

360 Review and Growth Plan

Benjamin E. Norquist

Azusa Pacific University

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In August, 2020, Azusa Pacific University distributed a survey to a group of my colleagues and students to solicit anonymous feedback about my leadership behaviors. The survey received 20 responses out of 30 people who received an invitation to participate. Of those who completed the survey, four are current colleagues from my department, eight are colleagues from outside of my department, and eight are students who reported to me in the 2019-20 academic year. The survey included 23 leadership-related items grouped into four categories: *leadership behaviors*, *valuing behaviors*, *interdependence behaviors*, and *communication behaviors*. Items were scored on a 5-point scale with the following values: 1 (unacceptable), 2, needs improvement) 3, meets my expectations, 4 (exceeds my expectations), and 5 (outstanding).

360 Review Results and Interpretation

Broadly, the results suggest I am performing at high levels in all four categories, but relative to the other areas, I score higher in valuing behaviors (4.3) than in leadership (3.9), interdependence (4.0), and communication (3.95). The two categories with the highest mean scores (valuing and interdependence) suggest that my colleagues think of me as appreciative and relational. Two of the strongest positive results are that others find me trustworthy (4.5) and approachable (4.75), further reinforcing the positive interpersonal result.

Although results are weaker overall in leadership and communications, there is a gamut of scores for individual items, ranging from 3.56 to 4.75. Within the leadership category, my weakest scores include *embraces change by challenging the status quo* (3.56), *provides a clear sense of purpose and direction* (3.65), and *generates alternative solutions when resolving a problem* (3.72). Within the communication category, my weakest scores include *keeps me*

informed of the status of my work, gives open and constructive feedback (3.65), and effectively deals with conflict (3.67).

Eighty percent of participants have known me for three years or less. This is an important point, as the last three years of my career have been unusually challenging and chaotic relative to the thirteen years I have worked in Christian higher education. I developed patterns of response to these circumstances that have both increased and diminished my capacity to lead others in various ways. I interpret my 360 review results and design the following growth plan in light of this larger context of leadership challenges and responses.

Growth Plan

I developed a personal mission statement and a set of values to guide me as I constructed the ensuing growth plan. This mission statement and these values derive from a contextualized interpretation of the results of my review, from my comprehensive strengths assessment, and from my professional goals. My mission statement is: *I will actively receive divine grace daily, following Jesus in all things. Driven by Jesus' commitments, I will follow, join, and lead others with and towards justice, goodness, and love.* After developing this statement, I defined the following values for my growth plan: First, I will invest in my overall health to expand my spiritual, emotional, and physical capacity to serve others. Second, I will focus my professional growth in areas where I can develop and execute a leadership vision to promote liberation, equity, and social justice. Third, I will expand my professional network to engage with higher education professionals across organizational functions and with business practitioners outside of higher education. Forth, I will strengthen multiple sets of communications skills and practices for management, marketing, and vision casting.

The following growth plan is designed to further activate my mission and enable my four values. In each section of the growth plan I align a series of specific, measurable goals toward one of my values, and I discuss how these goals can contribute to my professional development in areas of strength and opportunities for improvement.

Holistic Health

There are ways I have avoided attending to my spiritual, emotional, and physical health, and I recognize a range of consequences, including a reduction in my capacity to be generous, build relationships, and influence others. Because my health is important for its own sake, and it enables me to pursue my mission, I seek to invest in my holistic health as a key pillar of my leadership development plan.

In order to pursue this value, I set a range of goals. First, I would like to nurture spiritual friendships (Poust, 2010) for encouragement, mentoring, and collegiality. I need relationships like this in this season to grow holistically. Second, because time constraints and stress complicate my ability to be healthy, I will prioritize and release the least important professional opportunities to focus on only those most aligned with my mission. In order to accomplish this goal for life balance, I will take all of my annual vacation time, and protect my nights and weekends from professional work in order to rest and attend fully to my family. How I use my nights and weekends will continue to be an indicator of how I am managing stress and life priorities, regardless of how much pressure other responsibilities bring. Third, I want to increase my physical, emotional, and mental energy by using a dieting and exercise service to monitor and manage my eating, sleeping, exercise, and mindfulness practices. I am measuring my success by tracking whether I exercise daily and make ongoing progress toward a target weight of 145 pounds. Forth, I will attend to my life with God through a practice of writing spiritually

attentive, theologically rich prayers. Like writing poetry, but directed to God, this practice will give me the opportunity to purposefully explore scripture, internalize insights, and express the consternation, stress, and desires in my heart. If I produce one prayer each month, I will be achieving this goal.

By pursuing goals that increase my physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health, I am caring for the engine that will power my capacity to serve and lead. Jesus, who regularly escaped from others to spend time with God, rest, and pray, is my exemplar. It is out of this health and energy that Jesus then led ministry, taught crowds, and healed others. Having been less than healthy over the last few years, I have discovered just how critical my health is to anything else I would like to be or do.

Vision for Liberation

I believe we are deeply marred as a society by the systemic marginalization of groups by race, class, gender, and other identities (Baptist, 2014, Bertrand, et al., 2004; Taylor, 2019; Wilder, 2013). This marginalization is an urgent problem that must be faced and worked against, but society is structured in hegemonic ways that marginalizes the marginalization, turning it into a special interest issue and releasing majority groups from their awareness that they are implicated (Collins & Jun, 2017). I am committed to professional development that increases my capacity for work that will allow me to promote awareness and equity against these power asymmetries.

Advancing into roles where I can develop and execute new ideas (see my comprehensive strengths assessment) will give me the chance to grow as a leader and communicator as I pursue a vision for liberation and innovation in education. Because pursuing such a vision will provide

opportunities to challenge cultural and procedural norms and articulate alternatives, developing a vision for liberation in education is a key pillar of my leadership development plan.

I will learn from a diverse range of perspectives by tracking whether a majority of the books I read in a given year are from beyond my racial, cultural, religious, and national background. I also seek to learn from people in new relationships and places as well. Specifically, I will seek informational interviews and professional input once a month from equity-minded leaders such as Sheila Caldwell, Jeff Wright, Esau McCaulley, Yulee Lee, and Michael Emerson. Although I commit to a continual process of learning and self-reflection, I will also begin cultivating a voice and making knowledge contributions. Specifically, I will begin delegating equity-related projects to my direct reports, giving me a chance to expand this work beyond the bounds of my own desk. I will also continue advocating for diverse recruiting in the center where I work, moving toward a 25% composition of racially minoritized students in the iLab and 20% racially minoritized leaders in executive membership. These goals will provide opportunities for me to practice articulating an alternative vision, confronting the status quo, and encouraging change.

I also plan to launch a new project I am calling *Plural Church: A Studio for Writing Prayers Across Racial Groups*. I will recruit a diverse group of Christians who can begin exploring the art and practice of writing prayers together. The studio group will learn and practice together, and eventually begin generating occasional prayers that will express gratitude, joy, anger, and a full range of human responses to God in light of the justice and injustice of the world. Such a project will give me further opportunity to cultivate new leadership capacities in areas of strength and weakness while pursuing work worth doing. If I have found collaborators and have begun working on shared projects by the time I earn my Ph.D. I will evaluate that I

have been successful in launching this project. Continually learning, building equity-oriented programs, and launching the writing studio will nurture core leadership capacities, particularly around my commitments to push for change and my communication practices.

Expanded Network Capacity

I will expand my professional network to engage with higher education professionals across functions and with business practitioners outside of higher education. That my career has been largely limited to co-curricular programmatic areas highlights the importance of this value for expanding my network and credibility in other areas. To pursue this value, I will track a range of specific goals. First, I will dedicate one innovation project each semester in the CFI iLab to collaborate with a new department or function in higher education, and I will assign myself as the mentor for the project team. By doing so, I can learn about common norms, practices, and mindsets across a range of functions, develop a broader background, and nurture a network with professionals in enrollment management, advancement, financial management, operations, and executive leadership. Second, I will seek institutional service opportunities with committees and working groups outside of my center. Third, I will shape some of my research agenda around diverse higher education functions starting with admissions and marketing, affording me the opportunity to make further connections beyond my institution.

Communication for Leadership

Finally, I will strengthen multiple sets of communications skills and practices for management, marketing, and vision casting. Refining a range of communication skills will address aspects of leadership identified in the 360 review, further strengthening my high interpersonal credibility while attending to lower scoring areas such as persuasive communication and open information flow.

Some of the most efficient ways of improving my leadership and communication behaviors will be through skills development and regular practices. I will pursue a range of concrete goals in these areas. First, I will introduce daily and weekly communication practices toward my direct reports and my supervisor. Specifically, I will send daily work updates to my supervisor and schedule one-on-one meetings with my direct reports to promote open communication. I will invite feedback on my communication practices through a 360-review each semester. To nurture lines of communication during the pandemic, I will keep digital office hours twice a week and create weekly touchpoints through a group video chat. Second, to address external communications needs, I will seek formal education in marketing communication strategy, an approach to defining and reaching target audiences with a tailored message. This approach to communication is increasingly important as a baseline competence for leading sustainable organizations.

Conclusion

As I seek to articulate in my leadership philosophy paper, leadership is hollow without a meaningful telos toward which to aim, sacrifice, and work. In fact, unless it is approached with care, humility, and an unwavering commitment to justice, the power implicit in leadership can be harmful to self and others. If such a telos is integrated, then leadership and followership in a good and just direction can promote increased flourishing for people in the circles where it is exercised. The plans I have laid out above are plans to increase my power—power to mobilize others, power to persuade, power to act, and so on. As I plan for the expansion of my power to lead, I renew my commitment to my mission: *I will actively receive divine grace daily, following Jesus in all things. Driven by Jesus' commitments, I will follow, join, and lead others with and towards justice, goodness, and love.*

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