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## **Rethinking Leadership by Design:** Developing a Presidential Leadership Pipeline at Broadly Accessible Institutions

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# Abstract

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## Rethinking Leadership by Design: Developing a Presidential Leadership Pipeline at Broadly Accessible Institutions

Bachelor's degree-granting colleges and universities represent a growing percentage of broadly accessible institutions (BAIs) (Crisp, Doran, & Salis Reyes, 2014; Crisp, Orphan, & McClure, 2021). BAIs are defined as institutions with a historic and contemporary mission of creating opportunity through postsecondary education (Burmicky & McClure, 2021). According to an empirical typology aimed at differentiating BAIs, Crisp and colleagues (2019) asserted that BAIs enroll about sixty percent of all postsecondary students. BAIs provide access to first-generation, working-class, non-traditional age, and racially minoritized students (Crisp et al., 2021).

Given their history, mission, and core values, BAIs are in the best position to meet the diverse educational and workforce needs of various regions of the country (Crisp et al., 2014). National enrollment trends show that college students are more diverse than ever before (Snyder et al., 2019), and they are choosing different postsecondary pathways

that are more relevant to their lives. Despite the opportunities that BAIs provide, these institutions continue to face immense challenges such as budget cuts, enrollment fluctuations, and volatile legislation, especially public regional BAIs (Li, 2017). Thus, BAIs need leaders who are capable of moving these institutions in the right direction. This paper proposes an organizational capacity building model – the Presidential Leadership Capacity Building Model (PL-CBM) – to cultivate the presidential leadership pipeline at BAIs.

## Presidential Leadership at BAIs

To propose the PL-CBM, it is critical to provide context for what we know about presidential leadership at BAIs. In a commissioned report by the American Council on Education (ACE), Eckel and Hartley (2011) noted that today's presidents are not tomorrow's presidents, and institutions should prepare for high leadership turnover. The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a wave of presidential retirements and resignations (Martin, 2021), leading to a greater demand for presidents who are equipped to respond to major global crises (Dirani et al., 2020). BAIs, in particular regional BAIs, need leaders who understand their unique needs, challenges, and opportunities, as well as the communi-



ties that they represent.

Scholarship on presidential leadership at BAIs is scarce. Burmicky and McClure (2021) sought to better understand presidential leadership at BAIs by conducting a comprehensive literature review about presidential leadership broadly. After surveying the literature, Burmicky and McClure found very few works that could speak directly to presidential leadership at BAIs. This dearth of research leaves BAIs to operate with fewer tools and knowledge to make informed decisions about developing a pipeline of future leaders. Research has shown that institutions hire presidents who have served in this role before, which leads to the “re-

cycling” of presidents from one institution to another (Gagliardi et al., 2017). However, because BAIs face unique challenges (Crisp et al., 2019), not all presidents are equipped to serve these institutions despite having led a non-BAI institution, for example.

Since research on presidential leadership is scarce, there is a need for models and frameworks tailored to BAIs to develop the organization’s culture, systems and structures, and institutional policies to cultivate the presidential leadership pipeline (Preskill & Boyle, 2008). This paper outlines the Presidential Leadership Capacity Building Model (PL-CBM). PL-CBM is a “grow your own” model that is intentional about developing an organizational culture at BAIs that promotes the pipeline of future leaders within their own institutions. PL-CBM offers an opportunity for BAIs to develop the organizational capacity to prepare future leaders through a forward-thinking and asset-based approach.

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## The Need for a Presidential Leadership Capacity Building Model

Although research has emphasized the need for institutions to provide leadership development for emerging administrative leaders (e.g., Kezar & Posselt, 2020), there are limited tools for institutions—particularly BAIs—to use as they seek to develop and propel their own leaders. Moreover, there are fewer capacity building models that encourage competency development among their faculty and staff. Institutional efforts are mostly focused on short-term or “one-and-

done” models to encourage participation in professional development opportunities (León & Nevarez, 2007). These incentives are certainly a step in the right direction; however, they fall short of providing long-term career building and a presidential leadership pipeline necessary to address today’s challenges at BAIs.

Presidential leadership at BAIs has become increasingly more complex. Leading BAIs, particularly rural and regional BAIs, is especially difficult because they face additional challenges when it comes to technology, funding inequities, shifting enrollment, salary constraints, and recruiting and retaining qualified staff (Pennington, Williams, & Karvonen, 2006). It is imperative for BAIs to prioritize long-term leadership development informed by the acquisition of a specific set of skills and competencies relevant to leading BAIs, including

but not limited to budget management, crisis response, equity and social justice mindset, and political and interpersonal acumen (Rupp et al., 2016). In addition, research shows that leadership development opportunities can be exclusionary in practice and are not always attuned to the challenges that participants face in order to take advantage of such opportunities (Rodríguez et al., 2018, Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012).

Directly tied to why leadership at BAIs is more complex than at their non-BAI peers, it is important to note that most of their leaders do not have the resources, time, sponsorship, or bandwidth to engage in professional development. This tends to disproportionately affect women, caregivers, communities of color, and leaders from underfunded departments who could benefit from these opportunities the most (Eddy, 2018).



Many institutions fail to recognize the leadership potential of their own leaders, a phenomenon more prevalent among women, and even more so among women of color (Eddy, 2010). This means that institutions often hire external leaders with limited regional and institutional knowledge while overlooking their own talent, especially qualified women. This is not to say that external leaders cannot lead BAIs. However, it is critical for institutions to not disregard their own and nurture leaders who are both willing and ready to lead BAIs.







For example, a needs assessment study focused on academic leadership for women at a public research university suggests that highly competent women are often overlooked for leadership development opportunities, as many of these decisions are based on rank (where women are already underrepresented) or the types of scholarship they are working on (which is often undermined) rather than being based on competency (Hornsby et al., 2012). Other research suggests that although women receive mentorship, they do not get promoted at the same rates as their peers who are men (Ibarra et al., 2011; Hewlett, 2013).

Thus, to equip BAIs with leaders who are representative of who they are, the PL-CBM is unapologetic about developing a pipeline of future BAI presidents that recognizes their assets and talents and embraces diverse backgrounds, lived experiences, and identities. The notion of developing presidential leadership by design stems from the fact that BAIs need to be intentional and systematic about developing a capacity building culture that creates the proper channels, policies, and practices to make leadership development the norm and not the exception.

## Operationalizing Organizational Capacity Building

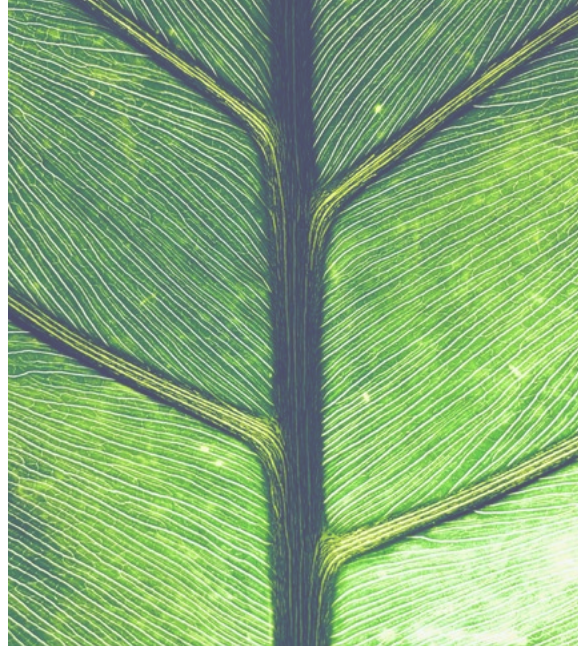
Leadership by design requires a clear understanding of organizational capacity building. Organizational capacity building refers to the implementation and design of systems, strategies, and policies to develop the organizational leadership culture that is up to scale with the institution's mission and values (Preskill & Boyle, 2008). Capacity building also refers to the implementation of evaluation, assessment, and continuous improvement practices. This type of capacity building focused on developing sustainable organizational cultures is relevant to BAIs, especially regional BAIs, that lack the resources and bandwidth to conduct lengthy and expensive searches that lead to recruiting external leaders who are not familiar with the needs and values of the region and institution. Lastly, capacity building should be incorporated into strategic planning, especially for developing a detailed plan of action for BAIs to be able to meet their set goals and objectives (Eddy et al., 2021).



## Guiding Framework

The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) developed a competency model to inform the development of current and future state college and university presidents (Rupp et al., 2016). The AASCU model serves as an appropriate guiding framework for the development of PL-CBM because it is focused on presidents and it is competency based.

The AASCU model applies assessment centered methodology, and it is informed by qualitative and quantitative methods. According to Rupp and colleagues (2016), assessment center methodology is underutilized in higher education, yet it is helpful to standardize national benchmarks to best develop and assess leadership skills based on individual and systemic gaps.



For qualitative data collection, interviews with subject-matter experts were conducted. Subject-matter experts were defined as individuals with “experience and insider knowledge of the role of the state college and university president” (Rupp et al., 2016, p. 11). Participants were asked to provide feedback on the first iteration of the competency model, which was developed based on a literature review. A total of fourteen subject-matter experts were interviewed to provide substantive feedback on the model.

After qualitative data collection, the competency model was revised based on the feedback provided by the subject-matter experts. This led to the development of a content validation survey administered to AASCU members to rate the relevance of competencies that were created as a result of the previous iterations of the competency model. The survey focused mainly on collecting evidence for the validity of the competencies, also known as content validity (as cited in Rupp et al., 2016). In sum, respondents were asked to rate competencies based on their importance for

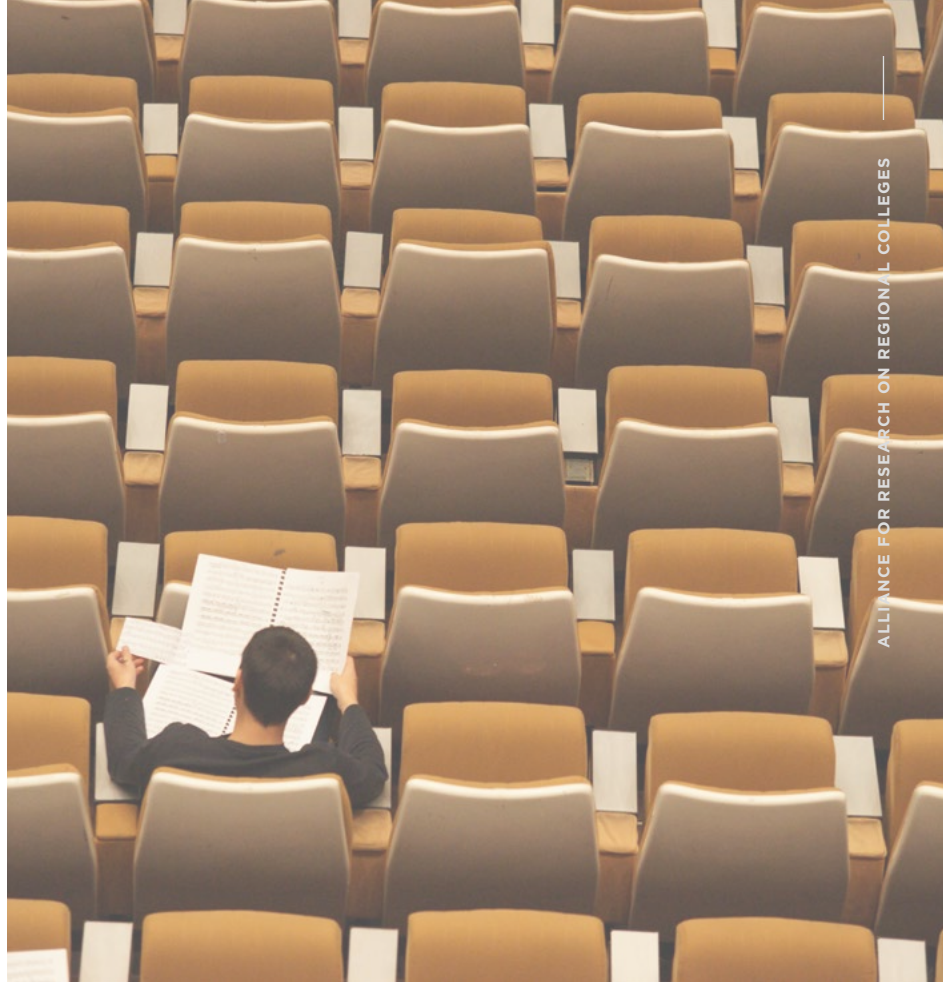


overall performance and the degree to which they can be applied to determine superior or adequate performance. The survey yielded a 22.5 percent response rate (94 out of 419 possible respondents).

After various iterations of this model based on several stages of data collection (i.e., literature review, subject-expert interviews, and content validity survey), AASCU developed their final model, the State College/University Presidential Competency Model. In turn, I used this model as a blueprint to propose the PL-CBM.

## Researcher Background

The development of PL-CBM was informed by my body of work focused on presidential leadership (e.g., Burmicky, 2022, Burmicky & Duran, 2022; Burmicky & McClure, 2021; Burmicky, Sáenz, & Ryu, 2021). However, it is just as important to note that PL-CBM was also informed by my practitioner background. Specifically, prior to becoming a higher education professor at Howard University, a private research HBCU, I served as a higher education/student affairs practitioner for over a decade in the areas of admissions, residence life and housing, student involvement, and diversity and community engagement. These roles took place at various types of institutions, including public and private institutions, faith-based institutions, predominantly white institutions, and an HSI-eligible public flagship institution. Furthermore, as a doctoral student and then



postdoctoral fellow at the University of Texas at Austin, I had the opportunity to work closely with a state-wide consortium comprised of K-12, community colleges, and bachelor's degree-granting institutions in Texas. The Texas Consortium for Male Students of Color gave me the opportunity to work closely with senior administrators across educational sectors to advocate for equitable educational outcomes for men of color. In addition, it gave the opportunity to oversee the planning and execution of numerous statewide and national leadership institutes, symposiums, and summits tailored to current and emerging leaders in education. This experience taught me about the value of working collaboratively across BAIs to accomplish a common goal.

## Presidential Leadership Capacity Building Model

The Presidential Leadership Capacity Building Model (PL-CBM) was informed by the AASCU's competency model. AASCU's competency model includes fifteen competencies, which are divided into four categories. The four categories are as follows: 1) management; 2) interpersonal; 3) personal; and 4) leadership competencies. Table 1 provides a summary of all competencies.

AASCU's model is focused on presidential leadership, which is ideal for developing PL-CBM. PL-CBM acknowledges the critical need to shift the discourse of what is acceptable and desired about college presidents (Garza Mitchell & Garcia, 2020). Namely, bachelor's degree-granting institutions in particular have historically chosen candidates who possess a chief academic officer background (Neumann & Bensimon, 1990). However, this trend

has slowly shifted in recent years with an increased demand for presidents with diverse portfolios and a wide range of competencies (e.g., finance, fundraising, enrollment management, crisis response) (McNair, Duree, Ebbers, 2011). Therefore, PL-CBM acknowledges the need to cultivate current and emerging leaders with diverse backgrounds and leadership pathways as an effort to change the discourse of who gets to lead BAIs.

In what follows, I detail the meaning and application of PL-CBM. PL-CBM serves as a blueprint for BAIs to put existing models (e.g., AASCU's model) into practice to develop emerging leaders. I use four leadership "L's" for applying this model: (a) Leading from Within; b) Leading from Across; c) Leveraging Your Own; and d) Learning and (Un)Learning. After the four L's, I present implications for practice and research for working with and expanding this model, especially within the context of regional BAIs.

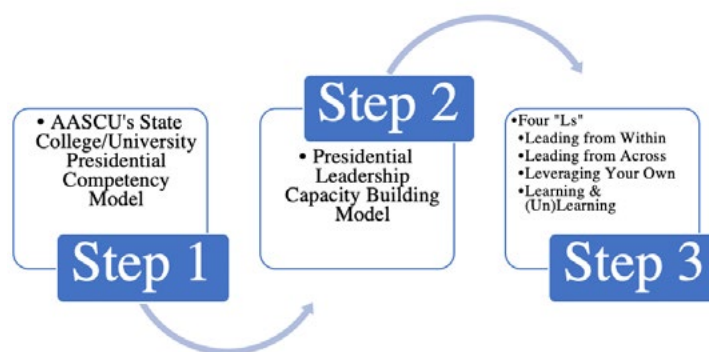
Table 1. AASCU's (2016) State College/University Presidential Competency Model

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Knowledge of the academic enterprise</li> <li>◦ Business enterprise management</li> <li>◦ Resource development and stewardship</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Interpersonal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Formal and informal communication</li> <li>◦ Positively engaged</li> <li>◦ Relationship development and maintenance</li> <li>◦ Climate creation and maintenance</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Personal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Integrity</li> <li>◦ Servant leader</li> <li>◦ Continuous self-development</li> <li>◦ Resilience</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Leadership Competencies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Problem-solving</li> <li>◦ People and team development</li> <li>◦ Strategic vision</li> <li>◦ Academic leadership</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



According to Hewlett (2013), sponsorship delivers ‘high-octane advocacy’ (p. 30) as well as the space to develop potential, acquire new skills, and take risks. Sponsorship is not to be confused with mentorship, which is often a person who provides help and support to a mentee and expects little in return (Hewlett, 2013)

Figure 1. Overview of Steps for Developing Framework



### Leading from Within: Turbocharging Careers through Sponsorship, Competency Development, and Holistic Care

The first competency category of the AASCU model is management. As seen in Table 1, management competencies include knowledge of the academic enterprise, supervision, business enterprise management, and resource development and stewardship. Adding to AASCU’s model, PL-CBM argues that management competencies should be grounded in holistic care—a principle that prioritizes the basic needs of professional staff (i.e., mental wellbeing, childcare, financial stability) (Burmicky & Duran, 2022). Management competencies are essential to leading BAIs, especially in times

of uncertainty. However, how can BAIs enable future presidents to acquire these fundamental competencies? More importantly, what support systems are in place for aspiring presidents to access these skills?

To keep an asset-based approach that shifts the responsibility from the individual to systems, PL-CBM urges BAIs to prioritize opportunities within their institutions rather than expecting leaders to be solely responsible for their own career advancement while seeking external support. Such opportunities establish connections between future leaders and individuals with influence—also known as institutional agents, according to social capital research (Stanton-Salazar, 2011)—to provide mentoring and sponsorship (Hewlett, 2013). This is especially important for women, LGBTQ+, and leaders of color as research shows that these opportunities are less available to these groups (Eddy, 2010; Valentine, 2020).

To apply this principle into practice, BAIs should encourage institutional agents (e.g., deans, vice presidents, provosts) to first identify emerging leaders who can benefit from competency development to “turbocharge” their careers (Hewlett, 2013). Although research is more abundant on the key role that mentoring plays in developing future college presidents (e.g., Commodore et al., 2016), fewer efforts exist to explain the role that sponsorship plays in creating opportunities for those who do not have the same access to professional networks (Baker et al., 2019). In fact, research shows that women are over mentored but under sponsored (Ibarra et al., 2010), and do not receive the same pay raises as their peers who are men (Curtin et al., 2016). Thus, in terms of turbocharging the careers of future presidents

at BAIs, it is important to emphasize the role of sponsorship, especially among historically underrepresented leaders.

According to Hewlett (2013), sponsorship delivers “high-octane advocacy” (p. 30) as well as the space to develop potential, acquire new skills, and take risks. Sponsorship is not to be confused with mentorship, which is often a person who provides help and support to a mentee and expects little in return (Hewlett, 2013).

Studies have shown that presidents have a genuine desire to provide meaningful professional development for emerging leaders (Burmicky et al., 2021; Martin, 2021). However, they also recognize the barriers that staff face to take advantage of professional development opportunities. For example, because of the culture of compliance that

prevails in financial aid departments (e.g., Burmicky & Duran, 2022; McKinnon-Crowley et al., 2021), many financial aid staff feel limited to fulfil their duties as a result of complying with state and federal protocols (e.g., FAFSA, loans), leaving little time to participate in professional development opportunities (Burmicky et al., 2021). However, this does not mean that they are not interested in growing professionally. In fact, because staff are overwhelmed with their current workload, it leaves them with minimal room to think about professional advancement (McKinnon-Crowley et al., 2021).

As a result, BAI leadership must be intentional about making room for emerging leaders to take care of their basic needs and be able to think about their professional advancement. This means that BAI leadership must prioritize talent management by being attuned to their employees' needs, especially as recent reports show that institutions are facing a morale problem with employees feeling exhausted and underappreciated (McClure, 2021).



To work towards realistic alternatives, division heads (e.g., enrollment, student affairs, development) should identify and sponsor emerging leaders within their units who have demonstrated interest in growing their management competencies (e.g., supervision, budget management, financial aid, fundraising). This means making tuition remission plans widely known (if and when available), making (paid) time for staff to participate in professional development, nominating for internal and external awards, and appointing staff to influential leadership committees on campus that have the potential to boost their career trajectories.

Similarly, academic deans should encourage tenured faculty to sponsor new faculty, especially minoritized faculty, on how to navigate the “hidden curriculum” that exist at their institutions, such as ambiguous appointment, tenure, and promotion processes that lead new faculty—especially faculty who hold multiple marginalized identities—astray (Turner, 2002). One of the key reasons why the college presidency remains mostly white and male (Gagliardi et al., 2017; Garza Mitchell & Garcia, 2020) is because of the lack of diversity within the faculty pipeline, which takes years, if not decades, to build (Eddy, 2018). Thus, BAIs must take role of sponsorship very seriously if they want future leaders to reflect their diverse student populations in years to come.



## Leading from Across: Developing Robust Cross-Sector Collaborations

The second competency category of the AASCU model is interpersonal. As seen in Table 1, interpersonal competencies include formal and informal communication, being positively engaged, relationship development and maintenance, and climate creation and maintenance. However, how can BAIs provide intentional spaces for leaders to develop these key relationships and forms of engagement? Similar to leading from within, BAIs should encourage robust cross-sector collaborations that include K-12, community colleges, baccalaureate institutions, and non-profit organizations. This is particularly relevant to regional BAIs that rely heavily on cross-sector partnerships. For example, many regional bachelor's degree-granting BAIs depend on transfer enrollment from their local community college(s). Thus, they should prioritize key initiatives to sustain healthy enrollments, such as establishing clear and up-to-date articulation agreements, dual enrollment, and early college high school programs. In addition, BAIs should also promote a transfer-receptive culture to maintain a steady transfer pipeline (Jain et al., 2020). The same can be said about the overall P-20 pipeline, which requires greater collaboration between the K-12, the local community, and the postsecondary sector.

Keeping this context in mind, although we have evidence that working collaborative is beneficial for institutions, we also know that organizations—especially higher education—tend to work in silos (Lloyd, 2016). Cross-sector collaborations not only promote better communication between sectors but also opportunities for future leaders to engage with one another and work towards a common goal. Aligned with AASCU's interpersonal competencies, cross-sector collaborations promote relationship development between key leaders and agents with the power to enact systemic change.

The biggest problem about working in silos is that it hurts BAIs the most, particularly rural colleges, regional colleges, border colleges, and geographically isolated colleges. Based on my past scholar-practitioner work promoting leadership development, I have learned that although it is generally understood that working across sectors is of great benefit to all, there are limited opportunities to develop partnerships with one another. In fact, while planning leadership development institutes, leaders have expressed to me that they hardly know other leaders from sectors outside of their own, and that they often find themselves working in silos. Thus, although AASCU's competency model calls for relationship development and maintenance, sometimes there is little to maintain

because leaders are not always afforded the opportunity to meet other leaders from institutions outside of their own, especially institutions that they rely heavily on.

Developing cross-sector collaborations is especially challenging for BAIs that have issues retaining talented staff and have high leadership turnover, which ultimately hurts institutional memory and the development of key pipeline programs and initiatives that drive enrollment (e.g., summer bridge programs, minority retention programs). Given the

rise of remote communications and more accessible professional development opportunities, it is important for BAIs to promote these venues more than ever before to avoid more isolation. regions like Central Texas and the Gulf Coast.

### Leveraging Your Own: Attending to Leaders' Core Beliefs

The third competency category of the AASCU model is personal characteristics. As seen in Table 1, personal characteristics include integrity, servant leader, and continuous self-develop-

ment. Thus, how can BAIs develop internal models and promising practices for their leaders to acquire these personal characteristics?

Consistent with existing literature, my research with college presidents has taught me that personal core beliefs and the mission of the institution play a tremendous role in shaping leadership style. According to Eddy (2010), leaders' behaviors are influenced by their core beliefs. Furthermore, how they are able to align their core beliefs with the institution's mission shapes their overall leadership style. As such, BAIs must be attuned to their leaders' core beliefs, and more specifically how their values align with the institution's mission and objectives. Because of their core values, these leaders have the ability to move the institution forward and stay true to their mission (e.g., access).

The way in which leaders make meaning of their leadership belief was particularly central to my dissertation study on Latino college president men. The majority of my participants chose to lead BAIs because their institution's mission was aligned with their core beliefs—more specifically, their mission to advocate for historically marginalized communities such as working class, first-generation, students of color. Furthermore, many of my participants talked extensively about servant leadership, an AASCU competency and well-known leadership principle that drives leaders to put their team's goals and objectives above their own. However, another lesson I learned is that many of these per-



sonal characteristics are not always innate, and that they in fact need to be taught and modeled by leaders who can relate to other emerging leaders.

For example, a central way in which my participants learned more about their core beliefs and how they shaped their leadership style is by developing close relationships with other leaders that could relate to their social, cultural, and racial and ethnic backgrounds. As shared by one of my participants, a community college president in the Southwest, “I didn’t think I could become a college president until I saw one that looked like me.” Most of my participants did not get to meet leaders that could relate to them until they attended external professional development seminars, leadership institutes, certificate programs, and/or fellowship programs. However, many of these programs require institutions to nominate and sponsor their own emerging leaders.

This particular practice can be exclusionary in nature, mainly because leaders with wider networks and savvier navigational skills will more likely get ahead. However, due to their mission, BAIs should be intentional about providing equitable opportunities for leaders who lack these forms of capital. For example, it makes sense for BAIs to have leaders who can relate with the needs of their students and communities that they serve. Thus, when leveraging their own, BAIs should prioritize the development of emerging leaders from marginalized backgrounds.

For instance, research shows that many of these models and professional development opportunities often ignore the needs of caregivers, particularly women who often carry the so called “second shift” at home and put professional development on the back burner (Acker, 2006; McKinnon-Crowley et al., 2021). Research also shows that women, in particular women of color, often feel discouraged from pursuing high-level leadership positions as a result of carrying the load for others and other power structures (e.g., “ole boys club” culture) (Woollen, 2016; Zell, 2017). Thus, BAIs must be particularly attuned to these realities, especially as they seek to mirror their surrounding communities. The same can be said for racially minoritized leaders who continue to be underrepresented in the leadership ranks (Gagliardi et al., 2017). As recent events such as the pandemic and natural disasters exacerbated these conditions even more, BAIs have the unique opportunity to lead by design and develop more equitable models and promising practices to proactively support leaders from their organizations.

## Learning and (Un)Learning

The fourth and last competency category of the AASCU model is leadership competencies. As seen in Table 1, leadership competencies include problem-solving, people and team development, strategic vision, and academic leadership. That said, the last leadership “L” calls for BAIs to move forward through a critical, asset-based, and decolonial mindset for developing leadership competencies. In doing so, they must first examine their institutional practices and policies by learning and (un)learning.



For example, as highlighted by Garcia and Natividad (2018), minoritized leaders can sometimes lead or shape their leadership competencies without knowing about their origins, culture, and background. This is mostly as a result of institutions failing to provide culturally relevant opportunities to define their organizational identity (Garcia, 2018). This is not unique to higher education, and it is prevalent in other sectors (e.g., K-12) that ascribe to deficit and/or colonial models of learning by stripping away indigenous practices and culturally-affirming ways of knowing (see for example, subtractive schooling by Valenzuela, 1999). Thus, PL-CBM calls for BAIs to empower leaders to implement culturally-affirm-

ing leadership practices (e.g., indigenous practices) as a way to (un)learn deficit and subtractive models that prevail at our institutions.

Tangibly speaking, BAIs should be critical and transformative about developing leaders through culturally-affirming practices. Namely, they should move beyond performative or “check the box” programs and initiatives that do not resonate with their students and/or local communities. In other words, as underscored by Garcia and Natividad (2018), BAIs should avoid the establishment of more colonial projects at the expense of historically marginalized communities. In developing a capacity building organizational culture, BAI leaders should ask themselves questions such as:

- 1.** In what ways do programs and initiatives such as Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, and Pride perpetuate colonial projects in higher education?
- 2.** How are we intentionally centering the voices, origins, and histories of Black, Brown, Indigenous, and LGBTQ+ communities?
- 3.** What support structures are we providing to ensure that women and other minoritized gender identities get a seat at the table?
- 4.** What are the specific ways in which these initiatives promote equity and social justice on campus?

These tangible examples provide avenues for BAIs to be more conscious about promoting decolonial and culturally-relevant leadership competency development. However, this should only serve as a start, and there are certainly more policies and practices that must be (un)learned to enact institution-wide equity. Learning and (un)learning means applying critical theories and social justice-oriented frameworks that move institutions forward without adversely affecting historically marginalized communities. Some theories and models include but are not limited to transformational leadership, critical pedagogy, Applied Critical Leadership (ACL), Critical Race Theory (CRT), and anti-racist educational leadership (Bass et al., 2006; Kezar, Carducci, & Contreras-Gavin, 2006; Santamaría & Santamaría, 2012). Thus, by centering these theories and models BAIs can move towards promoting equity-driven and social justice-oriented leadership development.

### Implications for Practice and Research

The Presidential Leadership Capacity Building Model (PL-CBM) offers tangible applications for BAIs to promote competency-based leadership development for emerging presidential leaders. This proposed model is neither perfect nor finished, and BAIs should use it as a starting point for enacting long-term leadership development at their institutions. In what follows, I provide implications for practice and research for moving this work forward.



### Implications for Practice

PL-CBM was informed by research and practice. However, it remains to be piloted among institutions, especially regional BAIs that are seeking to undergo this important work. Thus, I recommend leaders of BAIs who are committed to equity-driven and social justice-oriented leadership to use this model for igniting honest conversations among their senior leadership about the meaning of having equitable leadership at their home institutions.

Specifically, it is important to highlight that PL-CBM is not meant to be applied all at once. Furthermore, this is not a “one size fits all” model. BAIs can start with a particular “L” that is more relevant to their current needs. Moreover, PL-CBM does not assume that all BAIs are at the same place when it comes to leadership development. Some have already undergone comprehensive planning to make their presidential leadership development more equitable and culturally affirming. On the other hand, others may need a base or starting point. Regard-

less, this proposed model offers tangible applications for BAIs across various competency levels and institutional needs, and they should be applied accordingly.

Lastly, because PL-CBM offers critical questions for leaders (and institutions) to ponder, it could also serve as a tool for university-wide or division-wide strategic planning. Strategic planning is essential to an organization's success, yet, many institutions fail to engage in strategic planning, decision-making, and continuous improvement plans (Eddy et al., 2021; Hornak & Garza Mitchell, 2016). As previously stated, continuous improvement is a central component of developing organizational capacity building (Preskill & Boyle, 2008). It is critical for BAIs to engage in strategic planning to include assessment, evaluation, and continuous improvement across their policies and practices. PL-CBM can be used as a template for asking organizational leaders constructive questions about who they are and who they want to become.

Furthermore, if and when BAIs choose to participate in strategic planning, it is essential that they develop a plan of action to understand how such plans will be reviewed. This includes knowing which data courses or measures will be used to achieve set goals, as well as key personnel that will be responsi-



ble for carrying out the plan. Recent research shows that many institutions undergo the process of identifying key goals and objectives for moving their organizations forward. However, what is less prevalent is the evidence of actual plans to carry out these goals (Eddy et al., 2021). Regional BAIs cannot afford to invest resources and time into strategic planning without a clear vision for how to accomplish and deliver their goals. PL-CBM offers a plan.



## Implications for Research

Research focused specifically on presidential leadership development at BAIs is nascent (Burmicky & McClure, 2021). This paper offers a distinct model for studying how BAIs can better promote presidential leadership development for emerging leaders. Moving forward, PL-CBM calls for further development and exploration. Specifically, because BAIs are not a monolithic group (Crisp et al., 2019), it is critical to make distinctions about how different BAIs, regional BAIs in particular, can apply PL-CBM to move their leadership development forward. For example, what is unique and different about the way in which rural-serving BAIs can apply this model compared to urban and border-serving BAIs? The same and more questions can be applied across various regions of the country (e.g., Southwest, Mid-Atlantic, West Coast).

Moreover, to further polish PL-CBM, more research is needed to pilot its relevance and application process. For example, as exemplified by the AASCU model, PL-CBM should undergo through various iterations by conducting research and soliciting feedback with subject-matter experts from select BAIs and by collecting more evidence for the validity of the competencies through survey research (Rupp et al., 2016).

Lastly, given that many BAIs remain chronically underfunded for educational research purposes, educational agencies and foundations should take a closer look at the ways in which they can provide research funds more equitably, especially by prioritizing regional BAIs instead of wealthier, more heavily endowed institutions. This project, among many other BAI-focused projects, should be prioritized in terms of funding for the purpose of expanding research and educational promise among BAIs.



**As highlighted by several BAI scholars, more efforts are needed to advance our collective understanding of these pivotal institutions. Although BAIs are by no means a monolith (Crisp et al., 2019), it is critical for researchers and policy-makers to shift their attention towards these sectors.**

PL-CBM leverages existing work and research led by research and associations. It is one of many efforts to accelerate the momentum of BAI advocacy, including the very own center that is publishing this paper (e.g., Alliance for Research on Regional Colleges). In sum, PL-CBM presents an opportunity to expand this work without seeking to “reinvent the wheel” and fostering existing work and coalition building of national association, research, and applied leadership.



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