**Leadership Learning Intervention**

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**Enhancing Ethical Leadership: A Development Program for the Undergraduate Honor Council**

**Introduction**

The Undergraduate Honor Council of the College of William and Mary is an organization tasked with defending the honor of the institution and addressing all issues related to the honor code, including cheating, lying, and stealing. It comprises students selected from the various schools of the university under the supervision of the Office of Student Accountability and Restorative Practices, which receives, hears, investigates, and processes student cases, prescribes sanctions, and sensitizes students to the implications of their actions. However, these leaders face the following difficulties: reliance on the outcomes prescribed by the honor code and challenges in addressing more complex cases. This greatly affects the council's ability to present fair determinations and win the confidence of the broader campus community. To counter these problems, leadership learning interventions aimed at improving decision-making, understanding the nature of violations, and engaging stakeholders have been designed. This essay focuses on these interventions, utilizing workshops, mentorship, and case simulations to provide Honor Council members with tools to pursue ethical, efficient, and fair leadership.

**Group/Organization Description**

The Undergraduate Honor Council of the College of William and Mary is a vital organ that maintains and enhances ethical practices and standards across the college. Student-led and advised by the Office of Student Accountability and Restorative Practices, the council handles cases of honor code violations such as cheating, lying, or stealing. They evaluate cases, determine sanctions, and communicate decisions to students. They aim to promote fairness and accountability, though the challenging nature of their work sometimes leads to difficulty.

Despite their understanding and commitment, student leaders often struggle with core tasks. One major weakness is their heavy reliance on the honor code to reach outcomes. This reliance can result in prejudiced decisions, especially when special circumstances are not considered. Many council members express difficulty addressing factors such as intent or extenuating circumstances using rigid rules. Additionally, poor communication undermines the clarity and confidence of decisions (Oladeinde et al., 2023). These challenges highlight the need for leadership development programs to equip council members with competencies to handle complex cases effectively.

This leadership intervention aims to address these challenges by enhancing the council's ability to make ethical decisions, understand context, and communicate effectively. Through workshops, mentoring, and simulations, the intervention seeks to develop critical and cooperative thinking. Council members will apply what they learn to solve cases and help the council fulfill its mandate, ultimately fostering integrity and fairness across campus.

**Learning Outcomes**

This leadership learning intervention seeks to achieve several objectives aimed at fostering growth and effectiveness among student leaders. First, participants will enhance their problem-solving skills by evaluating not only honor code violations but also the circumstances surrounding them, such as intent and extenuating factors, aligning with transformational leadership principles of ethical decision-making and comprehensive thinking (Dugan, 2017). Second, they will gain a deeper understanding of the honor code, moving beyond a prescriptive approach to one where discretion and compassion are exercised, as supported by adaptive leadership theory, which emphasizes openness and flexibility in addressing complex situations. Third, participants will improve their communication skills by learning to articulate decisions, provide constructive feedback, and express empathy, thereby building trust and credibility among stakeholders through guided discussions and practical scenarios (Guthrie & Jenkins, 2018). Fourth, the intervention will promote moderated sanctioning practices, fostering equitable and context-sensitive sanctions that align with a restorative justice approach and the council’s educational mission. Lastly, participants will cultivate a commitment to lifelong learning by engaging in reflective practices that deepen their self-awareness and leadership approaches, ensuring long-term personal and professional development applicable across various contexts.

**Justification for Selected Format**

This leadership learning intervention employs a structured combination of workshops, mentorship, and case studies to ensure that student leaders achieve the desired learning outcomes effectively. Each element has been carefully selected to address the critical skills and understanding required for their roles, creating a holistic and immersive leadership development experience.

**Workshops** are the cornerstone of the intervention, focusing on key areas such as ethical leadership, contextual analysis, and communication skills. These sessions are designed to be interactive, incorporating role-plays and group discussions that allow participants to engage actively and critically with the material. For instance, role-plays enable student leaders to practice evaluating complex situations, considering both violations and the surrounding circumstances such as intent and extenuating factors. Group discussions provide a platform for collaborative learning and diverse perspectives, helping participants develop empathy and a more nuanced understanding of the honor code. The monthly schedule ensures consistency, reinforcing concepts over time and allowing participants to apply what they learn incrementally. This approach aligns with research by Guthrie and Jenkins (2018), which emphasizes the importance of sustained leadership development for meaningful growth.

**Mentorship** is another key component, pairing each student leader with an advisor or staff member for individualized guidance on ethical decision-making and leadership skills. This one-on-one relationship fosters relationship-based learning, enabling participants to delve deeper into the complexities of their roles. Mentors provide personalized feedback, help mentees navigate challenging scenarios, and encourage reflective practices that promote self-awareness. Drawing on Dugan's (2017) emphasis on transformational leadership, this format ensures that participants not only understand the theoretical aspects of leadership but also develop practical strategies to exercise discretion, compassion, and fairness.

Together, these elements create a dynamic and comprehensive leadership development program. Workshops provide the foundational knowledge and skills whereas mentorship offers personalized support and growth. This multi-faceted approach equips student leaders with the problem-solving abilities, ethical decision-making skills, and communication proficiency needed to fulfill their roles effectively, ultimately promoting equitable, restorative, and compassionate leadership within the council.

**Theoretical Frameworks**

My intervention is firmly rooted in three interrelated theoretical frameworks, namely,transformational leadership, relationship-centered leadership, and adaptive leadership, each providing essential elements for addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by student leaders in the honor council. These frameworks are highly appropriate for this intervention as they collectively prioritize ethical decision-making, collaborative processes, and the ability to navigate complex situations, all of which are critical for the desired outcomes.

Transformational leadership, with its focus on vision, ethics, and people development, offers a strong foundation for shaping student leaders who can inspire trust, model ethical behavior, and foster an inclusive culture (Dugan, 2017). This framework is particularly relevant for the intervention as it encourages leaders to think beyond procedural endpoints, such as simply applying honor code guidelines, to consider the broader implications of their decisions. By grounding workshops in transformational principles, the intervention helps participants develop the critical thinking and empathy required to evaluate not only violations but also the intent and extenuating factors surrounding them. Furthermore, this framework aligns with the mentorship component, as transformational leaders are known for their ability to guide and support others in their personal and professional growth. This ensures that mentors can model the ethical and visionary leadership behaviors student leaders are expected to emulate.

Relationship-centered leadership emphasizes the importance of interpersonal processes, shared decision-making, and collaboration (Wen et al., 2018). This framework is crucial for fostering confidence and cooperation within the honor council and the larger community it serves. Through activities such as role-plays, group discussions, and case study analysis, the intervention encourages student leaders to build trust and engage meaningfully with their peers, mentors, and stakeholders. Relationship-centered leadership also supports the intervention’s restorative justice objectives by emphasizing the relational aspects of accountability and fairness. It encourages leaders to prioritize the needs of those impacted by violations, fostering resolutions that are both empathetic and inclusive. This framework ensures that the council functions not just as a disciplinary body but as a collaborative community focused on growth and education.

Adaptive leadership equips leaders with the skills needed to navigate complex and emergent issues, making it an ideal framework for addressing the challenges associated with honor code violations (Eddy & Kirby, 2020). This theory is particularly relevant to the intervention’s case study and mentorship components, where participants learn to balance the prescriptive aspects of the honor code with the unique circumstances of each case. Adaptive leadership emphasizes flexibility, critical analysis, and the capacity to address systemic issues, which are essential for fostering fairness and ongoing learning within the council. By engaging in simulated scenarios and receiving feedback from mentors, student leaders develop the ability to respond effectively to diverse and unpredictable situations, ensuring that their decisions are both principled and context-sensitive.

**Why These Frameworks Are Most Appropriate**

These three frameworks complement one another and address the key aspects of the intervention. Transformational leadership provides the ethical foundation and vision needed to inspire trust and foster an inclusive culture. Relationship-centered leadership highlights the importance of collaboration and interpersonal processes, ensuring that student leaders approach their roles with empathy and a focus on community-building. Adaptive leadership equips participants with the tools to handle complexity and ambiguity, allowing them to make nuanced decisions that align with both the honor code and the individual circumstances of each case.

By integrating these frameworks, the intervention creates a comprehensive approach to leadership development. It ensures that student leaders are not only prepared to fulfill their roles effectively but also equipped to grow as ethical, collaborative, and adaptive leaders capable of navigating the complexities of their responsibilities. This alignment of theory and practice makes these frameworks the most appropriate for achieving the intervention’s objectives.

**Program Schedule and Timeline**

The leadership intervention for the Undergraduate Honor Council will take place during the Spring 2025 semester, incorporating monthly workshops, bi-weekly mentoring sessions, and case study simulations to progressively build participants' leadership skills. The program begins in January with a three-hour Ethical Leadership Workshop, featuring a 15-minute lecture on transformational and adaptive leadership theories, group discussions on ethical dilemmas, role-playing activities, and a debrief session. This foundational workshop introduces participants to ethical decision-making frameworks and sets the tone for the semester (Dugan, 2017).

In February, the focus shifts to Contextual Decision-Making, with a two-hour workshop that includes case study analysis, scenario simulations, and a reflective debrief. These activities equip participants with skills to assess context and intent in honor code violations, aligning with Adaptive Leadership principles (Eddy & Kirby, 2020).

March emphasizes Communication and Collaboration through a two-hour workshop incorporating a lecture on communication strategies, role-playing exercises, peer feedback, and reflective activities. This session helps participants articulate decisions empathetically and effectively (Guthrie & Jenkins, 2018).

In April, the program culminates with a four-hour Mock Hearing Simulation, serving as a capstone exercise where participants apply their knowledge of ethical reasoning, contextual analysis, and communication to multiple complex cases. This simulation highlights experiential learning's role in leadership development (Bird et al., 2021).

The semester concludes in May with a three-hour Reflection and Feedback Workshop, where participants review their growth, share insights, and suggest improvements for future programs. This reflective practice fosters self-awareness and continuous improvement, reinforcing a commitment to lifelong learning (Wen et al., 2018). Throughout the semester, bi-weekly supervisory meetings provide individualized guidance and feedback, ensuring sustained development and support for participants.

**Learning Strategies and Pedagogies**

To meet the needs of the Honor Council, the program is grounded in case study analysis, role play, team learning, and reflection. The program incorporates **case study analysis** as a cornerstone learning strategy, providing a practical, hands-on dimension to the intervention. These case studies simulate real-life situations that student leaders are likely to encounter, such as managing violations with ethical dilemmas or balancing restorative justice with accountability. Participants analyze these cases in a structured setting, applying their knowledge to make decisions while considering multiple perspectives. Feedback from peers and mentors during these exercises enhances critical thinking and builds participants’ confidence in applying their skills in real-world contexts. As highlighted by Ahuja (2024), experiential learning through case studies fosters the practical application of knowledge, bridging the gap between theory and practice.

**Role play and simulations** enable student leaders to immerse themselves in scenarios that mirror real-life challenges, allowing them to practice decision-making and problem-solving in a controlled environment. These activities encourage participants to evaluate contextual factors, such as intent and external pressures, and to apply ethical reasoning to their decisions. By simulating honor code violations, role play allows participants to build empathy, improve their communication skills, and refine their ability to justify decisions effectively. This strategy aligns with adaptive leadership principles, which emphasize flexibility and situational awareness, as well as transformational leadership, which highlights ethical decision-making (Dugan, 2017).

**Team learning** fosters collaboration among participants, encouraging them to work together to analyze cases, discuss issues, and develop solutions. This strategy helps build trust, communication, and problem-solving skills within the Honor Council, reflecting the importance of shared decision-making and collective responsibility. By working as a team, participants learn to appreciate diverse perspectives, develop interpersonal skills, and create a stronger sense of community within the council. These elements are crucial for fostering an inclusive and supportive environment that reflects transformational leadership's emphasis on collaboration and relationship-building (Dugan, 2017).

**Guided discussions** serve as a supplemental strategy to deepen understanding and promote critical thinking. These discussions provide a platform for participants to engage in meaningful dialogue, share experiences, and reflect on the challenges and opportunities they face in their roles. Facilitated by mentors or advisors, guided discussions encourage participants to articulate their thought processes, explore alternative perspectives, and integrate theoretical concepts with practical applications. This reflective process strengthens their decision-making abilities and aligns with experiential learning principles (Elendu et al., 2024).

Finally, the program emphasizes **self-assessment tools and reflection** to ensure continuous learning and self-improvement. Participants use self-assessment tools to track their progress, identify areas for growth, and recognize their strengths. Reflection activities, often conducted after workshops or simulations, provide participants with the opportunity to evaluate their performance, learn from their experiences, and set goals for future development. Incorporating feedback from peers and mentors further enhances this process, promoting the ongoing development of leadership skills and aligning with the Honor Council's mission of fostering ethical, empathetic, and effective leaders.

**Lesson Plan/Plan of Action**

As captured in the program schedule and timeline, the leadership intervention for the Undergraduate Honor Council will take place during the Spring 2025 semester with monthly workshops, bi-weekly mentoring sessions, and case study scenarios. The following is the detailed lesson plan or plan of action for each month inlusing the intended objectives and the expected learning outcomes with each activity assigned the minutes to be completed:

**January: Ethical Leadership Workshop** (3 hours)

* Objective: Introduce participants to transformational and adaptive leadership theories and their application to ethical dilemmas.
* Activities:
  1. Lecture on Leadership Theories (15 minutes): Overview of transformational and adaptive leadership.
  2. Group Discussion (30 minutes): Participants share ethical dilemmas they have encountered or anticipate.
  3. Role-Playing Activity (1 hour): Practice resolving ethical dilemmas using leadership theories.
     + *Scenario Example:* A student is accused of plagiarizing a paper due to similarities with an online article. Participants role-play investigating whether intent, oversight, or lack of knowledge influenced the case and propose an ethical resolution.
  4. Debrief and Feedback (45 minutes): Discuss lessons learned and how theories can guide future actions.
* Expected learning Outcome**:** Participants will understand and apply ethical leadership principles to decision-making processes.

**February: Contextual Decision-Making Workshop** (2 hours)

* Objective: Equip participants with skills to analyze context and intent when evaluating violations.
* Activities:
  1. **Case Study Analysis** (45 minutes): Review and discuss real or fictional honor code violations.
     + *Case Example:* A student is caught using notes during an exam. Participants analyze whether external pressures (e.g., illness, family issues) may have contributed and how these factors influence sanctioning.
  2. Scenario Simulation (1 hour): Participants role-play decision-making in diverse contexts.
     + *Scenario Example:* During a mock hearing, participants evaluate a case involving collaboration versus cheating in a group project.
  3. Debrief (15 minutes): Reflect on the impact of context on ethical decisions.
* Expected learning Outcome**:** Participants will demonstrate enhanced contextual analysis skills when assessing cases.

**March: Communication and Collaboration Workshop** (2 hours)

* Objective: Improve participants’ communication skills to articulate decisions clearly and empathetically.
* Activities:
  1. Lecture on Communication Strategies (15 minutes): Overview of effective communication in leadership.
  2. Role-Playing Exercise (1 hour): Participants practice delivering decisions and handling feedback.
     + *Scenario Example:* Role-play delivering a sanction to a student while addressing their concerns and maintaining empathy.
  3. Peer Feedback (30 minutes): Participants evaluate each other’s communication techniques.
  4. Reflection (15 minutes): Identify areas of strength and improvement in communication.
* Expected learning Outcome: Participants will improve their ability to articulate and justify decisions effectively.

**April: Mock Hearing Simulation** (4 hours)

* Objective: Synthesize learning from previous sessions to handle complex cases effectively.
* Activities:
  1. Introduction and Briefing (30 minutes): Outline objectives and provide case materials.
  2. Hearing Simulations (3 hours): Participants act out multiple cases, applying leadership skills.
     + *Scenario Examples:* Cases include theft of property during a group project, academic dishonesty involving shared files, and intentional falsification of documents.
  3. Feedback Session (30 minutes): Discuss outcomes and areas for improvement.
* Expected learning Outcome**:** Participants will integrate ethical reasoning, contextual analysis, and communication skills to handle complex cases.

**May: Reflection and Feedback Workshop** (3 hours)

* Objective: Review program outcomes and identify areas for continuous improvement.
* Activities:
  1. Reflection Activity (1 hour): Participants review their growth and development throughout the program.
  2. Group Discussion (1 hour): Share experiences and insights gained from the program.
  3. Feedback Collection (1 hour): Participants suggest improvements for future iterations of the program.
* Expected learning Outcome: Participants will commit to lifelong learning and provide actionable feedback to enhance the program.

**Connection Across Program Components**

All components of the program are interrelated, which makes it coherent for the participants. From such theories as transformational leadership, the program builds on ethical reasoning and systems thinking in decision-making. By using case studies and role-play, it's quite possible to develop contextual analysis as a learning outcome. The work of the program lies in workshops, mentorship, and simulation; thus, the participants are armed with theoretical knowledge, which they can practice practically on a structured basis.

The various elements are synchronized in order to create synergy. For instance, the mentorship sessions ensure that participants repeat concepts they learnt in workshops to their mentors, while case scenarios are real-life simulations that enable participants to exercise decision-making. The last components, self-assessments and feedback, would make the reflective processes consistent and feed the information into the learning process. This, I believe, addresses the Honor Council's needs and, at the same time, prepares the student leaders for the skills in ethical decision-making.

**Evaluation and Feedback Mechanism**

The following assessment approaches will be used in the assessment of program success: A self-structured questionnaire will be conducted among the participants to ensure their reception and perception of the effectiveness of each session in the overarched program. Supervised role-play exercises and simulations will be used in the project to evaluate the participant's performance together with peer reviews. Such appraisals will emphasize facets like the decision-making process, communication, and the possibility of accounting for the circumstances. Which include the questions like: On a scale of 1-5, how confident are you in applying ethical leadership principles to real-life cases after the session?, How effectively do you think the role-play scenarios prepared you for actual Honor Council hearings? Please explain. Were the case studies and simulations relevant to the types of cases you expect to encounter? Why or why not?, What challenges did you face in analyzing contextual factors during the simulations? Do you feel that the feedback from peers and mentors was constructive and actionable?, What specific strategies from the communication workshop do you find most applicable to your role?, What additional resources or activities would enhance your learning experience in future sessions?, How has this program changed your understanding of fairness and accountability in decision-making?, What improvements can be made to the mentoring component of the program?, Would you recommend this program to future Honor Council members? Why or why not?

Feedback is still going to be in a loop to make sure that improvements are made as they are noticed. Surveys and peer review feedback will be used to identify changes that need to be made in terms of the content and delivery of this program. For instance, should participants note difficulties in contextual analysis, more cases will be provided or specifically, mentoring on this issue will be organized. This iterative approach to the development of the program makes it more sustainable in that it is sensitive to the needs of the Honor Council and can adapt to better or improve with use.

**Conclusion**

This leadership development program for the Undergraduate Honor Council at the College of William and Mary is a multifaceted intervention aimed at responding to major problems in ethical reasoning, contextual sensitivity, and verbal self-expression. With the use of workshops, mentoring, and simulations, this program develops a set structure but with the freedom for students to improve as leaders. By combining transformational, relationship-centered, and adaptive leadership theories, it becomes possible to lay the sound groundwork for the skill. Moving forward, the program can be maintained and increase the number of participants in subsequent years through innovations based on the results of the participants' feedback. Subsequent versions could include progressive cases or enhance the model by including alumni mentors. In building the capacity, pro-ethics, and immense continuation of the Honor Council, this intervention also benefits a more equitable society among the campus population.

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