Leaders Without Titles

Sarah Good
Western Michigan University, sarah.good@wmich.edu

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Leaders Without Titles
Sarah Good, LPC, LMFT
Sindecuse Health Center, Faculty Specialist II
Academic Leadership Academy 2018-2019

Strengths
Self-awareness is a critical aspect of effective leadership. The Clifton Strengths Finder (galupstrengthscenter.com) is one tool that can enlighten people on this journey toward leadership and self-awareness.

My top 5 strengths include:
- Learner: Great desire to learn, want to continuously improve; process of learning, rather than the outcome, is exciting.
- Achiever: Possess a great deal of stamina and work hard; satisfaction is found in being busy and productive.
- WOO: Love the challenge of meeting new people and winning them over (WOO); derive satisfaction from breaking the ice and making connections with others.
- Relator: Enjoy close relationships with others; find deep satisfaction in working hard with friends to achieve a goal.
- Communication: Find it easy to put thoughts into words; good conversationalist and presenter.

When my strengths are at their best, “in the balcony,” they assist me in being the leader I have become, and continue to strive to be, with or without a title or role. Can you look at my timeline and find where my strengths were operating at their best?

“Courage is Contagious”
Brene Brown

After identifying my strengths, I better understood how I could dive into issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion without waiting for a title to be granted to me. The leap I took to establish the SHC D&I Committee is evidence of Brown’s principle of “courage is contagious.” I have observed my own ability to take initiative when avenues to do so were frustrated. It gives me hope that we can see a vision of ourselves, WMU, and organizations striving to be better to meet the needs of our constituents.

Leadership Journey
2009-2012 - Obtained full licensure as LPC in 2011
- Assisted in creation and implementation of Suspension Center for mental health agency in Calhoun County for underserved children and families.
- Obtained full licensure as LMFT in 2013
2013-2014 - Learned of marginalization felt by students when receiving health services at Sindecuse with (SHC)
- Approach Executive Director, requested establishment of Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Committee to improve service provision
2014-2015 - Awarded assessment and implementation grants from the Office of Diversity & Inclusion (ODI) to improve inclusive practices (see 2nd column)
- Began developing collaborative relationships across campus
2015-2016 - Chosen to attend National Conference on Race & Ethnicity in Higher Education (NCORE) by ODI
- Sindecuse awarded “Rising Star in Diversity” by ODI
- Began supervising newly licensed professional counselors
2016-2017 - Developed and initiated Student Affairs D&I Committee
- Participated on university-wide D&I Steering Committee
- Completed certificate in Higher Education & Student Affairs
2017-2018 - Poster presentation at NCORE (see 3rd column)
- Accepted into Educational Leadership PhD program
- Provided training to multiple functional areas within Student Affairs including Residence Life professional and student staff, Bernhard Center, and Career & Student Employment Services
2018-2019 - Continued participation on SHC D&I Committee developing trans* health care program
2019-2020 - Launching Trans* Health Care Program at Sindecuse

Improvements Continue
Sindecuse is officially launching a Trans* Health Care Program at present, largely due to the advocacy, relationship building, and training in which I have been engaged over the last six years.

- Adoption of WMU’s preferred name policy
- Improved information gathering at registration with more inclusive ways to identify one’s gender
- Staff improvement via multiple training opportunities
- Implementation of pronoun policy specific to SHC
- True Self Statement (wmich.edu/healthcenter/clinic/gender-health-care)
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Wise, T. J. (2) White like me: Reflections on race from a privileged son.

Contact Information
Sarah Good, LPC, LMFT
Faculty Specialist II
Western Michigan University
T: 269.387.1870
E: sarah.good@wmich.edu

Poster presented at W. K. Kellogg Racial Healing Grant Symposium, March 20, 2015, WMU

Moving Forward
Every career position I have held has allowed me to lead from the middle and taught me that leadership comes from all places, not just from the corner office. Each path I have chosen has pointed me toward the next step in my leadership journey. As I leave the Academic Leadership Academy, I will continue progress on my PhD in Educational Leadership with a concentration in Higher Education.

Through my work on campus and efforts toward obtaining my PhD, I will continue to take leadership positions presented to me and have the courage to develop my own paths when I see people, processes, and policies that can be developed to their full potential. Ultimately, I know leadership is found in all spaces; I carry my head high with that knowledge.

Special Thanks
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I also need to extend my gratitude to all of those who have pushed and challenged me with regard to my privileges, recognizing and working on my own racial identity development, and pushing me to challenge my assumptions and implicit biases. You all have provided me the space to question and learn which, I believe, makes me a better leader and, more importantly, a better human being.

Resources
- Wise, T. J. (2) White like me: Reflections on race from a privileged son.