





















was hired. In the ARL positions in which I have served, the provosts wanted someone who could not only come in to deal with and change dysfunctional organizations [libraries], but also to bring them back to good health and service. A change agent is always a risk taker; you have no choice because implementing change always involves some kind of risks. (I would also say that ARL colleagues I know very well were probably hired because of their reputations for taking risks and leadership.)

“Typically,” one director pointed out, “the successful candidates have been risk takers and leaders in ... other settings, but ‘fit’ rather than ‘trait’ drives the final selection locally.” There is often a “personality fit”—fits well in the organization’s culture—and “good chemistry with the person to whom he or she reports.”

The opposite viewpoint is that “the academy is risk averse and built on consensus and tradition.” Furthermore, “if a library has been administered by someone tyrannical, the person making the hiring decision may need to focus on hiring a ‘healer’ rather than a risk taker—the library may need to get through the healing before it is ready to venture into risks.” Thus, those making hiring decisions might seek “safe” candidates, the opposite of what they had or someone who will not “rock the boat.” “They do not want someone who will create controversy, internally or externally, which might land on their desk.” This group of directors also commented:

The majority of the time, the people who do the hiring for ARL directors are not themselves directors. They rarely understand the full scope of traits and skills required of directors. Their response to candidates is highly situational, that is, how bad (or good) are things at that library already. If things are bad, the search committee will look for a risk

taker who will fix messes and bring change. If things are wonderful and the faculty love the library, the search committee will be cautious and look for someone conservative who will maintain the status quo. This is true even if one or two working librarians are on the committee, since they (1) don’t really understand the director’s job either and (2) have no power on the search committee. A search committee may sometimes perceive a leader as someone who will focus too much on external activities and not spend enough time on the home front or as someone who will not listen effectively to the individual “needs” of staff or faculty. The challenge when one is a candidate is often to figure out quickly whether one is dealing with a conservative or a venturesome search committee.

Most of those who make the final hiring decisions for deans/directors of ARL libraries are seeking people who are knowledgeable, articulate, cooperative, and sometimes even compliant. They want people who report to them to be effective, but not especially demanding of time, attention, and resources. They value good citizenship to the institution and discourage those who strongly advocate for their unit or are aggressively independent. Increasingly, they want deans/directors who are experienced fundraisers. Especially in the largest libraries, they rarely hire potential rather than experience.

One director disagreed with the proposition that those making the hiring decision consider either leadership or risk taking:

Librarians, by their training and experience, do very well in these areas because they alone on the academic side are promoted for these traits. LIS education stresses that most li-

brarians will be managers of people, money, and resources. By the time a librarian becomes a director, he or she has had extensive experience in all areas of management. This is not true of deans and department heads in academic units. Librarians self-select and advance leaders so that the pools for these positions are strong, not because the search process seeks leadership and risk taking.

In addition to leadership, institutions often seek "a good fundraiser, a trustworthy colleague, and someone who will represent the institution well." Furthermore, they want individuals with good people skills, who are innovative and who will get along well with the faculty and administration, including the person to whom the director will report. One director noted: "Smart academic leaders want innovative and successful leaders for their libraries. Often they seek out individuals who can change the organization and lead it into the future. On the other hand, I know provosts who intentionally avoid such risk takers and want status quo."

### Interviews

The purpose of the interviews was to probe the study's research questions and determine whether a library leadership crisis looms.<sup>23</sup> The directors did remark that the position is about "moving an organization forward; it is not about money and power." Being a director is "political and hard," and it is "stressful" and requires "knowing a little about many areas," a breadth of knowledge, the ability to "fix problems," to function without praise, to think on one's feet, to listen, to synthesize what one hears and reads; and maintain the "big picture—understand how all things come together." One director believed that the profession has been successful in developing and promoting people of color to managerial positions, "but not at the rate it should to match the nation's demographics." The critical traits associated with starting a new directorship, she

thought, are respect and trust, gaining the respect of the staff and getting the staff to "trust that I want the library to provide the best service and to hold me accountable if I break that trust." She also emphasized the importance of patience (combined with persistence) as the director seeks to change the organizational culture.

Another director pointed out that "You choose which traits to showcase at a particular time" and that changing times and circumstances might require different ones. For the directors interviewed, attracting talented individuals to a directorship is less of a concern than finding good people to become department heads. Many librarians, they commented, have no long-term interest in management, perhaps preferring "to be project heads." Such positions are short term with clearly defined dates and deliverables, and they want neither the responsibility of a full-time position in management nor their "life consumed by work." Critical issues confronting the profession, therefore, are to "get more good librarians to take responsibility and assume authority."

There was consensus that the university community is often unaware of what directors actually do and how complex the position is. One interviewee commented that upper-university administrators think of the library in terms of the time when they used to conduct research and do not associate libraries with many issues with which they now deal.

When the questions centered on the selection process for new directors, a common comment was: "A typical search committee consists of faculty, the director of information technology, and some working librarians. Neither these librarians nor the faculty are likely to be aware of what directors do." This director characterized two types of search committees:

1. Cautious ones that want to maintain the status quo. The members examine and compare the candidates line by line with the job advertisement.

2. Adventitious ones that are more willing to be innovative and flexible. They might even bring in consultants to help in the review process.

In either instance, a key question is, How well do committee members get along? Another director expanded on the two types by noting that institutions may seek the opposite of the type of director they are replacing. However, upon arrival at the institution, the new director might turn to members of the search committee, "as you figure they helped to get you hired."

A couple of directors thought they possessed all the traits; the others believed that nobody could master all of them and that the senior management team, as a whole, would have the set. It is important, they stressed, that senior managers constantly engage in self-examination and seek to improve themselves.

The interviewees did not believe there is any leadership crisis and that the pool of talented librarians for directorships is "no better and no worse than before." One of them remarked: "In research libraries the 80/20 rule applies; 80 percent of the directors are good leaders and 20 percent are not." This is all the more reason for the profession, he maintains, to maintain a good pool of candidates and to give such individuals the necessary experiences from which to learn and master different leadership styles.

Another reason to maintain a strong pool of candidates for the position of library director, it was noted, is that more than half the current directors are estimated to retire between 2002 and 2010. Given the assorted complex issues relevant to academic libraries, library directors, more than ever, will need to manage their relationships with others—both those internal and external to the profession.

As to the path for becoming a leader, the directors emphasized the importance of gaining diverse experiences in libraries and learning from those opportunities. "The best learning situations are those

that are long term and give opportunities for personal growth." One director cautioned: "Growth has to be associated with line authority. Flat organizations want leaders at the senior level who have had line authority." Those interviewed highlighted mentoring, involvement in professional associations, and attending leadership institutes. A director added participation in consortia to which the library is a member; such consortia might deal with issues that cut across different campuses as part of a state university system. Involvement in consortia provides contacts and information as well as affords opportunities to engage in problem solving.

"Nurturing," one director commented, "is the role of both the director and AULs [associate or assistant library directors]. Some individuals are more comfortable working with one than the other. Because the director has the final say about salary, and perhaps about tenure, some librarians will prefer mentoring from the AULs." She also pointed out that one purpose of mentoring is to connect "people to the profession" and that "there is more than one way to do things; there is often no single answer."

## Discussion

Three categories (self-awareness, self-regulation, and motivation) relate to "self-management"; the other two (empathy and social skill) cover "managing relationships with others." For self-management (tables 1–3), "visionary—able to build a shared vision and rally others around it" (table 3) had the lowest average (1.583) among those most frequently identified, which means that more respondents were likely to rate it as most important. "Stable temperament and ability to maintain an emotional balance under constant tensions" (table 2) was second (average: 2.724), followed by "cognitive ability to deal with complex scenarios/situations" (table 1; average: 3.764). Using 3.764 as a general guide, all the highly ranked traits in tables 2 and 3 had a smaller average. Clearly, there is

greater consensus on self-regulation and motivation than on self-awareness.

Turning to the other grouping (tables 4 and 5), "managing relationships with others," the most highly selected traits all had an average of less than 3.764. Among all the frequently mentioned traits (all five tables), the greatest consensus was on the importance of "visionary—able to build a shared vision and rally others around it" (table 3) and "ability to function in a political environment" (table 5; average: 2.186).

### Reorganization of Traits

Only one director suggested a reorganization of the tables. This person pointed out that "respect for individuality and diversity" should be moved from the self-awareness category to the empathy category. The trait, "broad knowledge of issues," would fit the self-regulation category better if it were reworded as "ability to contextualize a given situation," which might mean a broad knowledge of issues, but "the real point is the ability to think before acting because one is aware of the larger picture." Good listening skills," it was suggested, might relate to both self-regulation and empathy.

### Job Advertisements

A tertiary research question is, Do the traits identified in the job advertisements match the survey rankings? According to study findings, they do not! For the self-awareness category (table 1), the job advertisements were concerned mostly with objective measures of success (e.g., "proven record of innovative and effective leadership" [ranked the highest]). None of the advertisements mentioned individuals who had a "realistic understanding of oneself" (ranked second by the directors), "knowing where he or she is going—taking the organization" (ranked third), or even individuals who had a "sense of humor" (ranked fourth). This is particularly interesting because laughter and smiling are powerful creators of resonance.<sup>24</sup>

Likewise, for self-regulation (table 2), none of the advertisements mentioned

individuals with a "stable temperament" or the other highly ranked traits. The advertisements listed having a "broad knowledge of issues" as most important; yet, only twelve directors chose this among their top characteristics.

In the third category, motivation (table 3), there appears to be more similarity between the advertisements and the director rankings. The directors considered "visionary" as the most important trait, which appeared in fifteen advertisements. "Commitment" appeared most frequently in the advertisements and the directors regarded it as third. Interestingly, optimism was ranked fifth by the directors, but this trait was not mentioned in the advertisements.

In the fourth category, empathy (table 4), "good interpersonal skills" appeared most frequently in the advertisements but, together with "attract, build, and retain talent," tied for second position in the director ratings. The directors placed "treat people with dignity and respect" first, "keep the organization focused on high-quality service" third, "exercises good judgment" fourth, and "being a good listener" fifth. Yet, the advertisements mentioned none of these traits.

With the last category, social skill (table 5), there was a divergence between the advertisements and the director ratings. The directors ranked "ability to function in a political environment" the highest, but the advertisements did not mention this trait. Being "collaborative" appeared most often in the advertisements, but the directors ranked it fourth.

### Comparison of Findings to Broader Literature

An emotionally intelligent leader appears to have much in common with transformational leadership, another form of leadership. One way to look at transformational leadership is to contrast it with the concept of transactional leadership. Transactional leaders are power wielders; they guide or motivate their followers to establish and meet goals and to clarify role and task re-

quirements. In contrast, transformational leaders have an interest in the personal development of followers. This is similar to the EI concept of empathy. Transactional leaders get what they want and followers get something they want; succinctly stated, this is the “carrot-and-stick” approach. The transactional leader pursues a cost-benefit, economic exchange to meet subordinates’ current material and psychic needs in return for “contracted” services provided by the subordinate. Additionally, transactional leaders cannot sublimate their own needs to the organization’s, but the transformational leader can.<sup>25,26</sup> This is similar to the EI trait of “stable temperament and ability to maintain emotional balance.”

Transactional leadership works well when maintaining day-to-day operations in stable environments. The problem with transactional leadership is that subordinates are not motivated to work toward a group goal unless a personal incentive is involved. Clearly, transactional leaders do not achieve the benefits of outstanding performance and their subordinates do not realize their potential.

Transformational leadership builds on transactional leadership. Similar to the EI leader, the transformational leader recognizes existing needs in potential followers but tends to go further, seeking to satisfy higher needs and to engage the full person or follower.<sup>27</sup> The transformational leader can move followers to transcend their own self-interest for the good of the group or organization.

Transformational leaders provide individualized consideration and intellectual stimulation, and they possess charisma. They have special skills that allow them to provide a supportive environment while motivating followers to higher levels of personal action. A transformational leader inspires the members of the organization to achieve more than they thought possible. Consequently, transformational leadership shares many of the EI traits related to motivation.

It follows that a transforming leader acts to maximize the needs of followers.

Leadership also must stimulate the needs of the entire organization, constantly moving employees to higher-order needs. The term *transformational* stems from the ability to develop people as resources and to move them to a more satisfactory state of existence.<sup>28</sup> By appealing to higher-order needs, the transformational leader generates subordinate commitment to achieving the organizational mission.

In reviewing the literature on transformational leadership, the following traits appear consistently: acting creatively, acting interactively (with vision), being empowered, passionate, and ethical. Creativity is revealed through challenging the status quo and seeking new ideas. Creative leaders see problems from different perspectives and are able to solve those problems. EI covers creativity and being visionary, and has variations of the other frequently mentioned traits.

Transformational leaders act as visionaries in that they work to achieve a shared vision. They empower their followers due to their ability to translate intention into reality and sustain it for the followers. This empowerment puts duality into motion; empowerment creates more empowerment, which in turn creates more power and allows followers to achieve their potential. The strength and compelling nature of this vision empowers the organization’s members to excel.

A surprising element in the listing of traits is that the leader must have passion.<sup>29</sup> Transformational leaders are passionate about their roles, tasks, responsibilities, and obligations to their staff. They forget their personal problems, lose a sense of time, and feel competent and in control. Without passion, there is no direction and vision is short-lived. Although the word *passion* did not appear as an EI trait, several characteristics are similar; for instance, “driven to achieve beyond expectations” involves being passionate.

Another defining characteristic that emerges repeatedly in the literature on

transformational leadership is that the leader is an agent of change, a catalyst for change, but not a controller of change.<sup>30</sup> Change emerges as an EI trait, for example, "change/shape the library's culture," "comfortable with change," and "flexible in adapting to change or overcoming obstacles."

### Research Agenda

Instead of continuing to examine leadership traits in general, future research might probe different situations and identify any variations in the traits selected and used. Such research might take *The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education*<sup>31</sup> and, through the application of case studies, investigate those traits over time and determine any shifts in the most frequently occurring ones. In other words, how well do the general traits identified in this article hold over time and in different situations? Furthermore, within this context, are there differences in the occurrence of different traits by gender and other general variables?

Further research might look at other types of leadership than emotional intelligence, comparing the traits and reducing any overlap among them. Case study research might take individuals identified in this study or elsewhere as leaders and probe which traits they have and how they use them effectively.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, do staff and others concur with the characterization of certain individuals as leaders and any claim that directors possess certain traits?

### Limitations

The authors recognize that the importance of specific traits may vary from situation

to situation and institution to institution and that many respondents wanted to select more than five traits. Nonetheless, by focusing on a few, the authors had an opportunity to review and refine the emerging list.

### Conclusion

Leadership might be defined in terms of emotional intelligence. Many aspects of this theory are similar to transformational leadership. As Goleman noted, EI "can be learned and improved at any age. In fact, ... on average, people's emotional intelligence tends to increase as they age. But the specific leadership competencies that are based on emotional intelligence don't necessarily come through life experience."<sup>33</sup> He further observed: "Leaders who are motivated to improve their emotional intelligence can do so if they're given the right information, guidance, and support."<sup>34</sup>

Leadership involves leading or influencing people to develop shared values, vision, and expectations based on shared principles and behaviors and to advance organizational effectiveness. In effect, "if a person cannot influence others, they will not follow that person; and if they will not follow, the person is not a leader."<sup>35</sup> Still, few people possess every trait identified in the five tables, but those traits deemed most essential for EI and other leadership styles merit close scrutiny and development. For these reasons, it is important to identify the assorted traits that comprise EI and to see that aspiring leaders in library and other information fields cultivate the ones deemed most critical.

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### Notes

1. A. J. Anderson, course handout for LIS 404, library management (Dec. 11, 2000). Donald E. Riggs distinguishes between management and leadership in "The Crisis and Opportunities in Library Leadership," *Journal of Library Administration*<sup>TM</sup> 32, no. 3/4 (2001): 6-7. Steven R. Covey states that "leadership creates new paradigms. Management works within the paradigm. Leadership works on the system. You manage 'things'; but you lead people. Fundamental to putting first things first in our lives is leadership *before* management: 'Am I doing the right things' *before* 'Am I doing things right'?" Steven R. Covey, *First Things First* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 27-28.

2. Anderson, Unpublished course handout.

## Emotional Intelligence: Which Traits Are Most Prized? 275

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5. Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence* (New York: Bantam Books, 1995).
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7. *Ibid.*, 88.
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18. Shelley E. Phipps, "The System Design Approach to Organizational Development: The University of Arizona Model," *Library Trends* 53 (Summer 2004): 75, 77. See also P. Senger, "The Leader's New Work: Building Learning Organizations," *Sloan Management Review* 32 (1990): 7–23.
19. Florence M. Mason and Louella V. Wetherbee, "Learning to Lead: An Analysis of Current Training Programs for Library Leadership," *Library Trends* 53 (Summer 2004): 187–217.
20. *Ibid.*, 215.
21. Jennifer J. Salopek, "Social Intelligence," *T + D* 58, no. 9 (Sept. 2004): 17.
22. See Gregg Sapp, "James Neal on the Challenges of Leadership: An 'LA&M' Exclusive Interview," *Library Administration & Management* 19, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 64–67.
23. Riggs, "The Crisis and Opportunities in Library Leadership," 16.
24. Daniel Goleman, Annie McKee, and Richard E. Boyatzis, *Primal Leadership* (Boston: Harvard Business School Pr., 2002), 19–32.
25. K. W. Kuhnert, "Transformational Leadership: Developing People through Delegation," in *Improving Organizational Effectiveness through Transformational Leadership*, ed. B. M. Bass and B. J. Avolio (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 1994), 10–25.
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27. James M. Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), 9.
28. *Ibid.*, 141.
29. Steven Covey, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989).
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31. *The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education* (Menlo Park, Calif.: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2001).
32. See, for instance, the identification of leadership in Karin Wittenborg, Chris Ferguson, and Michael A. Keller, *Reflecting on Leadership*, CRL Publication 123 (Washington, D.C.: Council on Library and Information Resources, 2003).
33. Goleman, "Never Stop Learning," *Harvard Business Review* 82 (Jan. 2004): 28–29.
34. *Ibid.*, 29.
35. John C. Maxwell, *Leadership 101* (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, Inc, 2002), 69–70.