DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROLES OF STUDENT COUNCILS IN HAVING SHARED AUTHORITY IN UNIVERSITY COUNCILS

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Abstract: For the purpose of this study, three objectives are set. The first is to determine practices of shared authority on campus by students as members in the university councils, both in Thailand and abroad. The second is to propose a model for appropriate shared authority. The third is to offer guidelines for the implementation of the model. Sources of data were derived from printed documents accessible by the researcher from 33 private universities in Thailand. Moreover, printed materials, namely, texts, journals and research reports on shared authority on campus by students were collected and analyzed. The 3,545 titles of printed materials were scanned which lead to the findings of the study. The model proposed comprises of four major elements. They are (1) roles and responsibilities of presidents of the student body as representatives of students in university councils; (2) organizational structure appropriate for the offices of the student council comprising the president, the secretariat and the financial controller; (3) rules and responsibilities of the office student administration, (4) public relations research and development in support of the president's decision-making. Guidelines for model implementation based on research findings are (1) acculturation (2) morale building (3) communications (4) empowerment (5) team-building and (6) outcome-oriented activities.

Higher Education in Thailand puts emphasis on three areas of student development: wisdom, skills, and moral/ethics relating to their future career. In order to achieve these objectives construction of curriculum and extracurricular activities play a vital role. Due to the rapid changes in society and the world, integration of extracurricular activities and curriculum is crucial. The aim is to cultivate wholeness in order to help students cope with society, and be productive citizens. (Dr. Vichit Srisaarnd, 2536: ก) Thus, there emerges a shift in emphasis from academic alone toward integration of academic and student activities to assist in development. (Charin Thaneerat, 2538: 19)

With implementation of the Educational Act and Revolution in Education, Higher education now is aiming to develop quality people for the society and nation through combination of extracurricular activities and academics. Extracurricular activities, although limited to college premises, play an important role in students' development as individuals and citizens. These activities serve as outlets for the students' voice, creativity, and abilities. They also symbolize the inner culture and values of both the student population and the institutions of higher learning (Janc, 2004)

As Rudolph (1966) reflected on student activism in higher education:

> The most sensitive barometer of what is going on at a college is the extra-curriculum. It is the instrument of change, the instrument with which generations of students, that possess the college for but a few years, register their values, often fleetingly, yet perhaps indelibly. It is the agency that identifies their enthusiasm, their understanding of what a college should be their preferences… It is the measure of its growth. To develop student a whole person is to develop the leadership ability when importing changes and engagement of the person in various level of activities.

To Komives, Licas, & McMahon (1998) leadership is "a socially constructed phenomenon" that serves to explain organizational change, structure, and relationships between the people engaged in a group process. Today, leadership is positional and non-positional, available to all levels of an organizational structure. In practice, this notion of relational leadership has translated into a powerful motivational concept that has opened doors to unconventional leaders, such as public servants, citizens, and community advocates. Furthermore, in the context of student leadership, this new paradigm has empowered students to engage in community service, campus activities, and public governance. (Janc, 2004)

According to Janc (2004), leadership is "meaning making in a community of practice". Leadership experiences are learning opportunities providing new tools and enhancing current skills practiced by student leaders. Leadership experiences are also about collective and individual improvements, learning moments, and inner reflection.

As students' experience new leadership challenges, they are faced with diverse environments, group dynamics, and tasks that require them to look to their teammates for community building and shared leadership, and to learn from within, making meaning of these experiences, and spiritually reflecting on their personal and professional goals. Leadership development is for that reason essential in the creation of an authentic self in one's community, as well as uncovering the meaning that is already embedded in one's mind, helping one "see what they already know, believe, and value, and encouraging them to make new meaning" (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993) "In this way, leadership generates

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leadership". Hence, leadership may be defined as "a growing process of student in attempting to accomplish change or make a difference to benefit the common good" (Janc, 2004).

Providing extra-curricular activities through being part of student council is one of the training processes for leadership. Thus in this study three objectives are set. The first is to describe practices of shared authority on campus by students as member in the university councils, both in Thailand and abroad. The second task is to propose a model for appropriate shared authority. The third is to offer guidelines for the implementation of the model.

Source of data were derived from printed documents accessible by the researcher from 33 private universities in Thailand. Moreover, printed materials, namely, texts, journals and research reports on shared authority on campus by students were collected and analyzed. The 3,545 titles were scanned which lead to the findings of the study.

The model proposed comprises of four major elements. They are: (1) Roles and responsibilities of presidents of the student body as representatives of students in university councils. (2) Organizational structure appropriate for the offices of the student council comprising the president, the secretariat and the financial controller. (3) Rules and responsibilities of the office student council pertaining to administration. (4) Public relations and research and development in support of the decision-making process of the president.

Guidelines for model implementation suggested based on the research findings are (1) acculturation (2) morale building (3) communications (4) empowerment (5) team-building (6) outcome-oriented activities/programs.

The relational model of roles of student councils on participants' interaction in an organizational setting and the relational model of students' councils focus on organizational setting were assessed. The relational model assumes that in any given organization a relational approach can be applied when participants engage in a web like structure and are inclusive, empowering, purposeful, ethical, and above all, process-oriented. Participants need to understand each other's perspectives; empower each other by sharing information and participate in the decision-making process regardless of one's role in an organization; have a positive attitude during goal setting and implementation; behave in an ethical and respectful manner; and be process-oriented, focused on producing high-quality outcomes. The relational model teaches organizational participants how

to work as a team, to respect and appreciate each other, and to achieve goals collectively. The relational model also encourages individual reflection, meaning making, and connection of leaders to their experience, to other participants, and to the organization as a whole. This model is built on the assumption that in any given organization a relational approach can be applied when participants engage in a web like structure and are inclusive, empowering, purposeful, ethical, and above all, process-oriented. According to Janc (2004), the relational model teaches organizational participants how to work as a team, to respect and appreciate each other, and to work together toward common goals.

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