

# Developing Responsible Leaders: The University at the Service of the Person

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Received: 26 April 2010 / Accepted: 17 October 2011 / Published online: 8 November 2011  
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**Abstract** The university years present the culmination of the formative years in the life of a student and an important time to consolidate the years of study while developing career and life aspirations of any youth. However, ignorance and apathy characterize the university life of many a student more than the ideal desire for an intellectual experience that would be expected. Much of this apathy and ignorance can be attributed to a failure to help the students appreciate what the university ought to be and what they can gain from it in their time there. As definitive institutions of higher learning, universities ought to play a big part in shaping the next generation of leaders.

**Keywords** Anthropology · Clinical education · Faculty of law · Leadership · Mentorship · Philosophy · Service learning · Subsidiarity · University · Values

## Introduction

The university years present the culmination of the formative years in the life of a student and an important time to consolidate the years of study while developing career and life aspirations of any youth. However, ignorance and apathy characterize the university life of many a student more than the ideal desire for an intellectual experience that would be expected. Much of this apathy and ignorance

can be attributed to a failure to help the students appreciate what the university ought to be and what they can gain from it in their time there. As definitive institutions of higher learning, universities ought to play a big part in shaping the next generation of leaders.

This article centers on the experience students can be taken through as a practical and accessible means of inculcating and nurturing the seed of leadership in them. The proposal made is centered on students in a faculty of law in the belief that law students take on leadership positions in their places of work and must therefore learn the art of leadership. It will involve defining leadership as virtue and therefore stress the need to develop it through learning and practice. The proposal focuses on the studies students have to do in the normal course of their school work, using it to impart leadership skills through a well thought out curriculum content and an engaging mode of knowledge delivery. This article, however, also proceeds from the premise that the university is not all about meeting the aims of society or finding solutions to its problems. Whereas this is one of the aims, studying is also and maybe more about the development of the person, equipping him or her with the knowledge that will enable him or her to make a positive contribution to society. For this to happen, the person and his or her development come first, and the university as an institution must therefore be at the service of the student.

## Virtuous Leadership

This proposal for creating the next generation of responsible leaders relies heavily on the notion that leadership can be learnt and that the earlier years of one's life are better suited for this than the later years. The moral virtues which

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define leaders rarely arise in us by nature, but we have the capacity to receive, grow and perfect them by habit (Ross 1958, p. 183). Leadership is about character, and the content of character is virtue (Havard, 2007, p. xiv) which is attained through repeated acts that become habits. Consequently, leaders are made, not merely born because leaders must have and live virtues which can only be acquired by practice. Not everyone is born with all the qualities of an ideal leader and even less people, if any, can sustain these qualities if they have them without the effort to grow in them. For those with the talents of ideal leaders, leadership will entail preserving and enriching what they have been entrusted with, which requires practice. For the majority who are not ‘born’ leaders, they can, by training, become what by nature they were not. Expecting people to be leaders after years of having no sense or a poor understanding of the term and its proper application would be expecting too much.

There is no single definition of leadership and it may be impossible to arrive at a precise meaning of the word. (Glynn and Jamerson 2006, p. 151) Whatever definition is taken, however, leaders exhibit certain minimum characteristics necessary to help others work towards the attainment of a shared goal. One cannot reasonably expect from others values they themselves do not live by (Valenti 2010); leaders therefore must have a sense of principles and live them before they can help others to aspire for them. As Aristotle notes, it makes a very great difference, ‘in fact all the difference’, what habits we make the effort to form from our youth; these will define our character and make us just, temperate, good tempered, diligent, brave or cowardly, inconsistent, self indulgent or irascible (Ross 1958, p. 183). The cardinal virtues, the hinges upon which all other virtues develop, present the essential ideals necessary for a solid foundation for leadership. The four cardinal virtues are prudence, temperance, fortitude and justice. They are ethical virtues which relate to human behavior (as opposed to intellectual virtues which relate to human knowledge) and constitute the basic characteristics of a leader which anyone aspiring to such position must acquire and develop over time.

#### Fortitude

Fortitude is strength of character, firmness of spirit, resilience or bravery which enables one to face the negative or difficult things in life with hope and calm. Fortitude is the virtue for a person in search of character; it encourages us to hold on to our ideals and principles once we set them even though it may be hard. To be able to hold a vision and inspire others to go at it with them, leaders must be courageous; this helps them to overcome all possible fears and strive for the goal. Courage enables one to take risks,

something which leaders must do in order to be innovative and bring change in their spheres of influence. People perceived as good sometimes make bad decisions; good leaders can, when faced with tough situations, resort to means or arrive at decisions they otherwise would not have. Many are the people who know vice is wrong and must be shunned and yet are overwhelmed by the lure of wrongs too beneficial that they take the risk, big or small, of being reprimanded if caught and do the wrong which they know they should not do. This is a ‘failure of character’ (Havard 2007, p. xiv) and happens when people, leaders, get used to following routine, doing things because that is the way things are done without making the conscious effort to develop habits they are convinced are necessary and non negotiable. Fortitude enables people to stand up for what they know to be right; the politician will toil hard to keep the promise he made to his constituents when they elected him; the policeman will take no bribe to let the offender go free for a wrong he has committed even when he cannot deny how much help that money would have been to him. With fortitude, the student will work hard at his or her studies, day after day, after day, knowing that hard work and not mediocrity is his calling; he or she will fight the temptation to cheat in exams. The professional will seek to prove himself or herself by hard work and the integrity that defines his or her vocation. Fortitude fosters the steadiness of the will in doing good despite all obstacles.

#### Prudence

Leaders need to have the capacity to make the right decisions in the face of numerous possibilities affecting themselves and others whose lives or well being depend on the decisions they make. Prudence is the virtue that enables one to discern situations in their reality and to make the best decisions in the circumstances. It requires one to be of sound judgment, which in turn means that they should consider all the facts of a situation, consult the relevant persons to get sound advice on the issue in question and then proceed to execute the decision arrived at. Leaders should be able to perceive situations in all their complexity (Havard 2007, p. 55) and understand all relevant underlying facts in order to make informed decisions. Prudence therefore requires one to seek advice constantly, to have the simplicity to acknowledge that they do not or cannot know everything, and the humility to seek the opinion of others who are more knowledgeable on the subject.

More than fact finding and deliberation, prudence entails executing the decisions arrived at. Without this virtue, many leaders end up theorizing much and achieving little in practice. Good will or good intentions are not enough; the constant practice of the habit of seeing things to the very end, exercising the virtues needed to put the last stone

makes the difference between mediocre and great leaders. To be solidly grounded, the practice of this virtue must start early.

### Temperance

Temperance is the virtue that enables one to have self control or mastery over his or her actions. Leaders need this virtue to overcome their shortcomings and persistently strive towards the desired end. For this, 'self-leadership' is necessary; they must first be leaders of their own lives before they attempt to lead other people. 'Men's supreme dignity lies in this, that they are directed towards the good by themselves and not by others' (Aquinas 1953). Temperance or self control enables one to manage himself or herself, to subordinate their passions and will to the greater good; only then can they have the authority to guide others and to lead organizations or institutions to attain desired goals. Without self control a person cannot have the capacity for magnanimity and humility which are indispensable characteristics of great leaders. These virtues demand that one does not let his or her needs or preferences override his or her obligation of service to others. True leadership is never self seeking or self serving; great leaders seek to serve more than to be served. The virtue of magnanimity directs a leader to constantly challenge himself or herself to greater heights, striving for the greater good of all and helping others to also set their goals high.

Leaders need to be persistent, not giving up in the face of difficulties but learn from mistakes and use them to better their output. More than merely doing things, leaders need a passion for what they do as this is the only way to inspire others to go along with them and to share in the journey of achieving the vision.

### Justice

Justice has as its object fairness in dealings with others. Justice encompasses all the other virtues because relating with others will necessarily entail treating them with dignity that is their due and as such exercising all the other virtues. Justice guides the relations of persons in society: those to whom they are bound by virtue of some relationship and those to whom they are bound merely by living or working together or alongside each other. It entails an exercise of the will, the constant practice of which leads to application of reason in dealings with others. Being just means giving to each person his or her due, what they are entitled to get from us not by virtue of what they do but simply for who they are.

A just person is always concerned about the welfare of his fellow human beings. He or she thinks of his or her obligations towards others as much as his or her rights,

seeks to exert himself or herself so that his neighbor does not suffer by his action and rather is spared apprehension that could arise from failing to execute the obligations of his state. A just person will serve his or her employer for the time he or she ought, will apply resources for what they are meant for; a just person will not take that which belongs to another, and properly understood, not even the honour or praise due to another. Justice calls for respect of the other person, and has honesty as its basis. Coupled with mercy, justice beckons us towards the poor and entreats us to be kind to them, seeing in them not failure or nuisance, a disgrace to society, but rather as presenting an opportunity to reach out to those who are in need for whatever reason; because they are victims of circumstances, or even if it be their fault, for we would gain but naught if we acted otherwise. Justice thus lived would create a more humane society together with the poor who will always be there in any civilization. A leader must understand his role in this context.

These and the numerous other characteristics that define leaders cannot be acquired overnight; they are values and virtues that ought to be inculcated in the person, to be applied not once, not occasionally but always and consistently. As such, we cannot afford to miss out on the university years to nurture in the young students these ideals, to use their disposition, open as it is to learning, to help them acquire the principles and values characteristic of great leaders and offer them the chance to grow in them, to live and practice them as they go about building their careers.

The approach taken to form the next generation of leaders must be one that places emphasis on the essence of excellence in studies, doing well in what one goes to do at the university. Over and above brilliance defined in terms of well-paid jobs and gauged merely in terms of success, excellence must be defined to include the notion of ethics that goes beyond the 'defense of intellectual property' or that 'treat[s] social responsiveness as a marketing tool'. (Nash 2010) Students will be taught, and learn, to take their studies seriously and not see their journey at the university only as a means to attain riches; they will be encouraged to seek by their reading to understand and develop themselves into experts in their fields and not just to pass exams; to see their studies as an opportunity to apply their mind and offer solutions to the many problems that face their kind. In addition to teaching the subjects that are the core of any field of study, the curriculum can and should be used to make the students more aware of their social environment, and at the same time also build up their understanding and quest for ethical principles in their field.

This article centers on the experience of students at the university, exploring an accessible means of inculcating in them the seed of leadership which they will go on to

nurture as they set about their careers. For purposes of clarity and focus, the proposal is presented to be applied in the context of law students at the upcoming Faculty of Law at Strathmore University in Nairobi, Kenya.

### **Creating Responsible Leaders: A Vision for Strathmore University Faculty of Law**

One question the upcoming faculty of law at Strathmore University faces, and one which it most certainly is ready to answer is, why another faculty of law? What does it plan to offer that the numerous other relatively new faculties are not already offering? The director of the School of Accountancy at what was then Strathmore College was once asked his views about a recent announcement that approval had been given to upgrade the College to a university. He said what mattered most to them was the overall development of the students who passed through the institution and success would be measured not so much by the name of a university, but rather by the contribution which time at the College made to the wholesome development of the students in all spheres of their lives (C. Sotz, Conference at Strathmore College, 2002). This has always been the mark of Strathmore and perhaps what most distinguishes it from the rest. Still a relatively young university, it has grown much in stature and prestige that it was ranked the top most university in Kenya and the best in Africa outside Egypt and South Africa in the 2009 and 2010 'webometrics' ranking of world universities ([http://www.webometrics.info/top100\\_continent.asp?cont=africa](http://www.webometrics.info/top100_continent.asp?cont=africa)), ahead of many of its predecessors. This is a great achievement by any means, but far from offering a chance to relax and glory in its success, it presents a challenge to the fast growing institution. What can it do to maintain its status as a credible university that focuses on the value of the person, striving to bring out the best in its students both in terms of academics and the value they add to society and also nurture them to be the best persons they can be?

The task of creating ethical and responsible leaders has been left almost entirely to business schools; the drive to restructure the teaching of ethics after the major corporate scandals such as Enron was centered on the business schools and teaching of MBA's.<sup>1</sup> Leadership is not usually viewed as a core concern in the study of law and the typical law curriculum does not offer courses in leadership. I

argue, however, that because of the role they are expected to play in the work place, much more emphasis must be put into teaching leadership, ethics and such other subjects to students in other fields and much earlier in the school curriculum. Students who take up courses at the university not directly oriented towards business such as medicine, law or engineering also end up occupying leadership positions in their places of work much in the same way as students with a business background. Lawyers, for example, are likely to head legal departments found in many business organizations, or to head law firms which are businesses in their own right or specialized departments within organizations. For this, they need more training in the art of leadership than most schools are designed to offer. Without training in leadership, lawyers may go on to propagate inappropriate ideas and inspire mediocre principles in those they happen to lead. This proposal supports the case for every law student to learn leadership skills in the conviction that the need to do so comes naturally with the quest for a law degree. As the system of rules set to maintain order in the relations in society, law has a real presence in many fields of business, playing as it does the role of regulator in areas such as economics and the regulation of markets. Increasingly, law also finds a place in relatively new fields. In such a dynamic set-up, using only the traditional means of teaching will not suffice to produce graduates able to fit in the challenging environment they find themselves.

For the most part of its history, Strathmore University offered business-related courses in fields such as accounting, commerce, and business management. Its focus on teaching ethics and other leadership oriented courses may have been taken as normal and well within the nature and scope of the courses it offered. As the university expands to deliver other courses, including law, this same approach and emphasis on leadership should be applied with the same vigor. While underscoring the point that the purpose of law, medical or engineering schools is not training in business, I stress the point that leadership is a function to be exercised in any area of work and the need for it, together with requisite training, whatever form it takes, must be emphasized while the students are preparing for these careers. As Prof. Gordon Graham notes, the purpose of the law is administration of justice as opposed to mere legal expertise (Mail & Guardian, 2010). What I call the traditional classroom method of teaching equips students with legal expertise, but the task of producing lawyers able to bring about the administration of justice must go beyond this and enable students to embrace a wider notion of the aim of their profession while at the university.

As Strathmore grows, it must be cautious not to compromise the function of the university with the benefits of commercialization; a very thin line exists between its

<sup>1</sup> See for example the Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRME) initiative, a comprehensive program for presidents and official representatives of leading business schools and academic institutions designed to inspire and champion responsible management education, research and thought leadership globally directed at management schools.

benefits and evils. The rise of private universities and parallel degree programs and with that the enrolment of students in higher education in Kenya over the last few years has been phenomenal. The growth in university numbers and student population in Kenya, as in many other countries, is to be lauded on the one hand as it offers more opportunities for students to acquire higher education. On the other hand, however, the question whether we are ready to take on the sudden increase in the numbers of students without compromising the quality of education and ensuring that the original objectives of the university are met begs an answer. This is because there is a direct relation between the quality of education and the quality of leaders, defined generally as good professionals able to make a positive difference in the environments in which they live and work.

The philosophy of Strathmore is to provide the most suitable means to improve the moral, social and economic conditions of the person and of society as a whole (Strathmore University Charter). This philosophy finds its roots in the principle of subsidiarity which states that an individual should be free to realize his destiny through his own initiative and his own response to the circumstances life presents to him in concrete historical choices (Carozza 2003, p. 43). Beginning with the concept that man, the person looked up to to become a leader, is endowed with an inherent and inalienable worth or dignity, it follows that the organs of society, whichever they may be; family, society, the state<sup>2</sup> or as in the present context the university, must be designed to promote his dignity and worth. Larger organs of society or collectivities do not exist for their own sake but to help the smaller collectivities and ultimately the individual to carry out their tasks efficiently (Carozza 2003, p. 43). Universities are one of the primary spaces where actualization of the capabilities of humans is promoted and as a consequence economic systems ought to be at the service of universities (Tabensky 2010). According to Amartya Sen, the purpose of economic systems is to create the conditions for humans to actualize their capabilities as opposed to the opposite supposition which places humans at the service of economic systems. Sen argues that the state and society have a big role to play in strengthening and safeguarding human capabilities (Sen 1999, p. 53) As such, the university is at the service of man, and whatever it does must be aligned towards the overall goal of contributing to his fulfillment. At the very heart of the university as an institution should be the student; the aim of the university ought therefore to be the development of the

student, helping him or her to make the most of his or her potential as a human being. The university thus plays its role when, as an institution of learning, it equips students with the knowledge they need in order to make informed choices in this regard. With this in mind, university education cannot be the mere imparting of theoretical knowledge.

### **Communicating the Mission of the University: An Essential Task**

Leaders Inspire Others to Share in Their Sense  
of Mission, Vision and Purpose

The university has to offer itself as a model of an institution with values the students can emulate since students learn more from what they see the institution doing to live up to an ideal of contributing to the greater good of society, than what lecturers will try to tell them in the classroom. In order to contribute to the vision of the university and take full advantage of what it has to offer, students should appreciate what the university was meant to be, what its place and role in society is and should be helped to see and say for themselves what they can do in the course of their studies to contribute to that vision. Leadership takes place through communication of ideas. It is inherently relational or social (Glynn and Jamerson 2006) and can only exist when a number of people share a common vision about where they, together, would like to be at the end of a given enterprise, venture, course or time working together on something. Students should understand what a university should offer them, what they can get out of it, and thus make a choice of which institution to study based on the values espoused by the university and the vision it offers for prospective students.<sup>3</sup> It is essential for leaders to begin their venture, whatever it may be, with the end in mind (Covey 2004, p. 97) in order to direct their energies towards attaining this end. As they get into the universities, students can be helped to form this vision, to make sense of the journey they are about to undertake as it is easier to be enthusiastic when one knows what awaits them at the end,

<sup>2</sup> See Article 1 (1) Basic Law of Germany (proposed by the Herrenchiessee Conference, 1948): The state exists for the sake of the human being, not the human being for the sake of the state. Quoted in Dawn Oliver & Jorg Fedtke, eds Human rights & the private sphere, a comparative study (2007).

<sup>3</sup> See Protagoras, a dialog written by Plato 380 B.C.E where Socrates asks his companion Hippocrates 'if you study with this fellow, what will he make of you? In carrying out the dialog, Socrates meant to help Hippocrates to think about why he went to Protagoras, a sophist, to study, and what such study would make him. If Protagoras was a sophist, Hippocrates could reasonably only expect to be made a sophist, of which he was ashamed, and that he did not know what a sophist was and neither whether that which he was committing himself to was good or evil. Similarly, students who go to an institution must be guided by the consideration of what values the institution espouses as that is what they can reasonably expect to gain by studying there.

as opposed to merely getting by and waiting for things to happen.

The university as an institution must have certain values that it seeks to instill. For it to create leaders, the university must be a leader in itself and show focus on the future, exhibit conviction in creating a vision by articulating tangible goals, values and strategy. It should operate from a set of core values and beliefs that guide its operations in all fields; it should be able to visualize itself through the society and employer's eyes in order to make itself useful by responding to their needs (Ulrich et al. 1999, p. 8). The upcoming faculty would do well to spell out its vision, aligning it with the overall vision of the university, and going through the motions of describing how this mission will be realized through the courses it plans to offer and the means of teaching it proposes to apply.<sup>4</sup>

To create an appreciation of the role of the university, student lectures can be organized at the commencement of their time at the university, designed to equip the students with knowledge of the aims of education, to put their coming years in proper perspective. Through these lectures, students will be helped or made to see the university as it was objectively meant to be so that they do not know or judge it only as they find it. In the course of the semester but in the beginning stages, speakers (selected from non-governmental organizations, government departments, and companies) could also be invited to talk about typical problems that our society faces at this moment in history: poverty, unemployment, food crisis, war and resource-based conflicts, violation of fundamental rights and human dignity, and other issues that have a legal bearing. The central aim of the lectures will be to get the students to commit themselves to take an interest in things outside the classroom from the very beginning of their course. It will be impressed upon them that contrary to popular belief, the university is not intended merely to prepare oneself to get a well-paid job, that what they should aim for is a wholesome development of their character or personality and this can only be given with hard work which in many cases will

<sup>4</sup> The mission and philosophy of Strathmore, stated in the Strathmore University Charter Legal Notice No. 86 Published on 23 June, 2008:

The mission of Strathmore University is the advancement of education through teaching, scholarship and service to society by *inter alia* providing an all-round quality education in an atmosphere of freedom and responsibility; creating a culture of continuous improvement; fostering high moral standards; and developing a spirit of service and respect for others.

The educational philosophy of the University is as follows:

- (a) A university must strive to serve society through the provision of quality academic and professional training, as well as human and moral training.
- (b) A university should provide the most suitable means to improve the moral, social and economic conditions of the person and of society as a whole.

require them to work beyond the comfort of the university library.

For success, the university must be able to turn its vision into action through its students, and the students in their turn should live out their convictions as they prepare for their careers. And because leadership involves acknowledging the fact that we always live in society and effects of actions are never isolated but are felt across borders, the institution should inspire a shared vision and purpose with its students and the communities in which it operates, or which depend on it for one reason or another. Meaningful university–community partnerships should be forged founded on an understanding of man and society. Whatever students learn must be taught and understood within the perspective of offering solutions to real problems. Hence, the community-based attachment offered in the second year of the course. Being present in communities will give the students the opportunity to apply what they learn in class and to exercise leadership skills making themselves useful to their immediate communities. In the community attachment exercise, the fact that the university students fall within the minority of persons who get the opportunity to pursue further studies should be made clear and be borne in mind by the students. Between 2002 and 2007, for example, less than 30% of the students who sat for the final secondary school certificate examination qualified for admission to the public universities in Kenya (Education Statistical Booklet 2003–2007 p. 28). Those therefore who manage to get into the university must appreciate their capabilities, wasting no time in using all available means and resources to turn themselves into the leaders society expects them to be wherever they are placed.

### Teaching Leadership

The aim of the university in attracting students should not merely be to perform well as an institution or to improve its ranking but instead to bring out the best in the students and help them to realize their full potential. Only thus will the students be able to go forth as leaders and help others in the same way to attain their best. In taking on new students, the effort put into attracting the best students intellectually, and the emphasis placed on defining success in terms of the 'A' student almost always overlooks the fact that virtue which is the fundamental characteristic of leadership is not talent (Havard 2007, p. 112); it is taught and lived. To produce the leaders society needs, leadership skills must be integrated in the curriculum, means applied to form students in leadership qualities in any discipline, without changing the nature of the subjects taught.

The process of creating leaders out of the students is not designed as a short course or once-off training. To

inculcate the notion that leadership and achievement are not ends in themselves but means to an end, the broad concept of leadership will be built into the curriculum and designed to last throughout the duration of the university course. The law curricula in most of the universities in Kenya is theory-focused arguably because of resource constraints but largely because of a lack of interest or conviction by many and a certain contentment with the status quo. But leadership cannot be taught through theory only because leadership is relational. Having the advantage of learning from the experiences of the other universities and consolidating best practices in the teaching of law both from within the country, the region and internationally, the upcoming faculty presents a valuable opportunity to alter this perception.

The following section seeks to explain the different applications of teaching leadership, the design of the syllabus and the leadership attributes that can be inculcated through the subjects taught and the mode of knowledge delivery.

### Curriculum Design

An ideal university is one where both teaching and research take place, with no compromise on either. The latter almost always seems to have preference because of the benefits it attracts; consulting opportunities for faculty members, a money making project for the school and the fame and fortune that come with this. In many instances, the abilities of the classroom teacher are seldom recognized beyond the university. A balance between the two functions of the university is needed for success to result. Research enables the institution and all involved, students and teachers alike, to keep abreast with current issues and developing technologies. Teaching on the other hand, when well done, ensures that the information thus gained is transmitted in an efficient way, empowering the students in their turn to understand, look for and put new knowledge into practical use.

The syllabus of the upcoming Faculty of Law is creatively structured to instill and bring out leadership aspects in the students. If well taught, if faculty are well aware of the vision of the university and strive to communicate it to the students so that they share in it, the students will emerge from the university as leaders in the true sense of the word. Building up on the institution's philosophy of scholarship and service to society being intrinsically linked, Strathmore's law faculty will offer subjects over and above the traditional strictly legal subjects that foster the wholesome formation of the students.

A recent article (Tabensky 2010) stated that that the main aim of the university cannot be merely to give people skills to get by in life, to achieve social status measured

primarily in terms of levels of wealth. "Education offers the opportunity to discover what we can do with our mind." (Bons 2009) Education comes from the Latin root *educere* which means 'to bring out' or 'bring forth' so that to be educated entails becoming fully human, (Bons 2009) drawing out a person's capacity to appreciate all the aspects of life. A system of education should therefore be appraised or criticized according to the values it espouses and seeks to instill. There is need for a culture of education where students and their lecturers alike value the need for self conscious, deliberate and intentional learning. (Fink 2003, p. 243).

Leaders need to be confident, believing in their capabilities and striving constantly to better themselves and acquire skills that drive them unwaveringly towards the desired goal. The confidence of leaders should come from their knowledge of the objective reality, which is the truth, which they need to use as the constant reference point to order their lives. In order to act appropriately, to respond to situations, to solve problems, there is a need for veritable information (Macdonald and Pichette 1997, p. 105) which in the final analysis is the truth; the truth about man and his end, society and its purpose. A leader must have a realistic perception of his subjects. A successful leader is people-oriented; successful organizations place emphasis on the people who work for them. Basic reasoning underlies this finding; man is in a given way and must be treated as man if he is to give his best; he reacts as man and responds to situations as only he can. If there are problems in society, many times they reflect a radical split between man, what he perceives himself to be and what he really is or ought to be (Duncanson and Samuel 1980, p. 12); the solution will lie in aligning these perceptions.

A basic study of man is therefore indispensable for anyone who is concerned with and hopes to offer a solution to man's problems as the study of law seeks to do. Strathmore has set the following as compulsory courses for all fields of study, including law: Introduction to Critical Thinking (which can be taught through practical service learning), Communication Skills, Philosophical Anthropology (the study of man), Principles of Ethics and Legal Business Ethics (which will help to understand the art of principled leadership, and also ethics in the context of legal practice), Social and Political Philosophy (a study of man and society) and Community-Based Attachment for 3 months. The aim of the courses taught in relation to the philosophy and anthropology of man will be to understand the nature of man-who is he and who is he meant to be which is necessary to understand better the reality of his world and his problems.

Some questions that such a study will seek to answer are: Who is man? A social being in search of self actualization? If so, they will make the discovery that no self

actualization occurs without service to others; it is in reaching out to others that human beings get the opportunity to be the best they can be, to realize their potential; but potential as what or as who? As human beings because that is who they are. What is man's end, what gives meaning to his existence; to what end does he toil each day or engage himself in the enterprises that he does? Such interrogations will bring to light the fact that the end of society is the common good of all. The university can be a place for students to discover this. Principles such as the common destination of goods, aimed at developing an economic vision inspired by moral values, will be taught in order to instill a vision that bears always in mind the origin and purpose of the world's resources (Anon., Presentation at Strathmore University).

We cannot deny the global moral deceit expressed as it is in the fall of corporate giants... Where did we go wrong? We ignored the obvious; emphasis on man-who we are, how ought we to behave. Although this noble aim has been lost to many universities in their quest for making money, the aim of the university from the ancient times has been to 'develop virtue and build character'. Ethics should be learnt by the business student as much as the law student because ultimately, leaders in both fields are needed and both students need to be prepared to face the moral issues they will encounter in their lives and future careers. The fall of large international corporations in the recent past as a result of acts of gross professional negligence and fraud has made it clear that what is needed to prevent such ethical failures is a corporate culture rooted in ethical and responsible behavior more than laws and rules restricting what people should or should not do in the work place. Correcting this notion of leadership that dictates what must or must not be done will require developing an opposite culture of responsible and sustainable leadership. But developing a culture cannot start when the students start working as is usually the expectation. It should not be assumed that they have the knowledge and instead use their university years to inculcate in them the ability to learn well founded standards of right and wrong.

That responsible leadership is exercised in freedom cannot be over-emphasized; a person should choose to do something because it is the right thing to do and never merely for external considerations. Freedom has to be understood as something that betters the one who makes use of it (Havard 2007, p. 124). It is the power of intelligent choice that prefers the option that leads to the greater good and is desirable only if it leads to good, otherwise of what use is it if it results in destruction? Yet this freedom is not without bounds. In so far as freedom calls for the exercise of choice to select options which are available to one, questions may abound on where to draw the line; how much freedom is worth its name? Virtue comes in as a

guide to determine the effective application of man's free will so as to result in his overall good. Freedom must therefore be directed. Chesterton acknowledges the concept of a freely constrained freedom with his remark: 'I could never conceive or tolerate any Utopia which did not leave to me any liberty for which I chiefly care, the liberty to bind myself.' (Chesterton 2007, p. 173) With virtue, man binds himself to the good and directs himself to that which will result in the overall good of society, consciously avoiding anything that leads to destruction.

Leaders are called upon to exercise their leadership skills and put forward values that will make the organization prosper. It is impossible or if possible it is unsustainable to lead with values that one does not hold. Leaders therefore must be persons of character; and character does not exist in and of itself, but also as it appears to others (Filson 2010), a fact that speaks volumes of leadership. Principled leadership calls for a leader to lead courageously, not merely doing right but being right, living the principles they propose to lead the organization by (Glynn and Jamerson 2006). A professional ethics course is included in the curriculum and can be taught not merely as a theory subject, but giving the students a feel of the complex real life situations they are bound to encounter in the work place. This will give them a chance to think about the responses they will have and to substantiate them. The ethics sought to be taught will be a virtues-based ethics as opposed to rules-based ethics. Whereas the latter are based on laws, the former are based on human nature so that they ascribe to the notion of doing something because it is the right thing to do, and not merely because the law says it should be done. The ultimate answer to success, however, it is defined, lies in virtue, and virtue is brought about by personal effort, it cannot be imposed on people.

Laws do not necessarily make men virtuous because they can get by with a strict observance of the minimum, or simply disregard them and hope not to be caught by the hand of the law. A good citizen who abides by the law is not necessarily a virtuous person as defined on the grounding of morals. Absent virtue, any effort to ensure that people, leaders, do the right thing will necessarily have a heavy reliance on command and control, the result of which is a definite placing of some above others, of masters above 'slaves' and a stifling of initiative. Any attempt at leadership that ignores virtue inevitably ends up being time consuming and resource dependent and is almost always bound to be unsustainable.

Legal Practice Management is another course offered by the law school that will contribute to the goal of teaching leadership. Teaching management of legal practice is useful as all students are expected to work in law firms for some time and many to run their own firms in the future. In a typical law practice, all management is comprised of



lawyers, in most instances trained only as lawyers with the result that any management skills applied are purely dependent on each individual and the capacities they have. This approach does not always have the best results.

### **Legal Research and Writing and Publishing Research**

Academic output expressed in publications. Publishing will enable students to express a well grounded understanding of their studies, an essential requirement for leaders in any field. A course on legal research and writing will be offered, taking no chances to ensure that students learn how to put their thoughts down coherently. Research and writing skills will enable the students to articulate the problems identified and solutions proposed in a most efficient way. A student journal will be ideal to capture the best of the research papers. An editorial board comprising students and faculty will be put together, offering a chance for the students to be involved in producing publications. The process of selecting the editorial board will be aimed at getting persons willing and able to take charge of helping their peers to improve their writing abilities, while at the same time bettering their own skills in the process. Work produced as student assignments will be evaluated on an ongoing basis and selected publications rewarded based on set criteria. Papers will be chosen in terms of engagement with issues on the ground, practicality of solutions proposed, convincing arguments supporting propositions made. The final result will be a student law journal produced regularly with the aim of inspiring students to publish, and to know how to do it well. If put into practice, the continuous art of publishing will enable the students to take their studies seriously and hone their research skills.

Whenever they have to write class essays, students will be helped to identify practical problems which they can base their research on. With some guidance, students can pick topical issues on which to focus their research, making topic selection an engaging exercise as opposed to the daunting task that many students go through, many times leading to research being carried out merely because the student is in search of marks. To concretize their research and to reflect well thought out possibilities of solutions, students will be encouraged to write papers as part of the normal course work and class assignments rather than special additional projects which they may not have time for.

The effort involved in producing the journal will demonstrate the commitment of faculty and students to obtaining a deep understanding of the subject of their research, undertaking the step-by-step process of outlining the problems to prescribing solutions and justifying or supporting their choices. Publishing research output requires discipline; it demands that the students are focused

and display depth of research showing that they really understand the issues they write about. It will help the students not to stop at superficial knowledge of what they study and to understand that passing exams not the ultimate aim of study.

The University through the lecturers and students can then work to turn the best publications into projects and the projects into reality. The students and faculty will need to have the vision, and apply skills and resources to form networks beyond their immediate environments or circumstances (Ulrich et al. 1999, p. 8) acknowledging that by themselves, they cannot offer solutions to all problems. The research and proposed solutions can be offered to relevant partners who would be able to fund the well-researched problems and see them to conclusion.

### **Service Learning**

It is imperative for leaders to understand the society in which they live. They ought to identify with external events, think deeply and see new possibilities of solutions to problems that seem perpetual (Ulrich et al. 1999, p. 8). Bearing in mind the concept of a university as an institution of higher learning, there is a lot of potential positive good that can come from it for the nations, for the economy and, in a more direct way, for the community around the university. For many students, research is a library experience; the research and writing of essays is done in libraries and the product of their work confined to the same libraries. However, leaders need to be able to provide solutions to problems, educated solutions, well researched and thought out responding to current issues that affect them and the societies in which they live. Through its courses and initiatives, the university should demonstrate leadership that is capable of integrating, resourcing and orchestrating activities of various project clusters and in so doing exhibit a capacity to address multi faceted problems of society (Ulrich et al. 1999, p. 9) which exist in a complex maze. The problems of society are ill structured and offer no systematic means of evaluating them in order to arrive at simple, pre-described solutions. The more one knows about an issue, the more they realise that there is no simple solution to it; 'the more you learn about it [a problem] the more you realise that it's [the solution you thought] not going to work, and the more you realise that our whole society is tied up in every issue' (Eyler and Giles 1999, p. 100). Thomas Maak notes that leadership ought to mirror the complexity of the 'world out there' (Leadership Conference May 2010 at University of Pretoria). Leaders must prepare themselves to face these issues; the university presents an ideal ground for such preparation. Such learning can only be undertaken by students who have an

understanding of higher education not as ‘a form of private investment’ but rather as a ‘public good’ (Chamberlin and Vale 2010, p. 50).

Service learning involves gaining skills or knowledge while at the same time offering service to society and in so doing enabling students to translate from the earliest possible opportunity the theory they learn into practice of the law. It entails engaging students through active participation in activities designed to meet needs of communities. Service learning is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students and will help to foster in them civic responsibility. More than mere acts of philanthropy and compassion towards the needs of the less fortunate, service learning provides structured time for students to reflect on the service experience and what impact it has had on them and the people with whom they interact (Adapted from the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993). The virtue of solidarity requires people not to be indifferent and drives them to make a firm commitment to the common good as opposed to a vague notion of compassion for the misfortune of others. (Anon., *Ethics in leadership*) Service learning will help to remind the students that the primary goal of the legal profession is to seek justice for all without discrimination (Conner et al. 2008, *Service learning and legal education: a sense of duty* writing on the Widener Law School tradition of service learning) and not, as many of them tend to expect, a money making pursuit. Service learning offers an opportunity to exercise leadership, make decisions and thus learn and exercise the virtue of prudence. Leadership is service and in service the virtues of magnanimity, humility and justice can be instilled in the students.

A structure of courses that allows engagement of students with the communities in which they live will offer practical fields to engage in ‘service learning’ (Eyler and Giles 1999, p. 98). The curriculum of the degree course at Strathmore includes community work, (Community-Based Attachment is one of the required courses). Academic study will be intrinsically linked with service and ‘service learning’ designed to teach critical thinking. (Eyler and Giles 1999, p. 92)<sup>5</sup> Learning while at the same time engaging in real-life situations that offer material for research and studies in a real-life context will lead to a more wholesome contribution to developing their understanding and finding solutions for societal problems.

Studies have shown a link between neighborhood quality and institutional success. (Brown and Geoghegan 2007, p. 3) Many universities attempt to reshape the

neighborhood so that the institution fits within a ‘successful’ neighborhood. Some universities have done this by buying all property in their vicinity as a way to guarantee control over surroundings; others have built tall fences around the campus to keep away unwanted elements of the neighborhood; but the most fruitful mode of integration has been where institutions integrate the neighborhood within the university life, establishing partnerships with the local residents in different ways (Brown and Geoghegan 2007, p. 1). This is the most sustainable option. People always live among people in an interaction that defines and is basic to life; a coordination of the intellectual experience and a desire to give back to society is therefore of utmost importance. One means of exercising the university-community partnerships is through legal clinics where students carry out research in areas relevant to the communities in which they study or live and offer legal advice to members of the communities who would otherwise be unable to afford such services.

### Law Clinics and Clinical Method of Teaching

Kenya has a relatively young history of legal education which starts after its independence in 1963 and is seen to have coincided with the independence movement (Dauphinais 2009, p. 60). In 1960, prior to Kenya’s independence and at which time a number of African countries were transiting to independence, a committee was established in the United Kingdom under Lord Denning to review legal education for Africans within the United Kingdom (Dauphinais 2009, p. 56). The Committee noted the need for training Africans as judges and lawyers to take their proper place after the transfer of power at independence (Dauphinais 2009, p. 56). The Kenya School of Law was established in 1962 following recommendations of the Committee to provide vocational legal training (Report on Mission by the Council of Legal Education 2007). The School was designed to meet the needs of the time, but hardly transformed for a long time after the attainment of its initial purpose. For many years, the essence of the institution as an establishment of vocational training was ignored and students who graduated from local universities were exempted from taking courses at the school. As such, they missed out on the opportunity to have the vocational training designed to be offered there and which they also did not get at the university because universities were not designed to offer it. In recent times, however, the situation has changed and the operation of the institution has undergone commendable review to restore it to its original aim. It is now compulsory for all graduates of law, from both local and foreign universities, to undergo pre-bar admission training at the School (Council of Legal

<sup>5</sup> A lecturer had taught intricacies of health care system for a whole semester and was frustrated that students offered a simplistic explanation of rising costs, attributing it to patients demanding too many tests.

Education 2009, p. 14) which is seen as a professional law school, practical in its orientation with a decreased emphasis on formal lectures. Instruction at the School takes the clinical approach and problem questions are discussed through simulations, role plays, interactive seminars and moot courts.

Whereas the contribution of the School to the formation of lawyers is appreciated and note is taken of the gap it seeks to fill by offering a practical approach to learning, Strathmore will do well by taking the course it plans and applying the clinical method of teaching at the undergraduate level. In many ways, it will be advantageous to respond to the crisis of good leadership by appealing to the students' capacity for learning much earlier, before minds are set and ways already formed. Not all legal subjects can be taught with a practical approach, but if the basic core courses can be used to help students understand the importance of the law and how to give their studies a practical orientation, the students can then, with this in mind, apply a similar approach to all the other courses they have to learn.

The curriculum at Strathmore will apply the clinical methods of teaching in several modules of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th year courses, and law clinics in several areas (Mbote K, personal communication, 10 March 2010). The law clinics will enhance the practical aspects of the discipline, and seek to make law relevant by elaborating on the intersection between law and society in areas such as development and economics. Although the concept of the law clinics and 'practical learning' will not be easy to implement, the effort made to structure its curriculum effectively and obtain the necessary resources to actualize it is what will distinguish Strathmore from the rest of the universities that do not apply this method. Clinical education offers a mode of learning that is engaging rather than one way; it makes the students read more than just to pass exams, and gives them the opportunity to reflect on happenings and experiences in order to arrive at informed decisions or conclusions. While engaging in the law clinics, students will experience and learn to deal with the complex nature of societal problems, and if well taught, they will develop the art of critical thinking and forging realistic solutions.

Good leaders must question the status quo and, as a defining characteristic, have the courage to break the rules (Barnes 2007, p. 22) of apathy, indifference and a comfort with the way things are done. They cannot do things in a given manner simply because that is how they have always been done. It is well worth the while to learn from early on that things do not have to be the way they are. As Chamberlin and Vale note (Mail & Guardian 2010), 'wondering' is needed at the universities because it will lead to amazement that is not satisfied with the first explanation, a curiosity capable of genuine surprise and therefore serious

inquiry. Wondering will lead to impatience that produces new perceptions and new paradigms. When they see the world around them as it is, students must learn to ask questions; why are things the way they are? If we have laws, and an elected government, what has gone wrong, how should these laws translate into anything positive and practical for the people on the ground? Such questions presented in the context of the operations of a law clinic will stimulate the student to apply his or her mind and find solutions. A leader must disengage from prescribed courses of action in order to consider each situation in context and provide a tailored solution. He or she must see where his or her personal values fit in the wider context of the organization; a student looks at the world and reflects on how his or her personal values, what he or stands for, aligns with the world and carries out research to see where they can meet, convinced that they indeed can meet.

A well thought out curriculum that incorporates the clinical method of teaching law will help to transform students from apathetic indifferent persons in search of paper degrees to useful determined leaders able to intellectually connect with their world. The set up of learning and research at the law clinic or through clinical groups will encourage students to work together, to communicate and share ideas with others and convince themselves of the solutions can offer or the values they espouse and at the same time exercise their leadership skills as they live the virtues they have learnt.

### **Mentorship Program**

People learn best by experience; there is need therefore for many examples of virtue if people are to grow in these virtues. The benefits of a system that integrates the community and reaches out to involve everyone in meeting the noble aims of the legal profession will undoubtedly be far reaching. The faculty can provide a link to other organizations such as lawyers willing to offer pro bono services or nongovernmental organizations that may be working with this objective. In living out this task, a mentoring program will be a natural consequence, and ideal in the context of the university nurturing the capabilities of the students. It will be a way of living up to its mission of concern with the overall development of the students and helping them to make the most out of their university experience.

The faculty can gain much from partnering with professional organizations, and individuals in legal and other professions in pursuing its goals. The mentoring program could involve students and faculty on the one hand, and also successful practitioners on the other hand. Thus, the students have help from all sides; from the lecturers who

guide them on their studies and other issues that affect them as they work towards their careers, and from people who have made it in the legal field to offer guidance on 'real life' experience outside school thus helping them to better prepare for it.

Mentors will help the students take their studies in stride, together with all the other issues that come with life at that stage. Currently, Strathmore runs a mentoring program where some of the staff of the university have, as part of their professional work, the responsibility of supervising the student's overall academic progress, encouraging the students to grow in virtue and providing pastoral insight for non-academic issues such as social and moral education, behavior management and emotional support (<http://strathmore.edu/dos/mentoring.php>).

A challenge of running a successful mentoring program is availability of persons capable of acting as mentors with the required values and who are willing to offer their time to guide the students in a sustainable manner, seeing them through their studies and beyond. Whereas it presents a real challenge, running a mentorship program cannot be overlooked if the quest to form leaders is taken seriously. For this, it will be worthwhile to create and 'sell' the mentorship idea, taking all necessary measures to prepare those who are willing to take up the task; giving courses for mentors, convinced that they play a big role in helping the students become the role models that society needs. An ideal way of sowing the seed for the future needs of mentors will be to include peer mentoring in the school program, taking advantage of the senior students and the experience they will have gained to be a support to the students who come after them.<sup>6</sup>

This will be good for both, for the mentees to have personal help from their peers whom they may identify with more in certain aspects and therefore find it easier to learn from them and also for the student mentors as it prepares them for the task of leadership which they will carry on to their careers after school. Starting and developing the mentorship program, selecting students for it, training them to be effective mentors will in itself be a sustainable way of developing leaders. The skills gained and values acquired in the process will be of use in the lifetime of the leader, while he or she guides peers at the university, forging his or her path in studies while at the same time considering other life issues he or she comes across. It gives both categories of students a chance to get more involved with the university as an institution and thus get to know its vision and values far much more than a

restricted classroom-teacher encounter would enable them to appreciate.

## Conclusion

This proposed model for developing the next generation of leaders is carried out in the stage in life when the mind of the student is inquisitive and searching for knowledge and answers. It is easier at this stage to forge in the students an understanding of leadership, the need for it and to teach them aspects of sustainable leadership. Leaders must understand the subject matter of their fields of study; one cannot be a good leader and bad student. This proposal focuses on study, which is what everyone who goes to the university seeks to do, and makes it relevant to society, helping students to see how to go about making a useful contribution based on their area of specialization. The proposal explores some ideas through which the 'university as a leader' can mold its students to take up the challenge of leadership in their time. The proposal defines leadership as virtue and service and directs the research students have to do in the normal course of their studies to address the problems in the society in which they study or work. Leaders will emerge from this context who have their priorities right and are able to take on the concerns of the work place, of society, of the state or the world with adequate preparation and capability.

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<sup>6</sup> For a useful guide for such a program see *How to Implement a Peer Mentoring Program: a User's Guide* available at [http://www.secretariat.unsw.edu.au/acboard/approved\\_policy/peer\\_mentoring\\_program\\_guide.pdf](http://www.secretariat.unsw.edu.au/acboard/approved_policy/peer_mentoring_program_guide.pdf) (accessed on 21 February 2011).

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