

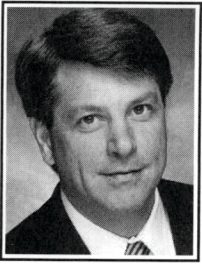
ACDA
SOUTHWESTERN DIVISION

Common Interests,

Common Goals....

Common Times

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Developing Leadership Skills in an ACDA Student Chapter

*Alan McClung, P.D., R&S Chair
Youth and Student Services*

Establishing a dynamic student chapter of ACDA at your college or university is challenging, yet incredibly rewarding. Through a variety of projects, choral music students discover how to set goals, plan in detail, facilitate events, follow others, and lead in authentic ways.

If a student chapter is to experience success, finding and fostering students' leadership skills is essential. Although leadership may be difficult to define, there are a number of objective characteristics that surface by consensus. When working with student musicians consider the importance of fostering the following list of leadership characteristics.

A leader will be able to . . .

- create or catch the vision. The eyes of a leader light up when discussing potential goals, projects, or events.
- feel the thrill of a challenge.
- express constructive discontent effectively instead of destructive malcontent.
- discern practical goals and ideas from impractical goals and ideas.
- take calculated risks. Be creative enough to turn lemons into lemonade.
- accept responsibility.
- keep commitments and provide follow through.
- feel empowered through the empowerment of others.
- set a good example.
- accept criticism graciously.
- listen to others exceptionally well.
- inspire the respect of peers.
- be enthusiastic.
- maintain a state of good humor
- involve everyone. Be more concerned for the "we" than the "I".
- encourage others through positive communications.
- believe in others.
- celebrate the success of others.

I find it interesting that the leadership characteristics needed to guide a student organization successfully are the same qualities needed to run a successful choral program or music classroom. There is little doubt that teachers, especially music performance teachers, function in the role of a leader.

Although people may indeed be predisposed towards certain types of behaviors (the nature vs. nurture debate),

Developing Leadership Skills...continued

I am convinced that good leaders are made not born. Effective leadership skills are accessible through a never ending process of self-study, education, training, and experience.

One way to enhance your professional experiences is by attending the SWACDA convention in St. Louis. The Student and Youth Activities Committee will present a session, First Year Teaching Surprises, featuring five, young, successful choral music teachers from around the Southwest. All undergraduates and student chapter advisors are encouraged to attend.

This session will serve as the official meeting for undergraduate students. It will be a place to meet, to network, and to share ideas with students from around the region. Informal opportunities will be available to share information on enhancing the ACDA student chapter at your college or university. An appropriate time to discover and develop your leadership skills is NOW.