk the talk of collaboration, but fail to walk it. Until we work together and agree on common ground in teaching students historical, theoretical, and practical foundations and applications of leadership, we will struggle to gain credibility or make the case for leadership as a credible major. Furthermore, we are doing leadership graduates a disservice by not working together to create a cohesive framework within which to unify our efforts (p. 21).*

It is in the spirit of collaboration that we assessed the lessons learned over the past 5 years from the planning, research, and day-to-day problem solving associated with teaching Leadership at UAE University. In this paper we provide an overview of our Multidisciplinary Bachelor Major Plan and make suggestions for best practices.

### **2.1. Program Overview**

The Leadership and Society Program's curriculum was designed mainly by an interdisciplinary committee of ten faculty members from different disciplines at the college of Humanities and Social Sciences. Their views and the results of their frequent meetings led to the development of the current program's curriculum. This process ensured that the program's curriculum met the expectations of all disciplines within the college.

One of the significant components of the program is to go beyond the presentation of traditional college courses that convey knowledge. This type of delivery largely belongs to the domain of pedagogy. Considering that our students were young adults, the program took a shift in epistemology and employed instructional technology which engaged the principles of andragogy (Knowles, 1990) and experiential learning (Kolb, 1984). The program's classroom experience stressed excellent teaching, academic rigor, and active learning. Outside the classroom, students are immersed in a rich array of cultural programming that is supported by United Arab Emirates University. For example, in conjunction with some courses, students are exposed to the cultural and

scientific resources of Al-Ain city and the UAE at large. The program requires students to engage in community service to develop social efficacy and an awareness of the essential relationship between privilege and responsibility.

The program embodies a three tiered range of benefit: to the individual, to the campus community, and to society. Personal benefits include knowledge construction and co-construction, leadership skills development, cognitive growth, emotional intelligence, ethic development, and practical competence that enable economic sustainability and success. Benefits to society are derived from promoted principles of good citizenship, including social awareness, improved productivity, and respect human rights and the rule of law. The Bachelor degree in Leadership and Society was designed to qualify graduates for a wide variety of careers and a broad range of social roles, and this offers students a definite advantage in the job market. Rather than preparing graduates for a single particular career, this interdisciplinary degree program provided students with the knowledge and skills necessary for a broad range of responsible and supervisory positions, which will open more opportunities for our graduates to find job in both public and private sectors. It equips students with the capabilities of the specialist and social entrepreneur. Some options include work with the government and Ministries, private sector employment in project management, consulting firms, social media, research, outreach, local community organizations, and volunteerism. The internships provide students with specific skills valued in the workplace. This is compatible with the University's goal to enhance its reputation as a developer of the next national leaders. The program strengthens the University connection with the community through the program's training courses (Field Work in Leadership and Society LDS 420, and 430) and through the co-curriculum activities of promoting volunteerism and organizing workshops, debates and visits. This task fits the United Arab Emirates University's goal of expanding students' development outside the classroom environment.

## **2.2. Planning**

Consistent with a general rubric of developing the curriculum based on data from best practices that at the same time incorporates the consensus of a diversity of relevant and interested academic stakeholders, the planning process involved the following activities: university-based reflections, content analysis, and independent reviews.

**University-based reflections.** In this stage, inputs from course teachers were solicited in the form of a report regarding the course description and requirements; contents; resources and technology; and teaching strategies. This was later followed by interviews to determine the views of the teachers on the satisfaction and fulfillment of the course objectives. An evaluation of the outcomes of the course in terms of satisfaction, performance, and outreach was later done by the fourteen students who graduated during the period from 2012 to 2013, all of whom were female UAE nationals.

**Content analysis.** Content analysis and satisfaction of all objectives and outcomes of courses in accordance with the main goals of the program were performed by ten faculty colleagues from different disciplines who participated in our internal reviews. Review and analysis were done to determine the academic and organizational obstacles that the program faced over the five years of program implementation. The program was also reviewed vis-à-vis the top 100 US Universities' Leadership Programs as well as top 100 International Universities by utilizing the portal used to check the top 100 international and US Universities (Your Gateway to Universities and Colleges, 2013)

**Independent Reviews.** Independent reviews were done by experts in the field. In our case, we engaged the services four external evaluators to assess the program. The external evaluators of this proposed Leadership plan were composed of Dr. Corey Seemiller, Director of Leadership Programs, University of Arizona; Dr. Pamela Kalbfleisch, Concordia University Chicago; Prof. Sandra J. Peart, Dean and Professor, Jepson School of Leadership Studies, University of Richmond; Dr. Sharon Gramby-Sobukwe, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Eastern University.

## **2.3. Requirements**

**Faculty.** In order to achieve program objectives, the faculty members had to be highly qualified. In addition to holding the normal and appropriate credentials for teaching at the university, they must have the academic qualification and the experience to teach leadership courses that draw from broad scholarship in the humanities and social sciences. Given the still-developing status of the field, it is crucial that faculty demonstrated a keen interest and possess innovative experience with leadership issues. They must also possess an extraordinary ability to inspire students, fellow faculty, and the university community about the valuable contributions of the field. In addition, they should demonstrate leadership themselves in collaboratively promoting the discipline through active participation in conferences, professional association, and other activities. Finally, faculty members must be aware of how our university particular models leadership to best serve its students and community.

**Admission Requirements.** Candidates for Bachelor Degree in Leadership and Society must apply for admission to the Leadership and Society Program during the spring semester of their second year. They must fill an

application form and provide all the required information by the first week of the spring semester. Students wishing to major in Leadership and Society are evaluated based on the following criteria:

- must have completed their UAE University General Requirements, General Education Requirements, and College of Humanities and Social Sciences Requirements.
- must have earned a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 in courses taken at the UAE University.
- demonstrate English language skills that meet a minimum IELTS score of 5.5
- demonstrate Arabic Language skills.

In order to assess individual qualities, the application process requires candidates for a Bachelor degree in Leadership and Society degree to :

- submit a Statement of Purpose and Commitment.
- participate in a personal interview.
- provide presentations as partial evidence of their student leadership potential.

These allow the Admission Committee to learn more about each of the candidates and the qualities that each of them may bring to his/her study and the program. Once accepted into the program, students are required to maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 to proceed through the program and graduate. Students who fall below this level in two consecutive semesters will be subject to review by the program's Progression Committee and may be required to transfer to another program.

#### **2.4. Course Model**

Course Goals. Based on the analysis of the internal and external inputs by the faculty and experts, respectively, and researches on best practices in leadership studies and development worldwide, we came up with the following goals that reflect the intra-personal developmental needs as well as the inter-personal ones. It also considered the organizational aspects of team- working and team -leading at the same time. Accordingly, the students of the Leadership and Society Program are expected to accomplish the learning goals and outcomes shown in Table 2. Based on these goals, we implemented the course design for the inter-disciplinary major in Leadership and Society shown in Table 3. As a corollary, Table 4 shows the course design for those who took the interdisciplinary Leadership and Society course as a minor field of study.

On the whole, the processes employed in the development of the Leadership and Society program was a synergy of conceptual, strategic, and operational elements that defined the program while paying close attention to the local and global cultural context in which the program is embedded in. The conceptual requirements were realized in the development of the program concept and the curriculum. The strategic requirements were met in the approach to design and delivery and the operational requirements were attained through the collaborative efforts of various stakeholders in contributing to the development, implementation, and evaluation of the program. After 5 years of its implementation, a number of thirty two students graduated from the Bachelor's program with twenty having majors in Leadership and Society and twelve with minors in Leadership and Society.

### **3. Assessment and lessons learned**

Our assessment begins with a note of caution regarding the “modifier” issue. As numerous disciplines recognize a need to integrate leadership as a topic of study, this apparent popularity at times may have the disadvantage of housing the discipline in many dispersed umbrellas, something that may be a main reasons delaying it from becoming independently recognized and independent and authoritative. When a leadership program serves a specific discipline (such as Educational Leadership, Communications Leadership, Organizational Leadership, Engineering Leadership, Social Leadership, Economical Leadership... etc.), there is a temptation for it to be used merely to provide scattered courses to fill up degree requirements. The need to construing a sound selection of courses as part of a dedicated program that is not “watered down” (Riggio 2011) is very important to crystallize Leadership Studies as a discipline. A related issue is the need to distinguish between leadership and management. Leading a discipline is much different from managing it, and so leadership is not simply an administrative subject.

Many fundamental questions remain in the pedagogy and content of the emerging field of leadership studies (Murphy & Riggio 2003). Our early debates dealt with questions that typically arise when a Leadership program is proposed. After facing foundational objections from those who doubted whether leadership can be learned and taught at all, huge debates also arose about the following: whether such teaching should occur at the post-graduate level ( a view once held by this author); whether the education should create leaders ready to work immediately after graduation, or should it instead be building a potentiality for future opportunities; whether the education should aim to prepare people for work as supporters and facilitators for actual decision makers; whether leadership instruction should act to promote individual disciplines; and whether its primary focus should be to produce leaders which could spread into society and act as community leaders and pioneers. Another

important argument arose about whether it should be a solo major, double major, co-major (ex. Peace College /US; Brungardt, Greenleaf, Brungardt & Arensdorf, 2006), or a minor. The latter is designed so that the greatest number of leadership candidates could take advantage of such learning opportunities.

The experience in the implementation of Leadership and Society also surfaced the issue on the faculty. According to Riggio (2013), to be a rigorous, the program has to be taught by accomplished faculty. The multidisciplinary nature of the program requires the faculty to have multidisciplinary expertise. The dearth of experienced faculty with multi-disciplinary expertise was a real impediment to the program. It is just hoped that this could be addressed in the future by tapping on the services of graduates in advanced leadership courses or by deliberately motivating the faculty to pursue higher studies along this aspect of leadership development.

It is also worthy to note that there are no accrediting agencies as of yet that can ascertain the effectiveness of the program. We were able to cross this bridge however through the assistance of a plurality of expert views from inside and outside the university. The program was already a collaborative effort from its inception and this ensured that the program was not a single person's agenda but was truly faithful to the vision of the university to develop a new generation of leaders.

The program is not only multidisciplinary but trans-disciplinary as well and here lies the crux of another issue: gauging the interdisciplinary mindset. In the absence of an established metrics to gauge the contribution of different disciplines in creating such a broad base of knowledge expected not only of a scholar but a leader as well, a parallel challenge is posed to scholars and researchers as well. Hopefully, further conversations on this emerging field will stimulate scholarly inquiry in this direction.

After reviewing international programs and reflecting on the experiences at our own program over the last few years, it seems these questions over implementation are best addressed depending on the hosting university and its mission. In the context of the UAE and for UAEU, supporting a Minor in Leadership Studies was deemed an essential component consistent with university and national goals. On the whole, the Leadership and Society program was successfully implemented according to design but there is still room for its further enhancement. We also hope that this endeavor will help spark further conversation and research on the Leadership and Society program that can offer alternative reference points for those developing new leadership programs or enhancing existing ones.

#### 4. Conclusions

The Leadership and Society program is a bold and novel step taken by the UAEU to respond to the need for developing future leaders among the young in a country that is rapidly moving towards becoming a highly competitive knowledge-based economy. The sensitivity to the cultural context made the development process avoid the cut and paste approach from hundreds of programs existing on the subject. Rather, the development process was evolutionary and synergistic. The program locates itself at the intersection of the conceptual, strategic, operational, and contextual dimensions associated with the multidisciplinary nature of the program. It highlights the synergy of these dimensions that is facilitated by the convergence of efforts of the university's internal stakeholders in collaboration with external experts, all of which led to the birth of the program. While growing pains were experienced in its implementation, these were taken not as stumbling blocks but stepping stones to further find ways to improve, enhance, and sustain program growth. Since leadership studies and development is an emerging field, the program can be likened to the Confucian first stem in a journey of a thousand miles. At best, it can serve as a model that can inform the development of similar initiatives in the Arab world where the need to re-cast existing programs to make these more sensitive to context is fast becoming an imperative.

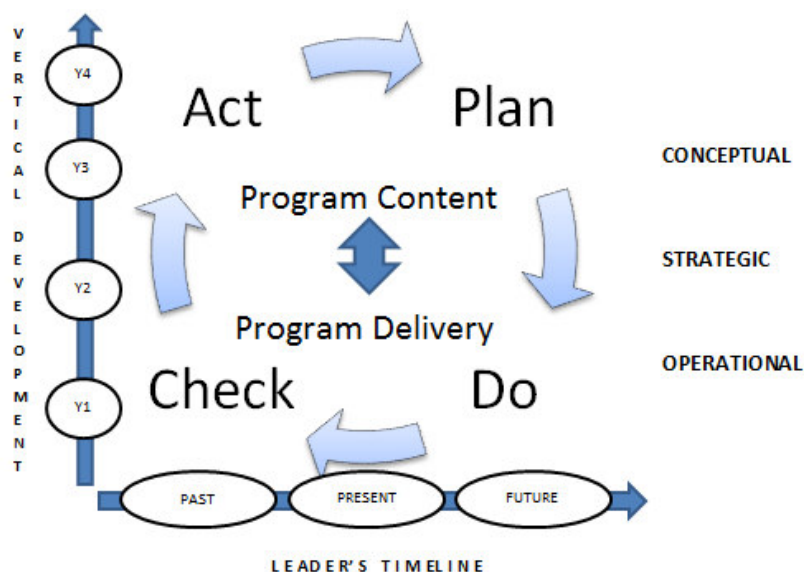
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**Figure 1. Framework of Program Development**



**Table 1. Typology of Development Programs in the Middle East and North Africa**

Types	Scope	Examples
National Leadership Development Programs	Nationals in public, private and semi-public organizations in Arab countries who exhibit potential to become leaders within the government	-Mohamed Bin Rashed Center For Leadership Development - Dubai Women's Establishment - UAE Governmental Leaders Program
Educational Institutions	University students and executive education participants from the public, private and nonprofit sectors	-Dubai School of Government -Sheikha Fatma Program at Zayed University - Al Yamama In Saudi Arabia with Oxford -Qatar Science Leadership Program - Effat College in Saudi Arabia - American University in Cairo Gerhart Center
Private Sector / Work Organizations	Company employees who are selected or self-nominate for training for management positions	-Shell - BP
Local and Regional NGOs	Non-governmental organizations and members of civil society who are training for community leadership and action	-CAWTAR -IREX
International Organizations	Training on leadership for countries and their administration provided by donor agencies as part of development aid	-MEPI - World Bank
Commercial Training Centers	Provide training on a commercial basis to any institution which requires that service	-UAE Leadership Training Center

Source: Al-Dabbagh & Asaad (2010: 5).

**Table 2. Learning Goals and Outcomes**

Goals	Outcomes
<b>Goal 1 (G1):</b> Develop personal leadership skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop goals and priorities to balance competing demands</li> <li>2. Recognize responsibility and accountability for own performance and behavior</li> <li>3. Assess the need for continuous learning and professional growth</li> <li>4. Demonstrate career interests and goals, awareness of program-related career possibilities</li> </ol>
<b>Goal 2 (G2):</b> Develop communication leadership skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop effective communication with others</li> <li>2. Identify mistakes and successes, and adjust future plans accordingly</li> <li>3. Explain ideas and materials effectively, both orally and in writing</li> <li>4. Express information in variety of forms - e.g. word, graphs, charts, diagrams</li> <li>5. Demonstrate clear and effective writing of leadership reports</li> </ol>
<b>Goal 3 (G3):</b> Develop teamwork skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Employ team work skills</li> <li>2. Demonstrate respect for different opinions and arguments</li> <li>3. Evaluate the performance of others</li> <li>4. Generate problem solutions and conflict resolution</li> <li>5. Demonstrate the ability to motivate others</li> </ol>
<b>Goal 4 (G4):</b> Explain theories of leadership and society	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss the different theories, concepts, and principles of leadership</li> <li>2. Examine the political, economic, social, and environmental aspects of local and international society</li> <li>3. Examine leadership theories and relevant knowledge</li> </ol>
<b>Goal 5 (G5):</b> Develop effective engagement in society	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Apply values of hard work, honesty, and integrity</li> <li>2. Define the role of volunteerism</li> <li>3. Show effective communication in diverse work environment</li> <li>4. Initiate positive changes in society</li> </ol>
<b>Goal 6 (G6):</b> Develop creativity and problem solving skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assess different situations and problems</li> <li>2. Identify the root cause of a problem or issue</li> <li>3. Operate innovative and creative solutions to problems</li> <li>4. Analyze regional and global issues</li> <li>5. Interpret different points of view/interdisciplinary perspectives</li> <li>6. Synthesize facts</li> <li>7. Analyze arguments and actions</li> </ol>

**Table 3. Course Design for interdisciplinary major in Leadership and Society**

Main Courses to be studied (3 CH each), (all compulsive but not the last two courses)	Goals /Courses Associated	Suggested Subjects to be fulfilled from other disciplines (to select 5 courses)	Goals /Courses Associated
6 Principles of Leadership	G1, G2, G4	Sociology of Organizations (Sociology)	G3
7 Identity in a Multicultural World	G1, G4	Social Psychology (Psychology)	G2, G4
8 Organizational Leadership	G3, G4, G6	Government & Politics of UAE (Political Science)	G4, G1
9 Interpersonal Leadership	G1, G2	International Organizations (Political Science)	G2, G6
10 Values and Ethics of Leadership	G1, G2, G3, G5	Contemporary Civilization (History)	G2, G4
11 UAE Society and Government in Globalized World	G4, G5	Principles of Economics (economics)	G5
12 Leadership Communication	G2, G5, G6	Social Entrepreneurship (Business Administration)	G1, G3, G6
13 Field Experience	G3, G5, G6	Fundamentals of Management (Management)	G2, G3
14 Internship	G3, G5, G6	Civilizations in Dialogue (Leadership)	G2, G5
15 Capstone Course (Faculty requirement)	All Goals	Twenty-First Century Challenges: Environment (leadership)	G3, G6

**Table 4. Course Design for a Minor in Leadership and Society**

<b>Main Courses to be studied (3 CH each), (all compulsive but not the last two courses, (see Apndix:2))</b>	<b>Goals /Courses Associated</b>	<b>Suggested courses as an Electives to be fulfilled from other disciplines (to select 1 courses)</b>	<b>Goals /Courses Associated</b>
1. Principles of Leadership	G1, G2, G4	Field Experience (Leadership)	G3, G5, G6
2. Identity in a Multicultural World	G1, G4	Values and Ethics of Leadership (Leadership)	G1, G2, G3, G5
3. Organizational Leadership	G3, G4, G6	(Course relates to specific specialty according to peripheral of major)	
4. Interpersonal Leadership	G1, G2		
5. Leadership Communication	G2, G5, G6		
• UAE Society and Government in Globalized World	G4, G5	Twenty-First Century Challenges: Environment (leadership)	G3, G6
• Principles of Economics	G5	Civilizations in Dialogue (Leadership)	G2, G5